

## The Base National Korean Mind is Utterly Incomprehensible to the Japanese

BY Kou Bunyu(GaO Wen-xiong), critic

Falsehood, fraud, mutual mistrust, empty arguments, ignorance, humiliation, cowardliness—these are the true faces of the great Korean people with a history that is five thousand years old.

### Nationality Painted with Betrayal and Mistrust

The Republic of Korea's President Lee Myung-bak's landing on Takeshima Island and utterly thoughtless comment concerning the Japanese Emperor instantly fueled anger and protests throughout Japan. There is the sense of resignation, rather than a mere rising of anti-Korean sentiment, that is beginning to settle among the Japanese people that Korea is no longer a proper nation.

In spite of the fact that Japan and Korea concluded a Basic Treaty after World War II, one Korean President after another still obstinately demands that Japan should apologize and show regret. While Japan has accepted such Korean claims and repeatedly made such acceptance clear in writing—and has virtually made apologizing a ritual—Korean anti-Japanese sentiment has neither ceased nor calmed down.

When President Kim Dae-jung and Roh Tae-woo's two-generation-long, ten-year pro-Chinese, pro-North Korean, anti-Japanese and anti-American left-wing administrations changed to that of business-minded Lee Myung-bak, who clearly promised to end the troublesome Korean-Japanese relationship of the past, Japan, with much optimism, also expected a better and normalized relationship between the two countries. However, decent Japanese with common sense were utterly shocked by the sudden, drastic change in attitude and abnormal behaviors displayed by President Lee Myung-bak since this August, and cannot help but feel that "We have been betrayed again." "You too, Lee Myung-bak!"—Japan's mistrust against Korea continues to pile up all the more.

President Lee Myung-bak's eccentric actions immediately reminded me of a description in the book entitled *Korean Way* (originally titled *History of Koryo*) written by French Father Claude-Charles Dallet. Dallet writes, "Conspiracy devised by 50 people will be revealed by 49 people, which indicates the Korean nationality of mistrust and betrayal."

The "foreign incidents" that occurred twice are well-known events in Korean history.

Korea fought against the Manchu-Mongolian Eight Banner Army and was defeated in the battle, and then made to bear the humiliation of being forced to build the “Triumph Arch,” the “Reception Hall” and the Statue of Admiration for China. But these can be traced back to the second king of the Later Jin Dynasty Khan Hong Taiji who simply avenged the mistreatment and distrust inflicted upon his people by Korea. The “Foreign incidents” should not be seen as a history of aggression on the Peninsula by the Manchu-Mongolian Eight Flag Army, but rather as historical events signifying the Korean national behavior of betrayal and mistrust.

After the War, the entire Korean Peninsula (both North and South) totally abolished the use of difficult Chinese characters which were used only by a very small population of elites, and made Hangul the national alphabet, which proved to be essential to building a nation. At that time, even China itself tried to simplify the Chinese characters and to eventually Latinize the characters. Even the great author Lu Xun wrote in his will: Unless Chinese characters are abolished, China will be ruined. Change or transition in the means of communication is often seen throughout human history and is not exclusive to the modern and contemporary eras.

As a result, however, the so-called Hangul generation, after the abolishment of Chinese characters, had no means of studying the true history of their own country and as a consequence the Korean people knew only of their national history through fabrication. In the *Five Thousand Year History of Korea*, except for the histories of the Kokuryo and Bohai, very few true descriptions can be seen and Pak Chong-hui is the only true historical figure. That is how I see the Republic of Korea from a neutral point of view.

### **Korea during 36 Years under the Japanese Imperialist Regime Was an Ultra-stable Society**

President Lee Myung-bak’s comment “If the Japanese Emperor wants to visit South Korea, he should first apologize for the victims of the independence movements” may be permissible in Korea, but not in any other place on earth. Not only will Korean intellect but also its national dignity will be severely questioned.

Ever since the Seoul Olympics, Korea continues to demand that the Japanese Emperor visit Korea, as if it were Japan’s obligation. On the contrary, Japan never proposed an Imperial visit. Moreover, now that the “victims of the independence movement” have been mentioned, let me add the fact that, from volunteer soldiers to anti-Japanese guerrillas, there were more victims of the power struggles within the organizations than those who were judged and punished by the law set-up after the

Japanese-Korean Federation. Who killed Yo Un-hyung, Song Jin-man and Kim Gu, who acted most heroically as leaders of the anti-Japanese and “resist Japan” independence movements? I suspect that most independence activists were killed by their own comrades or political enemies.

After the War, Korea still insists on “overcoming” Japan, repeats such anti-Japanese mantra as “the seven deprivations caused by the 36-year-long Japanese Imperialist regime,” referring to the seven items of sovereignty, king, land, surnames, human life, national language and resources, and further adds accusations of forced abduction and comfort women. These assertions serve as leverage in their nation-building. The Island of Takeshima was designated as Korean territory after the Syngman Rhee Line was set-up after the war.

Ever since the dawn of the era of nation-states, all peoples or nations have aspired to become big and powerful. Not only Great Britain and France, but also the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary, Czechoslovakia and what later became Yugoslavia were federal republics headed by similar leaders (but mostly monarchs). The book entitled *Concept of Great East Federal Republic* by Tarui Tokichi, which was published several years after the publication of *Out of Asia* by Fukuzawa Yukichi, maintains that the three nations of Japan, Korea and China felt no sense of awkwardness when they were called “federal republics” in terms of race, territory, shared culture and customs. The Japanese-Korean Federation was realized through overcoming conflicting opinions on both sides, and it is a false accusation that the federation was a product of forced, unilateral action by Japan. The Japanese-Korean Federation was jointly celebrated by the Powers as a foundation for eternal peace in East Asia, and even the Qing Dynasty and Russia, which held conflicting interests, did not disagree.

In reality, in fact, far from suffering the “seven deprivations,” which Korea loudly claims during the post-war years, both population and food production doubled, and sovereignty was further expanded. In terms of historical facts, the seven “deprivations” should instead be referred to as the “seven benefits” or “seven offerings”.

After President Rhee Syngman onward, a Korean political rule or destiny was for the emerging president to purge his predecessor. However, this was not a practice limited to the post-war years. From the House of Yi to the noble class of Yangbang, peer struggles became a special product and chronic disease of Korea. Not only within the five hundred years of the Yi Dynasty, but also during the Koryo Dynasty--even dating back to the nation’s founding by King Dangun--violent peer struggle was the doomed destiny of the Peninsula.

Why, then, did Korea during the Imperial Japanese era become a highly stable society,

unprecedented in Korean history? The only reason for this was that the traditional peer struggles were eliminated from the Peninsula and changed into outside, off-stage fights. In the post-war years, the Korean tradition of peer struggle returned. The Hangul generation, in accounting for their modern and contemporary history, should know these basic facts.

### **Mentality Inclined to Link Everything to “Forced Abduction”**

It is becoming more and more clear that forced abductions and comfort women were never real issues. Nevertheless, Korea is still using them as perfect tools for blackmailing and extortion—Koreans even built a bronze statue of a comfort woman to honor and worship.

Quite understandably, though, there may be some reason for their fussing over linking everything to forced abduction, judging from their history and nationality. There were following historical facts: forced abductions of people sent from Kokuryo and Paekche by the Tang Army and of Koryo people by the Mongolian Army. It was also a historical fact that the Manchu-Mongolian Eight Flag Army took half the Korean population to the north. It is also a fact that kidnapping is a habit that is a part of the traditional culture of the Peninsula. The abduction incidents committed by North Korea can be said to be examples of that habit, too.

Japanese and Korean media once sensationally reported that “Eight thousand Taiwanese boys were abducted to Japan,” but the news turned out to be a bogus “great discovery” by the Korean media and Japanese progressive scholars. During the Pacific War, Taiwanese boy workers, after passing a strict academic examination and physical check-up, and with the approval from the school principal and their parents, were eventually sent to Japan proper to engage in the production of *Raiden* (Thunder Fighters) fighter planes, which were comparable to Zero fighter planes.

The “forced abduction” of Korean people is a fabricated story and the fact is that the Japanese Government actually limited the number of Koreans entering Japan proper, and Koreans held rallies to protest the limitation. Regarding the entry of Japan proper by Taiwanese people, there was very severe competition in the form of examinations, and judging from the situation, common sense tells us that it would have been most unfeasible to forcibly abduct Koreans. Even today, it is a big headache for the Japanese Government to deal with illegals entering from the Peninsula.

As for the so-called comfort women, except for a few Japanese, like ex-foreign minister Kono Yohei, whom the Koreans favorably refer to as a “conscientious Japanese,” Governor Ishihara Shintaro of Tokyo and Mayor Hashimoto Toru of Osaka,

for example, firmly deny the accusation, maintaining that there is no evidence of organized and forced prostitution by the Japanese. That is the common belief among the Japanese as well.

In the first place, the Korean Peninsula has been the biggest supplier of prostitutes in Asia. At present, there are one hundred thousand Korean prostitutes working in various places around the world, and about half of them are engaged in Japan. Judging from the history of prostitution of the Peninsula, the managing and catering of prostitutes is equivalent to the “comfort women” situation and had raised no moral or ethical concerns before some progressive (actually left wing) Japanese people criticized President Park for his policy of state-run prostitution and prostitution tourism as a national business in the seventies. During the Koryo Era, it was a historical fact that the government set up an office for classifying married women, widows and virgins, and sold the data to the Mongolian Government. It is a far cry from the fact that once Toyotomi Hideyoshi became furious after learning that Japanese women were sold to Portugal as slaves that he immediately issued an order expelling the visiting missionary fathers.

Seen by neutral eyes of a Taiwanese, up until the time immediately after the War, prostitutes in Taiwan were mostly Korean. The first human exchange between Taiwan and Korea was among the prostitutes working at coal mines. In times of famine, girls were sold at the price of one-sho (1.8 liters) of rice a head, and during the Imperial Japanese regime, the price was 30 yen, equivalent to two months salary of a state official, through Chinese merchants. In India, female mediums are more highly honored than a king, while the women’s status is entirely different in a Confucian state. The sad and tragic history of the poor Koreans of the past is too premature to be told to young Japanese junior high school students. Instead of trying to glorify the past, Korea should know about its own social manners and customs to some extent.

### **Bullying of the Weak and Theft at a Fire**

I understand that Japanese people are fed up with the anti-Japanese, “overcome Japan” campaigns repeatedly staged by Koreans and may sometimes be at a loss on how to cope with them. Why don’t you change the way you see the Koreans a little bit? On the contrary, the anti-Japan fuss among Great China and Small China can serve as a good stimulus for post-war Japanese to ask themselves once again, “What is a state and what is a nation?” and may be a catalyst for true self-reflection and awakening. Thus, you may well be grateful for the anti-Japanese movement. You should learn from Roman history, wherein Rome deteriorated and collapsed into self-debasement after it

had defeated and ruined its eternal enemy Carthage.

At the least, since the Great Korean Empire at the end of the Yi Dynasty, Korea has become a country too dependent on Japan to live on its own. The Koreans may voice “anti-Japan” and “overcome Japan” hostility, but deep inside they indulge in Japanese leniency. Korea also holds a grudge towards China, which had held hegemony over Korea for one thousand years. However, with China, the idea of *Hanfeizi* is more dominant than that of *The Prince* by Machiavelli.

The Chinese have a secret knack of completely dominating its counterpart so that the latter cannot fight back. Holding a grudge is useless. On the other hand, the compassionate Japanese can hardly be so ruthless and harsh. That is the difference.

The true character of the Koreans is to obediently follow the strongest, not only in politics, but in every phase of life. As a reverse of humiliating obedience in front of the strong, they tend to act ruthlessly toward the weak and take advantage of them, similar to looters during a fire. Who knows of the Korean people’s behaviors immediately after the end of the War in the devastatingly scorched Japanese homeland?

“We were invaded a thousand times and every time we fought back and expelled the invaders,” is the proud story of their country among the Hangul generation. Pitifully, though, there is hardly any historical fact that supports this assertion. When invaded from the north, influential people in northern Korea readily offered the land to the invaders and attacked southern Korea, even willingly leading the invaders. Even during the Japanese attack from the sea, people in the lower classes rose in upheaval, burned the royal palace, captured the escaping prince and rendered him to the Japanese army. This story of battle is revealed in the history of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s Korean campaign.

Both domestically and overseas, the Korean national behavior of playing up to the strong while bullying the weak and of looting during a calamity remains the same. During the Yi Dynasty, Korea served Master Ming and bullied the Manchurians. When the Manchurians fought back, they promptly changed their vehicle from cattle to horses and engaged in a great massacre of the Ming people in front of the Manchu-Mongolian Eight Flag Army. The first overseas campaign, of which the Koreans boast, was nothing more than the battering of Viet-cong guerrillas, Koreans merely acting as asses covered lion’s skin.

In the first place, Taiwan and Korea were comrades in the fight against Communism. Foreign aid that enabled the realization of the “Miracle of Hang River” also came in great amount from Taiwan, besides from Japan. But Korea, after having changed their standing from pro-Taiwan to pro-China, from cattle to horses, beat and bullied

Taiwanese people in extremely harsh and cold-blooded ways. Taiwanese-Chinese merchants in Korea are Shantung people. The Chinese merchants were most severely oppressed and their population was reportedly reduced to one-tenth of its original size and the survivors were scattered to Taiwan and other countries outside of the Peninsula.

It was not, however, Taiwan's nature to accept such horrible bullying without fighting back. While on the occasion of the riot in Los Angeles, black Americans only attacked Korean-owned stores, in Taiwan counter-actions ranged from cancellation of airplanes mutually commuting between the two countries, city councils in Kaohsiung and Tainan unanimously passed a resolution to completely banning exchanges between their sister cities, and also among the private sectors, a passenger carelessly speaking Korean was forced out of the taxi, barbecue shops run by Korean owners were forced to go nearly out of business.

Japan, so plagued with Korean bullying as to have had a bronze statue of a "saint comfort woman" built right in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, can yet stay so cool and nonchalant in a truly grown-up manner. I cannot help but envy the Japanese for their maturity.

### **Hyper-Inner-Depth Psychology that Breeds Anti-Japanese sentiment**

This author has written several books on the Korean people's "anti-Japan" stance since the nineties. One of them is *Distorted Korean General Government Office* (Kappa Books). I have tried to widely analyze the reasons why Koreans are anti-Japan.

As far as the recent anti-Japanese actions are concerned, I think that they will not so easily cease in a short period of time. That is because the real reason for the problem lies in the Koreans, rather than in the Japanese people.

The point is that "professional" anti-Japanese activists are not of the "colonial-days generation" who had experienced the 36 years of the Imperial Japanese regime, but mostly of the "Hangul generation," who actually do not know much about Japan.

The "Colonial-days generation," who had been made subjects of the Japanese Emperor, may cry "stop Japan" with the Hangul generation in public, but they never mention anti-Japanese sentiment in private. The Hangul generation despise this Japano-phile generation so much that they even say, "As long as the old generation does not die out, Korea will never be able to celebrate its national glory," and so easily sever their ties to the preceding generation.

As to the reasons for the Korean anti-Japanese stance, there have been various analyses, ranging from the breeding of nationalism to the culture of grudge. The

anti-Japanese stance taken by the people of Great China (China) and by the people of Small China (Korea) may in part come from a common Chinese character, but in some part may be quite different, reflecting different historical paths.

In Korea, which is without a religious centric force inherent in Islam and Judaism, the people can seek their identity only through sensational encouragement. This is the very Achilles' heel of the Korean people, who boast of a "great Korean people with a five-thousand year history."

Having no centering force like religion or a monarchy, Korea has no way of venting their humiliation and a very complicated psychology of having constantly been threatened by the Chinese Empire by land and the Imperial Japanese control of the seas. Unless their dreams of "becoming the most brilliant people in the entire world" and "making the 21st century the Korean century" are realized, both the anti-Chinese and the anti-Japanese and counter-Japanese fuss will never cease.

It is essential to probe the Korean mentality at a comparative cultural level to find out the true reason for Korean anti-Japan feelings--especially from the points of Korean nationality and its language structure.

The father of modern Korean literature, Lee Guang-Su points out many aspects of Korean nationality: false words, fraud, mutual mistrust, flowery words, empty arguments and opinions, flattery and truckling, false obedience, adaptation to the majority, shamelessness, abuse, servility, cowardliness, indecision and unsocial selfishness. Ex-president Park Chung-hee picked up factional strife and currying favor with the strong as negative legacies from a criminal national history and the history of the Yi Dynasty. Of course, customs, habits and nationality change as ages change. In his book *The Structure of the Korean People's Mind and Consciousness*, Yun Dae-lin's remarks on the Korean language include, "It is unfit for scientific descriptions," "It is unable to comprehend matters objectively and to focus on the subject," and "It lacks spirit to see things rationally."

I feel that we need to find out the true reasons behind Korean anti-Japanese sentiment, with the help of Freud's psychoanalysis and Jung's hyper-inner-depth psychology, as well as the Buddhist idea of alaya-vijnana, master of everything in the universe.

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Born in 1938 in Kaohsiung Prefecture, Taiwan, Mr. Kou graduated from the Commercial Department of Waseda University and completed a Masters' course at Meiji



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Among Mr. Kou's many books are *Japanese Legacy Unknown to the Japanese* and *Korea Was Made by Japan*. His latest book is *Why Are the Japanese so Different from the Chinese and the Koreans?*

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