

The Changes in the Course of Japanese Policy for Farming-Based Colonization Before and After the Annexation of Korea

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The purpose of the Japanese governing policy toward Korean rural areas and agriculture in general had been to build a cheap source of food and an exclusive market for Japanese products. As such, the Japanese demand for colonial rule was in line with any other imperialistic demand. However, such an understanding, though correct, is not sufficient. An understanding at this level only penetrates into the universal characteristics of an imperialistic invasion and is severely limited in grasping the specifics and the particulars of the Japanese imperialistic domination. Moreover, not even those specific characteristics were constantly pursued throughout the entire colonial era; there were changes and revisions as the times and conditions changed.

In order to explain the characteristics of Japanese policy toward the rural communities and farming in Korea, it is vital to pay attention to the following queries. The overall direction of Japanese policy was determined by the economic aspect of the question "what were the Japanese capitalistic demands against Korean rural areas and agriculture?" and by the politico-military aspect of the question "how did Japan define the strategic position and value of Korea in its process of carrying out the invasion policy?" Careful attention also must be given to the fact that sometimes Japanese invasion and governing policy toward Korea was determined by military factors originating from the Japanese desire for the invasion of the continent. Japanese agrarian policy was primarily set, not according to the

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internal demands and needs of Korean society, but according to external demands.

However, such outside demands were not always carried through to the end; they were revised or altered according to the inherent economic and political factors in Korea, such as the Korean social structure, especially the reality of the countryside, farming, and farmers and its contradictory structure, and the unfolding of the nationalistic movements against such contradictions, etc. The means of enforcing the policy also varied accordingly. Therefore, a study of the history of colonial policy for farmland must focus on how the internal and external needs were regulated among the many related but sometimes conflicting causes in politics, the military, and the economy. It should also take into account how the aim and the means of accomplishment varied according to each period and stage.

Based on this view, this article purports to examine the formation of and the changes in the underlying issues in Japanese colonial policy for agriculture around the 1910s, before and after the complete annexation of Korea. Particular attention will be given to the following questions: (1) what motivated the Japanese farmland policy after the Russo-Japanese War for immigration-based colonization, which called for a massive emigration of Japanese farmers to Korea for domination of Korean farms and agriculture, and (2) why was the basis of this policy weakened, and was finally abandoned after 1910?¹

2. The Problems of Population and Food Supply in Japan and the Manchuria-Korea Immigration Concentration Policy

1) The Problems of Population and Food Supply

In Japan there was a drastic increase in population and food consumption around the time of the Sino-Japanese War. The rate of natural population growth remained at 6 to .8% annually before the War, but afterwards it started to exceed 1%. The total annual population increase numbered 300,000 before the war but came close to 600,000 after the Russo-Japanese War. As a result, the total population of Japan jumped from 43,230,000 in 1897 to 47,680,000 in 1905.

Due to the population growth, especially in the cities and among the non-agricultural population, food consumption, particularly that of commercial products

1 About the Japanese policy on farming-based colonization in Korea, see Kwon Tae-eok, "The Agricultural Policy During the Era of the Presidency-General under the Rule of Japanese Imperialism" in *The Japanese Invasion of Korea Before and After the Russo-Japanese War*, History Association of Korea (Seoul Iljogak, 1986)

such as rice, increased rapidly. The number of cities with population of 50,000 or more rose from 14 in 1888 to 29 in 1908, and the total population in those cities from 2,956,000 to 6,889,000.² While the population of farmers was reduced from 66.6% in 1900 to 59.3% in 1910, there was an inverse increase in population engaged in mining, manufacturing, and transportation.³ Among the farmers, there was a rise in the consumption of rice and barley, while the opposite was true of the consumption of millet, a product the economy was self-sufficient in.

The problem was that the rate of increase in food production could not match that of food consumption. After 1900, during the post Sino-Japanese War period, rice production went from an oversupply to a shortage. Rice imports skyrocketed to 2,000,000 *seom*, [1 *seom* = 47.6 gallons, or 5.12 bushels: translator's note], approximately 4.3 to 12.1% of the total national consumption. Japan, from this point on, had become a chronic food-importing nation.

The population and food-shortage problem was a serious matter to the colonialists in Japan. Based on Malthus' population theory, they predicted a possibility of an unfortunate situation in the near future because of the rapid population increase and the failure to supply an adequate amount of food. According to those colonialists, the population increase would induce an overall decline in the standard of living, and a rise in the unemployment rate. The wide gulf between the rich and the poor would generate a political and economic crisis. Some colonialists contended that the critical problem facing Japan at the time was not the expansion of armament or diplomatic operations, but how the ever-increasing population would get its supply of rice and jobs.⁴

One must notice, however, that the colonialists' claim as to the seriousness of the population problem was rather exaggerated. The actual rate of increase was a mere 1% which was hardly critical. And it was far surpassed by the rate of economic growth. After the Sino-Japanese War until 1910, the Japanese GNP growth rate was between 1.5 and 2.45%, and as a result, the GNP growth rate per capita marked

2 Honjou, *Population and Its Problems* (1930), pp 230-33

3 Kaznishi Mitzhaya et al, *The Rise of Japanese Capitalism II*, 7th Edition (Tokyo University Press, 1969), p 361

4 Yoshikawa Teru, *The Theory of Korean Farm Management*, 1904, Gatow Masro, "Introduction," in *On Korean Agriculture* (1904), p 5, Yamamoto Gotaru, *A Guide to Immigration to Korea* (1904), p 3, Tougo jushi, *On Japanese Colonization* (1906), p 200, "A Proposal for overseas Immigration Protection" (Feb 1, 24, 1905) in *The Proceedings of the Imperialist Parliament 1* (Seoul Taesan, 1991), pp 286-289, 309-311, "A Proposal for Overseas Immigration Protection" in *The Proceedings of the Imperialist Parliament 2*, p 19

somewhere between .43 and 1.49%. As capitalistic industry expanded, much of the population was employed by the secondary and tertiary industries of mining, manufacturing, transportation, and commerce. As can be seen, these circumstances did alleviate the population problem. The population "crisis," which the colonialists claimed was threatening Japanese society, was, to a certain degree, overstated. While overpopulation was put forth as a social problem, the Japanese government was carrying out a policy that would actually generate a population increase. A specific example of such a policy can be found in the revision of the Japanese constitution. A prohibition order was issued on abortion after the Meiji reform, and in 1882 it was expressly stipulated to be a criminal law. According to the revised criminal law in 1907, a murder charge was applied to the killing of infants due to economic distress within a family, and there was a severe corporal punishment for abortion.

One begins to wonder, then, under what intentions the contemporary colonialists discussed and overstated the seriousness of the population problem, and with what motivation the Japanese government actually pursued a policy of population-increase. The implications of the fact that both the colonialists and the Japanese government insisted on founding a colony as an answer to their respective population problem should be carefully heeded. Although Taiwan and Hokkaido were already occupied by Japan, they were not considered to be sufficient outlets or sources of food and resources for the ever-expanding population. The continental invasion was regarded as a must to solve the population problem. In other words, the problem of surplus population was presented, and exploited, as a justification for the invasion of the East-Asian continent. A good example can be found in the Manchuria-Korea immigration concentration policy.

2) The emergence of the Manchuria-Korea immigration concentration policy

A form of the Manchuria-Korea immigration concentration policy, the aim of which was to concentrate Japanese immigration in Manchuria and Korea, began to appear even before the Russo-Japanese War. According to Nakahashi Tokugorow, who served as a regular member of the Eastern Association and the chief of the Railroad Bureau in the Department of Communication, the criteria of a first-rate nation included how much military force could be mobilized in times of war and whether the population would reach more than 100,000,000 by the end of the 20th century. For this reason, he considered population increase Japan's most important project. The Japanese territory at the time, however, was not enough even to accommodate 40,000,000 to 50,000,000 people. Although some had emigrated to

North America and Australia, Nakahashi did not regard it too favorably because such emigration would be equivalent to serving the enemy. His choice of location for the expansion of the Japanese people was nearby Korea and Manchuria. With an establishment of some transportation facilities such as sea routes and railroads, he predicted that these areas would be able to accommodate 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 people within 20 to 30 years.⁵

Nakahashi's colonization theory is based on a mercantile concept of population. Mercantile nations assumed the size of population to be the measure for national wealth and military power. They limited the size of emigration to rival countries on the one hand, and on the other, strongly promoted their population-increase program for the sake of national prosperity and defense. To solve the problem of overpopulation, they would strategically disperse the excess population and continue applying their mercantile policy there for national wealth and strength.

It was Nagai Ryutarow, a professor at Waseda University and a leading scholar in colonization-related policy-making, who perfected Nakahashi's Manchuria-Korea colonization policy into the Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration theory. In "The Manchuria-Korea Concentration Theory" which came out in 1910, he argued that emigration to the more developed countries such as Europe and North America would benefit those rival countries by offering well-trained, but cheap labor which would only serve to reduce the demand for Japanese products and finally undermine the Japanese economy. For this reason, he opposed establishing Japanese settlements in Europe and North America while strongly arguing for Manchuria and Korea as the locations for promoting and concentrating emigration. Korea, in particular, was regarded with a good prospect for agricultural emigration, with a potential for accommodating up to 10,000,000 immigrants because of its low population density.⁶ The Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration theory reflects the circumstances surrounding the transformation of Japanese capitalism to imperialism after the Russo-Japanese War. It acceded to Nakahashi's militaristic ideas in principle, but also paid equal attention to economic aspects.

The moment when the Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration theory started to be regarded as a diplomatic policy came following the rise of some problems over Japanese emigration to the United States and Canada.⁷ Around the time of the

5 Nakahashi Tokugorow, "The Manchuria-Korea Colonization Theory" in *The Sun*, pp 9-8. 53, 55

6 Nagai Ryutarow, *Social Problems and Colonization Problems* (1912), esp Chapter 3 "The Idea of the Manchuria-Korea Concentration"

7 See footnote 7 in "The Japanese-American Gentlemen's Treaty," in *The Chronological Table of*

Russo-Japanese War and shortly afterwards as well, there was a drastic increase in the amount of emigration to the North American regions and also in the magnitude of conflict between them and the Japanese government over their respective immigration policies. As a response to these problems, Japan set a limit to the number of immigrants, and at the same time considered the Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration theory with a renewed enthusiasm.

However, it would be an oversight to view the theory only as an alternative to Japan's North American policy. Rather, the theory must be understood as a part of Japan's continental invasion policy. After the Sino-Japanese War, Japan, while maintaining friendly ties with Britain and the United States, continued its policy of expansion to the Asian continent. This policy was, however, in direct conflict with Russia's southward invasion policy which included not only Manchuria but also Korea. The members of the younger generation which held power in the cabinet—Kasra Tarow and Komura Jutarō, for example—propounded the view that Japan should control the “destiny of Korea”⁸ even at the cost of an armed encounter with Russia because the future of Japan depended on it. As a necessary step toward preparation for such an occasion, Japan formed an alliance with Britain. Journalists, scholars, and groups of diplomatic hard-liners such as the Black Dragon Association (1902) and the Friends against Russia (1903) also emphasized the disgrace of the three-nation intervention of 1895, raised public hostility against Russia, and advocated war.⁹

It was around this period that immigration to China and Korea was seriously proposed. The Japanese government revised the immigration law in 1901 so that a Japanese national would be able to travel freely to Korea and China. The officials from the Department of Agriculture and Commerce and agriculture specialists were dispatched to Korea, and serious field studies were made on Korean farming. Various colonial associations, such as the East Asian Association (1898), the Korea Association (1902), and the China-Korea Association (1902), were organized among Japanese politicians, journalists, and intellectuals to support the field surveys, emigration, and commerce. The Japanese intention to dominate Korea and

Japanese Diplomacy and Major Documents I (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press), pp. 304-305

8 “The Views of Komura, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, on the Formation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance,” (Dec. 7, 1901), *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202

9 Mazumi Junosuke, *A Political History of Japan II* (Tokyo University Press, 1988), pp. 107-114, Peter Duus, *A Modern History of Japan*, trans. Kim Yong-Duk (Seoul Jishik Industry Press, 1983), pp. 142-46, Sakada Masatoshi, Chapter 4 “The Russo-Japanese War and the Hard-Line Diplomacy,” in *A Study of Hard-Line Movements in Foreign Affairs in Modern Japan* (1978)

Manchuria in the midst of Russia's tightened control over Manchuria and the mounting tension between Russia and Japan is reflected in the active interest Japan took in these areas.

After the Russo-Japanese War, Japan gained the sole right to control Korea and a chance to extend its influence on Manchuria. It was at this point that Japan was forced to prepare for a counter-attack at the same time it had to ready itself for hostile encounters with China or Russia over the control of Manchuria and Mongolia. Japan defined these military, strategic values as the justification for their plan to dominate Korea and Manchuria. Proposed to effect the domination was the Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration policy.

The Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration policy was adopted and officially declared as Japan's foreign policy at a cabinet meeting in September, 1908. According to the emigration policy in "the issue of the course for foreign policy" which was decided in this meeting, there were two reasons for the emigration concentration policy in these particular areas.¹⁰ First, there was a need to concentrate Japan's political and military power in Manchuria and Korea in order to face down Russia and China, and second, there was a need to limit the size of emigration to Europe and North America, which at the present level was a cause of political and economic discord with these regions, for the sake of Japan's national policy, the improvement of its foreign commerce.

The focus of such a diplomatic policy was confirmed through Komura Jutarō's parliamentary address in February, 1909.¹¹ He insisted that within 10 to 20 years Japan must send 1,000,000 immigrants to Manchuria and Mongolia. In the next year's address, he pointed out that Japan's current population of 50 million was relatively small compared to China's 400 million, Russia's 160 million, and the United States' 100 million. In order to strengthen its national power, he claimed, Japan must concentrate its people within its own territory.¹²

In the end, by declaring the Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration policy, Japan, on the one hand could minimize the tension between the European and North American countries over the problem of the growing size of emigration, and on the

10 "The Issue of the Course for Foreign Policy" (Sep 25, 1908), in *The Chronological Table of Japanese Diplomacy and Major Documents* I, p. 308

11 "The Speech of Komura, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs" (Feb 3, 1909), in *The Proceedings of the Imperialist Parliament V*

12 *Dictionary of Japanese Diplomatic History* (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs), p. 896. Onoi Tsitsuru,

other hand was on its way to securing a material base for establishing actual control over Korea and Manchuria. Therefore, the Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration policy should be viewed (1) as a part of the continental invasion policy that reflected the demands of Japan's capitalism as it was transforming itself to imperialism after the Russo-Japanese War and (2) as specifically an invasion policy that aimed to rule Manchuria and Korea through the external expansion of the Japanese people.

3. The Japanese Survey of Korean Farming and the Diversification of the Theory of Agricultural Colonization

1) The Japanese views on the conditions of Korean farming

Not only the Japanese government but also local offices and various colonial associations expressed interest in agricultural colonization of Korea and dispatched farming experts to survey the actual conditions. During the early period a few people, including an engineer from the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Gatow Masro, and a professor from Tokyo University, Sakahiro Tsuneaki, were dispatched by the government to survey Korean industry.

Gatow visited Korea 4 times between 1898 and 1904, and the result of those visits was his *Theory of Korean Farming* (1904). He asserted in this book that the only solution to the problem of agricultural overpopulation at home was to establish colonies overseas and proposed Korea as his choice. While Korea, especially its southern region, had a warm climate and fertile land, its population was sparse compared to Japan, which made it a perfect candidate for Japanese emigration.

More influential than Gatow in the shaping of Japanese policy was Sakahiro. While he was an agriculture professor in Tokyo University, he was employed by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and rose as high up as the directorship of agricultural affairs. Upon an order from the Department, he went for 4 months to survey China and Korea, and his findings and assessments were reported in *An Outlook on Chinese and Korean Industry* (1902). Here he offered the following advantages of a Korean agricultural colony backed up by rather presumptive statistics on the size of population, arable land, etc.: 1) there was much land to be cultivated; 2) there was much room for improvement in farming, and 3) because of the similarity in climate and other natural features of the land, Japanese farmers and the existing Japanese farming know-how would be sufficient to achieve an agricultural reform in Korea.

In March of 1904, on the basis of the reports by these specialists and others, the Japanese government organized the Committee for the Study of Korean Farming and set up a plan to send all of the seven-member committee to Korea.¹³ This plan was activated by the end of the same year, and the outcome of this project was *The Investigative Report on Korean Land and Agricultural Production*, an enormous, five-volume publication.

Local offices and various groups and individuals also went into action for a study of the actual farming conditions in Korea as a preparation for farming-based colonization. A number of reports that came out around the time of the Russo-Japanese War resulted from this activity. They were unanimous in their conclusions, much the same as those at the government level: an investment in Korean farming would be profitable.¹⁴ As such, Japan already had a serious interest in Korean farming and farmland which led to full-scale field investigations even before the Russo-Japanese War, and had reached an agreement that Korea would be appropriate for an agricultural colony.

However, there was disagreement among colonialists as to whether Korea would be a proper site for specifically emigration-based colonization. Some argued that the Korean countryside met the conditions for a mass emigration of medium- and small-scale Japanese farmers wanting to become independent, landed farmers. But others were more critical, insisting that land-investment colonization, which meant management under a landlord system using tenant farming, would be more advantageous, and that it would be more desirable to proceed with emigration-based colonization within set limits to assist landlord management.

2) The diversification of the views on agriculture-based colonization: emigration-based colonization and land-investment-based colonization

Those who favored emigration-based colonization determined that the Korean countryside had a small population but much arable land that had not been cultivated yet. Therefore, they argued, a mass emigration to those untilled lands would be like catching two rabbits at the same time: it would serve as an outlet for

13 "The Issue of Surveying Korean Farming" in *The Records of the Japanese Consulate Office in Korea* 20 (The National History Compilation Committee (of Korea), 1991), pp 407-409

14 Kim Yong-söp, "The Early Farming-Based Emigration Policy and the Concept of Landlordism in Imperialist Japan" in *Studies on the Modern and Contemporary History of Farming in Korea Landlordism and Farming Problems before and after the Japanese Domination* (Seoul Iljogak, 1992), pp 37-42

the excess population and as a basis for agricultural colonization of Korea. The one who systematically supported such a claim with specific numbers and figures was Sakahiro. He said if 14 million *jeong* (1 jeong = 2.451 acres) were cultivated, 7 million Japanese farmers could be colonized. Besides, he adds, since the population per square mile in Korea was 146, a mere half of Japan's 299, there was ample space for emigration-based colonization.¹⁵ Despite the fact that such presumptive statistics was the result of a very rough estimation based on rather short-period studies and investigations, these numbers were quoted again and again in many published reports and books, and contributed a great deal in Japan's formulation of colonial policy.

There were some people who argued for a large-scale emigration-based colonization based on a simple comparison of the population density between the two countries. Some assumed that since Korea, the population of which at the time was 10 million, had the capacity to accommodate 24 million people (half of Japan's current population) 14 million Japanese could eventually settle in Korea. Even if an appropriate population density were set at a lower rate considering Korea's lower standard of living, at least 7 million could move there according to such an estimation.¹⁶ "The Publisher's Address" and the editorials in *The Wealth of Korea* (1907) also stated that judging from the availability of arable land Korea could absorb well over 10 million immigrants. For this reason, the book claimed, some million, or even some ten million people would be welcome.¹⁷ As can be seen, the main evidence used to support the idea of emigration-based colonization in Korea was always the assumption that there was a vast portion of uncultivated land with a small population

On the other hand, there were dissenting voices to the validity of this evidence within Japan. Yoshikawa Teru, who traveled to Korea in the fall of 1903 stated that Korea did not have as much uncultivated land as assumed by some people when compared to Japan's eastern or northeastern regions. The reason for such an assumption could be attributed to the fact that those who surveyed Korea and had put out reports were mostly from the western regions where the lands were cultivated to the maximum capacity.¹⁸ Tamizaki Shingorow, who was in Korea on

15 Sakahiro Tsuneaki, *A View on Chinese and Korean Industry* (1902), pp 118-129

16 "Japan's Promotion of Emigration," *Taehan-Maeil-Sinbo* (the Korean Daily News) Sep 8, 1906

17 *The Wealth of Korea*, vol 1, p 3, "The Conditions of Farming in Korea," Ibid 7 (Dec 15, 1907), p 7

18 Yoshikawa Teru, pp 26-27

an inspection duty on behalf of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce from March to July in 1904 went further and wrote that “the first thing that surprises you upon entering the country is that the lands are well tilled and there isn’t much more land to be cultivated.” He also pointed out that there were large pieces of arable land around the rivers but much work would be required such as the construction of embankments.¹⁹

The Ministry of the Presidency-General shared such an understanding. According to their *Management of Farming in Korea* (1907), which was put out as a manual for farming-based emigration, the reported availability of uncultivated lands in Korea was overstated.²⁰ Even if there were uncultivated lands, most of them were privately owned and, like Hokkaido, would not serve as a ready site for emigration-based colonization. They were indeed acknowledging that emigration-based colonization in Korea was not easy. The more they became aware of the actual conditions of farming in Korea, the stronger the argument that the possibility of successful emigration-based colonization was weak.

However, even those who were critical of or held negative views on the idea of emigration-based colonization, which insisted on a large-scale migration of farmers, still did not deny the need for farming-based emigration. On the contrary, many argued that it should be vigorously encouraged as a solution to the population and food-shortage problems in Japan and as a basis for a firmer control over Korea. They were only pointing out that the conditions of the Korean countryside and farming industry were not adequate for a mass emigration and colonization. According to them, Korea was rather suitable for land-investment-based colonization, and emigration-based colonization should be encouraged only at a secondary or auxiliary level.

This type of claim was well figured in Gatow’s report. He argued that the solution to the problem of a surplus population of 400,000 to 500,000 a year was a migration of farming population to Korea. While maintaining that tenant farming by Korean farmers would be profitable, he still encouraged emigration-based colonization to a degree that the Japanese farmers could function as assistants in a landlord-management system, as disseminators of Japanese farming technique and as the living models of “the Japanese-Korean alliance.”²¹

However, the difference between the theory of emigration-based colonization and

19 Tazanaki Shingorow, *A Report on the Inspection of Korean Industry* (1904), pp 48-51

20 p 17

21 Gatow, p 152

that of land-investment-based colonization was not significant. Whether an emigration-based colonialist or a land-investment-based colonialist, they all shared the common awareness that transplanting Japanese farmers would prove effective for “developing” and controlling Korea. They were in total agreement when it came to the common goal of utilizing Japanese emigrant farmers as those in charge both of transplanting Japanese farming skills and techniques in order to modify the ways of Korean agricultural production to their own taste, and of controlling and assimilating the Korean countryside.²²

In sum, these two groups of colonialists had a common awareness of the course of assimilation for farming and farmers in Korea, but differed in their opinions about what to form its social and material basis on. While those who favored land-investment-based colonization intended to dominate the Korean countryside and farming in general by expanding and strengthening the management system of colonial landlords, those who preferred emigration-based colonization tried to build up the ruling power over the Korean farming community and industry by encouraging emigration-based colonization of Japanese farmers.

Two goals set the tone for Japan’s imperialistic invasion policy: to support the efforts of colonial landowners to seize farming land, and to actively promote emigration-based colonization. The keynote of Japan’s colonial policy during this period was the colonial reorganization of Korean agriculture and the stabilization of their control over the Korean rural areas with the help of the colonial landlords and the Japanese emigrant farmers as the social and material basis of that control. The Japanese government took a deliberately compromising stance between the two groups of colonialists, although attention should be given to the fact that at this point in time as compared to a later period it did lean more toward the proposal of the advocates of emigration-based colonization.

4. The Promotion of the Agricultural Policy Based on Emigration-Based Colonization

1) The Promotion of Emigration-Based Colonization as Initiated by Japanese Landowners and Capitalists

22 Iwanaga, *A Manual for the Most Recent Industry in Korea* (1905), p. 151, Yamamoto Gotaru, p. 75, The Ministry of the Presidency-General ed., p. 17, 徳永勳美, *A Comprehensive Bibliography on Korea* (1907), p. 24, 青柳網太郎, *Korean Colonization Policy* (1908), p. 68, *The Central Korean Farmers’ Association Newsletter* 3-9 (Sept. 1909), p. 14

As the enthusiasm for emigration-based colonization was heightened, various farming colonization companies and associations were organized in many places in Japan. Local government offices supported these groups and companies by covering all kinds of expenses in the name of assisting the emigrants, the companies, profit sharing, the management of the model farms, etc. so that the emigration and colonization project could run more smoothly.²³ These farming-based colonial companies and associations set up branch offices in Korea and also in prefecture halls within Japan.²⁴

A few of them succeeded in managing large areas of farms through landownership and in promoting emigration-based colonization.²⁵ A good example of this was Ishikawa Prefecture Farming Company. Upon studying Korean climate and other features of nature and the actual conditions of farming, they distributed the results and sent away their executives and other employees to various places in Japan and under the sponsorship of local officials promoted the emigration. They also offered favorable terms to the emigrants interested in tenant farming. The first year, each emigrant family was to receive a loan of 2 *jeong* of rice fields and 5 *dan* (1 *dan* = .245 acre: the translator's note) of fields for farming other things, as well as some forest and uncultivated land. The terms for the succeeding years depended on the conditions of the land and on emigration. The rent for tenancy was fixed for 5 years and the taxes were paid by the company.²⁶ Compared to the terms of tenant farming offered by the company to Korean farmers, Japanese farmers had a great advantage.²⁷ When need arose, the company also lent money to the emigrant farmers at little or no interest.

The Japanese landowners in Korea ran their own immigration-based colonization projects. The big landowners were interested in them for the management of their own farms. They also offered favorable farming terms for immigration.²⁸

However, these emigration projects could not be a full-time job for the landowners and capitalists. They were only a secondary means for agriculture-based

23 Yamaguzi, *On Korean Industry I* (1910), p. 710

24 The Ministry of the Presidency-General ed., pp. 43-48, *The Central Korean Farmers' Association Newsletter*, 2-10, p. 61, 3-9, pp. 14-15

25 Ohohwashi, *A Guide to Korean Industry* (1915), pp. 805-21

26 *Ibid.*, p. 811

27 Asaka Kyouji, "The Ways of the Colonial Life in Korea: the Story of Great Japanese Landowners," in *Studies in Korean History*, pp. 341-42; Chung, Yon-tae, "Japan's Agrarian Policy and Colony Landlordism in the 1910's," *Studies on Korean History* (1988), pp. 476-78.

28 Ohohwashi, pp. 823-47

colonization and smooth farming management. The majority of the colonial companies considered land-investment-based colonization projects, including purchasing of lands, wasteland development, and farming management, as their main business. Their intention by having a large number of Japanese farmers in the rural areas of Korea to teach and supervise Korean farmers as well as show them a model of Japanese farming was to control the Korean farmers and improve their farming technique. This, they hoped, would strengthen their hold on Korean farming communities and also serve to fulfill the course of their country's colonization policy.²⁹⁾

2) Founding of the Oriental Colonization Company

While the Japanese landowners and capitalists considered emigration-based colonization as a secondary or subordinate project to their agricultural enterprise, the Japanese government was launching an all-out effort for it. Japan sought to establish a government-run company to promote emigration-based colonization. It started to receive more serious consideration when Japan set up the plans to seize the rights to develop wastelands.³⁰ As the plans were finally frustrated due to Korea's forceful resistance, the discussions of a government-run company for emigration-based colonization were temporarily suspended.³¹

It was in 1907 that they were resumed in earnest and put into action, initiated by Kasra Tarow who was then the president of the Oriental Association. During his term as prime minister (June, 1901-Jan 1906) throughout the period of the Russo-Japanese War, he led the continental expansion policy by strengthening the Anglo-Japanese alliance and taking a hard line against Russia. "To instruct Korea, to develop its source of gain, to enlighten its civilization, and to reap the fruit of protection" were regarded by him as the achievement of the goals of the Russo-Japanese War.³² He felt it his duty to make Korea a protectorate under Japan. Starting from the Korean-Japanese Protocol, formulated in Feb. 1904, to the Protectorate Treaty concluded in Nov. 1905, he completed the process of making Korea a protected state, and the next year he resigned from his post as prime

29 *Ibid*, pp 296, 326, 732, 741, 807-8, 812-13, 823-24, 843-47

30 "The Bill for the Oriental Colonization Company" (March 25, 1908) in *The Proceedings of the Imperialist Parliament* 2, p 5

31 Yun, Byōng-sōk, "On the Japanese Demand for the Right to Develop the Wastelands," *The Korean Historical Review* 22 (1964), p 22

32 Tokutomi Zohow, *A Biography of Kasra Tarow* (1967), pp. 926-27

minister.

In February 1907, he changed the name of the Taiwan Association, where he had been the president ever since its foundation in 1898, to the Oriental Association, and defined its intended range of influence to include Manchuria and Korea. It was around this time that secret agents were dispatched to the Hague, commissioned by King Kojong. When this scheme was discovered, Japan not only forced the king to step down from the throne and sign the New Korean-Japan Agreement, but also eventually put all authority over Korea under the Ministry of Presidency-General.³³ When this process was concluded, Kasra felt “the most urgent business in effecting the goal of instructing Korea was to establish economic facilities.”³⁴ He then advocated through the Oriental Association the founding of the Oriental Colonization Company (hereafter OCC), which bore fruit in December, 1908.

At first, the course of business at OCC included a plan to send out 240,000 Japanese farmers over a 10-year period. To accomplish this, an estimated 240,000 *jeong* of farmland for the emigrants, 10,000 *jeong* for tenant farming, and 3000 *jeong* for direct management farming had to be accumulated. In view of the circumstances at the time—there were 4,889 Japanese farmers, which comprised of a mere 4% of the 121,536 Japanese living in Korea, and 52,436 *jeong* of Japanese-owned land by the end of June, 1909—this was indeed an ambitious project.³⁵

However, this business plan was merely a goal for the first 10 years. It should be noticed that Tasra also saw emigration-based colonization during the early stage as a trial project and by gradually increasing power intended to attain the “great success.”³⁶ After the 10-year period, imperialist Japan wished to send Japanese farmers to all of Korea with those 240,000 emigrant farmers as the foundation. With this intention, “the OCC hoped to transfer 30,000 to 50,000 immigrants to Korea each year and eventually complete sending somewhere between 240,000 and 400,000 Japanese farmers so that the number of emigrants would reach about one-fourth the entire Korean population at the time, which was 12,000,000.”³⁷ There

33 On the illegal nature of the process of forcing King Kojong’s abdication and signing of the New Korea-Japanese Agreement, see Yi Tae-jun, *On the Confiscation of Korea’s National Seal and the Process of Counterfeiting King Soojong’s Signature by the Office of the Presidency-General* (Seoul Ggachi, 1995)

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 925-26

35 神戸正雄, *The Theory of Farming-Based Colonization in Korea* (1910), p. 6, Yamaguchi, pp. 693-79

36 Tokutomi Zohow, p. 930.

37 Tomita, “The Future of the Immigration Project in Korea” in *New Korea* (1916), 82-83

was a strong possibility that Japan had such a plan. As has been shown before, most of the colonialists claimed that somewhere between 1 million to 10 million people would be able to emigrate to Korea and form a colony, and 6 million was the size of emigration assumed in the process of establishing the OCC.³⁸

Behind these plans set by the OCC lay Japan's political, economic, and social intentions to effectively carry out a systematic plundering and domination of Korea. By having the excess Japanese population settle in Korea, Japan could expect a political consolidation of the continental invasion process and control over Korea, an economic benefit from the necessary increase in food and resource production, and social gain by easing the problem of domestic overcrowding. These expectations were backed up by the typical logic of the idea of Manchuria-Korea emigration concentration and the idea of emigration-based colonization. Japan ultimately expected the Korean farmers and farming industry to adopt the ways of Japanese farmers and farming and become assimilated, which was an important step toward a complete annexation.³⁹

6. Little Progress in Emigration-Based Colonization and the Changes in the Underlying Principles of the Agricultural Policy

What and how much were accomplished under Japan's farming policy which was based on emigration-based colonization? Let us first examine the contemporary symbol of emigration-based colonization policy, the OCC.

The OCC, on the one hand, took over what were known as "the most profitable, high-quality portions" of land, the farmlands that belonged to the stations and government offices, justifying it as an investment and, on the other hand, actually went out to buy out lands.⁴⁰ However, because they were supposedly engaged in a "serious investigation ever since they started," not until 1910 were they able to actually get into the emigration-based colonization project. Of course, this was only an excuse for their failure. The real reason behind the OCC's inability to proceed with their plan was Korea's vigorous anti-Japan movement from the very beginning.

38 It was often reported in Japanese newspapers that Japan was considering the establishment of the OCC and planned to transplant 6 million poverty-stricken Japanese farmers in Korea *Taehan Mael Sinbo* (March 3, 14, 1908, April 28, 1908)

39 Tokutomi, p 930, 青柳網太郎, pp 68, 76-78, "The Bill for OCC," p 53

40 *The Ten-Year History of OCC*, pp 34-39

Although the OCC had advertised its projects as a great advantage to Korea's further development, Korea's response was quite negative. Many of the newspapers and magazines affiliated with the enlightenment movement in Korea regarded the establishment of the OCC as another Japanese scheme, much like the previously failed project to seize the rights to wasteland development, only more organized and reinforced. They instilled a sense of crisis in the public mind arguing that once the OCC was established, millions of Japanese would migrate to Korea and take over all the lands. The capitalists and landowners were encouraged to form farmers' associations and companies and confront the OCC with their own colonization projects. The newspapers and magazines also appealed to the Korean capitalists and landowners to make loans to the farmers so that they could maintain Korean ownership of the land by repurchasing from the OCC.⁴¹ However, such worries and criticism of the OCC were not confined to some journalists' enlightened concerns. They reflected the sentiment of the general public, both in the cities and in rural areas.⁴²

Moreover, the volunteer army movement that spread nationally after the forced abdication of King Kojong and the dissolution of the Korean army was shaping up into an all-out, anti-Japanese war when the dismissed soldiers joined the volunteers. These armies, on behalf of the Korean farmers, attacked the Japanese farms that played the role of an advance detachment for Japanese invasion. In order to defend themselves from these attacks, Japanese farms constructed trenches, organized their own volunteer armies armed with guns, and also asked the local Japanese guards, army, and police for night-time assistance.⁴³ These efforts notwithstanding, Japanese farms were the object of constant attacks, plunder, and arson that often led to human casualties.⁴⁴ In the Ch'olla area, where the Korean volunteer army was most active, it was even difficult to collect the rent for tenancy. The Mokpo Farmers' Association, a group of big Japanese landlords, asked for additional military police dispatching offices, and more regular police stations.⁴⁵ The so-called great suppression operation in the southern region was the Japanese means of confronting the problem. They began a relentless hunt and punishment of Korean volunteer soldiers, but the army's movement continued in the mountain areas

41 *Taehan Maeul Sinbo* (March 3 and 14, April 24, September 30, 1908)

42. *Taehan Hy phoe-bo* 6 (Sept 1908), p 62

43 Huzii Kantaru, *On Korean Lands*, pp 15-16

44 Kobayaka Wakuziru ed *The History of Korean Agricultural Development*, pp 21-27

45 *Mokpo-chu* (1914), p 186

Because of such strong anti-Japanese sentiments, the OCC could not get on with their emigration-based colonization projects.

The OCC's plans bore little fruit. In 1912, the total number of Japanese farming immigrant families who were sponsored by the OCC was a mere 4,385, which was a disappointing number when one considers the earlier plan to sponsor an emigration of 30,000 to 50,000 every year. The OCC, which the Japanese expected to function as the leader in the reformation of Korean farming, became the object of harsh criticism as they were seen to be "desperate only in reaping profits from Korean farmers as a landlord and as usurers."⁴⁶ The immigrants of the OCC became "troublesome figures for Korean farmers, rather than helpful instructors."⁴⁷ And the Japanese immigrants, in addition, seemed to be depriving the Koreans of the tenant farms, the basis of their livelihood, and "became only a cause of social disorder and emotional clash, and, thus, a barrier in regards to the goal of development."⁴⁸

More fundamental problems included the extremely low number of emigrants until the early period of imperial rule. The total number of Japanese landowners and farmers who were transplanted to Korea was 2,132 families, only 4.2% of the entire Japanese population in Korea. Obviously, the result was much below expectations.

Several factors that contributed to such a low figure have been pointed out: limited transportation and education systems, Japanese immigrants' failure to adjust to Korean farming, a lack of financial institutions, and limited sources of immigration-support facilities.⁴⁹ But other significant factors should also be included as we have seen so far there was not as much uncultivated land to begin with, and the resistance force in Korea against the Japanese intention to take over the rural area could not be easily reckoned with.

Besides, the majority of Japanese landowners and capitalists were far more interested in buying up lands than in various projects to promote emigration-based colonization. The projects were not effective considering the expense and the efforts put into them. It was a common assumption among the landlords that buying up lands in Korea was far more profitable than supporting Japanese farmers with moving expenses and employing them as farming supervisors or instructors in Japanese farming methods. Rather than intensifying their farming management, they chose to expand it. It was an understandable choice because not only was

46 Nagai Ryutaro, p. 433

47 Asami Noboru, *The Theory of Japanese Colonial Rule*, p. 208

48 Inoue, "The Evaluation of the Projects in OCC," in *New Korea*, p. 128

49 神戸正雄, pp. 139-151

tenant farming by Koreans safer for the landlords but also 10 to 20% more profitable.⁵⁰ In addition, by lending money with high interest and holding the farm as security, they could easily accumulate much land.⁵¹

As a result, there was a sharp increase in Japanese-owned land. The number of Japanese landowners rose from 348 in June, 1906 to 2254 by 1910. The total measure of their possessions jumped from 12,937 6 *jeong* to 86,952.3 *jeong*. 80% of these lands were for farming, reaching 69,302 4 *jeong*. That was 3.2% of the entire 2,162,357 *jeong* of farm land in Korea.⁵²

The Japanese emigration-based colonization policy turned out to be less than successful. But, on the other hand, land-investment-based colonization and landlord-centered management of colonial farming became more actively pursued. The landowners and capitalists started to give up on what was already a small-scale, secondary project of emigration-based colonization projects, and, instead, focused only on landlord-centered management.

The Japanese policy of emigration-based colonization, which had been supported with high hopes of solving the problem of overpopulation and food-shortage in Japan, providing Japan with an advance base for its continental invasion, and offering it a material base for the domination of Korean rural areas, finally failed. For this reason, when Japan took over the control of Korea, it had to revise the principles of its agricultural policy which was based on the idea of emigration-based colonization. As they finally abandoned this idea, they wholeheartedly adopted the policy of making Korea their base for food and supplies. The domination policy for Korean rural areas, which was once intended as a triple-axis structure of colonial authority, colonial landlords, and Japanese farmers, was changed to a double-axis structure of colonial authority and colonial landlords. Japan's agricultural policy finally turned into a militant system of official enforcement with the landowning class as its mainstay.⁵³

(Translated by Kang Ji-soo, Professor of English, Inha University)

Glossary

Asaka Kyouji	淺田喬二	Gatow Masro	加藤末郎
Asami Noboru	淺見等郎	Honjou	本庄榮治郎

50 Simanekang, *An Investigative Report on Korean Industry* (1906), pp 250-60

51 *Ibid*, p. 279

52. *The Annals of the Government General of Korea* 1910 (1912), pp 266-267

53 Chung Youn-tae, pp 427-435

Huzii Kantaru 藤井寛太郎

Inoue 井上孝哉

Ishikawa Prefecture Farming Company

石川縣農業株式會社

Iwanaga 岩永重華

Kasra Tarow 桂太郎

Kaznishi Mitzhaya 楫西光速

Kim Yong-söp 金容燮

Kobayaka Wakuziru 小早川九郎

Komura Jutaro 小村壽太郎

Kwon Tae-eok 權泰穉

Matsmoto 松本

Mokpo-chu 木浦誌

Nagahashi Tokugorow 中橋德五郎

Nagai Ryutaro 永井柳太郎

New Korean-Japan Agreement

丁未條約

Ohohwashi 大橋清三郎

Onoi Tsitsru 小野一一郎

Oriental Colonization Company(OCC)

東洋拓殖株式會社

Sakada Masatosi 酒田正敏

Sakahiro Tsuneaki 酒匂常明

Simanekang 島根縣

Taehan Hyöphoe-bo 大韓協會報

Taehan Mael Sinbo 大韓每日申報

Taiwan Association 臺灣協會

Tazanaki Shingorow 谷崎新五郎

the China-Korea Association

清韓協會

the East Asian Association

東亞同文會

the Korea Association 朝鮮協會

Tokutomi Zohow 德富蘇峰

Tomita 富田幸次郎

Tougo jishi 東郷實

Yamaguzi 山口精

Yamamoto Gotaru 山本庫太郎

Yi Tae-jin 李泰鎮

Yoshikawa Teru 吉川祐輝

Yun Byöng-sök 尹炳奭