A Sentimental Journey: Mapping the Interior Frontier of Japanese Settlers in Colonial Korea

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This article explores the role of affect and sentiment in shaping cross-cultural encounters in late colonial Korea, as seen and experienced through the eyes of Japanese men and women who grew up in Seoul. By interweaving the oral and written testimonies of former settlers who came of age on the peninsula between the late 1920s and the end of colonial rule in 1945, the paper attempts to reconstruct their emotional journey into adulthood as young offspring of empire: specifically, how they apprehended colonialism, what they felt when encountering different segments of the Korean population, and in what ways their understanding of the world and themselves changed as a result of these interactions. Focusing on the intimate and everyday zones of contact in family and school life, this study more broadly offers a way to understand colonialism without reducing complex local interactions to abstract mechanisms of capital and bureaucratic rule.

In what ways can we talk about colonialism without reducing complex local human interactions to relations of power, dominance, and hegemony? In proposing emotion (see Reddy 2001; Haiyan Lee 2007) or "sensibility" (Wickberg 2007) as a lens through which to investigate the past, a number of studies have implicitly posed a new challenge for scholars of empire. Paying attention to sentiment and sensibility, they suggest, gets us beyond an analytical grid of race, gender, and class that has dominated cultural history—where colonial studies have reigned and thrived—"matters of the intimate"—which were as important to the colonial order as macro processes of rule. While Stoler is chiefly concerned to show how the affective state of

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colonials, especially children, became subject to official surveillance, I am also interested in unpacking their emotional life itself: how they apprehended colonialism, what they felt when encountering different segments of the indigenous population, and in what ways their understanding of the world and themselves changed as a result of these interactions. For charting the world of settler youth, I will use sentiment and sensibility, inscribed in records of their sensory experience of Korea and its people, as an analytical prism through which to refract and reflect on the formation of selfhood, the process of socialization as “Japanese,” and the dynamics of colonial encounter more broadly.1

In combing through a variety of literary sources for voices of the colonized, scholars of Korea have already shown how to anchor colonialism in the terrain of emotional life by attending to its broader registers, nuances, and resonances. But if the emotions of Koreans—as products of injustice, prejudice, and violence they suffered under Governor-General’s rule—are deeply etched on the vernacular archive, it is somewhat difficult to identify and talk about emotions of Japanese colonists, who remain, for the most part, faceless.2 Indeed, just as the colonizer seldom treated the colonized as thinking subjects, scholars have seldom treated the colonizer as an emotional being.

I propose to delve into the “murky worlds” of emotions, desires, beliefs, dispositions, and perceptions (Wickberg 2007, 670) that are largely absent from the existing accounts on colonizers by using what one might call sentimental texts: memoirs, letters, school alumni albums, and oral testimonies. My aim is to map the interior frontiers of settler youth—an affective geography of colonial encounter, as woven by the memories of those who came of age on the Korean peninsula, between the late 1920s and the end of colonial rule in 1945.3 A focus on youth provides a particularly fruitful angle from which to explore the fluidity of colonial sensibilities in the embedded structures of power. It allows us to understand not only what it was like to grow up in the colony, but how young settlers felt about, perceived, and made sense of the

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1For this approach, I have drawn much inspiration from Faier (2007).
2For a few pioneering works that have provided valuable profiles of settlers, see Kimura (1989), Duns (1995), and Takasaki (2002).
3The bulk of my data draws on oral and written testimonies of 87 former settlers (76 men, 13 women) collected from personal interviews, round-table discussions, school reunions, letters, and questionnaires distributed by myself to members of the Chūō Nikkan Kyōkai (Central Japan-Korea Association) and the following school alumni associations based in Tokyo: the Keijō Teikoku Daigaku Dōshōkai; the Rengyō no Kai; and the Higashi Nihon Dōshōkai. Personal interviews were conducted in the homes of my informants, and questionnaires were distributed at monthly meetings of school alumni associations or at annual school reunions, in the period from December 2001 to July 2003. The majority of my informants were born in Korea, raised in Seoul or other cities of major Japanese settlement, and were in their twenties when the war ended (most were students and some newly employed), and their families were engaged in commerce, business, and public service. Unless otherwise noted, the details of everyday life in this article draw on the information furnished by these informants.
larger colonial realities that constituted the context for their journeys into adulthood, indeed their process of becoming “Japanese.”

For reconstructing settlers’ life histories, memory offers but a mediated extension of the past—and it usually comes in fragments. A few oral and written accounts that document the lives of ordinary Japanese men and women who made Korea home provide only a string of impressions from their bygone youth. And though relics of the empire, they are hardly records of domination. Their narratives are replete with a sense of nostalgia which, as scholars have repeatedly noted, operates by a kind of self-censorship: an impulse to erase or mute aspects of experience that evoke “shame, guilt, or humiliation,” leaving only those experiences one wants to remember (quoted in Tamanoi 2009, 6).

Nonetheless, these localized fragments of memory reveal a surprisingly diverse array of Japanese-Korean interactions that might have taken place in the skein of everyday life. Memoirs of former settlers teem with the colors, smells, tastes, and other sensory impressions of the local terrain they traversed and a multicultural milieu they inhabited as young offspring of empire. The minutiae of their day-to-day may not tell us how colonial rule was exercised through high politics, courts, and markets. But they show how ethnic boundaries and cultural identities were constituted, negotiated, policed, and transgressed through the quotidian rhythms and routines of daily life, where contact was absorbed into one’s stream of consciousness. At times, fleeting impulses of emotion produced in these moments of encounter could capture the most enduring structures of colonial power, and the innermost contradictions of empire. Rather than residual and unreliable sources of history that are not worthy of study, oral and written testimonies of settlers are key repositories of knowledge about everyday life in colonial Korea. And insofar as each document embodies some elements of its author’s sensibilities (Wickberg 2007, 676), they offer a rare window into the personal realms of feeling, perceiving, and experiencing the daily colonial realities that went unrecorded in official sources and wartime propaganda.

In taking the “emotional texts and utterances” (Reddy 2001) of settlers seriously, I employ the methodology of historical ethnography, as recently demonstrated by anthropologist Mariko Tamanoi (2009). In her seminal work on the Japanese agrarian settlers in Manchuria, Tamanoi has shown how to analyze and engage with memory, transmitted mostly in an oral form, while being mindful of its constructed, if not contorted, nature and a complex process of selection and narration—dictated by “who remembers and when, where, for whom, and how he or she remembers”—through which each memory is created. Following her approach I will interweave written and oral, published and unpublished, “past” and “present” accounts to reconstruct the everyday life of Japanese settlers in Korea, while also attending to moments when the informants interpolate their “intense subjectivity” in recounting their colonial experience (2009, 19–20).

In drawing “a memory map” of settler youth, I focus on two contact zones: family and school. These were formative sites where children developed a
concrete sense of the self in relation to the other, learning of their “place and race” (Stoler 2002). Wherever the Japanese settled, family, and careful parenting, ensured that their children remained emotionally and culturally anchored in their Japanese identity. School was designed to cement this identity further by imbuing them with a sense of duty, superiority, and responsibility toward Korean charges as the future vanguard of empire. Through family life and proper education—central loci of official concern and social reform—settler youths were schooled to become and feel “truly Japanese.”

But their cognitive development did not chart a neat trajectory envisioned by parents, policy makers, and pedagogical texts. As they moved up the educational ladder, their memories suggest, Japanese youth discovered Korea and Koreans they had previously not known in their familiar world, and developed more complex sensibilities that placed them neither fully in Japan nor in Korea but somewhere in-between. Their rite of passage from childhood to adulthood was shaped and complicated at every stage by unexpected, and at times unsettling, encounters at home, in classrooms, and on most traveled streets and neighborhoods. It was in these intimate spaces where young settlers learned to communicate with Koreans through subtle cultural cues and gestures, including mere exchanges of glances, as well as to navigate the tension between the lofty colonial ideal of unity and the mundane reality of difference.

A topography of affect produced by these encounters, from fear and anxiety to empathy, affection, and kinship, was not a residual domain of colonial experience but rather central to the formation of settler sensibilities and selfhood. By teasing out such emotional and cognitive layers of experience that existed beneath the formalized structures of social control, I want to highlight the tacit and often unarticulated processes through which colonial relations were constituted. Paying attention to such relational dynamics allows us to see how colonialism was ultimately rooted in sensuous, visceral, and emotional human activity, which created a reservoir of potentialities for affective, if fragile, bonds to develop between the two worlds of settlers and Koreans.

GROWING UP IN KOREA

From the beginning of their migration in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the Japanese in Korea constituted a socially diverse yet close-knit

4Outside my own work, the ambivalent identity and moral education of young settlers in this “in-between” space—a concept usually interrogated as a location for the formation of hybrid identities among the colonized (Bhabha 2004)—are richly explored by Cohen (2006) who focuses on the upbringing of children, Helen Lee (2008) who highlights the experience of women, and Inaba (2005) who provides a comprehensive overview of settler education. This article complements these studies by utilizing more oral testimonies and highlighting the dynamics of cross-cultural contact between Japanese and Korean students.
community. Dominated by natives from Kansai and Kyushu, early settlers managed their own daily affairs, from commerce to education and hygiene, and invited carpenters from home to build shrines, temples, theaters and other community institutions to create a distinctively Japanese cultural milieu. By 1930, Japanese had become physically entrenched in cities and satellite towns, with a fully third of them born on the peninsula (Tange 1943, 2–3). Amid the heterogeneity, “a sense of equality” permeated the settler community, as one former resident of Seoul recounted, where government officials commingled with merchants and brothel owners, enjoying a bourgeois way of life inaccessible to most rural folks in the metropole (Keijō Nanzan 1996, 165–66).

The world of settlers did not remain completely sealed from the influence of Koreans who surrounded them, however. The process of acclimatization involved adopting certain aspects of the indigenous lifestyle, the extent of which varied widely among settlers depending on location, family occupation, social status, and length of stay. While corporate and bureaucratic elites built Japanese- or Western-style homes, for instance, most settlers rented or remodeled existing Korean dwellings, typically keeping at least one room with ondol (Korean heated-floor), indispensable for what they described as the harsh “continental weather.” Many former settlers had a tactile memory of living on ondol, where they “slept and studied in the winter,” or “lay flat on its cold surface to cool down in the summer.”

Settlers’ diet mirrored the pattern of dwelling, to selectively incorporate local customs into an overall Japanese lifestyle. Except for those who lived in gated company housing communities and rarely ate Korean food, many of my informants grew up eating kimchī on a daily basis. Some of their mothers learned from native housemaids or “omoni who lived nearby” how to make kimchī, and customarily prepared it every autumn like local Korean families.

Nonetheless, settler children for the most part grew up in a protective cocoon of Japanese culture, where Korean was rarely spoken, and family and communal life evolved around the homeland throughout four seasons. Mothers played a central role in maintaining this culture as custodians of Japanese sensibilities in the colony. They kept themselves attuned to the latest trends and knowledge in home-making, family health, and child care as avid readers of women’s magazines such as Shufu no tomo [Housewife’s Companion] imported from the metropole. Full-time mothers rarely ventured beyond their neighborhood and a local Japanese commercial complex, where they shopped for groceries and sampled fabrics for kimono, which they often preferred to ready-made western dress.

Mothers, too, were guardians of colonial hierarchy. Many Japanese women left their children in the care of Korean nursemaids—a luxury they could

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5 For the centrality of hygiene to the Japanese colonial project, see Henry 2005.
6 For a detailed discussion of the internal diversity of settlers, see Cohen 2006, Chapter 2.
7 Takeuchi Yoshiro, response to questionnaire, 12 August 2002; Osada 1982, 117.
8 This information comes from my interviews and questionnaire surveys (see note 3).
afford due to wage differentials between Japanese and Koreans and overseas allowance (zaikin kahô) their husbands received in addition to regular salary. A Japanese family typically hired one young Korean girl as a babysitter (they called “kichibe” or “nêya”) and one or two Korean women as housemaids (they called “omoni”), in addition to servant boys for miscellaneous chores such as laundry, heating a bath, and other forms of manual labor. Although in-house Korean maids were often treated as family members, some were abused, for which upper-class Japanese women gained a notorious reputation. In one incident recorded by the police in Seoul, a local Japanese housewife, upon seeing a teenage maid folding her husband’s kimono left on the floor, scolded her for touching it “with such dirty hands” claiming that Koreans were “full of lice,” an act of rewarding what was meant as a considerate gesture with racial insult.

Except for police officers and a few wealthy yangban families who lived on their streets, the categories of Koreans my informants grew up knowing largely belonged to “lower social orders”: baby sitters, house servants, vegetable peddlers, fish mongers, store clerks, employees, and laborers. Japanese parents demonstrated to their children from very early on how to communicate with these Koreans as masters, not as social equals, including a habit of referring to them with a derogatory term, “yobo,” passed onto children even as little as five years of age (Iwasaki 1966, 78). Indeed, it was in the comfort of home that Japanese children came to be embedded in asymmetrical relations of power: it was where they were schooled to acquire awareness as members of a ruling minzoku (ethnic group), and to form enduring images of Koreans as different, inferior, other.

In the eyes of children, the outside world often appeared as segregated as inside their home. In the case of Seoul, many informants recalled, a rough division existed between the “Korean town” that sprawled around and north of the streets of Chongno and the “Japanese town” that grew around Honmachi in the southern part of the city. And yet, this fractured social geography did not always correspond with the lived experience of Japanese children. They frequently traversed the worlds of colonizer and colonized, taking detours en route to and from school and wandering into Korean neighborhoods, which were often declared off-limits by their parents. Even those who grew up in predominantly

9 Interview with Aoki Etsuko, 21 December 2001. The wealthiest families employed as many as a dozen servants, including those they brought with them from Japan. According to one source, “kichibe” and “omoni” were given Japanese names, and paid a monthly wage of about 6 yen and 10 yen respectively, less than half the average salary Japanese maids received at the time (Kajiyama 1995, 167).

10 Chôsen oyobi Manshû, February 1933: 119.

11 A list of “Korean characteristics” enumerated by my informants indicate that since young age they had internalized many caricatures of Koreans, such as “propensity to lie,” “toadyism,” and “lack of hygiene.”
Japanese neighborhoods recalled playing, and fighting, with Korean children, who taught them how to play a variety of traditional outdoor games such as Korean chess (changgi) and kite-flying.\(^{12}\)

Although most of my informants grew up in an environment where Korean was not necessary for daily living, they also learned how to count and greet in the vernacular while being cradled by nursemaids, whose warmth they fondly remembered. Some picked up a few more phrases while shopping for fresh produce at local markets or helping their parents cater to Korean customers at the family storefront. In a few rare cases, where their families settled in Korean neighborhoods or in the countryside, Japanese children grew up speaking in Korean until they went onto primary school. One such former resident of the suburb of It’aewŏn, Sasaki Kumi yuki recounted how he used to masquerade as a Korean when gallivanting around Map’o with his childhood friend, Sin Wŏn-gyŏng, who would cautiously whisper in his ears, “Don’t speak Japanese from this point on.”\(^{13}\) Childhood memories are full of such adventures of ethnic border crossing, through which snippets of Korean culture were seamlessly incorporated into the world of settler youth.

The mobility of their children made some Japanese parents very nervous. Privately they warned their kids against playing with Koreans, though their admonishments were often ignored.\(^{14}\) Not unlike the Europeans who lived surrounded by natives in Africa and Asia, Japanese settlers feared the potentially harmful effects of ethnic proximity on their children’s moral development. But, to borrow a keen observation made by Elizabeth Buettner on the British families in India, “parents often worried far more about children slipping into the realm between colonizer and colonized than they did about their possibly ‘going native’ through contact” (Buettner 2000, 292). Such fear, for instance, translated into widespread Japanese prejudice toward “mixed offspring (konket-suji),” though their number was too small to become a serious social threat. Of more immediate concern to Japanese parents was the perceived lack of cultural literacies among their offspring born and raised on Korean soil. This concern had already emerged around the time of annexation, when some predicted the birth of a new category of hybrids who were neither fully Japanese nor Korean (Aoyagi 1913, 146–47). Even as late as 1927, a veteran local Japanese teacher bemoaned that “some Japanese children in Korea, because they grew up in a land without a Shinto shrine or in a family that doesn’t even have an amulet from Ise Shrine, have lesser comprehension of reverence for kami (gods) and ancestor worship than do children in naichi (mainland)” (Yasuda 1927,

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\(^{12}\) A round-table discussion with members of the Chūō Nikkan Kyōkai, Tokyo, 2 February and 23 February 2002; former student of Keijo Imperial University (Department of Law), letter to author, February 2002; Takenaka 2003, 116.

\(^{13}\) Sasaki Kumi yuki, letter to author, 23 February 2002.

\(^{14}\) Morita Kiyoshige, response to questionnaire, 12 May 2002.
Half-educated settlers were no less worrisome than educated native rebels against colonial rule.

Apart from family discipline, a sure defense against adverse effects of their children falling in this in-between space was school education. If hill stations in European colonies were “the nurseries of the ruling race” (Kennedy 1996, 130–146), Japanese primary schools in Korea were designed to serve precisely this role. Since annexation, the colonial government adopted a kind of “separate but equal” principle by creating “ordinary schools (futsū gakkō)” for Koreans and “primary schools (shōgakkō)” for Japanese, while absorbing or abolishing many native schools (sōdang) in the process (Cohen 2006, 178; Tsurumi 1984, 296–301). Both ordinary and primary schools shared a pedagogical goal, first and foremost, to “nurture good and loyal kokumin” by requiring their pupils, for instance, to daily recite the Imperial Rescript on Education—a pledge of allegiance to the emperor, which stressed loyalty, filial piety, and other “Confucian emotions” (Haiyan Lee 2008, 268) to foster affective ties to the patriarchal head of the Japanese family-state.

But their sentimental education was also differentiated along ethnic lines. The curriculum of Japanese primary schools closely conformed to the metropolitan system, placing particular emphasis on the students’ future “responsibility to develop Korea and assimilate Koreans, and contribute to the fortune of the empire” (quoted in Kim 2005, 79). According to the guidelines for conducting an ethics class proposed by one school principal, local teachers were encouraged to pay utmost care in tutoring Japanese pupils “to show compassion toward living creatures, nurture a caring heart, and particularly be kind to Koreans and Chinese” (Morimoto 1917), sentiments deemed necessary for educating them in benevolent governance. Korean ordinary schools, by contrast, focused on the teaching of Japanese language and agricultural skills along with the values of industry, discipline, obedience, and love of labor, while “elevating the education of an [elite] minority.”

For this latter purpose, in 1922 the colonial government replaced ethnicity with “regular use of Japanese” as a new criterion for sorting students’ admission to colonial schools. Although this measure opened a way for a few Korean children with the necessary linguistic proficiency to enter Japanese primary schools, it did not fundamentally alter the ethnically separate patterns of enrollment (Caprio 2009, 130–32). Nor did it substantially raise the rate of Korean attendance; even in 1930, barely 20 percent of school-aged Korean children were in school, as opposed to almost all Japanese children by 1924 (Kim 2005, 70, 76). For most of the colonial period—at least until the second education rescript of 1938 moved toward unifying Japanese and Korean schools—primary schools remained all but a preserve of local settlers.

15 “Kyōin kokoroe” (1916), repr., in Chōsen Kyōiku Kenkyūkai 1918, 74.
Schools and homes were expected to cooperate closely in monitoring the cognitive development of the child (Cohen 2006, 162–63). Local parents were encouraged to engage their children in activities that enhanced particularly “Japanese” aesthetic sensibilities at home. One 1941 article in a colonial educational journal proposed, for instance, utilizing Japan’s traditional customs, such as obon for promoting ancestor worship, and the Boys’ Festival (tango no sekku) and the Girls’ Festival (mono no sekku) for fostering “valiance, military and warrior values, health, cheerfulness” as well as “gratitude to imperial Japan” (Takahashi Keiho 1941, 55–56). Like the case of “borderline Europeans” in the Indies whose citizenship was measured in terms of cultural competence (Stoler 2002, 118), Japanese identity was defined in terms of sentiments, values, and cognitive faculty, how one “felt” and “understood” what it meant to be “truly Japanese.”

But the education of Japanese children presented a deep dilemma. While educators and policy makers expected them to stand at the frontline of contact with Korea, they also had to protect their fragile Japanese identity from the debilitating consequences of exposure. This was further complicated by the tension between policy and parenting, which increased as the wartime regime after 1937 accelerated efforts to foster ethnic fusion in the name of naisen ittai (Japan and Korea as One). Nowhere did this contradiction become more manifest than in the issue of intermarriage. According to the recollection of Osada Kanako who lived in Korea until age twenty-one, “When I told my parents that it would be best to marry a Korean for the goal of ‘naisen ittai,’ they reprimanded me severely, making me sulk” (Osada 1982, 117). Such an idea had not even crossed the minds of the former settlers I interviewed. While the colonial state encouraged, and Japanese parents condemned, ethnic proximity, however, young settlers more often found themselves emotionally betwixt and between Japan and Korea. Such oscillation is vividly chronicled by their sentimental journey through school life in colonial Seoul, to which we now turn.

GOING TO SCHOOL

By the end of the colonial period, Seoul had seventeen Japanese primary schools, each of which admitted a handful of Korean children from well-to-do families every year. These students completely blended with Japanese pupils to be barely recognizable as “Korean,” as one alumnus of Nanzan Primary School recounted: “our Korean classmates spoke perfect Japanese” and at the time “we assumed they were Japanese.” So assimilated they were, Fujimoto Hideo who graduated from Hinode Primary School confessed, that “it even

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16Such ambivalence was reflected in one survey on the impact of cross-cultural contact on Japanese and Korean school pupils in North Hamgyōng (see Chōsen Sōtokufu, Chōsen, August 1915: 140–45).
17Similar results were obtained by Kimura Kenji’s survey on former settlers in Sinŭiju (2001).
18A round-table forum with graduates from Nanzan Primary School, 21 July 2003, Tokyo, Japan.
felt strange to a child’s mind when visiting my friend’s house to see him speak in
Korean to his parents and brothers; only decades later did he realize how his
innocent wonder underscored the brutal reality of a bilingual world in which
Koreans were forced to live. This demographic pattern carried over into Japa-
nese middle schools (ちゅうがっこう) or girls’ schools (じょがっこう), where, as one Japa-
nese alumnus of Ryūzān Middle School recalled, some of his Korean classmates
were even “more Japanese than us.”

But the situation began to change dramatically as they moved onto higher
learning. Instead of going back to Japan, as a few bright students of affluent
families did, most former settlers I interviewed stayed in Korea for post-
secondary education, an opportunity largely if not exclusively limited to male stu-
dents. As part of the aforementioned educational revision in 1922, all vocational
and post-secondary school facilities were made open to Korean and Japanese stu-
dents alike (朝鮮専門教育局 1927). Among the dozen such
schools included Keijō Higher Commercial School and Keijō Industrial School,
elite-track colleges where local settler merchants would send their children
with the hope that, instead of inheriting family business, they would land a white-
collar job that promised them a higher social status. Two years later, moreover,
Keijō Imperial University was created as a sixth imperial university in the Japa-
nese empire, partly in response to nationalist pressure and partly as a means of
preventing an exodus of colonial students to Japan. Although many of these
schools ended up being dominated by Japanese, the ethnic ratio of students in
public commercial schools in fifteen cities became more or less equal by 1937
(朝鮮専門教育局 公立学校 1937, 33–34). Not an insignificant
number of Koreans also entered Keijō Imperial University, especially in the
department of law and letters (鶴田 2008, 221).

For settler youth, going to higher school symbolized a rite of passage into
adulthood. They were now allowed to drink and go to movies without school per-
mission, and even smoke with the teachers’ open knowledge. More important, it
signaled the beginning of their journey of discovery, both of the self and the
other. For most settlers who had known only babysitters and servants as the
closest Koreans, it was in these institutions of higher learning where they for

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19Fujimoto Hideo, response to questionnaire, n.d.
20According to two Korean graduates of Keijō Industrial School I interviewed (10 May 2002), they
grew up speaking entirely in Japanese and could not read or write in Korean when the colonial rule
ended in 1945.
21In the case of Keijō Middle School, between 1922 and 1943 the number of Korean pupils
remained in the twenties and thirties, out of a student body of about 1,000 (今永 2005, 227–28).
22Takeuchi Yoshiro, response to questionnaire, 12 August 2002.
23Between 1929 and 1941, the department conferred a law degree on 196 Korean students, who
represented forty-one percent of the total number of graduates. But the ethnic ratio in the depart-
ment of medicine remained more unequal (Keijō 独市大學 1927, 101; 朝鮮専門教育局 公立学校 1937, 67).
the first time began to interact with a large cohort of Koreans in their age range and treat them as social equals, at least on the level of formality.

One of the notable consequences of their daily interchange was to compel settler youths to revise, even overturn, the conventional images they had held about Koreans. Whatever sense of superiority they may have imbibed earlier was eclipsed by the brilliance of Korean classmates, who hailed from all provinces through a rigorous process of selection, and invariably dominated the top rankings, while keeping their Japanese classmates in a permanent state of mediocrity. Senchimatsu Yatarō who attended Keijō Imperial University recalled how all ten Korean students in his class of forty studied extremely hard “as if competing” with Japanese students. To his amazement, they not only mastered Chinese texts such as *The Analects*, but interpreted literary allusions of such Japanese classics as *Tsurezure gusa* and *Genji monogatari* with effortless ease (Senchimatsu, 78–79). According to Takeshita Eigorō who attended Keijō Higher Commercial School, Korean students also excelled in foreign languages, whether English or German, while Japanese students struggled with simple Korean, a compulsory subject at vocational schools (Keijō Kōtō 1990, 375).

Multi-ethnic campus life also led to greater exposure to Korean culture. Since a tender age, most settler youths had gained only a glimpse of Korean ways of life—some from a distance (in the case of Takeda Tatsuya, over a fence that separated his house and a neighboring Korean village (Ryūzan 1988, 286)), some more closely, when visiting a friend’s home (where they marveled at the “extreme hospitality” and “extravagant lifestyle” of their yangban host) or while attending a Korean neighbor’s wedding where they watched with intense curiosity its solemn and intricate rituals. Along with these moments of “culture shock,” they occasionally stumbled onto the harsh rural realities of Korea, en route to a vacation spot or during a school excursion to the provinces where they witnessed in “amazement” the level of poverty among local farmers.

On the other hand, Satō Katsunori, while growing up in Taegu, became so accustomed to the stereotypical images of Koreans as “poor, dirty, vulgar,” that he was “staggered” by the magnificence of the stone statue of Sŏkkulam he saw during a school trip to Kyŏngju.

This frequently drawn contrast between “poor” living Koreans and “marvelous” Korean tradition, if a reminder of Japan’s cultural debt to the peninsula, underscored a settler tendency to seldom treat Koreans as individuals. Instead they often dissolve into the nostalgic landscape as a mere collage of impressions, such as “*ajumoni* pounding their laundry at the well” and “the loud wailing of

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24 In the case of Zenrin Commercial School, only one out of 13.5 Korean applicants was offered admission in 1918 (Seiha 1992, 106–7).
26 Uehara Atsuo, response to questionnaire, n.d.
27 Satō Katsunori, response to questionnaire, n.d.
‘aigo’ at a funeral” (Seiha 1992, 444–45). Still, accounts of campus life also illustrate how each interpersonal contact deepened young settlers’ knowledge of Koreans and their culture. They discovered, for instance, that their Korean classmates were often several years older (and physically more well-built), and many already married due to the traditional custom of early marriages arranged by parents. For some settlers, their classroom turned into a space where they learned literally to “blend in the smell of Korea.” Fujii Tsunao, who graduated from Zenrin Commercial School in 1939 as one of the only twelve Japanese out of fifty-two students in “B Class,” recollected a typical scene of his classroom on a wintry day in Seoul:

A *daruma* stove is burning. We place a shelf near the stove and line up our unwrapped lunch boxes to warm them up. As our lunch boxes warm up, the scent of *kimuchi* (K. *kimch’i*) begins to waft through the classroom. I felt it as the smell of B Class, not as a strange odor. Their lunch boxes are huge. They are packed with millet and red beans like pressed sushi. At the prime of my appetite I felt envious of their volume (Seiha 1992, 446).

For most Japanese pupils, their learning of Korean culture was less an intellectual appreciation of tradition than a visceral experience of its everyday forms, a string of small sensory discoveries buried in the routines of campus life.

On another level, however, settlers’ encounter with Korean students could be unsettling. Unlike the few “docile” students whom they had known in primary and middle schools, their Korean classmates now were not only more visible but assertive. To hear Korean students speak in their native tongue during a break between classes was particularly “unpleasant,” as many candidly recalled later. According to Fujii, “At times I felt irritated and somewhat looked down upon by the way they spoke in a language we did not understand while staring at us” (Seiha 1992, 446). Graduates of Keijō Imperial University similarly remembered feeling both “alienated” and “annoyed” by their Korean classmates who “would congregate among themselves and speak in Korean” especially when discussing what appeared to be “matters disadvantageous to them.”

For most Japanese students, their interactions with Korean students did not extend much beyond the classroom. Their favorite activity after school was to amble up and down the streets of Honmachi, the hub of the “Japanese town.” Students from Keijō Imperial University and Keijō Higher Commercial School especially relished the opportunity to take a *Honbura* (Honmachi-cruising) in their dashing “black school uniform and hat,” some with a “gentleman’s stick,”

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28Yamaguchi Hisashi, response to questionnaire, 6 December 2001; Iijima Mitsutaka, letter to author, 2 August 2003.
29About a quarter of my sixty-four interviewees who attended post-secondary institutions said they had close Korean friends.
amid the admiring stares of girls’ school students.\(^{30}\) Winding past the crammed streets of Honmachi, some Japanese students ventured into Chongno to watch Hollywood movies or to eat and drink at local taverns (K. sulchib), food stalls, and restaurants where they even learned to play with kisaeng (Korean female entertainers).\(^{31}\) But after-school clubs—what for most students constituted the most memorable part of campus life—tended to be ethnically separated. At Zenrin Commercial School, for instance, Japanese students dominated kendo, baseball, and archery clubs, while Korean students dominated table tennis and soccer (Seiha 1992, 229); as one Korean graduate of Keijō Higher Commercial School also evocatively reminisced, the soccer club “perhaps represented the only form of ‘independence’ Koreans could enjoy at the time” (Keijō Kōtō 1990, 170).

Such a division reflected ethnic politics growing out of cliquishness among Japanese and Korean students, who often kept each other at arms’ length, and members of their own communities under mutual surveillance. Satō Katsunori, who attended Keijō Economic College, recollected how “Japanese friends would look at you from a biased viewpoint (iromegane de miru) if you became too close to Koreans.”\(^{32}\) Korean students appeared to be no less subject to peer pressure, as Yang Song-dok recounted the atmosphere of his high school: “It was impossible to have friends among the Japanese students. If I did that, I would be branded pro-Japanese and persecuted by my classmates” (Kang 2001, 45). In the microcosm of campus life, outside the parents’ purview indeed, Japanese and Korean students learned not only to gauge their distance from each other but also to police their identities among themselves. In so doing they effectively reproduced the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that governed the larger colonial society, where one was not allowed to belong to both communities or remain amially in-between.\(^{33}\)

**BETWIXT AND BETWEEN JAPAN AND KOREA**

That campus life began to resemble the adult world may not be so surprising when considering the trajectory of co-education in colonial Korea. Far from laboratories of ethnic harmony as their architects had designed them, mixed vocational schools were continually beset with friction (Seiha 1992, 105, 152). Above all, students were key participants in Korean nationalist activities, including the most massive demonstrations for independence in March 1919, in the wake of which relations between Japanese and Korean students deteriorated to

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\(^{30}\)Keijō Kōtō 1990, 88; interview with 25 members of the Keijō Teikoku Daigaku/Yoka Dōsōkai, 5 December 2002, Tokyo.

\(^{31}\)Responses to questionnaire; Sasamoto Hiroshi, Seiha 1992, 464–65.

\(^{32}\)Satō Katsunori, response to questionnaire, n.d.

\(^{33}\)See the example of one Japanese teacher in Morisaki 1984, 122.
a point where, as Yun Ch’i-ho reported on the Government Medical School, “they don’t exchange even the simplest forms of common courtesies like ‘Ohayo or Konichiwa’” (Kuksa P’yŏnch’an Wiwŏnhoe 1987, 141). Equally important to recognize is the fact that the March First movement, no less than the more numerous local incidents, stemmed from “trivial sentiments of animosity” that had accumulated in the minds of Koreans who daily endured settler abuse (Chŏsen Sŏtoku Kanbŏ 1925, 43–44). Such pent-up frustration galvanized some 54,000 Korean students into action a decade later, triggered by a “minor” incident in which Japanese middle-school students teased Korean female students on the train in Kwangju. From the nation-wide movements to local children’s brawls, inter-ethnic conflicts, indeed, demonstrated how emotions became central loci for political contestation—and settlers of all ages were often primary targets of Korean ire.

Although the suppression of the Kwangju Student Demonstrations, and more decisively the outbreak of the war in 1937, spelled the end of organized resistance, nationalist sentiments by no means disappeared. Quite the contrary, former settlers’ testimonies reveal how young Koreans, while studying side-by-side with Japanese, underwent their own rite of passage into selfhood and nationhood. Kaikyu Yoshihisa, who attended Keijō Imperial University during the last years of Japanese rule, observed first hand how Korean freshmen of various provincial origins became slowly “initiated into nationalism” by their senpai (senior students) and through a tight social network of Korean friends. “As months went by, a chasm [between Japanese and Korean freshmen] gradually developed,” he recalled, “and after the first summer break it seemed to become permanent.”

It was also in the intimate spaces of classroom and tavern, where the most honest, if disturbing, confessions were uttered by Korean friends. “I heard for the first time Korean classmates rant about independence, but only when drinking,” explained Kaikyu, admitting “I had to revise my understanding [about Koreans] significantly after that.” Where such desires were not explicitly conveyed, Japanese students learned to interpret visual and linguistic cues of their Korean classmates as covert political gestures. Many of my informants stated how they simply “sensed” and “felt” Korean antipathy, for instance, every time their classmates said “Ilbon saram (Japanese person)” while looking at us.” Kitami Akira couldn’t help but notice how one Korean classmate, who had graduated from the same Ryūzan Middle School, now made a point of slipping into Korean hanbok (traditional dress) everyday after school (Keijō Kōtō Shōgyō Gakkō 1990, 90)—what could be construed as a symbolic gesture of shedding his “Japanese” upbringing.

Even in the midst of war, several Korean students at Keijō Imperial University made a bolder gesture of defiance, recalled one Japanese alumnus, by failing

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34 Kaikyu Yoshihisa, response to questionnaire, n.d.
to turn in a class assignment to write out the Imperial Rescript on Education, an act that bordered on lèse-majesté. Many also recounted how Korean students were not as enthusiastic as they were about participating in military drills and physical training. And during the infamous “name-changing campaign,” Kiriyama Shin remembered feeling “odd” that his Korean classmates adopted such funny names as “Tokugawa” and “Toyotomi” (names of two “great unifiers” of Japan from the early modern era), only to realize that such a parody was “the sole form of resistance” they could present to the authorities (Keijo Kōtō Shōgyō Gakkō 1990, 85). When organized nationalist movement had all but disappeared in the peninsula, indeed, Japanese students became direct witnesses to how young Koreans continued to resist assimilation and subvert the hegemonic structures of rule in the indirect and non-confrontational ways available to them, that is, through language use, dress, and classroom conduct—the very cultural criteria by which their political attachments to the empire were measured.

Utterances as well as silences of Korean classmates continued to unsettle the interior world of settler youth in the course of war. As they began to learn of Korean desire for autonomy, outside the heavily censored textbooks, Japanese students developed a complex mixture of emotions, from “sympathy” and “understanding” to “fear,” “danger,” and “skepticism.” Perhaps the most honest sentiment was conveyed by one graduate of Keijo Higher Commercial School who admitted, “even though I had understanding as a human being, as a Japanese I still did not want to see it,” or in the words of a graduate of Keijo Imperial University, “I was equally sympathetic to the cause of Japanese colonization.”

Uehara Atsuo who went to Keijo Commercial School “harbored a certain degree of fear about the Korean han (hatred) toward Japanese,” while a fellow graduate, Satō Katsunori, recollected his internal conflict this way: “When Hitler came to power in Germany and the term ‘national self-determination (minzoku jiketsu)’ frequently appeared in newspaper headings, I constantly felt a sense of crisis by thinking how it must surely be swaying the mind of my Korean friend.”

Their fluid tangle of emotions illustrates how feeling and thought, far from discrete and isolated realms of human experience, remained inextricably entwined (Reddy 2001) in how settler youth experienced, comprehended, and grappled with distance from the world of Koreans. And as they encountered Korean national sentiments—their desires, frustrations, animosities—many Japanese students began to emotively straddle the colonizer-colonized divide, which

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36 N. T., response to questionnaire, 5 February 2002.
37 M. R., response to questionnaire, n.d.
38 S. K., response to questionnaire, n.d. Although Hitler was calling for national self-determination of the Germans in their conquest of the Sudetenland, according to this informant, the idea of national self-determination itself had an immense appeal to the Korean intelligentsia.
compelled them to turn inward: to confront their own liminal status of being neither completely tied to Korea nor to the metropole.

The settlers’ capacity to empathize, indeed, appears to have stemmed from their own ambivalent, interstitial being. In addition to displaying a remarkable lack of longing for their homeland, some of my interviewees claimed that they identified more closely with Koreans than with metropolitan Japanese, as in the case of Aoki Etsuko, a graduate of Keijō Women Teachers’ College who taught Korean children during the last years of war. While she could easily communicate with her Korean colleagues or parents of her pupils, Aoki told me, “I felt a cultural gap with Japanese who came from naichi. Because the Japanese at home had only seen Korean laborers, they also tended to disdain and belittle Koreans, which often enraged me as a resident of Korea.”

Many former settlers also confessed how they felt emotionally aloof from the emperor, a point corroborated by contemporary observers with much lament. To be sure, some of them avowedly became devoted “imperial youth (kōkoku seinen),” as they were mobilized for the public spectacle of lantern parades, military marches, and visits to Shinto shrines. Mizuno Shin’ichi, a graduate of Ryūzan Middle School, proudly recounted the day in May 1939 when he joined the student representatives across the empire, from Karafuto to the South Seas, in marching from the Hibiya Park to the Imperial Palace where the august monarch “bestowed upon us a personal inspection” (Ryūzan 1988, 273–75).

Not all students appeared to be as moved by militarism as Mizuno, however. In the midst of war victory parades, as Ichikawa Hayao, a fellow Ryūzan alumnus, later recalled, “we felt neither the darkness of the wartime nor the opposite elevation of militarism,” because “we were living as colonizers” and spared the hardship of metropolitan Japanese (Ryūzan 1988, 281–82). Morisaki Kazue, then a girls’ school student in Taegu, similarly admitted that she had “less awareness as imperial subjects than the children in naichi,” and the word “emperor did not evoke any special feelings” (Morisaki 1984, 42). To combat such apathy of Korea-born Japanese became the central vocation of a Keijō Imperial University Professor Tsuda Sakae and his followers, who founded the Ryokki Renmei in the early 1930s to propagate emperor-centered ideology (Takasaki 1982). They appear to have attracted only a small number of fellow settlers, however, and some of my interviewees who attended their meetings felt too “uncomfortable” to stay.

39Also see Cohen 2006, Chapter 3.
40Interview with Aoki Etsuko, 21 December 2001, Tokyo, Japan.
41Interview with Hatae Kōsuke, 8 March 2002; also see his article in a school newspaper, Suryō Gakuhō (15 April 1944), reprinted in Keijō Kōto 1990.
42Interviews and questionnaire survey with 25 members of the Keijō Teikoku Daigaku/Yoka Dōsōkai, distributed on 5 December 2002, Tokyo.
Settlers’ emotional distance from home appears to have widened, as the thrust of militarism penetrated their campus life to transform classes into a daily regimen of military drills, physical training, and labor service. And as teachers who were labeled as “liberal” were gradually purged from faculty (Keijō Kōtō 1990, 80–81), some Japanese students developed a strong antipathy to the army. During his third year in Keijō Middle School, for instance, Takenaka Kiyoshi, with his best friend who was “antipathetic to Government-General’s rule,” played a prank on a signboard that read “naisen ittai” by adding a line to the character “ichi [one]” to make it read “naisen nitai [Japan and Korea as two].” Anecdotes like this suggest a failure of affective education among some second-generation settlers, showing how Japanese children could subvert their learning.

Meanwhile, an atmosphere of anti-militarism forged empathetic, if fleeting, connections between some Japanese teachers and Korean pupils. According to one Japanese graduate of Keijō Commercial Higher School, during a students’ debate one Korean classmate “boldly spoke about Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Yi Sun-sin,” two rival military leaders during the ill-fated Japanese invasion of Korea in the late sixteenth century. Despite being a taboo subject, some Japanese professors apparently gave him an enthusiastic applause, which left a lasting impression on this observer as a sign of affirming their mutual resentment of the military (Keijō Kōtō Shōgyō Gakkō 1990, 86). Behind the closed doors of classrooms, a shared world of understanding also developed between an unlikely teacher and his Korean students, as one of them reminisced about Uesugi Jujiro, a professor in charge of a “Japanese studies” seminar introduced in 1939. Though son of a right-leaning constitutional scholar who famously attacked Minobe Shunkichi’s so-called “emperor-as-organ theory,” Uesugi evidently “did not emphasize kokutai (national polity) very much” in his seminar. And when some Korean students complained that his phrase, “Koreans’ plant-like existence,” offended their sensibilities, Uesugi explained that he had meant to refer implicitly to their enduring condition of being colonized, to which the students responded with a satisfactory “smile” (Keijō Kōtō Shōgyō Gakkō 1990, 109, 168).

For most settlers, however, rarely did their animosity toward the army translate into criticism of their empire. According to Takenaka Kiyoshi, he consumed proletarian and socialist literature as voraciously as his Korean classmates did since middle school, but “strangely I never thought about Korea on the ground (ashimoto).” And while at Keijō Imperial University, he never obeyed the order to memorize the Imperial Rescript for Soldiers, “not because I thought about Korea, but because I had anti-army disposition” and most of all “wanted to avoid conscription.”

43Takenaka Kiyoshi, letter to author, 7 January 2003.
44Takenaka Kiyoshi, letter to author, 7 January 2003.
in socialism and Marxism during high school and college in Japan, but that did not lead him to question Japanese colonial rule in Korea (Ko 2001, 72).

While conversant in the theoretical language of resistance, Japanese students remained surprisingly heedless of its local echoes. A sheer disconnect between what educated settlers embraced intellectually and what they could accept emotionally—a dissonance made plain precisely due to the interdependence of thought and feeling—poignantly reminds us that anti-militarism was ultimately not synonymous with anti-colonialism. Even as they resented army dominance, as Morisaki Kazue recounted later, settler youth like herself never doubted the legitimacy of their nation’s empire, as convinced as their parents that the annexation of Korea “saved the country from its further internal conflict and decline” (Morisaki 1984, 138–39). Save for a few socialists who joined Korean workers and peasants in their anti-capitalist struggle (Sonobe 1989), settlers hardly, if ever, developed their empathy into self-criticism, far less into political action, ultimately confirming Albert Memmi’s dictum that there can be no colonist revolutionary.

Limits of Japanese-Korean relations are rendered into psychological agony of young settler protagonists in autobiographical novels written by Kajiyama Toshiyuki, a second-generation colon.45 Becoming an adult, as one character describes, meant not only to become aware of various “contradictions” and injustices of empire, occasioned by such moments as when feeling “cold glances as sharp as icicles pierced his body” on entering the Korean suburbs. It also meant to realize how enmeshed he himself had become in their daily operation, as another character explains: “I used to feel annoyed whenever our Korean maidservants spoke insolently to us after they’d become familiar with our household manners or when father’s occasional Korean guests addressed him as if they were his equals. ‘How dare you?’ I wanted to ask them. In such instances, my antagonism was based only on the fact that they were Korean” (Kajiyama 1995, 116, 59).

More often, however, settler youths betrayed Koreans closest to them, while utterly unaware of their complicity with state violence. One former student of Keijō Middle School, who befriended a Korean student from Keijō Women Teachers’ College, bitterly recalled an incident that would haunt him for decades. “One day she asked me for advice on how she ought to explain the meaning of ‘hinomaru’ (Japanese national flag) to Korean primary school pupils. I casually brushed off the question by telling her something like, ‘Why don’t you just look at an encyclopedia.’ I did not understand at the time her genuine worry and pain in dealing with what must have surely been an uncomfortable subject

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45 Along with Kajiyama, a number of writers—including Kobayashi Masaru, Muramatsu Takeshi, and Yuasa Katsuei (whose life and scholarship is deftly analyzed by Driscoll 2005)—self-consciously referred to themselves as second-generation colonists in Korea whose works constitute a distinct genre in the postwar Japanese literature.
to her.” Other memoirs also chronicle how a few true friendships that existed between Japanese and Korean students were severed rather than cemented by the wartime policy of *naisen ittai* (see Fujimoto 1994). All of these testimonies seem to converge on one message that consistently runs through Kajiyama’s stories: insofar as the “Japanese” and “Koreans” could not exist outside of the colonial system, any relationship between the two was ultimately doomed.

**IN THE EYES OF KOREAN STUDENTS**

When looked from the perspective of Korean students, limits of inter-ethnic bonds seem to become even clearer. A few Korean voices featured in some school alumni albums allow us to access their experience studying alongside settlers. On the one hand, the Korean and Japanese memories of campus life are entangled with teachers they admired, shops they frequented, and notebooks they shared before school exams, and some of these experiences developed into life-long friendships they would cherish for decades after 1945. On the other hand, Korean reminiscences are littered with sentiments of loss, anger, frustration, resentment, alienation, and humiliation they felt, and held back, daily at school—memories that compete with the Japanese classmates’ longing for their lost “home,” claim to innocence, and remarkable silence on colonial violence.47

These emotions come alive in several essays that poignantly recapture the moments when Korean students confronted Japanese arrogance and prejudice, on and off campus. During a summer labor camp at an iron works in northern Korea, Kim Yöng-ch’il recalled for instance, he was “punched” by some Japanese classmates for speaking in Korean while playing *shōgi* with fellow Korean students (Kim Yöng-ch’il 2000, 28–29). A sense of outrage was palpable in another essay by Yi Wŏn-gap, a graduate of Keijo Higher Commercial School, who remembered how one Japanese professor of civil law abandoned any pretense of *naisen ittai* by habitually insulting Koreans during his lecture. His lack of sensitivity stirred Yi and other Korean students to lodge a protest, which evidently reached the ears of the education bureau chief (who most likely feared inflaming Korean hostility in the midst of war), and led to the teacher’s dismissal from school (Keijo Kōtō 1990, 169–70).

Most Korean students found no redress, however. If they faced discrimination at school, more awaited them after graduation. Even those who finished at the top of class were not assured of a career, as local Japanese firms usually advertised jobs with a proviso that they were “for Japanese only” or hired few Koreans to fill their ethnic quotas “for formality’s sake” (Keijo Kōtō 1990, 156). Kim Hyŏng-gŭn, an alumnus of Keijo Higher Commercial School, remembered

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46 Takenaka Kiyoshi, letter to author, 7 January 2003.
47 Interview with three Korean alumni of Keijo Industrial School, 10 May 2002, Seoul.
when a few weeks before graduation the Japanese principal called only Korean students to his office and advised them to apply to Hwasin Department Store and other Korean-run firms, out of concern that Japanese companies would have few, if any, spots available to them. Upon hearing what was evidently meant as well-intentioned advice, Kim “felt to the bone the sorrow of a nation deprived of sovereignty” (Keijō Kōtō 1990, 209–11).

Their experiences were echoed by Korean graduates of Keijō Women Teachers’ College, where they shared rooms, baths, and meals with Japanese students. According to a survey conducted by Sakimoto Kazuko, ethnic relations among the students were overall amicable, if only due to the nature of their training; as future educators they were “taught not to discriminate” in the spirit of naisen ittai, and to cultivate a different set of sensibilities such as grace, serenity, warmth, and strength (1999, 83–84). But Japanese students, while impressed by the “smart and well-mannered” Korean classmates, remained largely oblivious to their internal sufferings. As Ikeda Masae found out from her former classmates after war, Korean graduates not only incurred greater pressures to cooperate with the wartime policy—to cultivate affective ties with Korean pupils by serving as their “mothers,” as an effective way to assimilate them as Japanese—but also faced discrimination at work place in terms of promotion and pay.48 No wonder, Sakimoto points out, that Japanese students and teachers fell short of forming gender-based solidarity with Korean women to challenge the patriarchal structures of colonial society.

To be sure, many Korean graduates of elite-track vocational schools did land prestigious careers that prepared them as future business and political leaders in the post-liberation era (Song 2000; Cho 1999, 32–34). From the Korean testimonies, nevertheless, emerges a structure of discrimination so pervasive that it remained imperceptible to all but those who experienced it, that is, Koreans of all social classes. Colonialism was a tangible experience for Koreans who encountered its effects daily and “viscerally (taikan teki),” as journalist Sō Ch’un noted in 1939, such as at a local post office or a ticket gate in the train station, mundane spaces where no Korean would pass without at least once being insulted by a Japanese (quoted in Yi Sǔng-yǒp 2001, 39–40). That settler youth could be among the most unthinking offenders of Korean sensibilities makes it less difficult to fathom why they failed to emotionally connect with Korean classmates, even as they shared a common intellectual language, and in some cases a radical vision of social change.

CONCLUSION

“Our daily life (seikatsu) itself was an act of invasion (shinryaku),” wrote Morisaki Kazue in her memoir, years after she repatriated from Korea to the

48 Ikeda Masae’s testimony at the symposium on “Japanese settlers and Modernity” (14 June 2003, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo); also Sakimoto 1999, 86.
home islands (1984). If Morisaki’s confession disrupts the dominant settler narrative of nostalgia, it also powerfully resonates with the voices of a few like-minded offspring of empire, such as Takahashi Katsuo. A graduate of Nanzan Primary School, Takahashi injects his “intense subjectivity” in his school album to bridge the world of adults with the world of children. Children were no less culpable than adults in discriminating against Koreans, Takahashi writes, urging his fellow alumni “to speak and testify,” instead of remaining silent and claiming that they were “too young to know.” “Those of us who lived in Korea for thirteen years cannot even speak or write in Korean. This fact itself speaks to how, apart from violent persecution, fierce cultural discrimination was perpetrated. Discrimination performed by our everyday … Unless we fully recognize this fact, our children will again become well-intentioned (zen’i no) perpetrators” (Keijō Nanzan 1996, 270, 272).

Takahashi’s call, which also reverberates in novels authored by second- and third-generation colons like Kajiyama, raises a number of critical questions for scholars of empire. How is colonial power exercised and perpetuated through the rhythms and cycles of everyday life? How do “well-intentioned” teachers and “innocent” children become enmeshed in the structure of colonial violence? This article has made a preliminary step in answering these questions by tracing documentary trails of the emotional life of Japanese who grew up in colonial Korea. From their testimonies, we learn that colonialism operated not only through the state ruling apparatus but also in the realm of the unconscious—what Sakimoto Kazuko has called “muishiki no sabetsu”—where even children and naïve adolescents could participate in colonial domination through deeply ingrained habits of thought (caricatures about Koreans), language use (“yobo”), and sentiment (feeling of superiority). To anchor colonialism in emotional, mundane, and intimate spaces of encounter allows us to recognize, indeed, how the assumed boundaries separating the worlds of adults and children, the conscious and unconscious modalities of domination often blurred in the local operation of empire.

At the same time, settlers’ journey into adulthood tells us not of a world so rigidly divided and fixed, but of a fluid and liminal space shaped by mundane and intimate encounters between Japanese and Koreans. Their emotional life vividly registers the effects of such encounter, showing how the everyday became the site for a dynamic cultural process where young settlers struggled to make sense of the new reality and tried to incorporate it into their worldview. Though most settlers lived in a monolingual environment and within the bounds of privilege, daily encounters forced them to relate to Koreans, and confront inner contradictions of empire as well as ambivalence about their own identity, intersubjectively. If settlers’ tenuous, and often one-sided, moments of connection with Koreans reveal fundamental limits of their contact, they equally hint at the existence of the vast range of human and emotional experiences that can not be reduced to abstract mechanisms of capital and bureaucratic control.
Even as the state sought to control intimate matters and everyday practices, with a sense of urgency in the course of war, plural, marginal, and “differentiated” lived spaces (Certeau 1984, 188–89) emerged and existed between colonizer and colonized as they wittingly or unwittingly navigated across their divisions. Unearthing the horizon of sensibilities that emerged in this fluid zone of contact remains a challenge for scholars of empire.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Jordan Sand and Mariko Tamanoi for inviting me to explore rough ideas for this paper at the Symposium on “Imperial Japan and Colonial Sensibility: Affect, Object, Embodiment” (UCLA, December 2007) and to the participants for their comments and inspirations. I owe special thanks to Lieba Faier and Mariko Tamanoi for pushing me to rethink some of the analytical categories used in the paper draft. For further comments and criticisms that helped give this paper its final form, I would like to thank J. P. Daughton, Julian Go, Sean Hanretta, Allyson Hobbs, Yumi Moon, Thomas Mullaney, Yukiko Shigeto, Laura Stokes, and three anonymous JAS reviewers. For invitations to present this paper at various stages of its evolution, I would also like to thank the Korea Institute and the Reischauer Institute of Harvard University, Henry Em at New York University, and Andre Schmid at Toronto University. Finally, I wish to thank all the former residents of colonial Korea who shared with me their personal experiences and memories, which form the basis for this paper.

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