

Development of Korean Communities in Northern Jiāndǎo in the 1910s and the March First Movement: Centered on the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in the Lóngjǐng Region

Li Yongzhi
Yanbian University

Abstract

The peninsula-wide March First Movement in 1919 demonstrated the cohesiveness of the Korean people and served as the opening chapter to a new history; the entire peninsula was flooded with protests for independence, and shocked by their intensity, the Japanese colonial government engaged in indiscriminate suppression. The March First Movement propelled demonstrations to be held as well in Northern Jiāndǎo ("Puk-kando"), situated north of the Tumen River. Thousands of demonstrators gathered on March 13 in Lóngjǐng to read the Declaration of Independence as part of the demonstration. Although dozens of people were injured due to the suppression by the Chinese armed forces (seventeen were killed), numerous demonstrations (currently known are fifty-eight) took place throughout Northern Jiāndǎo. A frontier region, Northern Jiāndǎo was a unique cultural space wherein Koreans who crossed into this borderland formed their own communities; with active ethno-nationalist education and religious propaganda, the region served as a nexus of ethno-national and anti-Japanese consciousness. In addition, due to the frequent exchanges between the Korean peninsula and the Maritime Province, Lóngjǐng in particular served as the cradle of ethno-national independence movements.

Keywords: March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in Lóngjǐng, Kanmin Association, Independence Movement, Kim Yakyŏn, Declaration of Independence

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1. Preface

With the centennial of the March First Movement, the landscape of large-scale, popular movements toward independence on the Korean peninsula can be palpably felt from the disparate photographs that capture the momentum. Deeply moving are the images of Koreans dressed in white carrying the Korean flag in their hands and shouting for independence in the streets. On March 13, a great crowd gathered in Lóngjǐng in Northern Jiāndǎo to protest for independence.

In Northern Jiāndǎo (referring in this article to a region encompassing the four provinces surrounding the Tumen River where Korean people lived, namely Yanji, Hélóng, Wāngqīng, and Húnychūn), Korean migrants initially formed settlements, which they subsequently developed into veritable Korean communities. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Koreans living in the northern frontier region of the Korean peninsula began to migrate in mass-scale, and by the 1880s had formed a Korean settlement in a region to the north of the Tumen River. In 1885, the Special Zone for Migrant Koreans, an area of about 275 kilometers long and 157-196 kilometers wide, was established, stimulating the border-crossing by Koreans into this region and making convenient mass migration.

Thereafter, the Qing Chinese government instituted numerous administrative units to manage the migrant Koreans by assimilating and managing them in a unified fashion. In the twentieth century, the Koreans who had migrated north established civic organizations such as the Kanmin Education Association, to promote education for ethno-national consciousness. They also established the Kanmin Association as a follow-up organization, ultimately developing an ethnocentric, autonomous organization representing the interests of Korean people. In fact, some scholars view the establishment of the Kanmin Association as the incipient formation of a Korean community in Northern Jiāndǎo (Kim 2001).

After the Japanese annexation of Korea in August 1910, numerous independence activists sought asylum in Northern Jiāndǎo. There, they engaged themselves in various projects to build a base for independence movements in the disparate Korean communities. Beginning with ethno-national education and religious propaganda in the 1910s, the area quickly became a matrix of Korean independence

movements.

Meanwhile, after World War I, President Woodrow Wilson declared the principle of national self-determination, instilling in the oppressed people and colonies of the world hope for independence. The Koreans were no exception and presently announced their independence to the world, undertaking numerous activities for such purpose. Then, on January 22, 1919, the news that Emperor Kojong, who was under house arrest at Tōksugung (Tōksu Palace) in Seoul, was poisoned by the Japanese spread, inflaming rage. On February 8, the Korean students in Japan held a rally and proclaimed Korean Independence. On March 1, the mass-scale demonstration for independence, known familiarly as the March First Movement, took place in Seoul; nearly 500,000 people participated.

On March 7, 1919, when news of the March First Movement was disseminated to the leaders of independence movements in Northern Jiāndǎo, they resolved to hold a celebration for Korean independence on March 13 in Lóngjǐng and sent a letter to each pertinent region in Northern Jiāndǎo. Lóngjǐng was chosen as the location of celebration because it was not only the first place pioneered by migrant Koreans and the center of politics, economy, and culture of the Korean community, but also the seat of the Japanese consul general. On March 13, tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered in Lóngjǐng, and as the church bell rang at noon, those gathered read aloud the Declaration of Independence and carried out anti-Japanese demonstrations.

This article examines the Korean communities in Northern Jiāndǎo and the March First Movement through the lens of the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in Lóngjǐng. First, the study aims to contribute to illuminating the context in which such a large-scale, systematic movement could take place by closely examining pertinent economic development, changes in Korean civic organizations, dissemination of ethno-national education, and the growth of ethno-national consciousness. Next, by focusing on the development and characteristics of the movement, the study seeks to investigate the particularities of and reasons for failure behind the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in the Lóngjǐng region of Northern Jiāndǎo.

2. Development of the Korean Community in Northern Jiāndǎo

a) Regional Development of Northern Jiāndǎo and Korean Civic Organizations

Thus far, the history of Northern Jiāndǎo has largely concentrated on the history of immigration in the region and anti-Japanese struggles premised on ethno-national education. From the perspective of the history of independence movements, the formation of an immigrant community and the training of anti-Japanese activists through education are certainly the foundation of the Korean ethno-national history of Northern Jiāndǎo. However, to enrich the understanding of Korean communities in Northern Jiāndǎo, it is necessary to examine the particular context in Northern Jiāndǎo and the specificities of economic relations between the region and the Korean peninsula. Moreover, aspects such as the strategic factors surrounding the persistent struggle for dominance over Northern Jiāndǎo between China and Japan in the ensuing years will help effect a more holistic understanding of the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations and the subsequent armed resistance against Japan.

Northern Jiāndǎo is not only a region wherein numerous migrant Koreans settled, but also a strategic location that connects Korea, China, and Russia. Consequently, the region was at the center of competition for dominance between China and Japan. For Japan, it was a crucial area in terms of the military, infrastructure, and resources essential for the invasion of Manchuria. At the time, there was a naval base in Vladivostok, and the militarization of the Chinese Eastern Railway proved a headache for the Japanese forces in the northern frontier.

If Japan could root itself in Northern Jiāndǎo, it could establish the first line of defense along the Húncūn-Liángshuǐ-Yanji-Emuzhen route and transform the area of On'gwi-Ch'ōngjin-Wōnsan into a military reserve, cooperating at close range with the Japanese Korean Army and at the distant range with the *Nanman* Defense Force. Given this strategic position, Japan indeed actively pursued the invasion of Northern Jiāndǎo after the Russo-Japanese War. It appears that the

intervention in the so-called “Jiāndǎo problem” was also based on this strategy. Of course, it was also a location wherein Qing China could strengthen its hold on the eastern frontier in Jilin, if the Chinese government treated the region appropriately and stopped the expansion of the Japanese and Russian forces.

In fact, the Qing Chinese government did remain vigilant in the Northern Jiāndǎo region to prevent the expansion of Russian and Japanese forces. For example, in 1910 there was a plague in Manchuria that killed 50,000 people. At the time, Qing China was working closely with Russia and Japan to control the epidemic, but it is interesting to note that China remained suspicious of both Russia and Japan the entire time the three were working together; China viewed epidemic control as an issue of not only a battle against disease, but also a fierce political struggle. Consequently, the Qing Chinese government vigorously promoted international cooperation, and simultaneously remained on guard of the possibility that Japan or Russia would manufacture a pretext and violate Chinese sovereignty. The Northern Jiāndǎo region was a border region connecting China, Russia, and the Korean peninsula, thus strategically significant for Japan’s continental policy; consequently, the need to remain vigilant about Russia and Japan was ever more pressing. In this vein, when To Pin, the Commander of the Southeastern Jilin Guards, examined areas under epidemic control including Dunhua and Emuzhen, he advised the overseer of military matters in Jilin, “Though no significant negotiations transpired today, that the Russians have isolated Vladivostok and the Japanese have reduced the wharfs on the coastal routes along the Tumen River indicates that they are aimed at Húncūn” (Lee 2017, 29).

Regarding disease control in the Northern Jiāndǎo region, China pursued international cooperation, hiring Japanese physicians and promoting disease prevention measures espoused by the Japanese. As described in the previous section, however, it always kept a vigilant eye on Japan. If at this time, there was international cooperation in medicine, sanitation, and disease prevention in the Northern Jiāndǎo region, Russia and Japan were the main targets in the foreign trade of Northern Jiāndǎo.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the commercial center of the Northern Jiāndǎo region was Húncūn. Subsequently, in the 1910s, a new commercial center

was formed in and around Lóngjǐng. Trade in Húncūn was conducted *via* land and water routes. The land route mainly consisted of two paths; one was operated in Russia or along the East Sea of Korea, namely the “Eastern Route” spanning from Vladivostok through Posyet to Húncūn in the east, and the other route stretched from Jilin through Dunhua and Yanji, and then to Liángshuǐ in the west. On the other hand, the water channel was operated by ship from the East Sea of Korea to Húncūn because the supply on the Tumen and Húncūn Rivers was extremely high at that time.

Qing China built docks on the rivers and managed the water route, through which part of the imports from Russia and Korea were transported to Húncūn. At the time, the commodities purchased through the “eastern route” were mainly imports from the West such as petroleum, hemp cloth, white cloth, and watches, and the goods purchased through the “western route” consisted of gold and silver ornaments, silk, and medicinal products. Because it was cheaper to transport imports from the West, they were distributed to the inland area in Húncūn, and sold in places as distant as Wāngqīng, Ningguta, Yanji, and Dunhua.

Products brought through international trade via Húncūn at that time were either transported to the interior Chinese markets or exported to foreign countries, while some were imported into the markets in Northern Jiāndǎo and sold at general stores. Among the foreign goods on sale at these stores were Japanese, American, and British cloths, the Japanese ones outnumbering the others. There was also Russian twill, with all of the five or six different kinds manufactured in Russia. In addition, there was seafood from Russia and Japan as well as Russian and British cigarettes.

All wool products were imported from Russia. Cotton was imported from Jilin and Japan, and salt was mostly imported from Britain, with some imported from the Russian Maritime Province. The foreign trade in Húncūn at this time was well developed, propelling Húncūn to become a commercial center of the Northern Jiāndǎo region. There are a few reasons for this. First, the upper region of Húncūn opened relatively early. Second, the geography provided numerous advantages. Third, it had already been in the midst of development for some time as the crux in the changes undergone by China, Korea, and Russia.

Due to the aforementioned conditions, Húichūn quickly became the first center of trade in the Northern Jiāndǎo region. However, changes in the international situation began to threaten Húichūn's status as an international trade center. In 1909, the closure of the free port in Vladivostok wielded great impact on the Húichūn trade. As a result of the closure, Húichūn's foreign trade reached its nadir, and it became difficult to export local agricultural products. Moreover, after World War I erupted in 1914, Russia forbade exports due to the lack of domestic supplies. Consequently, Húichūn and Russia's trade dwindled to almost none.

On the other hand, the trade between the Northern Jiāndǎo region and the Korean peninsula increased at this time, and the Korean ports of Unggi and Ch'ōngjin replaced Vladivostok as the main ports of trade. In 1917, the Northern Jiāndǎo trade volume with the Korean peninsula accounted for 65% of total trade, followed by Russia with 10%, and Jilin with 25%. In other words, the trade volume with the Korean peninsula exceeded the trade with Jilin, propelling the peninsula to the head of domestic and foreign trade in the Northern Jiāndǎo region. During this period, the trade between the Northern Jiāndǎo region and the Korean peninsula developed around Yanji and Lóngjǐng.

Located approximately 200 kilometers from Korea's Hoeryōng, Lóngjǐng began to emerge as a new commercial center as part of the land trade route between China and Korea. As a result, the international trade center in the Northern Jiāndǎo region began to shift from Húichūn to Lóngjǐng and its surroundings. In the transition, the infrastructure from Ch'ōngjin to Hoeryōng was improved, and the Japanese tried to utilize Ch'ōngjin Port as the central port of trade in Northern Jiāndǎo. As the Ch'ōngjin Port route was shorter than that between Pusan and Dalian, Japan was able to occupy a favorable position in trade and maintain an advantage in trade relations with Russia as well (Kim 2008, 156). In addition, the opening of the railway from the Ch'ōnbo Mountain to the Tumen River played an important role. In 1918, the center of trade shifted from Húichūn, within the trade sphere of Vladivostok and Unggi Port, to Lóngjǐng, an area influenced by Ch'ōngjin Port. The table below shows in detail the in this shift in the trade center of Northern Jiāndǎo in the 1910s.

〈Table 1〉 Trade in Northern Jiāndǎo, 1910–1919 (unit: *Haegwan* Currency)

Year	Húnychūn Maritime Customs		Total	Lóngjǐng Maritime Customs		Total
Year	Import	Export		Import	Export	
1910	158,008	151,399	309,407	121,569	9,834	131,403
1911	382,486	263,275	645,761	127,290	19,496	146,786
1912	599,287	270,667	869,954	352,504	119,877	472,381
1913	595,396	522,251	1,117,647	671,199	174,315	845,514
1914	551,381	254,319	805,700	506,826	58,672	565,498
1915	417,093	205,247	622,340	351,533	91,532	443,065
1916	429,527	269,728	699,255	531,508	112,577	644,085
1917	469,776	575,914	1,045,690	811,177	726,669	1,537,846
1918	585,921	659,110	1,245,031	1,582,425	1,187,690	2,770,115
1919	722,080	513,356	1,235,436	2,234,406	1,080,972	3,315,378
Total	4,910,955	3,685,266	8,596,221	7,290,437	3,581,634	10,872,071

As shown above, the volume of import and export in the Northern Jiāndǎo region was higher in Húnychūn than in Lóngjǐng until 1916; it was from 1917 that the Lóngjǐng trade volume began to outpace that of Húnychūn. The main reason for such a shift was that during World War I, Russia limited trade due to the shortage of domestic goods, reducing trade between Russia and China. During the same period, the volume of trade between China and the Korean peninsula through Húnychūn actually increased; however, the increase was considerably smaller than that in Lóngjǐng. After the October Revolution, Russia fell into disarray, and as such, what was now the Soviet Union closed all ports such as Vladivostok and Posyet Bay, rendering international trade in Húnychūn possible only through the Korean peninsula. During this period, the land-based trade of Lóngjǐng developed at a rapid pace.

As can be seen, the Húnychūn area served as the initial foreign trade center of the Northern Jiāndǎo region due to its convenient transportation through places such as Vladivostok. However, as the international context shifted, the maritime trade between China and Russia declined, supplanted by the land-route trade between China and the Korean peninsula, crowning Lóngjǐng and its environs the

new center of international trade in the Northern Jiāndǎo region. A bustling market formed in Lóngjǐng, and a meat market and a market that opened once every five days transformed Lóngjǐng into a place where crowds of considerable size gathered. In fact, the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations occurred on a day when the markets were opened, enabling numerous people from the environs to gather.

Lóngjǐng was the political, economic, and cultural center of Korean communities in the Northern Jiāndǎo region. At that time, 50% of the Koreans living in the region resided in Yanji, 36% in Hélóng, 10% in Húchūn, and 4% in Wāngqīng. In 1919, the population Northern Jiāndǎo was 400,000, among whom 300,000 were Koreans (Suh 1981, 115). In Yanji County were two urban districts, namely Lóngjǐng and Yanji; the former was where the Korean population was concentrated. Japan installed its consul general in Lóngjǐng as well. The main cause of the concentration of Koreans in the Lóngjǐng basin was that Sōjōnbōl and P'yōnggangbōl were there, places convenient for rice farming, and the majority of migrant Koreans were rice farmers. The settlement structure whereby rice paddies spread along the river and alongside them, Korean concentrations, formed along each stream of the Tumen River. In the 1910s, Koreans in the region began to negotiate with the local Chinese governments; a representative Korean group was the Kanmin Association.

In the 1910s, Korean communities in the Northern Jiāndǎo region appear to have been formed through the Kanmin Association. As a pro-autonomy organization, the Kanmin Association negotiated closely with the Chinese local governments on behalf of the interests of Koreans. The Association holds significant meaning not only in the history of anti-Japanese independence movements of Northern Jiāndǎo Koreans, but also in the history of the development of Korean autonomy movements. In particular, it may not be an exaggeration to trace the origin of the historical significance of the Korean-Chinese ability to exercise their autonomy within the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture to the Kanmin Association (Ch'oe 2009, 133-174).

Although the Kanmin Association was dissolved in a year, the Association wielded significant influence upon the educational, religious, pro-autonomy, and

anti-Japanese movements of Koreans in Northern Jiāndǎo. The Kanmin Association was representative of civic organizations with a pro-China, anti-Japan leaning, maintaining an intimate tie to the Chinese local governments at all times. In addition, the Association promoted the entry of Koreans into the region as part of the strategic move to escape the Japanese consular jurisdiction. The pro-autonomy movement of the Kanmin Association carried the meaning of “local autonomy” and played an auxiliary role in local administration. As such, the Association can be regarded as a popular civic organization with an inclination toward self-governance, formed to preserve the ethnic Korean communities in Northern Jiāndǎo.

The previous Kanmin Education Association had also been established with the aim of autonomy, but because its activities were focused on education for the Koreans living in Northern Jiāndǎo, it was limited as an autonomy association. On the other hand, because the Kanmin Association, which was established with the Kanmin Education Association as its matrix, was responsible for all functions as the self-governing body of Korean communities in Northern Jiāndǎo, it can be understood as a fully autonomous organization. Following the dissolution of the Kanmin Association, its members continued to pursue protection and promotion of the interests of Korean people by establishing organizations such as the Kwōnōp Patriots Association. The People’s Association of Kando (Jiāndǎo), which was founded directly following the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations, can also be understood as offspring of the Kanmin Association; the central members of the Kanmin Association established the People’s Association of Kando (Jiāndǎo) and continued the independence movements.

What must be noted in the development of Korean communities in this period is the ethno-national consciousness that independence activists in the 1910s instilled in said communities through general religious education as well as schools. At the time, the religious background of the executives of the Kanmin Education Association, with the exception of the few such as Park Ch’anik and Yun Hae (who were followers of the Church of Tan’gun, the mythical progenitor of the Korean ethno-nation), was Christianity, including Kim Yakyōn. Through Christianity, they sought to accept modern, “developed” thoughts and cultures of

the West, and more importantly, sought to utilize extraterritorial rights of foreign missionaries. In particular, in February of 1911, Lee Tonghwi and Kye Pong'u arrived in Northern Jiāndǎo and began to advocate for the so-called "Theory of Saving the Nation through Religion" (Ch'oe 2003, 262). As an extension of this thought, they practiced education for autonomy and ethno-national consciousness by establishing churches and schools in settlements of migrant Koreans throughout the Northern Jiāndǎo region. Moreover, after the March First Movement, they also established paramilitary groups to carry out armed struggles. Between 1906, when the first church was established in Northern Jiāndǎo, and 1921, when the presbytery was organized, there were, in the four counties of Northern Jiāndǎo, hundreds of churches, including thirty organized churches, fifty-seven unorganized churches, and twenty-eight nascent churches (Suh 1981, 115).

b) Development of Education in Northern Jiāndǎo and the Growth of Ethno-National Consciousness

The modern private education movement in Northern Jiāndǎo was an extension of the anti-Japanese ethno-national education movement on the Korean peninsula at the time. It was also influenced by the modernization theology movement in China. In 1904, the first public school in Northern Jiāndǎo, Puksan Middle School, was established in Yanji County, and eleven new schools were established before 1910. With the establishment of Sōjōn Academy by Yi Sangsōl and others in 1906, numerous private schools for Korean students were established throughout Northern Jiāndǎo, contributing significantly to the establishment of a Korean cultural sphere and enhancing ethno-national consciousness in the region. In particular, Lóngjǐng and Hélóng had large concentrations of Koreans, and offered convenient transportation to and from the Korean peninsula and the Russian Maritime Province. Thus, Lóngjǐng developed into a cradle of anti-Japanese national education, centered on the educational movement vis-à-vis private schools in Northern Jiāndǎo.

According to the survey of private academies by the Commander of the Japanese Military Police in Chosōn in December 1916, there were 6,314 students from 239

private schools established throughout the entire region of Manchuria. Among them, 157 schools were in Northern Jiāndǎo, accounting for 65.7% of the total number of schools, and represented 3,879 students, accounting for 61.1% of the total number of students (Kang 1973, 141-165). The schools famous in Lóngjǐng at the time, namely Myōngdong Middle School, Chōngdong School, Changdong School, and Ch'angdong School, attracted students both domestic and international. These schools had gained their illustrious reputation by the fact that the famed among the exiled Korean patriots took on the teaching role and meticulously carried out ethno-national education.

These schools taught subjects such as Korean language, Korean history, and Korean geography, and provided subjects such as mental training, music, and physical education, thereby thoroughly instilling anti-Japanese ethno-national consciousness. In the early days, the Kanmin Education Association had compiled textbooks with the aim of heightening ethno-national consciousness. Textbooks on the history of Korea and *Osubulmang* (literally “Not even in sleep shall we forget.”) by Kye Pong'u, for example, were used by said schools as major conduits of ethno-national education (Kim 2013, 147). Students who were educated at these schools were then scattered throughout Northern Jiāndǎo, themselves establishing schools and fostering numerous anti-Japanese independence activists. For example, the progenitor of the Myōngdong School was the Myōngdong Academy established by Kim Yakyōn. Later, it welcomed Chōng Jaemyōn, Head of the Northern Jiāndǎo Board of Education dispatched by the New People's Association (Sinminhoe). Chōng actively revamped the outdated education system, and the school eventually became a Christian institution. In 1918, anti-Japanese Koreans based themselves at Myōngdong School. The records of the Japanese Military Police show that these Koreans kept in intimate communication with the anti-Japanese activists in Russia and the radicals in Vladivostok, and monitored Japanese activities (Han 2009, 267). As is evident, the Japanese government closely watched over the independence activists' every move by keeping a vigilant watch on ethnic Korean schools such as the Myōngdong School.

The close monitoring by the Japanese notwithstanding, the students of the Myōngdong School carried out a massive independence movement alongside the

Korean residents after they were informed of the March First Movement. They copied the “Declaration of Independence” from Seoul and sent the copies to disparate niches of ethnic Koreans throughout Northern Jiāndǎo. They also participated alongside majority of the members of the Myōngdong Church in the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations. In addition, before the massive demonstrations of March 13, the Ch’ungnyōl Guards were established with the Myōngdong School as its center; it consisted of 320 students from various schools. At the Kwangsōng School, the Fierce Tiger Assassination Brigade was formed with a teacher, Kim Sangho, as its captain. As is evident, students took charge of the anti-Japanese movements throughout the Northern Jiāndǎo region. It was in the wake of the expansion of anti-Japanese consciousness that independence demonstrations were carried out in Northern Jiāndǎo.

3. March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in Lóngjǐng and Its Impact

a) Development of the Movement

The equivalent of the March First movement in Northern Jiāndǎo was well prepared and systematic. As has been seen, anti-Japanese organizations and schools cultivated independence activists through propaganda and education, instilling in them intense ethno-national consciousness. They also raised the ethno-national consciousness of the Koreans through night schools and lectures. The independence demonstrations were carried out in such an expansive anti-Japanese atmosphere.

The independence activists of Northern Jiāndǎo promoted their movement by connecting to the Russian Maritime Province as well as the Korean peninsula, dispatching Kim Yakyōn to the former and Kang Pong’u to the latter. In addition, between February 18 and February 20, thirty-three key independence activists (including Ku Ch’unsōn, Kim Yōnghak, Ko P’yōng, Pak Tongwōn, Yi Hongjun, Yi Sūnggūn, Park Kyōngch’ōl, Kim Sunmun, Kang Yonghōn, Yi Sōngho, Paek Yujōng, Ch’oe Pongyōl, Park Chōnghun, and Kim Tongsik) gathered in secret at

the home of Park Tongwŏn in Yanji and discussed appropriate strategies of the independence movement in the Northern Jiāndǎo region. At the meeting, they formed the Kwangbok Guards (“Independence Guards”) in preparation for clashes with the Japanese military police during demonstrations.

Here, the leader of the movement is also clear. Kim Yakyŏn was already a recognized leader of the Korean people in the Northern Jiāndǎo region; as the representative of the region, Kim went to the Russian Maritime Province to collaborate with other independence activists, particularly on the writing and proclamation of the “Declaration of Independence.” Before returning, he also discussed how to recruit delegates and raise funds to dispatch delegates to the Paris Peace Conference. However, Kim became a key surveillance target for China and Japan, and during the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations, was arrested by the Chinese police in the Waryong area of Yanji. In addition to Kim Yakyŏn, leaders such as Chŏng Jaemyŏn, Ku Ch’unsŏn, and Kim Yŏnghak led the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations, ultimately effecting a popular movement in which people from all walks of life and strata participated.

After news of the March First Movement and the “Declaration of Independence” by the thirty-three national representatives were received on March 7, the independence leaders of Northern Jiāndǎo decided to hold a celebration for the independence of Korea on March 13 on the north side of Lóngjǐng. They then quickly made preparations; the “Declaration of Independence” and informative brochures for the celebration were copied in the basement of Ŭnjin Middle School where ethno-nationalist education was practiced (Association for Compilation of History of Korean Independence Movement 1973, 93),¹⁾ and then relayed secretly by well-trained characters throughout the entire region of Northern Jiāndǎo and Dunhua. All participants had made preparations, including making the Korean flag by the designated date, led by each school’s teachers and other responsible parties (Yun 1998, 462).

At that time, all Koreans within and outside the city of Lóngjǐng, with the exception of the staunchly pro-Japanese, were notified of the celebration and

1) In fact, the Ŭnjin Middle School was established in February 1920.

participated. Students (from Myōngdong Middle School, Chōngdong Middle School, and Ch'angdong Middle School, as well as schools in Posōng and Kwangsōng) along with other Koreans gathered in front of Sōjōn Field. In “Northern Jiāndǎo, Past and Present,” Kye Pong’u estimates that the crowd numbered 30,000. In “Milcha” by Kwak Chonghui, the estimate given is around 20,000. Moreover, “Milcha” states that after approximately 20,000 gathered in Lóngjǐng, they were forcibly dispersed, and that efforts to suppress other such gatherings were not as effective as they should have been. On the other hand, a confidential report by the Japanese claims, “Approximately 6,000 gathered in a circle in the square to the left of the consul general in Lóngjǐng, and four people took turns giving speeches to proclaim the independence of Korea in the middle of that crowd.” The large discrepancy in the estimates of crowd size is believed to have been due to the fact that each party garnered its estimate according to the specific purpose that benefitted each party. As such, the estimate by the Chinese side may prove more useful, as this side might have had fewer ulterior motives to misrepresent the estimate. As a reference point, a region-wide student athletic event was held on the day of Tano Festival, the fifth day of the fifth month on the lunar calendar, in 1913, and present were approximately 15,000 people, including students and residents (Park 2009, 93). This perspective is also held by researchers who have conducted field work there. However, whatever the case may be, it is clear that large crowds gathered, a fact buttressed by the crucial photographs previously presented.

On the day, Kim Yōnghak read the “Declaration of Independence,” and after the speeches by leaders from disparate places in Northern Jiāndǎo, the crowd began to chant and protest for Korean independence. However, a surprise aggression by the Chinese military police, acting upon Japan’s request, resulted in thirteen people dying from gunshot wounds at the site and many more injured. Four of the wounded protesters later died in the hospital. On March 17, thousands of people gathered for the funeral, where they expressed their devastation and rage at having lost their nation.

After the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in Lóngjǐng, dozens of demonstrations were held in various places throughout Northern Jiāndǎo; in face

of the military police, they felt palpably the need for unity among Koreans and, perhaps more cogently, armed resistance. Thus, after the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations, numerous independence movement associations were established throughout Northern Jiāndǎo, and many prepared and trained for armed resistance by procuring weapons and recruiting trainees.

An examination of the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in Lóngjǐng illustrates several points. First, the movement was systematic and thoroughly prepared. The links between the Russian Maritime Province and the Korean peninsula were extremely close, and leaders such as Kim Yakyŏn and Chŏng Jaemyŏn had actually journeyed to the Maritime Province. In addition, when Kang Pong'u went to the Korean peninsula on March 7 and returned with news of the March First Movement, within a short time period, the "Declaration of Independence" was copied and relayed throughout Northern Jiāndǎo, demonstrating the capabilities of a sophisticated organization. That the Ch'ungnyŏl Guards and the Kwangbok Guards were established in preparation for potential physical confrontation also demonstrates the level of precaution taken. When casualties actually did occur on the day, the wounded were immediately taken to Chehang Hospital, a church medical facility. Second, activists took charge of the central roles. Kim Yakyŏn, the chairman of the Kanmin Association, and numerous other figures who were leading the independence movements such as Chŏng Jaemyŏn, Kim Yŏnghak, and Pae Hyŏngsik were prominent independence activists who formed the core leadership of the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations. Third, the role of religious groups, especially Christians, was significant. Leaders such as Kim Yakyŏn and Kim Yŏnghak were Christian pastors, and a majority of the leadership was Christian. As many schools were built by religious groups, majority of the students who participated in and those who were at the forefront of the movement were also Christian. In short, a Christian group was at the center of the movement. Fourth, the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations were also a popular movement in which people from all walks of life and every stratum participated. Although as might be expected, agricultural workers represented majority of the participants, Koreans young and old participated. Fifth, students were at the forefront of the movement in preparing

for and the unfolding of the movement; many of them became independence activists later in life. Sixth, the purpose of the independence movement was clear because numerous intellectuals, or independence activists, participated in the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations. In Northern Jiāndǎo, independence activists from different backgrounds gathered to discuss the post-independence identity, espousing the republican stance and advocating for armed resistance after the movement. Of course, the aim was to build a government together with diplomatic liaison.

b) Impact of the Movement

The March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in the Lóngjǐng area were part of the March First Movement on the Korean Peninsula, which had a ripple effect that promoted the Korean independence movement in Manchuria. It also raised the independence movements in Northern Jiāndǎo to an entirely different plane. Following the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations, numerous independence movement organizations were formed throughout disparate areas in Northern Jiāndǎo, and these groups tried to establish the armed forces that would stimulate a war of independence. The effects of this movement can be understood in several ways. First, there appeared strong anti-Japanese militarist movements in the areas of Korean residence in Manchuria after the March First Movement; such movements were large-scale, and the duration, extremely long. For example, there were three large-scale demonstrations in Húnychūn; each protest drew thousands of people. Organized by Hwang Pyōnggil and others, the Húnychūn independence movements were unprecedentedly large in scale and violent. Before May, dozens of demonstrations of considerable scale were held throughout Northern Jiāndǎo. The demonstrations not only shocked the Japanese, but also buttressed anti-Japanese ethno-national movements on the Korean peninsula. Second, the participation of the Han Chinese students in the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in the Lóngjǐng area is also noteworthy. At the anti-Japanese demonstrations in Lóngjǐng were the Han Chinese students of the Lóngjǐng Tongsan School, who stood at the forefront of the demonstrations

alongside the student Ch'ungnyŏl Guards from the Myŏngdong School. When the bodies of those who perished were interred on March 17, the Chinese students once again participated, displaying solidarity between the Chinese and the Koreans. Subsequently, when the anti-Japanese ethno-national movements arose in Northern Jiāndǎo under the influence of the May Fourth Movement, Korean and Han Chinese students participated together, part and parcel in the anti-imperialist movement. Third, the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in Lóngjǐng further developed the anti-Japanese movement in the Northern Jiāndǎo region. After the movement, people of various places organized secret societies. Organizations such as the Ch'ungnyŏl Guards, Ŭiyong Guards, and Maengho Guards were established to strengthen anti-Japanese propaganda. Moreover, Japanese secret agents and pro-Japanese forces were assassinated as a warning against pro-Japanese proclivities. As a result, ethnic Korean police officers frequently refused to show up to work at the Japanese consul general or resigned altogether. Fourth, through the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations, Koreans obtained a heightened awareness of the importance of ethno-national unity and deepened sentiments regarding the necessity of armed resistance against the Japanese. Consequently, anti-Japanese leaders throughout the region established armed anti-Japanese groups. In short, it should be said that the foundations of armed struggle against the Japanese were established both psychologically and organizationally.

In addition to the discussion above, two supplementary explanations for the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations in Lóngjǐng must be forwarded in this paper. First concerns whether the “Declaration of Independence” read on that day really did come from the Korean peninsula. In his work, Yun Pyŏngsŏk argues that it is difficult to view the proclamation read on March 13 as the “Declaration of Independence” signed by thirty-three representatives that was delivered from the Korean peninsula. He argues that the read document was in fact the “Proclamation of Independence” with the signature “Residents of Northern Jiāndǎo” (Yun 1998). However, this document was written as an extension of a different “Proclamation of Independence of Chosŏn.” In other words, as the “Declaration of Independence” that was signed by Kim Yakyŏn and sixteen other

representatives was discovered, the question of exactly which declaration of independence was actually read arose. As mentioned above, the document read on March 13 was most likely the “Proclamation of Independence,” currently housed at the Independence Hall of Korea, that was signed “Korean Residents of Northern Jiāndǎo.”

A large-scale, unified people’s movement had been in the planning stages for a long time, in communication with leaders from both the Russian Maritime Province and the Korean peninsula in 1918 and at the Christian Conference in the beginning of 1919. Between February 18 and February 20, leaders met at Park Tongwǒn’s home to discuss strategies for the movement. In the resulting resolution, all churches and organizations in Northern Jiāndǎo are encouraged to cooperate to devote all their energy to the Korean independence movement. Moreover, all organizations in Northern Jiāndǎo should initiate demonstrations in line with the “Declaration of Independence of the Chosŏn People” to be proclaimed soon in the Russian Maritime Province, and after the proclamation, the prominent members of each organization in Northern Jiāndǎo should gather in Lóngjǐng and themselves proclaim independence so as to boost morale (Yun 1998, 459-460). Of course, even if it was not read directly, it would spread to various places in the future and play a major role in the development of the regional independence movement.

It is conceivable that even if the separate “Proclamation of Independence of Chosŏn” discovered later had not been read, it would have been disseminated throughout the region, significantly contributing to the development of local independence movements. What is noteworthy here is that the seventeen representatives, including Kim Yakyŏn, were pursuing two following strategies: One was to send representatives to the Paris Peace Conference in order to obtain resources for independence from international powers, and the other was to set up a fierce group of ethnic Koreans such the Kyŏlsa Guards to send such a group to the Korean peninsula to demand independence. Among the measures discussed was armed resistance that involved forming a paramilitary independence group that would enter the Korean peninsula. In other words, the measure sought to have paramilitary independence groups recognized both domestically and internationally

as militant groups, and to establish their controlling body as the ethno-national Korean government (Yun 1998, 469).

The second explanation regards the Lóngjǐng mausoleum of the anti-Japanese patriots of the March Thirteenth Independence Demonstrations. This mausoleum was constructed on April 10, 1990, after the tombs were confirmed. Currently, however, only thirteen tombs exist. Then, where are the bodies of the four who perished at the hospital? It is reasonable to believe that they must have been interred along with the others because the four died at the hospital before March 17, when the funeral was conducted for all seventeen casualties, namely the four who perished at the hospital and thirteen who died on-site on March 13. The names of all seventeen are currently recorded in the Register of Independence Patriots.

After March of 1919—the month during which significant and large-scale independence movements took place on the Korean peninsula, Northern Jiāndǎo, and other areas wherein Koreans had sought asylum—the Japanese empire had no choice but to re-examine their colonial strategies on the peninsula. With the so-called Cultural Rule, Japan began to engage in manipulative attempts to quell the intense resistance from the Korean people partly caused by the cruelty of Military Rule. Of course, Japan continued to ruthlessly subjugate independence organizations.

However, the Battle of Fengwudong that took place in Northern Jiāndǎo in 1920 served an unexpectedly severe blow to Japan. Having failed to capture the independence fighters, Japan massacred innocent civilians in what is called the “Great Catastrophe of Kyōngsin Year.”

4. Final Thoughts

The centennial of the March First Movement served as an opportunity to reflect upon the movement and its meaning. The outcome of such reflection can be summarized in the following three ways.

First, although we believe that we intrinsically know the March First Movement, numerous events held in commemoration actually have overshadowed deep

reflection. Scholarly discourse has yielded many a successful study, but there still remain details that call for further clarification. For example, we still do not know for certain how many people participated. Moreover, much research needs to be conducted on the subject of pro-Japanese collaborators and collaboration; in fact, there is an overwhelming tendency to avoid said subjects altogether. Without uncovering the shameful aspects of a nation's history, that nation cannot confidently and with justification discuss the wrongs and rights of history on the global stage. In some ways, the symbiosis of the identities of the victim and the assailant can be understood as a contradiction created by the historical contingencies of the time. Such parallax existed in many nations of Europe as well as other ethnic groups and is the subject of deep reflection in many places.

Second, there is a need for a more expansive discourse on the meaning of the March First Movement. The tendency to define the movement only as an ethno-national independence movement still remains, and much research has attempted to remedy such a narrowly focused understanding. For example, noteworthy works such as “Peculiarities of the Japanese Colony on the Korea Peninsula amidst the Changes of the East Asian Region, before and after the March First Movement” by Paek Sŭng’uk of Chungang University, and “Transformation of the Theories of Culture in Modern East Asia and the March First Movement” by Yun Haedong of Hanyang University broaden the spatio-temporality of the March First Movement on the Korean peninsula to effect a more fluid understanding of the movement. Said studies and others like them have highlighted the need to pursue rigorous research rather than merely relegating the movement to the confines of remembrance.

Third, both field work and examination of documents led to some heartfelt illuminations. Although exchanges led to much learning, one also felt the weight of responsibilities as a historian—that a crucial historical moment such as the March First Movement must be studied more in-depth and from diverse perspectives, and that the results of such efforts should be disseminated to as wide an audience as possible. In other words, not only do the unreasonable contents need to be boldly revised, but the little-known facts also must be carefully explicated through historical evidence. For example, some texts claim that Korean

independence fighters were the victors of the Battle of Ch'öngsalli, during which they killed a great number of enemies; despite the diverse views on just how many actually were killed, the general consensus is that the number currently reported in many texts has been significantly inflated. Whatever the case may be, the contents of actual field work and reasonable documentary evidence, coupled with appropriate arguments yield that a large number of Japanese troops were in fact killed. In this vein, interest in the history of the Korean people's independence movements may prove beneficial in eliciting broader affinity and consensus.

When history is not properly documented at the opportune time, there remains no choice but to study inappropriate documents. As most of us realize, the saying "Records are national strength" may not at all be an overstatement. Documentary records are lifelines, particularly in historical research. The more we scrutinize the past, the more vital records will become, enhancing our capacity for soundly approaching the future. One hopes that the centennial of the March First Movement will prove to be a year of reflection upon our history.

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