

Korean Mysticism and Anti-Japanese Thinking (Seirindo Co. Ltd.)

By Tajima Osamu

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Introduction

The Abnormal Relationship between Japan and Korea

The gelatinous anti-Japan smear

It goes without saying that Korea and China are the major anti-Japan states in Asia. However, between the two countries, their anti-Japan stance widely differs. China's anti-Japan stance is somewhat utilitarian. Briefly, China uses its anti-Japanese stance as a means to an end. It is often pointed out that anti-Japan surges such as ownership of the Senkaku Islands and the history textbook issue are delicately controlled by Chinese Communist Party headquarters so that these disorders do not turn into riots against the Chinese government itself. At the same time, rioters, understanding such political maneuvering, enjoy participating in legal acts of destruction. That's why they are called "official demonstrations" or "official riots". For the foreseeable future, if the Chinese government decides it is politically favorable, China may suddenly turn into a friendly neighbor, albeit merely in appearance. We cannot, though, definitely say that such a possibility is nil. During the Cultural Revolution, they carried out acts of extreme cruelty, of executing Confucian scholars and burning unfavorable books. And yet, by parading Confucius as the sole authority of Eastern wisdom during their lobbying activities, they established Chinese schools called "Confucius academies" in universities all over the world in a most dispassionate manner.

By contrast, my impression is that Korea's anti-Japanese stance is more emotional, more spasmodic and at the same time viscerally sticky. While China's anti-Japanese sentiment is dry, Korea's is wet. I would describe it as feeling like a sticky shirt on one's sweaty back on a hot summer day. It is not at all pleasant and smooth--it is gelatinous.

In February 2013, the Taejon District Court in South Korea, turned down a request to return a Buddhist statue that had been stolen from Kannonji-temple in Tsushima, Nagasaki Prefecture. This decision is nothing short of a hostile act on the part of a Korean court against Japan. Besides the stolen statue, what did the Korean side gain through this trial? The case simply made the Kannonji-temple priest and pro-Korea citizens in Tsushima angry and the annual friendly cultural exchange was cancelled. On top of all these, an unfavorable impression was created in that the practices of a court in South Korea are far from those practiced by civilized nations. If it had been China, they would have never committed such a childish act. Instead, they would have returned the statue, as a benevolent partner, and proposed to put the statue in mutual care, in the name of Sino-Japan friendship.

As this case indicates, we will see how irrational and baseless Korean anti-Japanese claims are. South Korea seems to hate Japan, no matter what. And yet, from top to bottom, the South Korean economy totally depends on Japan. This situation is beyond rational understanding.

Automobiles, household appliances, shipbuilding and steel manufacturing—these are industries with international appeal, of which South Korea brags, all of which would have never come into existence without technical advice from Japan. If Japan were to stop exporting engineering equipment and raw materials, Korean factories would be instantly forced to close down.

It is no exaggeration to say that South Korea's life-and-death is in Japan's hands. Why is it that, as South Korea hates Japan so much, they turn to Japan for help in times of need? Why is it that Japan never fails to render aid to South Korea as the latter, constantly hurling abuse, never misses a chance to pull down the former? There are many cases of conflict between countries and ethnic groups closely related to each other in terms of geography and history, such as India and Pakistan, Iran and Iraq, and Israel and Palestine. But we have never seen a case, for example, in which Pakistan would provoke India in order to gain technical assistance. It is indeed a rare case that, while Japan and South Korea remain in an awkward relationship, the two countries have always relied on each other. If we ever try to rationally explain this bizarre relationship, we will only end up with sheer confusion.

The Symbolic reflex of “the 36 years of Imperialist Japan”

Once Koreans mention “the thirty-six years of Imperialist Japan”, many Japanese tend to stop thinking, step backward and agree to whatever unreasonable remarks the other side makes. It reminds us of the climax in every episode of a popular Japanese TV drama, *Mito Komon*: a villainous local officer suddenly becomes obedient as soon as Komon’s medicine case, which bears the seal of the Tokugawa shogunate, is presented in front of the villain. I would refer to the thirty-six years of Imperialist Japan as “the medicine case reflex.”

In the past, in a popular TV talk show dubbed “Japanese people, you look strange there,” Mr. Rufin Zomahoun, from the west African country of the Republic of Benin (and currently Benin’s ambassador to Japan), on the occasion of then Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo’s words of “keen reflection on the past history and sincere apology” in a joint declaration between Japan and South Korea with then South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung in October 1998, noted that, “Japan ruled South Korea for 36 years. European countries made Africa suffer for 700 years from slave trading and colonial rule. But they never apologized, not even once. In this respect, I think Japan is a wonderful country.” At that time, shouting “Imperialist Japan” and the “medicine case effect” had far greater effects than they do now. Many Japanese were pleased to hear Mr. Zomahoun’s words. What Japanese people were dying to say, but never dared to express, African Mr. Zomahoun vocalized with precision.

However, a Korean woman who was present at the studio stood up and shrieked, “This is as if a(n) [African] person, who was raped ten times, was saying, ‘You [South Korea] were raped only once and so you should put up with it.’”

Afterwards, the studio became chaotic and totally out of control. Angry Korean and Chinese words flew all over the studio as well as words of support by foreigners for Mr. Zomahoun.

When a “Korean resident” in Japan named Shin Su-gok¹ (despite being born in Japan, she seems to prefer the appellation) appeared in another Japanese TV show, *Live TV till Morning*, she chided Japanese university students on a studio tour: “You Japanese raped

¹ Shin Su-gok was born in 1959 in Japan, a third generation Korean “resident” in Japan. She is human resource development consultant, freelance writer and political activist.

Koreans who gave birth to resident Koreans in Japan. You should realize this fact.”

The point in common with Ms. Shin’s words and the aforementioned South Korean woman’s is that they compared Japan’s annexation of Korea to rape. I felt that their words were somewhat unconvincing. To be more precise, I felt uncomfortable.

A year after this incident, Diet Representative Nishimura Shingo said in an interview with *Weekly Playboy* (issue of November 2, 1999): “National defense means preventing our women from being raped by men from other countries.” His view provoked severe protests—that his view “infringes” on women’s rights. As a result, Representative Nishimura was obliged to resign as Undersecretary of Defense. The author is very much interested to know how female Social Democratic Party lawmakers who responded with fury to Mr. Nishimura’s comment will react to the aforementioned references to “rape” by the two South Korean women.

Korean idiosyncrasy that compares Japan’s annexation of Korea to rape

It has been pointed out that in South Korea the anti-Japanese frenzy as it exists today was rapidly accelerated during the Presidency of Kim Young-sam, the first civilian president of South Korea. (Before his term, the South Korean tradition was military dictatorships.) President Kim carried out a small cultural revolution in which the “debris of the Imperialist Japan,” buildings, facilities and customs from the annexation period, were totally demolished and abolished.

The immediate target was the former office building of the Governor-General. It was then used as a museum. Regarding this Gothic Governor-General’s office building, many South Koreans argued that it should be preserved as a historical landmark and from an aesthetic point of view as well. There was much controversy over the building, between people for and against preservation. Among those for demolition was writer Chong Un-hyon, who strongly supported getting rid of the building, saying “How dear and darling was the baby my wife gave birth to after she was raped, still I could not bring myself to call the baby my own.” (*The Cultural Anthropology of Pro-Japanese and Anti-Japanese Sentiment*, by Choe Gil-song, Akashi Library.)

Needless to say, the baby the raped wife bore refers to the Governor-General’s office. I

am not sure whether his referring to rape may have influenced the majority or not. Ultimately, it was decided to demolish the Governor-General's office in 1995 and now there is nothing left. Only the steeple is preserved at the Independence Memorial Hall in Tennen City. "My wife was raped"—Mr. Chong's expression is far more shocking than those of the two women I previously mentioned. But that is not all—there is more. There is also another comparison: "My daughter was raped."

The fundamental treaty between Japan and South Korea² was finally concluded after 12 years of long, tedious negotiations. During one of the negotiation sessions, Korean representatives complained endlessly about the damages brought by the Annexation. Japan's leading representative, Mr. Kubota Kanichiro, advisor to Japan's Foreign Minister (at that time) said, "Japan's rule over Korea brought many profits to Korean people by building railroads and ports, and creating farm land." This caused the meeting to temporarily break up. The then-Foreign Minister, Okazaki Katsuo, did not ask Mr. Kubota to resign—rather, he strongly supported him, saying, "He just said the right thing in the right way." I am very much impressed with the fact that Japan used to have such a minister and a diplomat with gritty determination. Naturally, and as usual, South Koreans responded very emotionally to the Japanese minister's comment. Former professor at Kang-yo University, Kim Yon-un, who is known for publishing outrageous history books, such as *The Real Nature of the Japanese Language—The Great King of Wa Speaks the Language of Baekje* (Sango Kan, publisher), described Mr. Kubota's view, "To use a comparison, it is as if a rapist who raped a precious girl of her parents' pride and made her pregnant impudently told her parents, "Now that I gave her good seeds, you should be grateful for that." (*The South Koreans and the Japanese*, by Kim Yon-un, Simul Publishing Society).

Japan and Korea share a relationship based on human nature

It may only be ignorance on my part, but I have never heard someone say, "Britain raped Malaysia and Hong Kong," or "Spain raped one country after another in South America," let alone, "England raped Ireland." In world histories, there are no statements that

² Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea signed on June 22, 1965.

“Germany forcibly raped Austria” or “Silla³ raped Koguryo⁴ and Baekje⁵.” It is equally hard to understand that South Korean history scholars never mention that Yayoi⁶ people raped Jomon⁷ people or that Baekje raped Wa. At the same time, they never cease to claim that Japan was created by immigrants from the Korean peninsula.

I suppose that there is something particular in their history that urges South Koreans to compare Japan’s annexation of Korea to raping.

My conclusion is that the Japan-Korea relationship, or, frankly speaking, the anti-Japanese and Korea-phobia (or the outward appearance to flatter Korea) relationship that ties the two countries together is very uniquely human in terms of underlying eros. It is a kind of love-hate relation, but there is more to it than that. In short, the relationship is abnormal.

Using terms such as sexual impulse, libido and eros as keys, this book, unlike any other, analyzes the perverted relation between Japan and Korea and discusses the two countries from the viewpoint not of a university professor or an international journalist but from a former writer for an insightful adult magazine with maniac followers.

Abnormality is a very human. Abnormality is a microcosm of humanity. In this sense, the Japan-Korea relationship is very human.

There are parents and children who cannot be independent of each other, no matter how grown-up they have become. Looking closely, we can see their co-dependent relationship. Strictly speaking, this is an abnormal parent-child relationship. Among these types of parents and children, it is an extremely rare case where they are able to achieve a very productive relationship, such as the case of singer Misora Hibari and her mother Kimie.

³ Silla (57 BC – 935 AD) was a kingdom located in southern and central parts of the Korean Peninsula. Silla, along with Baekje and Goguryo, formed the three kingdom of Korea.

⁴ Goguryo (37 BC – 668 AD) was a kingdom located in the northern and central parts of the Korean Peninsula, extending into the southern and central parts of Manchuria.

⁵ Baekje (18 BC – 660 AD) was a kingdom located in southwest Korea.

⁶ Yayoi period (around 1,000-600 BC to 200 AD) of Japanese history.

⁷ The Jomon period lasted from 14,000 BC to 1,000-600 BC. Jomon pottery is the main characteristic of this period’s culture.

Most of these relationships, however, are very unproductive and regressive to the extent of the weakness of the parent and child.

As it is important to strongly advise parents and children to learn to become independent of one another, I would like to state that it is necessary for both Japan and Korea to become independent of each other. The twenty-first century provides a very good opportunity in this regard.

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