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From Plantation Laborers to Ardent Nationalists: Koreans' Experiences in America and Their Search for Ethnic Identity, 1903-1924.

Young Ho Son

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From plantation laborers to ardent nationalists: Koreans' experiences in America and their search for ethnic identity, 1903–1924

Son, Young Ho, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1989

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FROM PLANTATION LABORERS TO ARDENT NATIONALISTS:
KOREANS' EXPERIENCES IN AMERICA AND
THEIR SEARCH FOR ETHNIC IDENTITY, 1903-1924

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by

Young Ho Son
B.A., Kyung Hee University, Korea, 1981
M.A., Central Missouri State University, 1982
May 1989
In memory of my mother,
Myung-Rim Cha,

with belated gratitude for her love and dedication
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I have received great help from many institutions. The Government Publications Office and Interlibrary Loan
Office of the LSU Middleton Library facilitated this study by obtaining public documents, microfilms, and many secondary sources from other libraries. The National Archives in Washington, D.C. and the National Library & Government Records Office in Seoul, Korea were of great help in securing precious source materials in both English and Korean otherwise unavailable. I am also thankful to the History Department of LSU which has provided me with graduate assistantship and research funds. The Coates Memorial Fund was of great help in typing, drawing, copying, and binding of this dissertation in the final form.

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Last but not least, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my lovely wife, Hae Kyung and my son, David, for sharing the many hardships and trials which I have had during the past six years of my graduate studies at LSU. To them I owe the most.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The romanization of Korean names closely follows the McCune-Reischauer system with a few exceptions of those whose names have been better known by their unique ways of spelling (e.g., Seoul or Syngman Rhee). Frequently used Korean words considered integral to this study are italicized and translated only when they appear initially in the text. Korean names are written with surname first as is customary in Korea. However, names of permanent Korean residents of the United States and Korean authors of works in both English and Korean are written in the Western order with given name first.
This dissertation is a study of pioneer Korean immigrants from the beginning of the "mass immigration" in 1903 to the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924. The main emphasis is upon their background and experiences, and in particular upon their struggles to maintain their ethnic identity and to create for themselves an American identity. In addressing these themes, this study focuses on three major questions.

First, in order to understand why conservative, land-bound Koreans left their homecountry for the unknown land, this study analyzes historical, socioeconomic, and political forces which worked together in both Korean and American societies. Second, in an attempt to reveal the uniqueness of the Korean experience in America, it probes such factors as Korean immigrants' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, their family and community life, their working conditions and occupational adjustments, and their ethnic organizations. Third, in order to uncover the nature of the Korean-American community in this period, it discusses three aspects of Koreans' search for identity: their attempts to achieve identity through ethnic institutions, through political activities for Korean national independence, and through accommodation to a racially discriminating American society.
After examining the distinctive characteristics, motives, organizations and social creativity of Koreans, this study concludes that, in the face of the double challenge of white racism and of the loss of their national independence, Korean immigrants did, to a remarkable extent, overcome numerous difficulties and regain and then retain their ethnic identity. They came to America as sojourners, but within ten years of their settlement, they became permanent settlers. Their status changed from that of poor, uneducated, and unstable plantation laborers to self-sufficient, literate, and trustworthy members of American society. This study also argues that Korean ethnic nationalism resulted in part from an essential desire to assimilate to American society. Thus Korean immigrants strove to be "more American" because they felt that they were working for the realization of a "democratic dream." Through ardent nationalist activities, Korean immigrants could sustain their ethnic unity and cohesiveness while searching for a meaningful life and existence in the alien and often hostile environment.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A substantial number of books, articles, and dissertations have been written about United States-Korean relations and American policy toward Korea in recent years.\(^1\) However, there are few works on cultural or racial relations between the two countries. This is especially true for studies on Koreans in America. There has been some work done dealing with Korean immigrants and their lives, but they are mostly sociological studies, mainly focusing upon the new immigrants who have arrived in America since the 1960s.\(^2\) As a result, little is known


about early Korean immigrants and their lives in America. This dissertation is designed to help fill this gap.

Past studies of Asian immigration have heavily concentrated on the anti-Oriental exclusion movement. They focused on the excluders rather than the excluded, on the white racists rather than the immigrants themselves. Roger Daniels calls this "negative history," that is, history that delineated "what was done to these immigrant peoples rather than what they themselves did." Such historical literature has furnished some meaningful and important interpretations and data, but often such work has shown little understanding of the distinctive


characteristics, motives, organizations and social creativity of Oriental immigrants in America.

This study concentrates on the immigrants themselves in order, as Stephan Thernstrom put it, to study history "from the bottom up." Korean immigrants are treated as subjects of history rather than merely as objects whose lives were determined by the assimilating forces in American society. In offering a historical survey of Korean immigration to America, I hope this study will add a little more knowledge to the much neglected field of ethnic histories, thus contributing to a better understanding of America's mixed ethnic roots.

Korean emigration to America began in 1882, and expanded into a major movement between 1903 and 1905 when Hawaiian sugar planters first recruited Korean laborers to satisfy the demand for cheap yet dependable agricultural labor. More than 7,000 Koreans landed in Hawaii before this organized emigration ended in late 1905. They were followed by about a thousand "picture brides" between 1910 and 1924. During and shortly after this period, about 900 Korean students, intellectuals, and political exiles arrived in the "land of opportunity." After the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924, no more Korean immigrants were legally admitted until the end of World War II.

These three groups were pioneer builders of the Korean community in America. This study is mainly concerned with
their background and experiences, and in particular with their struggles to maintain their ethnic identity and to create for themselves an American identity during the period from the beginning of the "mass immigration" in 1903 to the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924. In addressing these themes, this study focuses on three major questions.

First, what motives led Koreans to migrate to America around the turn of the century? Many different forces pushed Koreans out of their homeland and pulled them to the United States. Some of these forces were peculiar to Korea, and others were international in origin and scope. In order to understand why conservative, land-bound Koreans ventured across the Pacific to the unknown land, it is necessary to analyze how historical, socioeconomic, and political forces worked together in both Korean and American societies.

Second, to what extent were Korean experiences in America essentially different from those of other immigrant groups, particularly the Japanese and Chinese? This question can be answered by examining the uniqueness of Korean experience in America, that is, those experiences not shared by other immigrant groups. This uniqueness, in turn, can be revealed by probing such factors as Korean immigrants' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, their family and community life, their working conditions and occupational adjustments, and their peculiar political,
social, economic, and cultural institutions.

Third, Korean immigrants were not only deprived of their national independence by Japanese occupation of their homeland, they were also greatly handicapped in adjusting to life in America by the anti-Orientalism prevalent in America. How then did they maintain their ethnic or national identity while accommodating themselves to a racially discriminating white society? This question is very significant because it exposes the nature of the Korean-American community which bequeathed its activities and heritage to the later generation of Korean immigrants.

With these questions in mind, this study is divided into three parts. Part one deals with such subjects as the historical and sociological factors that worked together in both Korean and American society to produce the mass migration of 1903-1905, and the socioeconomic and demographic background of Korean immigrants. Part two discusses the Korean immigrants' living and working conditions, marriage patterns, and family life. The main focus is upon the extent to which their old-world cultural heritage was transplanted and modified to cope with new problems in an alien land. Part three examines three aspects of the Korean search for identity while adapting to American society: maintaining identity through ethnic institutions; maintaining identity through political means; and maintaining identity through racial accommodation in the face of Americans' fear of the "Yellow Peril."
PART ONE

THE MASS MIGRATION OF 1903-1905
CHAPTER II

THE DEMAND FOR FOREIGN LABORERS IN HAWAII

The history of the coming of diverse racial groups to Hawaii reflects the history of the sugar industry. After its discovery by Britain's Captain James Cook in 1778, Hawaii became a new frontier for American missionaries and planters of tropical crops such as coffee, sugar, and pineapples. Just as Protestant missionaries attempted to change the spiritual climate by converting the natives to Christianity, the newly emerging sugar industry altered the nature of the Hawaiian economy from one made up of small, independent growers to one of large-scale, labor-intensive plantations.¹

The tropical climate of the Islands made possible the production of sugar, pineapples, and coffee. The greatest resources were devoted to the production of sugar, which was first grown by a Chinese on the island of Lanai in 1802. By 1835, sugar replaced coffee as the main crop, a

transformation symbolized by the formation of Koloa Plantation on Kauai which was the first systematic sugar plantation with stable management. From that time forward, sugar became the single most important industry, both for Hawaii’s economic prosperity and for the sustenance of its population. All industries in Hawaii were, directly or indirectly, dependent upon the sugar industry, and the social, economic and political structure of the islands was established upon a foundation of sugar.

Five big sugar planters became the actual rulers of Hawaii. They were J. F. Hackfeld & Co., C. Brewer & Co.,

---


3. The total value of all the crops taken from the Hawaiian Islands in 1899 was $21,292,422. Of this sugar represented $18,762,996, or 87.8% of the total agricultural products. The dominance of the sugar industry in the economic structure of the islands was equally indicated by their export statistics. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1905, the total value of the export products of the Territory was $36,123,867. Of this amount sugar alone represented $35,113,409. See U.S., Congress, House, *Third Report of the Commissioner of Labor on Hawaii, 1905*, House Doc. 580, 59th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), pp. 9-10. Hereinafter cited as *Third Report of Labor*.


Alexander & Baldwin Co., T. H. Davies & Co., and Castle & Cooke Co. They "built up their enterprises from profits, and their business alliance had tight hold of the archipelago's finances, transport, agricultural staples, and industries." The planters became the single most powerful economic group in Hawaii—"a status which was to leave "a legacy of a century of economic, political, and social domination of Asian immigrants by white plantation owners" even after annexation to the United States." In 1919 Ray Stannard Baker wrote:

Hawaii has been called...the Paradise of the Pacific. But it is a paradise not only of natural beauties and wonders; it is also a paradise of modern industrial combination. In no part of the United States is a single industry so predominant as the sugar industry is in Hawaii, and nowhere else, perhaps, has the centralized control of property reached a state of greater perfection.  

Hawaii was a territory with a very strong and powerful propertied class and a very numerous and heterogeneous non-propertied class. There were very few middle-class people

---


Of the five, J. F. Hackfeld & Co. was responsible for the financial operation of plantations and the procuring of plantation labor. The company also served as the agent for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, which transported many Japanese immigrants to the Hawaiian sugar plantations. Hackfeld was the first man to suggest the importation of Korean workers, not only because the plantations needed more labor, but also because he would profit from transporting Koreans to Hawaii on his steamships.

At first, the white sugar planters employed native Hawaiians on a contract-labor basis. Because the demand for sugar was low in those early years, the planters were able to obtain enough workers. As time passed, however, this stable situation was disrupted by two factors. The first was the decline in population of native Hawaiians. Between 1832 and 1836, there was a great decline from 124,449 to 107,954, or 13.2 percent, which, if it had continued unabated, would have brought about the extinction of the Hawaiians within a few generations. An average annual decline of two percent continued for the next two decades, cutting the native population down to 71,019 by 

---


The decline in population was due to high death rates and the correspondingly low birth rates which resulted from the spread of Western diseases such as measles and smallpox to which the native Hawaiians had not yet developed an immunity.\(^\text{12}\)

In addition, because of their indulgent and naturalistic living patterns, the natives, not accustomed to hard work, were not willing to work regularly. Since their physical and mental traits were nicely adjusted to the tropical environment, they felt it unnecessary to accept the monotonous and exhausting plantation life. To the white planters, the native population was neither willing nor able to supply the labor needed to expand the sugar industry. Realizing the critical need to procure labor for the growth of the sugar industry, the planters turned to the cheap yet reliable immigrant laborers for their labor force.

The second factor was the increasing demand for


Hawaiian sugar. The market for sugar greatly expanded as gold discoveries in California opened the West Coast in 1848 and, later, as the Civil War began in 1861. The result was a rapid growth in sugar production along with the expansion of the area used for that crop. In addition, the Treaty of Reciprocity in 1876 between the Kingdom of Hawaii and the United States also gave a great impetus to sugar production.

A duty on Hawaiian sugar imported into the United States had become an obstacle to the development of the industry. However, the treaty permitted Hawaii to export sugar duty-free into a previously tariff-protected American market while granting the United States the right to use Pearl Harbor. The treaty served as a great stimulus to the sugar industry, which expanded its production as much as ten times in the following decade. With the demand for

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production (Pounds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>4,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>594,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>1,204,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>5,282,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>8,431,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>690,882,132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


William A. Russ, Jr., "Hawaiian Labor and Immigration Problems Before Annexation," *Journal of Modern History* 15 (September 1943): 207-22. According to Russ, in 1876-77 the production was 25,576,320 pounds; by 1889-90 it

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sugar came an increased call for laborers from the planters.

The two factors—the decline in the native population and the increased demand for sugar—combined to create a labor shortage which was destined to last for more than a century. The search for additional sources of labor extended to other countries, and by the end of the century nearly 400,000 people of sharply contrasting ethnic and racial origins had been imported from all over the world, 184,000 of whom had arrived in Hawaii by 1905. Korean immigration was destined to play its own special role in this development. The Koreans joined the army of laborers of many other nationalities who preceded them, and helped to advance the sugar industry.

The Chinese were the first ethnic group to be imported. The planters asked the native ruler of Hawaii, King Kamehameha III, to permit the importation of Chinese laborers. Permission was granted in 1852, when 293 Chinese from the Canton area arrived in Hawaii. The inflow of Chinese workers continued, and reached a high point during

was 268,000,000 pounds.


the decade between 1876 and 1885,\textsuperscript{17} when the Kingdom of Hawaii signed a reciprocity treaty with the United States. The Chinese greatly contributed to the expansion of the sugar industry in Hawaii during the second half of the 19th century.\textsuperscript{18}

As new arrivals, the Chinese initially received a favorable reception. They were cheap and dependable workers. Transportation costs were low and a laborer's wages amounted to only ten dollars a month. They were generally docile and more amenable to plantation discipline than were those who had been in Hawaii for some time.\textsuperscript{19} As the years passed, however, the sugar planters became disappointed with the Chinese workers. Soon after expiration of their three-year contracts, many Chinese workers left the menial positions on the plantations, which, like the slavery system in the antebellum South, were infamous for unfavorable working conditions. Low wages, long hours, lack of opportunity for promotion, racial discrimination in the better jobs, harsh treatment


\textsuperscript{18}. Wayne Patterson and Hyung-chan Kim, \textit{The Koreans in America} (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co., 1977), p. 17.

\textsuperscript{19}. Third Report of Labor, pp. 48-49. For a detailed explanation, see Russ, "Hawaiian Labor and Immigration Problems," pp. 207-22; Lind, \textit{An Island Community}, pp. 298-316.
of laborers by plantation overseers—all these motivated them to move to the cities, looking for better opportunities or jobs. This meant that the planters would have to import more laborers to replace the Chinese who left.

When the Chinese moved into the cities, they accepted work at low wages. As a result, many townspeople lost their jobs to the Chinese and began to complain of unfair competition. The Chinese in the cities became more visible to the urban middle class, who complained that the Chinese were inassimilable with the Hawaiian race, that they were disease carriers and opium smokers, and that they impeded the Americanization of Hawaii.

The sugar planters first opposed the annexation of Hawaii to the United States because it "would mean conformity to American immigration legislation and the cessation of the influx of [contract] laborers from Asiatic countries so necessary to the life of the plantations." However, they soon realized that the annexation would be

---


very profitable to their business because Hawaiian sugar could be sold on the mainland without being taxed. As a result, they were afraid that the importation of too many Chinese might make the United States less inclined to include Hawaii as one of the states or territories. In fact, anti-Chinese feelings were strong in America at that time.

The mid-1860's witnessed a great influx of Chinese coolie labor into the United States for trans-continental railroad construction. When the railroad was completed, many Chinese lost their jobs and were dumped into the western labor market. By 1870, there were 63,000 Chinese in the United States, and one out of ten persons in California was Chinese. The Chinese sought work in mines, farms, factories, and domestic services, often throwing whites out of work. They became convenient and highly visible scapegoats for the frustrations of the period. Anti-Chinese feelings finally led to the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, prohibiting all further immigration of Chinese to the country. Consequently, the


24. The Act is sharply contrasted with the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 which provided for "the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance and also the mutual advantage of the free migration and emigration...from one country to the other, for the purpose of curiosity, of trade or as permanent residents." For a detailed discussion, see ibid., pp. 47-49; Akira Iriye, Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian
first legislative restriction against Chinese was passed in Hawaii in 1883, the first of four such laws enacted to restrict Chinese.

The anti-Chinese feelings were pervasive in Hawaii. The planters were afraid of the dominance of Chinese in the plantation labor markets. The numbers were relatively small until the late 1870's, but afterwards, the rapid influx of Chinese alarmed some of the planters. By 1882, only 5,000 of the 14,000 Chinese in Hawaii were on plantations, and in 1884 they constituted 22.6 percent of the entire population and 50.2 percent of the foreigners. It was feared that the Chinese might form a labor monopoly, and that Hawaii would become a Chinese colony. At this point, the planters began to seek another source of cheap labor to offset the Chinese.

At first, the planters attempted to recruit labor from European countries such as Portugal, Germany, and Scandinavia, but they could not attract sufficient numbers to supply the demand. Thus planters turned to the Japanese as the most suitable to substitute for the Chinese. The planters were willing to import the Japanese laborers

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22. Conroy, Japanese Expansion into Hawaii, p. 82.


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because they were the least expensive in both transportation costs and monthly wages, as the following table shows.

TABLE 1  
Cost of Importation and Average Wages of Each Racial Group (per person)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Group</th>
<th>Cost of Importation</th>
<th>Aver. Wages (with Food)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>$112.00</td>
<td>$10.41 per mo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegians</td>
<td>130.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>110.00</td>
<td>12.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sea Islander</td>
<td>78.50</td>
<td>10.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>76.85</td>
<td>13.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>65.85</td>
<td>9.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, as one source reported in 1889, the Japanese willingly "learn the English language and habits, and make good house, farm, and plantation servants...and they are provident and thrifty."\(^{28}\) Naturally, the Japanese were welcomed as substitutes for the Chinese. But they represented more than a change in ethnic groups. The planters launched a calculated effort to prevent a labor monopoly by one ethnic group. The Japanese were imported to check the dominance of the Chinese in the labor markets. Later, the Koreans were used in a similar role to offset

\(^{27}\) Coman, "History of Contract Labor," p. 35. The figures were estimated in the report of the Board of Immigration for 1886. Not only were oriental people less expensive to transport, but the Japanese were the least expensive. They were also very economical because of their cheap monthly wages.

\(^{28}\) Planters Monthly (Hawaii), April 1889, p. 149, as quoted in Lind, Hawaii's People, p. 35.
the Japanese.29

A speculative boom in sugar began immediately after the annexation of Hawaii to the United States on August 12, 1898. Numerous projects for the expansion of sugar production created a large demand for laborers. However, with the annexation of Hawaii by the United States, Chinese immigration was automatically prohibited because the Chinese had already been excluded from the United States. Meanwhile, the Japanese laborers in Hawaii rapidly increased. During the two years of 1898-1899, about 30,000 laborers were imported from Japan. By 1890, the Japanese became the largest immigrant labor group.30 And by 1900, they were estimated at 61,111, comprising about two-fifths of the whole population, as illustrated by the following table.


TABLE 2
Population of Hawaii in 1900
by Race and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian</td>
<td>15,621</td>
<td>14,157</td>
<td>29,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Hawaiian</td>
<td>3,973</td>
<td>3,886</td>
<td>7,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>16,531</td>
<td>12,288</td>
<td>28,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sea Islander</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>22,296</td>
<td>3,471</td>
<td>25,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>47,508</td>
<td>13,603</td>
<td>61,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106,369</td>
<td>47,632</td>
<td>154,001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like the Chinese before them, most of the Japanese originally intended to stay in Hawaii for a few years, make a quick fortune, and then return home with money and prestige. Yet like the Chinese, most moved to the West Coast or remained in Hawaii because of weakening home ties, the difficulty of saving sufficient money to return with prestige to Japan, the dream of future prosperity in


America, and the pleasant climate.33

The Japanese left the plantations soon after their contracts expired. They moved to the cities for better jobs even more quickly than the Chinese had.34 They established themselves in the urban areas where, "as laundrymen, restaurant keepers, draymen, carpenters and the like, they entered into competition with the American laborers, most of whom in San Francisco were recent immigrants from Europe."33 The townspeople, who had previously complained about Chinese competition, had similar complaints about the Japanese. They were afraid of the expansion of Japanese shops and stores, Japanese-language newspapers and schools, and Buddhist temples, which helped to preserve Japanese cultural heritage and maintain cohesion in the Japanese community.36

The planters were also upset by the independent attitude of the Japanese laborer. Although the Chinese had put up with difficult and even degrading conditions, the Japanese resented the harsh treatment they received from


34. Lind, An Island Community, p. 254.


the white planters or foremen and did not remain docile workers. They complained about the low wages and demanded better living conditions. Although under the contract-labor system strikes were illegal, sabotage and work stoppages occurred from time to time as the Japanese workers began to take action. Between 1890 and 1897 there were twenty-nine strikes, and the rate of desertion reached six percent by 1895. Three years later, the rate increased to 16.4 percent.

After the annexation of Hawaii, the contract labor system came to an end. The Organic Act, adopted in 1900, prohibited immigrant laborers from working under penal contract. As a result, plantation workers were then free to leave the plantations whenever they wanted, while strikes were legalized. Taking advantage of the abolition of contracts, the Japanese staged thirty-four strikes between 1900 and 1905. One of the big strikes, for

37. Third Report of Labor, pp. 136-144. As to the character of the Japanese labor, one author indicates that "a majority of the plantation managers, if asked for a comparison, would state their preference for the Chinese field hand. This is due to the persistence, patience, and docility of the latter." See Richards, "Future of Japanese in Hawaii," p. 301.

38. Lind, An Island Community, p. 225. According to Lind, the high rate of desertion was due to debts incurred by laborers, attractive opportunities offered in the coffee districts, and the ill-treatment received from plantation foremen. For a detailed discussion of Japanese labor agitation, see Third Report of Labor, pp. 136-144.

instance, occurred on Oahu Island in 1909 when 8,000 Japanese sugar workers jointly struck. This strike was crushed after a three-month heroic struggle. While the planters recognized that the Japanese were cheap to import, the strike actions were a source of dismay. Naturally, the conservative planters viewed the Japanese with great suspicion.

As the numbers of Japanese grew very rapidly, many people feared that they might eventually take over political power in Hawaii. The Hawaiian government became aware of the power of Japan, which was strong enough to make demands and protest vigorously in defense of its subjects in Hawaii—a role which the weaker Chinese government was unable to play. The planters also became "apprehensive of the control by one nationality of the labor market, particularly as the growing consciousness of national as well as local importance was noticeable in the Japanese." At the same time, the leaders of the Hawaiian community, who were pro-American, began to think of Japan as America's rival in Asia and the Pacific. Rumors circulated that Japan wanted to annex Hawaii and that it was sending as many Japanese workers as possible to make it easier to take over the islands when the time came.


At this moment, the planters attempted to seek a solution to the Japanese problem in the same way they had solved the Chinese problem earlier—by pitting one race against another. So they decided not to depend on one racial group, but adopted a policy of recruiting workers from a number of different sources in order to diversify the labor pool. As the Japanese had been welcomed by the planters as substitutes for the Chinese, so the Koreans were recruited in a similar role to replace or supplement the Japanese.43 One source explained well this situation:

The natural consequence of Hawaiian economy has been the continuous cycle of labor importation, its exploitation for a few years, and the plantation exodus...When one source of supply fails, another is soon discovered to provide this labor juggernaut with fresh material. When Chinese threatened the scheme through sheer numbers, Japanese were used to checkmate, and when these latter proved onerous in their demands, Portuguese, Koreans,... relieved the situation.43

With this background, a member of the Board of Immigration of Hawaii, Constantine N. Grunwaldt, suggested that Koreans be imported into Hawaii to substitute for Chinese and Japanese laborers. The proposal was discussed on November 2, 1896, at the meeting of the Executive


Council of the Board of Immigration. Detailed records are not available now, but it is quite possible that Grunwaldt showed his ability to secure Korean laborers while stressing "the benefits of using Koreans instead of the Chinese, who would soon be prohibited entirely by annexation, and the Japanese, who were lately causing so much trouble." The Board, however, did not take any specific action except to adopt a resolution calling for the importation of Koreans:

Resolved, that the government look favorably upon the proposition to import Korean laborers, but will await applications from the planters; that government will assume no further responsibility other than simply consenting to grant permits upon the same terms for which permits are granted for Chinese and Japanese.

In accordance with this resolution one of the members of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA), J. F. Hackfeld, submitted to the Executive Council of the Board of Immigration a proposal to import Korean laborers on 44. Patterson, "First Attempt to Obtain Korean Laborers," pp. 18-19.


44. In 1895, the HSPA succeeded the Planters' Labor and Supply Company which was formed in 1882 in order to regulate the supply of labor and to prevent competition for laborers between plantations. The HSPA consisted of representatives of the various plantation owners.
Hackfeld's proposal was rejected with no explicit reasons stated at the time, except that, "with annexation recently assured and the troubles with Japan over, it would be better not to begin importing another Oriental race into Hawaii." Another possible reason was the then current anti-Oriental feeling and policy of the Board of Immigration.

The importation of Korean laborers was seriously considered again in the early spring of 1902. One government report reads:

In order to replace their losses in the cane field, the planters had recruited their forces by means of further immigration from the Orient, and at the same time an effort was made to break up the solidarity of the Japanese by stimulating the Korean immigration.

At about this time, the planters began to hear very favorable reports about the abilities of Korean workers. A missionary in Korea wrote, "Here the testimony even of the foreign mining companies, [avows that] the Koreans are the

47. Kim and Patterson, Koreans in America, p. 2
49. Lee Houchins and Chang-su Houchins, "The Korean Experience in America, 1903-1924," Pacific Historical Review 43 (November 1974): 550. Before Hawaii was annexed in 1898, the Hawaiian Republic tried to build a white society, directing the immigration in such a way as to build a population base that would support Anglo-Saxon dominance. The rallying cry for this program was "White Labor," which became the subject of discussion in numerous government meetings. See Conroy, Japanese Expansion into Hawaii, pp. 191-198.
50. Third Report of Labor, p. 44.
best workmen of any nationality they have employed."
"The Koreans is [sic] the pick of all the Orientals as a workman," said one American manager of the Unsan mining company in Korea. "I have worked Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans during the past seven years, and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the Korean is decidedly the best." Alice R. Appenzeller, the first American child born in Korea whose parents were pioneer missionaries in that country, wrote:

Koreans do their part; that is what a plantation official told me recently of his workers. An army post exchange manager told me that Koreans were his best workers. The head of a school in Honolulu told me that the Korean girls there had done more with their opportunities than others. Uncle Sam has been good to these children of his, and they appreciate it.

American Minister Horace N. Allen also expressed a similar view:

The Koreans are a patient, hard-working, docile race; easy to control from their long habit of obedience. They are usually very keen on getting a foreign education, and this had taken quite a number to the United States where a few have become naturalized, while those who have returned are doing well and are a credit to their American education...Koreans are a more teachable race.

51. Lillias Horton Underwood, Fifteen Years Among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea (New York: American Tract Society, 1904), p. 274. The author was the wife of Dr. Horace Underwood, one of several American pioneer missionaries in Korea.

52. "Koreans are the Best Workers-American Mining Man Prefers Them to Japanese," Pacific Commercial Advertiser (Hawaii), 28 July 1906.

than the Chinese.54

Considering the labor problems they were having with the Chinese and Japanese, it is not surprising that many planters wanted to import Korean workers for their sugar plantations.

As a result of the HSPA's attempts to bring manual laborers from Korea, 102 Koreans finally arrived at Honolulu aboard the S.S. Gaelic on January 13, 1903, marking the beginning of Korean immigration to the United States. By 1905, some seven thousand Korean immigrants landed in Hawaii on sixty-five different ships.55 Among these, 4,683 Koreans were employed in the various plantations which comprised eleven percent of the work force in Hawaii.56 This large-scale immigration, however, would have not been fruitful without the good offices of


56. Third Report of Labor, pp. 44-45. This figure, making due allowance for women and children, leaves room for a number of Korean laborers employed in other than plantation work, such as is enumerated in the Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor under the head of Agricultural Pursuits, Professional Service, Domestic and Personal Service, Trade and Transportation, Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits, etc.
CHAPTER III

LABOR RECRUITING EFFORTS IN KOREA:
NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE FORCES FOR EMIGRATION

The importation of Korean laborers during the years of 1903-1905 was initially promoted by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA). The HSPA decided to recruit Korean workers in order to meet the labor shortage on the one hand and to check Japanese dominance in the labor markets on the other. However, it was the direct result of the good offices of American Minister in Seoul, Horace N. Allen. Allen was a central figure for Korean immigration to Hawaii. Without his well-established influence on Korean court politics, the HSPA would not have been successful in recruiting Korean laborers.1 American Protestant missionaries in Korea also aided the HSPA's recruiting efforts to persuade conservative Koreans to migrate.

Returning from home leave in March, 1902, Allen met an HSPA representative in San Francisco, who asked Allen to help in the recruitment of Korean laborers. Allen was so interested that he rushed to Hawaii in order to have an extra day to talk with officials of the HSPA before

proceeding on to Korea. Allen held a meeting in Honolulu with the planters to discuss the importation of Koreans to Hawaii. There is no doubt that Allen, who was familiar with Korean politics and the general condition of the people, gave information to the plantation owners on the capacity of the Koreans for work and on existing conditions in Korea. In his letter to Sanford E. Dole, governor of Hawaii in 1902, Allen wrote:

My reason for sending you these copies is that I learn it is the intentions of a number of Koreans to try the experiment of emigrating to Hawaiian Islands during the coming winter, with the idea of bettering their conditions and preparing the way for others to follow in case the conditions are found to be satisfactory...The severe famine of the past winter made the matter [of recruiting Korean laborers] seem all the more attractive to the people, while the fact that the Government had to import large quantities of rice to feed the starving seems to have turned the attention of the officials favorably to the subject of emigration...The Koreans are patient, hardworking, docile race; easy to control from their long habit of obedience...If Koreans do get to the Islands in any numbers it will be a God-send to them (Koreans) and I imagine they will be found to be unobjectionable and of good service as laborers.

Upon his return to Korea, Allen contacted David W. Deshler, a fellow Ohioan and junior partner in the American Trading Company operations at Inch'on (then Chemulp'o). Allen asked if he would be the HSPA's recruiting agent in

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3. Allen to Dole.
Korea for the emigration scheme. After Allen's initial plans were made, the HSPA dispatched its representative, E. Faxon Bishop, with $25,000 to Korea in September, 1902. Bishop's mission was to seek plantation labor to relieve the cessation of Chinese immigration and to ease the preponderance of Japanese laborers.

Bishop met with Allen and Deshler to make final arrangements. He offered Deshler $55 for every Korean recruited to Hawaii. Deshler became involved with the emigration scheme for two reasons. Deshler already held several economic interests in Korea, including a steamship line operating between Inch'on and Kobe, Japan. He would profit from transporting the Korean laborers to Japan in his steamship as well as from the fee paid by the HSPA for each Korean laborer to reach its plantations in Hawaii.

On the other hand, Allen's motivations are somewhat

4. Houchins and Houchins, "Korean Experience in America," pp. 550-551. Deshler also had considerable mining and shipping interests in Korea and was owner of the three fast steamers which plied between Kobe, Japan and Inch'on, Korea, and Shanghai and Inch'on.


more difficult to identify. Although he was convinced that Korean laborers would adjust themselves to the conditions on the Hawaiian sugar plantations, and although he may have also felt that such an opportunity would better the lot of individual Koreans, his dominant motivation appears to have been political self-interest. Allen and Deshler had business and political connections and had done favors for each other in the past. By organizing the patronage of influential Ohio Republicans, including his stepfather, George K. Nash, a close friend of President-elect William McKinley, Deshler had been the first to support Allen to become American minister to Korea in 1897. Owing Deshler a political debt, Allen later supported Deshler's emigration scheme ardently and contributed materially to Deshler's personal fortune. In any case, on May 9, 1902, Bishop appointed Deshler as an agent of the HSPA in Korea, and Deshler began to organize the East-West Development Company in Inchon to manage the recruitment program.

Meanwhile, Allen exerted a strong influence on Korean court politics for the HSPA and Deshler's new venture.

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Allen had come to Korea from Ohio as a medical missionary in 1883. When the Progressive Party staged a coup d'etat in 1884, Min Yong-ik, the powerful chief of the Queen's clan and an ex-chief of the Special Mission to America in 1883, had been wounded and left for dead. Dr. Allen cared for him and cured him. After his successful treatment of Min, a nephew of the Queen, Allen became the royal family's personal physician in 1884. Thus he could secure an influence and trust based on solid gratitude. Allen did fight for the interests of Americans in Korea, especially in the fields of economic concessions and missionary work.

As American Minister to Korea, Allen presided over a considerable body of American enterprises. The Seoul-Inch'on railroad, the first to be established in Korea, had made rapid progress in the hands of Americans in Korea. The first powerhouse, electric light plant, public telephone system and trolley line in Seoul were owned or operated by Americans. When using his influence, Allen knew well what channel he should take. Sometimes he

10. Allen founded the first Western medical institution in Korea (Kwanghyewon Hospital) in 1885. He became American Minister to Korea in 1897. See U.S., Congress, Congressional Directory, 55 Cong., 2nd Sess. (1897), p. 263. For details of Allen's influence and his early career, see Harrington, God, Mammon, and the Japanese.

followed an indirect channel by way of the chief eunuch Kang Sok-ko, the head of the powerful pro-American party within the Palace.\textsuperscript{12}

The other channel was through influential politicians or officials, such as Min Yong-ik and Min Yong-hwan. Since the Korean royal family, especially the king, had been pro-American and depended upon American advisors and aid (military as well as financial), Allen could perform a lot of backstage maneuvering for the HSPA's emigration scheme. Allen's well-established role as advisor to the Korean emperor, Kojong, was crucial to his success.

Allen persuaded the Korean government of the advantages of mass migration. He pointed out that emigration to Hawaii would relieve some of the burden on the government of feeding the starving people. He also suggested that the emigrants might be able to send money back to their families in Korea. This would certainly help the domestic situation and lessen social unrest. On the other hand, Allen contacted Min Yong-hwan, one of the members of the powerful Min clan who had progressive ideas. Allen pointed out to him the cultural benefit of "the opening of Korea and Progress."\textsuperscript{13}


\textsuperscript{13} Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipnyon-sa, p. 4. See also its abridged version in English, Warren Y. Kim, Koreans in America (Seoul: Po Chin Chai Printing Co., 1971).
American missionaries in Korea also helped the HSPA's recruiting scheme. Rev. George H. Jones was eager to send Koreans abroad because he felt it would be to their own advantage. He believed that mission work would be more successful with the Koreans away from home since Christianity still met with some opposition in Korea. Rev. Jones visited Min Yong-hwan several times and warned him about the dangerous situation of the Japanese encroachment into Korea, and the future of the Korean youth. Thus he suggested that it would be better to send many Korean youths abroad to study, by way of emigration to Hawaii.

Jones directly influenced members of his congregations to migrate. According to the testimony of Hyun Soon, one of the interpreters of the East-West Development Co., out of the first group of 121 Korean immigrants who left Inch'on abroad the S.S. Gaelic on December 22, 1902, nearly


15. Rev. Jones was one of the American Methodist missionaries in Korea and pioneered a church at Inch'on at that time.

half were members of Jones's church in Inchon. Later Rev. Jones recollected his happy reunion with former congregation members in Hawaii, when he visited various plantations in 1906. He wrote:

My Korean companies told me there was a Korean store kept by a Christian... On arriving at this store what was my surprise to find a young man and his family whom I had baptized and taken into the church in Korea some years before, running this store and happy and prosperous. Other American missionaries such as Homer B. Hulbert, Dr. H. G. Underwood and Rev. Henry G. Appenzeller also played a role in the emigration. In


addition to the "wonderful story of the Cross, the message of hope and life," they told the Korean people that America was a Christian country and that Hawaii was the paradise of the Pacific, where the weather was good and working conditions excellent. They also pointed out a better opportunity to improve their economic lives and to learn Western civilization. In his letter to Huntington Wilson, Deshler pointed out that American missionaries were very cooperative for recruiting Korean emigrants. They saw in the work, "an opportunity for Koreans to improve their condition, to acquire useful knowledge and to better themselves financially."21 Undoubtedly American missionaries made an indirect contribution to the recruitment efforts of the HSPA and Deshler by encouraging the timid and unwilling Koreans to migrate to Hawaii.

The king finally accepted Allen's proposal. On November 15, 1902 he authorized Deshler to recruit Korean laborers. In the same month, the Korean government established the Suminwon (Bureau of People's Comfort), a


department of emigration, headed by Min Yong-hwan, which was in charge of issuing passports and rules and regulations concerning emigration. Deshler had already set up an organization called the East-West Development Company at Inch'on to recruit Korean emigrants. He hired a Korean, Kim Jae-ho, as his interpreter, and organized several branch offices throughout major port cities such as Pusan, Mokp'o, Kunsan, Wonsan, Chinnamp’o, and two other large cities, Seoul and P’yongyang.

During the last six months of 1902, announcements and posters were placed in the market places and other public places such as railroad stations, churches, and foreign legations. However, advertisement through word of mouth was more effective than the posters. Many surviving immigrants recall that they heard the news through friends or relatives rather than by seeing the advertising.\(^{22}\) The poster advertisements told about Hawaii and its prosperous sugar industry, inviting emigrants "to share the sunshine of a new land in the middle of the Pacific."\(^{23}\) The following advantages were advertised by Deshler's company:

1) The laborer who wants to go to the Hawaiian Islands will receive various benefits and government help.
2) The climate in Hawaii is warm and temperate, and there is no severe temperature change.


\(^{23}\) Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1934)," p. 410.
3) School education is very liberal. Children under fourteen years of age will be provided with primary instruction in the public schools.
4) There are jobs available all the year around for farmers who are healthy and decent in behavior. The workers' rights will be protected by law.
5) Monthly payment is fifteen dollars in American money, which is equal to thirty yen in Japanese money and sixty seven won in Korean money. There are ten hours of work a day with no work on Sundays.
6) The laborer and his family will receive, free of costs, living quarters, fuel and water for domestic use, medical attention and medicine.²⁴

To many poor farmers and urban laborers, the advertisement offered a new and challenging opportunity. At that time urban laborers earned about $3.00 per month, if they were lucky enough to find regular jobs; but the recruitment announcement was not received eagerly at first.²⁵ Despite various efforts and advertisements, it was not easy to arrange for Korean workers to emigrate to Hawaii. At first the fear of the unknown prevented them from seriously considering leaving home. There were only fifty-seven laborers who wanted to emigrate by December 22, 1902. The second recruitment was done after December but only sixty-three, including women and children, wanted to


²⁵. So, Miju Hanin Ch’ilsipnyon-sa, p. 23.
leave Korea by February, 1903.24

This slow and unwilling response was due to two obstacles that had to be overcome: one was the reluctance of most Koreans to leave their homeland; the other was the United States immigration law that prevented employers from giving financial assistance to foreign workers coming to America. The second obstacle was more easily overcome than the first.

The Koreans were being hired as free laborers, not as contract laborers. Since United States law forbade the introduction of contract labor to its territory, they were not required to promise to remain any specified length of time. Theoretically, Koreans were supposed to arrange their own transportation and other necessary provisions. However, most Koreans were too poor to raise the necessary funds for emigration with their families.27 In addition to the transportation fee, they also needed the "show money" to demonstrate to United States immigration officials in Honolulu that they were not paupers. The problem was solved in the following manner. The HSPA instructed Deshler to set up a bank--"Deshler Bank"--in Inch'on. All the bank's money came from the HSAP, and these funds were used to loan money to Koreans who wanted to emigrate to


27. Allen to Dole.
In this way, the planters were able to get around the law by financing the Korean workers indirectly. Without this aid, most workers would have been unable to afford the trip to Hawaii.

The Koreans' unwillingness to leave their homeland was more difficult to deal with. Some Koreans had left their country before, but emigration to Hawaii was very different from any journey that had been taken in the past. Koreans had migrated to Manchuria, Japan and the Soviet Union, but these countries were relatively close to Korea. The emigrants could easily return home to care for their parents or to perform religious obligations for their ancestors. But Hawaii was more than halfway across the Pacific Ocean, and it might be impossible to get back.

The Korean people in general have not been adventurers. For more than two centuries, until the conclusion of the Korean-Japanese Treaty of 1876, the Korean government adopted a policy of isolation. The

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28. Koh, Han'guk Iminsa Yongu, pp. 209-210; Houchins and Houchins, "Korean Experiences in America," p. 552; Choy, Koreans in America, pp. 93-94; Patterson and Kim, Koreans in America, p. 23. The bank paid the immigrants' passport fees, loaned each individual his passage fare and "show money." The loans, negotiated by the Deshler Bank in Inch'on, were to be paid back. Although some immigrants paid one dollar per month from their wages for the expense incurred in getting them to Hawaii, many refused to pay back, arguing that the wages were low and the living quarters very poor.

ruling class became exclusive and had no contact with other peoples except for the Chinese. In addition, there was a strong force in Korean culture of the Yi Dynasty which had traditionally discouraged Koreans from emigrating overseas. This was the Confucian ethical principles of filial piety, ancestor worship, and absolute obedience to elders.

According to Confucius, the living were inextricably linked to the graves and spirits of the dead. The spirits of the deceased ancestors and their graves required constant attention and care. Therefore, it was considered against the faith to abandon ancestral graves. Generally speaking, no Koreans could leave home without a feeling of guilt. Thus, a family-centered, feudal social system and ideology prohibited Koreans from leaving their native land. Moreover, the fear of the unknown cut back the eagerness of the people to go abroad, because most of them had never been far from home. Moreover, the fear of the unknown cut back the eagerness of the people to go abroad, because most of them had never been far from home.30 Even among the poorest laboring class, it took great courage and decisiveness to leave their hometowns and families to venture across the Pacific. Most Koreans at this time tended to consider settling overseas to seek a fortune as thoughtless, even immoral conduct.

An even more serious obstacle was the basic distrust that most Koreans felt towards anything Western. The following passage, from a Korean mother to her son who was

on a diplomatic mission to America, is an example of anti-
foreign feeling, which was very strong among the Korean
people:

Dear boy! I hear that foreigners don't use rice. I
can't imagine how anybody could live without
eating 'pap' [rice] three times a day. When I
think how hungry you must be on cakes made of
some kind of flour, I can neither sleep nor eat.
Don't you, even for fun, put on foreign clothes.
Oh, how ugly a foreigner appears in tight black
trousers looking like a pair of walking stilts.
My son, I hear that Korean youths who go abroad
contract the bad habit of smoking cigarettes
instead of our long pipes and of loving foreign
costume, despising the topknot, and the beautiful
Korean dress and hats of liberal dimensions. I
cannot explain this change of heart otherwise
than by supposing that when a Korean goes abroad,
foreigners give him a certain medicine to change
him...Remember all this, my boy, refuse to take
the heart changing medicine and come back to me
soon unchanged in taste and dress.31

Feeling as they did about Westerners and Western culture,
not many Koreans were eager to emigrate to Hawaii.

Against this negative background, several factors
worked to encourage Koreans to migrate to Hawaii. The most
important factor was economic. For several centuries Korea
had closed its doors to the outside world except for China.
However, in the last half of the nineteenth century, Korea
found herself at the crossroads of a power struggle among
her neighbor nations--Japan, China, and Russia. They began

31. This letter was sent by a worried Korean mother
(anonymous) to her son who was at that time a member of a
diplomatic mission to America. The mission was led by Min
Young-hwan who later became President of the Bureau of
Emigration. "The Korean Abroad," letter 1, translated by
Yun Ch'i-ho, Korean Repository (May 1897), p. 107. See also
Patterson, "Korean Frontier In America," p. 434; Patterson
to force Korea to open her ports for trade and commerce.
Like China, Korea had little choice but to accept "unequal
treaties" with the Western powers. Eventually, Korea
became a battleground for foreign power seeking economic
and political hegemony. One historian describes this
situation well:

After Korea opened its doors to foreign powers,
the peninsular became a semi-colony of Japan and
the West. The country was divided into zones of
influence of the various foreign powers. The
United States obtained mining concessions and
communication and transportation franchises.
Japanese merchants began to monopolize Korean
import and export businesses...The native
handicraft industries and the primitive
agricultural economy faced bankruptcy, and the
national treasury became empty.\textsuperscript{32}

To make the situation worse, a series of natural
disasters struck much of Korea. A nationwide famine took
place in 1901 and 1902, caused by an unusual drought
followed by floods. Severe famine prevailed in the three
southern provinces and Hwanghae, northwest of Seoul. In
Ch'ungch'ong province, there was depopulation because of
famine, and "eight out of ten" houses were empty because of
runaway farmers.\textsuperscript{33} Large numbers of urban Koreans found

\textsuperscript{32}. Choy, Koreans in America, p. 73. For the
explanation of many ills afflicting Korea at that time, see
Toyokichi Iyenaga, "Japan's Annexation of Korea," in Japan
and Japanese-American Relations, ed. George H. Blakeslee

\textsuperscript{33}. The Korean situation in the half decade prior to
the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in February 1904 has
been described as follows: "[T]he political, economic, and
social conditions of the nation continued to deteriorate
under an absolutistic regime dominated by petty, rapacious,
and irresponsible court favorites. There were no large
themselves in equally distressing circumstances.

To relieve this serious situation, the Korean government suspended all civil engineering projects, prohibited rice exports and imported 300,000 sum of rice from Indochina. The government also set up a Relief Office to distribute to needy people the grains that were collected in taxes. The royal family donated a relief fund, and the government decided to deduct one-fifth to one-third of the stipends of all government officials for six months as donations to starving people.34

Although poverty in Korea was as old as her history, the social situation at the time was critical. Various epidemics raged through the summer, adding to the burdens of recent drought, flood, and locust plague. The Korean government, however, could not relieve these socio-economic tensions adequately, nor did it have a strong desire to solve these problems. It was impossible for the reudalistic government in decay to maintain an effective

scale convulsions; it was a gradual process of system decay." See C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim, Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 115.

system for handling the emergency.

In this crisis, Allen stressed that the economic situation in Korea necessitated emigration. In a letter to John Hay, Secretary of State, Allen described the famine of the previous year, and said, "There has been talk of organizing an emigration bureau ever since last winter."35

In a different letter, he said, "The severe famine of the past winter made the matter seem all the more attractive to the people, while the fact the Government had to import large quantities of rice to feed the starving seems to have turned the attention of the officials favorably..."36 Allen's suggestion for emigration at that time was more welcome to the King, and to the Korean officials. By then the Korean government was willing to loosen its traditionally tight restriction on emigration.

The second factor encouraging emigration was political. King Kojong always trusted Allen, a powerful and trusted American Minister, and personal advisor and loyal physician. He willingly depended on Allen and the American government for aid in case of crisis. King Kojong sought Allen whenever he had troubles in either personal or political matters.37 When Korea was made Japan's

35. Allen to Hay.
36. Allen to Dole.
37. For details of this account see Harrington, God, Mammon and the Japanese; F. A. McKenzie, The Tragedy of Korea (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1908).
protectorate, King Kojong made his own direct appeal to America, dispatching Homer B. Hulbert with a letter to President Theodore Roosevelt.\(^3\) In this letter, the King described Japan's intimidation and use of force against Korea, and asked the American Government for the sympathy and application of the "good offices" clause of the Korean-American Treaty of 1882. However, Roosevelt, having deep-rooted pro-Japanese feelings, endorsed Japanese domination over Korea in exchange for a pledge that "Japan does not harbor any aggressive design whatever against Philippines."\(^3\)

On the eve of the Russo-Japanese War, he felt he stood alone to face Japanese encroachment. Allen's proposal for Korean emigration to Hawaii was good news to him since he felt that it would improve relations between Korea and America. Allen wanted the United States to become interested in Korean affairs. After the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed in 1902, Japan appeared determined to take over Korea step by step. Allen thought that by promoting the Korean immigration project, the United States


government would have a greater stake in the independence of Korea, and at the same time would provide a check to Japanese expansion in Korea.40

It should be noted here that such a proposal was proper and legitimate according to the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States and Korea signed May 22, 1882. The Treaty contained a proviso (Article VI) pertaining to emigration of Koreans:

Subjects of Chosen (Korea) who may visit the United States shall be permitted to reside and rent premises, purchase land or to construct residence or warehouses in all parts of the country. They shall be freely permitted to pursue their various callings and avocations, and to traffic in all merchandise, raw and manufactured, that is not declared contraband by law.

In addition, Article XI stated that Korea and the United States should provide "all possible protection and assistance in evidence of cordial good will" to the students of both countries, "who may proceed to the country of the other, in order to study the language, literature, laws or arts."41

Closely connected to the political consideration was the psychological factor. In order to recruit Korean immigrant laborers on behalf of Hawaiian plantation owners, Allen worked quietly from behind the scenes to influence

40. Choy, Koreans in America, p. 93.

the King. He contacted his chief ally and friend in the
court of Kang Sok-ko, and tried to boost the King's ego.
The King's psychology played an important part in this,
because the King's "Chinese Complex"—hatred and love for
China—made him independent from China and had made him
Emperor.42

King Kojong became the Emperor of Great Korea in 1897
and started to show his power and independence from China.
So, Allen appealed to the Korean emperor's sense of
prestige: unlike the Chinese, who had been excluded since
1882, Korean laborers would be welcomed in Hawaii. He
found that "the Emperor seems to feel considerable pride in
the fact that while the Chinese may not enter the United
States [by law], Koreans will be allowed to do so."43 So
Allen wrote a letter to Sanford B. Dole, Governor of
Hawaii, stating that "it is probable however that the pride
of the Emperor had much to do with the matter."44 One day
the King sent one of the court officials to Allen to ask
"if it were true that Chinese could not enter the United
States while Koreans might do so."45 In replying in the
affirmative, Allen didn't fail to explain the nature of the
American immigration laws, the rules regarding Chinese

42. Hyun, Han'guk Yuimin-sa (I), p. 797.
43. Allen to Hay.
44. Allen to Sanford.
45. Ibid.

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exclusions and contract laborers, and the positive economic and cultural benefits of Korean emigration to Hawaii.

In summary, these positive (economic, political, psychological) factors in Korean domestic situation, coupled with the shortage of the labor force in Hawaii that resulted from the decline of the native population, contended against the negative (cultural) factors for overseas migration. Finally, the former prevailed over the latter, making the Korean government approve the migration of its citizens to Hawaii in early November of 1902. Yet in the end, the most crucial factor was Allen's friendship with King Kojong and his well-established influence on the Korean court. Without his active assistance for the HSPA's emigration scheme, substantial Korean migration to Hawaii during the years of 1903-05 would probably not have occurred.
Chapter IV

Koreans in America: A Socioeconomic and Demographic Analysis

Before examining some socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of Koreans in America, it seems appropriate here to review the figures involved in the "mass migration" of 1903-1905. There are few systematic records available from which the exact numbers of Korean arrivals in Hawaii can be drawn. There is no consensus on the actual numbers among scholars because they count the figures differently. The government statistical data also give different figures. In the 1930's, Bernice Kim explained the reason for this discrepancy:

Some arrivals in the Territory during the years stated are undoubtedly arrivals of Koreans who left the Territory for a visit to Korea and later returned to Hawaii; it is likely that some such persons brought back wives. Similarly some arrivals may be the round trip of Koreans who left Hawaii for the mainland of the United States and returned to the Territory later on.¹

One source says that 479 persons were refused landing and subsequently sent back to Korea because of their failure to pass the physical examination of the American immigration station in Honolulu.² But, it is not clear whether or not

¹. Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 83.
the arrival figures include the number of those rejected people.

One report of the Bureau of Immigration shows that a total of 7,378 Koreans arrived in Hawaii from July 1, 1903 to December 31, 1905. 6,701 were males, 677 females, and 465 children under fourteen. This report probably includes those who were rejected and returned to Korea because of bad physical condition or disease. If we subtract the number of those rejected, 479, the actual number of arrivals comes to 7,380. Several authors state that 7,226 Koreans came to Hawaii from 1903 through 1905, consisting of 6,048 men, 637 women, and 541 children. Two sources provide the figure of 7,394, of whom 6192 were men, 755 women, and 447 children under fourteen. One source presents 7,843 immigrants comprising 6,701 men, 677 women, and 465 children. Still another computes a total of 7,291 about Korean immigrants for two reasons: the need for physical strength for the demanding plantation works, and various epidemics pervaded in Korea at that time.

3. Third Report of Labor, pp. 14-15. This report originally gives the upper limit figures of 7,859, including sixteen admitted during the years of 1901-02.


Koreans during the same period.\textsuperscript{7}

Although there is no accord on the actual numbers involved, it is important to understand the broad outlines. Some seven thousand Koreans came to Hawaii by sixty-five different ships during the "mass migration" of 1903-1905. Most of them were recruited as sugar plantation workers in an attempt to check the dominance of the Japanese in the labor markets.\textsuperscript{8} Korean immigrants became one of the main productive forces, ranking second in number on the sugar plantations. They comprised 9.71 percent of the work force in Hawaii.\textsuperscript{9} Such a relatively large influx of Korean immigrants in a short period was not to take place again until the end of World War II.

In their geographical and social origins, Korean immigrants in this period were greatly different from two other major Asian ethnic groups. Chinese immigrants chiefly consisted of young peasants coming from the districts in the southeastern provinces of Fukien and


\textsuperscript{8}. For a detailed explanation of this background, see Chapter II of this study.

The majority of Japanese immigrants came from southwestern Japan, especially the prefectures of Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Kumamoto, and Fukuoka. Most of them were small farmers or tenant farmers from poor agricultural areas. However, Korean immigrants were heterogeneous, coming from every province of Korea and from all walks of life.

It is hard to identify the exact geographical origins of Korean immigrants, but several existing sources generally indicate that they migrated from throughout Korea. On his tour of various sugar plantations in 1906, Rev. George H. Jones visited Maui, Hawaii and held a meeting with fifty Korean workers there. He found that they had migrated from twelve out of the thirteen different


provinces of Korea.\textsuperscript{12} No one district or province could be singled out as the predominant geographic origin of Korean immigrants.\textsuperscript{13} Such a pattern differs from that of Chinese and Japanese immigrants who came from specific areas—primarily from Kwangtung Province and Hiroshima Prefecture, respectively.

Although Koreans migrated from throughout Korea, most


\textsuperscript{13} Many scholars on Korean immigrants agree on the geographical diversity. But some stress more southern origins of Koreans while others emphasize more northern origins. There are several arguments for the northern origins of Korean immigrants. First, under the regional factionalism of the Yi dynasty (1392-1910), northerners were discriminated against by the southern yangban [noble] class and were denied access to high positions within the Court. Such discriminatory policies eventually led to a revolt against the central government. This meant that northern Koreans became less conservative while the traditional southerners wanted to retain the status quo. Second, northern Korea is a mountainous region with rich natural resources, whereas southern Korea is predominantly an agricultural area with rich land. Historically, because of the shortage of cultivated land, northern Koreans developed a more flexible social structure. Southern Koreans retained a rigid, feudal, family-centered social structure. In contrast to the tradition-oriented South, northern Korea was relatively lacking in clan and other traditional forms of social organization, and comparatively receptive to millenarian religious movements. Christianity, of the American fundamentalist and revivalist sort, also met its greatest successes in this area. Naturally, more northern Koreans joined in the emigration to Hawaii than southerners did. Third, both the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War were fought mostly in the northwestern region of Korea. The wars destroyed not only national independence but also private property. The suffering northern Koreans desperately needed a new place to live. The emigration to Hawaii provided them with hope for a better life. See Linda Shin, "Koreans in America, 1903-1945," in Roots: An Asian American Reader, eds. Amy Tachiki et al. (Los Angeles: Continental Graphics, 1971), pp. 200-201; Choy, Koreans in America, pp. 77-78.
Map 1. Modern provinces of Korea, with locations of recruiting offices and geographical origins of Korean immigrants, 1903-1924.
of them came from the cities. Half of Korean immigrants came from the Seoul-Inch'on-Suwon area, perhaps the most "urbanized" region of Korea at the time. The other half came from other urban centers dispersed throughout Korea. Few migrated directly from the rural districts. In the 1930's Bernice Kim stated, "nearly all had been city dwellers" and "very few came from the rural districts." One American manager of the Unsan Mines pointed out in 1906 that "Korean immigrants are drafted from the seaport scum."

The urban origins of Korean immigrants was mainly due to the heavy advertisements in port cities and large towns. Deshler's East-West Development Company, responsible for recruiting immigrants to Hawaii, had its main office in Inch'on and branch offices in Pusan, Mokp'o, Kunsan, Wonsan, and Chinnamp'o. As a result, urban dwellers had many opportunities for emigration. Unlike the Chinese and Japanese, many Korean immigrants were already Christians prior to emigration. Since Christians, both foreign

17. About forty percent were Christians, and gradually most Koreans became church members. See Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipyon-sa, pp. 6-7; Choy, Koreans in America, p. 77. The
missionaries and native converts, were concentrated mostly in the cities, such an urban distribution is not surprising.

A majority of Koreans were city residents, but this does not necessarily mean that the city was their birthplace or hometown. Many of them had previously escaped to the cities from their homeland in the countryside. As the foreign influences in Korea increased, the political situation grew worse. In the years between 1894 and 1905 three armed conflicts—the Tonghak Rebellion, the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War—took place on Korean soil. As a result, many peasants were uprooted from their home villages where their forefathers had lived for generations.

During the famine years of 1898 to 1901, according to Bernice Kim, farmers drifted away from poverty-stricken rural areas, especially Hwanghae Province, to seaports or cities in the north, seeking a means of allaying their hunger. Oppressive taxes also drove farmers from their homes. The common people had to work harder and harder to satisfy the demands of corrupt officials, who taxed the

reader will recall that out of the first group of 121 Korean immigrants who migrated to Hawaii, nearly half were members of Rev. George H. Jones's church in Inch'on. This was in part a result of active assistance of American missionaries for the HSPA's recruiting scheme.

For the details of the two wars, see Korea Review: 4 (1904): 193-249.

Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 78.
people so heavily that it became necessary for common farmers to go into debt just to survive. These troubled people moved to the cities in search of what little work was available there. Exposed to Christianity and its liberal ideas in the urban centers,\(^2\) they had many opportunities to observe Western culture and thus were more likely to migrate to Hawaii than those who remained in rural isolation.

The heterogeneity of social origins was another striking characteristics of Korean immigrants. Unlike Chinese and Japanese immigrants who were mostly peasants, Korean immigrants came from all walks of life. Several sources attest to this:

About one third were minor government officials, ex-soldiers, local scholars, disguised students, Christian evangelists, Buddhist monks and political refugees. The remainder was made up of common laborers, coolies, farm servants, mine workers and petty criminals.\(^2\)

\(^2\) From the 1880's forward, Korean diplomats and students began to travel to America, bringing back such ideas as constitutional government and reforms along democratic lines. In the 1890s daily newspapers began to be published in Korea. The first one, Tongnip Shinmun [The Independent], was established by a Korean named Philip Jaisohn, who had studied in America and had returned to help his country adopt the more modern ways of the West. Soon there were other newspapers publishing stories about the people and customs of far-away lands. All this meant that, for the first time, average Korean people, especially in urban areas, began to think about the world that lay beyond their own little villages.

Korean immigrants consisted of farmers, common laborers, churchmen, discharged soldiers, and unemployed men. Some were scholars and students, who sought an opportunity to further their knowledge and promote democratic ideals. They also had to work on the plantations to make money to start their education.22

Besides, the free transportation to Hawaii had attracted wandering young peddlers, gold diggers, some three hundred ex-soldiers of the Korean Army and the poverty-stricken poor people, who had suffered most from the oppression of Korean officials and the rich class of people.23

Kim Hei-won Sarah, one of the pioneer Korean women, also confirmed the diversity of social origins of Korean immigrants:

Most of those who came as immigrants are of low class: common laborers, mine workers, ex-service men...[T]here were quite a number of Korean people, all scholars and classmates of my mother.24

Since a high percentage of immigrants were city residents, there is no doubt that peasants were a very small portion of the immigrant group.25 Only one-seventh


25. One source, however, stated the different view that "many of them were farmers unable to eke out a living from their rice paddies, which had been scorched by a severe drought,...and some were displaced individuals who had lost their property during the Sino-Japanese war." see Kim and Patterson, Koreans in America, p. v.
of the total Koreans were peasants prior to emigration. In addition to the urban-centered recruiting scheme which provided rural residents with few opportunities for emigration, the mentality of peasants would also explain the reason for their small proportion.

Koreans were land-bound and lived immobile in an agrarian society. Under the influence of Confucian values which had been established as the nation's dominating doctrine since the founding of the Yi dynasty, they regarded immigration overseas as immoral conduct, even as a crime, for it left the graves of ancestors and members of the clan unattended. With such a conservative attitude, it was very hard for them to go abroad or seek contact with Western civilization. This attitude was particularly strong among peasants, who were very attached to the land.

Since many immigrants had been previously uprooted

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27. It also resulted in the policy of encouraging agriculture, discouraging commerce and industry, prohibiting outflow of materials and grains from the country, and for that end discouraging trade.

28. Except the limited exchange of official envoys, mutual contacts through traveling, academic exchanges, migration, and trade ceased almost totally. Not only were Koreans prohibited to go out of the country, but also the approach of foreigners was strictly controlled. See Byong-ik Koh, "Korean Concept of Foreign Countries during the Yi Dynasty," Paeksan Hakpo [Paeksan Review] 8 (June 1970): 231-232.
from the countryside by famine, wars and oppressive taxes, their lack of skills forced them into unskilled occupations in the cities. Naturally, the majority of Korean immigrants were common laborers or coolies who worked periodically in the cities. They were followed by ex-soldiers, minor governmental clerks, political refugees, students, policemen, miners, woodcutters, household servants, and a few Buddhist monks. Nearly all had been city dwellers.29 Another source stated the similar view that "the vast majority of those who came here [Hawaii] on immigration ships were of laboring class, although some belonged to the Sunpae [scholarly] or Yangban [noble] stock."30 Before leaving home, a majority of Koreans had been exposed to some elements of modern society, such as urban life, non-agricultural work, and Christianity.31

Quite contrary to Korean sources, however, the United States Senate Immigration Commission reported that Korean immigrants were mostly farm laborers (or farmers) when they entered the United States, as the following table indicates.

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TABLE 3

Number of Korean Immigrants by Each Specified Occupation, Fiscal Years 1899 to 1910.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Laborers</td>
<td>6,233</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Laborers</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Occupations</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Occupation (Women &amp; children)</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>7,790</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 7,790 Koreans who were admitted during the years of 1899-1910, 6,233 or eighty percent were registered as farm laborers. And, only 469 or six percent were listed as professionals, skilled workers, common laborers, or other occupations.

To interpret this variance among source materials, one should be careful about the nature of the mass immigration. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Korea was still a backward feudal nation, exclusively dependent on primitive agriculture and handicrafts. More than ninety percent of the whole working force was engaged in farming; of these,

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33. "Professional" included actors, clergy, government officials, physicians, and teachers while "skilled" included clerks and accountants, and other craftsmen.
eight-five percent were tenants or "slave farmers."³⁴

Until the rapid industrial development of the 1960's and 1970's, Korea had always remained a country of farmers, four-fifths of the people living on the soil they tilled. Since farming was a major industry in Korea at this time, many Koreans, regardless of what other occupations they pursued, could safely say that they were farmers. Emigration agents also might have advised them to register as farm laborers, since most of the Koreans were recruited to work on sugar plantations in this period.³³

A few sources state that some ex-soldiers of the Korean Army moved to Hawaii late in 1904 and 1905.³⁶ However, there are no records of them in this immigration report. In 1905, Japan tightened her political control over Korea, and obtained permission by treaty to station her soldiers in Korea. Under Japanese pressure, the Korean government began to reduce the Korean Army while Japanese troops increased in numbers. There arose strong discontent and disgust among the Korean soldiers who eventually left.

³⁴. Choy, Koreans in America, p. 40


³⁶. Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 82; Yang, "Koreans in America," pp. 5-6; Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipyon-sa, p. 342. According to Kim Won Yong, about 500 ex-soldiers migrated to Hawaii during the years of 1903 to 1905. Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities (I)," p. 37. Lyu states that some 300 ex-soldiers of the Korean Army left their homeland for political or economic reasons.
the service and drifted into the large cities without employment. Consequently, some of these alienated and jobless ex-soldiers, most of them young bachelors, decided to move to America, expecting to improve their economic and social status by their emigration.37

Because of the heterogeneity in social origins, Korean immigrants, according to Bernice Kim, were "not particularly fit for plantation type of labor."38 Rev. G. L. Pearson of Honolulu, Hawaii also stated a similar view in 1904:

A few...are not at all fitted for the work, being unused to hard toil, having too little strength or an enfeebled health. A small number of such characters are dissatisfied and are a burden to the Korean community. Men who are unable or unwilling to work find a hard time in Hawaii as do all such persons in any country.39

For some Koreans whose previous occupation was farming, the plantation jobs were not so difficult because they were already accustomed to similar work. But, since the bulk of Korean immigrants were common laborers or coolies who had not worked regularly and steadily at hard labor jobs, they found the plantation jobs to be extremely demanding and harsh. That is why, as soon as the Koreans arrived at the Hawaiian plantations, a majority of them moved out within a few years, going to the cities in Hawaii or to the West

Coast of the United States.

Having examined their geographical and social origins, we may now look at some demographic characteristics of Korean immigrants. While some helpful studies on this subject have recently been published, it is difficult to secure primary source materials upon which sound analysis and interpretation can be based. Fortunately, however, the United States Senate Immigration Commission compiled various immigration statistical data by race from 1820 to 1910. The report recorded the number of Korean

**40.** The reasons for the lack of primary materials and systematic records about Korean Americans are not hard to identify. Until the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act which prompted the rapid growth of the Korean population in America, the total Korean community has never been large. Some 7,000 Koreans arrived in Hawaii during the years of 1902-1905, and almost half of them in a few years moved to the mainland, settling predominantly in California. Honolulu and Los Angeles were the only centers of any eventual concentration of Koreans. Additions to the community, except through natural increase, were few, although some students and political refugees were admitted and wives came to join Koreans already resident here. It has only been in the late 1960's and 1970's that Korean communities have mushroomed in Los Angeles, Washington D.C., New York, and a few other places. Until recently, then, the number of Koreans in America was too small to permit the degree of cultural and social impact other immigrant groups have made. See Arthur L. Gardner, "Notes on the Availability of Materials for the Study of Korean Immigrants in the United States," in The Korean Diaspora, ed. Hyung-chan Kim (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1977), pp. 247-257; Russell Endo, "Social Science and Historical Materials on the Asian American Experience," in Asian-Americans: Social and Psychological Perspectives, Vol. 2, eds. Russell Endo et al. (Palo Alto, California: Science and Behavior Books, 1980), pp. 304-331.

**41.** U.S., Congress, Senate, Immigration Commission, Statistical Review of Immigration, 1820-1910 (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1911). This volume is a ready reference for the most important statistical data
immigrants, their occupation, age, sex and marital status, and their educational status. The beginning year is 1899, the year after the annexation of Hawaii. Thus, these statistics included all the United States territories, as well as the mainland.

The following table gives the number of Koreans of each sex and their destination in the United States, according to the year of their entry.

---

### Table 4
Korean Immigrants to America, 1899-1910.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Hawaii</th>
<th>California</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1,723</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>1,907</td>
<td>1,884</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>4,506</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>4,929</td>
<td>4,892</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,072</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>7,790</td>
<td>7,431</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4 indicates, most Korean immigrants (7,400 out of 7,790) moved to Hawaii during the years of 1903-1905. They became one of the chief productive forces in the Hawaiian sugar economy. They ranked second in number on the sugar plantations, comprising 9.71 percent of the work force in Hawaii. The Japanese averaged 65.8 percent, and the Chinese 9.14 percent.

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2. This is only the number of arrivals from Korea to Hawaii or California, respectively. A considerable number of Koreans moved internally from Hawaii to California during the period, but the figure are not included in this table.

Hawaii was the first major place where pioneer Koreans settled and created a viable Korean community. From 1910 to 1924, however, a considerable number of Koreans moved directly from Korea to California. The migration of Koreans within the United States--especially from Hawaii to California--was also greatly hastened during the 1910s and 20s. About half the Korean immigrants, who left Hawaii for California did so for better social and economic opportunities. Until the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, which accelerated the large influx of Koreans into the United States, Hawaii and California were two main centers of Korean concentration in America.

In the matter of sex, Table 4 presents the extremely unbalanced sex ratio of the Korean population in America. Of the 7,790 immigrants, 7,072 or 90.8 percent were males and 718 or 9.2 percent were females. The ratio of men to women was about ten to one. The ratio was quite high, especially compared with that among racial groups from Europe whose proportion of males to female was less than sixty percent. Chinese and Japanese immigrants were about ninety-six and eighty-four percent male.

45 The percentage of male proportion to female among European ethnic groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Male Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

respectively.**

Since most Koreans settled in Hawaii during the early years, it seems proper to examine the sex distribution of Koreans in any specified age group in Hawaii.

TABLE 5 *7

Age and Sex Distribution of Koreans in Hawaii, 1910 and 1920.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,931</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>3,498</td>
<td>1,452</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 illustrates some prominent features of the Korean population in Hawaii. Since Deshler recruited mostly young single males as the plantation laborers, one would expect the Korean immigrants to be young. Indeed, the great majority of Korean immigrants were young men in

* * . Ibid., p. 47.

their prime. In 1910, of the 4,533 Koreans (3,931 males and 602 females), 2,774 or 61.2 percent were in the age groups between twenty and thirty-nine. Thus, the economically active and reproductive age categories comprised the largest majority. In the 1930's Bernice Kim wrote, "over six thousand were young men between twenty and thirty and the remaining few were young married couples." The report of the Senate Immigration Commission also asserts a similar result.

Korean immigration generally followed the pattern set by the Chinese and Japanese immigrants in that most were single young men. However, there was a perceptible increase in the number of Korean men who brought their wives and children. This was in part due to the conscious decision of sugar planters to encourage men with families to come. The planters thought that such people would be more stable and less prone to move from plantation to

"". Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 36; Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1934)," pp. 409-413.

"". During the years of 1899-1910, 7,169 or 92 percent of the immigrants were from fourteen to forty-four years of age, 531 or 6.8 percent were under fourteen, and 90 or 1.2 percent were forty-five years or over.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under 14 Years</th>
<th>14 to 44 Years</th>
<th>45 Years or Over</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899-02</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-05</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>6,833</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>7,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>7,169</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7,790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

plantation or to return to Korea or move on to the mainland. But this was also in part a decision made by the emigrants that the move to Hawaii was to be a permanent one. According to the report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration, of 4,929 Koreans admitted to the United States in 1905, 325 or 6.5 percent were under the age of fourteen. The same report also stated that of 11,021 Japanese, only 124 (about one percent) were under fourteen.

Table 5 (as in the case of Table 4) displays the high proportion of males to females among Koreans in Hawaii. In 1910, there were 3,931 males but only 602 females; in 1920, 3,498 males as against 1,452 females. This imbalance in the sex ratio was most striking in the age groups between twenty and forty-nine, the ages when sex parity is most needed. The following table gives the sex distribution of this particular age group.

30. Before annexation the Chinese and Japanese came to Hawaii as "penal contract" laborers which kept them more stable, at least until the contract expired. However, Korean immigrants came after 1900 as free laborers who were not bound by contract or agreement to work on a plantation for a fixed time. This made them move frequently from one place to another with the hope of bettering their wages or working conditions.

TABLE 6 32

Sex Distribution Between Ages of 20 to 49.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Number of Men per Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>2,177</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The imbalance in the sex ratio changed very little until the 1930's. It remained as one of the most persistent social problems among Koreans in America. Because of the shortage of women, only a very small portion of Koreans were able to maintain an ordinary family life. The bulk of Koreans, deprived of home environments, suffered greatly from emotional and physical frustration. This became a source of anxiety and instability in the Korean community and created some serious problems in its early stage. For instance, many incidents of a "scandalous nature" such as adultery, elopement and fights over women, among others, took place in the plantations. The so-called "picture-bride" system was introduced between 1910 to 1924 to relieve this situation and to create a healthy and harmonious Korean community in Hawaii.31

This imbalance in the sex ratio would also explain one of the main features of Korean immigration—the "sojourner" 32.


32. For a full discussion on marriage and "picture-bride" system, see Chapter VIII of this study.
theory of emigration. Like their Chinese and Japanese counterparts, most of the Koreans were bachelors and considered themselves as sojourners. They had no intention of staying in Hawaii and making it their home. They were interested only in making a quick fortune within a few years and returning to Korea to live out their lives in wealth and comfort.

Yet the realities were otherwise. They were compelled to remain in America because of weakening home ties, the difficulties of saving sufficient money to return with prestige and the dream of future prosperity in America. Moreover, unlike the Chinese and Japanese, Korean immigrants actually did not have their country to return to because Korea was annexed by Japan in 1910. Deprived of their national entity as Koreans, and alienated from the mainstream of American society, they were tormented by feelings of injustice and frustration. They became marginal beings thrown into a strange land.

When seeking admission to the United States, immigrants were not formally tested as to their ability to read and write. They were simply asked such question as "Can you read?" and "Can you write?" If they were able to read or write in some language or dialect, it was accepted as proof of literacy. Statistical data secured by this method are neither absolutely reliable nor conclusive. However, as the inquires quoted were simple in character, and as the educational status of immigrants in no way
affected their rights to admission, it may be assumed that the information is substantially accurate.\footnote{54}

The following table shows the number and percentage of Koreans, fourteen years of age or over, who could neither read nor write.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Educational Status of Korean Immigrants, Fiscal Years 1899 to 1910.}
\begin{tabular}{llll}
\hline
Year & 14 Years or over & Persons 14 Years or Over who were illiterate & \\
\hline
1899-02 & 166 & 6 & 3.6 \\
1903-05 & 6,899 & 2,716 & 39.3 \\
1906-10 & 194 & 41 & 21.1 \\
Total & 7,259 & 2,763 & 38.1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

As Table 7 indicates, Korean immigrants during the years of 1899-1902 were mostly literate. Only four percent of them (six out of 168), could neither read nor write. During the "mass migration" period of 1903-1905, however, Korean immigrants were less educated and literate. This is due to the fact that most of the Koreans during this period came from low classes of Korean society. The immigrants during the years of 1906-1910 were somewhat better educated than those of the earlier mass migration. Of the 194, only 41 (21.1 percent) could neither read nor write, compared with

\footnote{54. Statistic Review of Immigration, p. 84.}
\footnote{55. Ibid., pp. 84-87.}
the 39.3 percent of illiterates in the former group. This is attributed to the flow of a sizable number of professionals and "refuge students" who fled from Japanese rule in Korea during this period.

Of 7,259 Korean immigrants admitted during the years of 1899-1910, 2,763 or 38.1 percent could neither read nor write. Although the illiteracy rate stands above average among all the ethnic groups, it was quite low, compared to 57.2 percent of Mexicans, 59.5 of Turkish, and 68.2 of Portuguese. The relatively high literacy rate among Koreans was rather impressive in view of the extremely limited opportunity for education in Korea in the late nineteenth century. Of course, this rate was based on knowledge of Korean letters, not of the English alphabet. Most of the immigrants did not understand a single English word and had to have the help of Korean interpreters.

The percentage of illiteracy was progressively reduced after 1906. By 1930, the rate of Korean children attending school was the second highest among all ethnic groups in Hawaii, exceeded only by the Anglo-Saxons. This

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5*. One source also states that about forty percent of Korean immigrants to Hawaii were literate, see Kim, Koreans in America, p. 11.

57. The average illiteracy rate of all the ethnic groups admitted to the United States during the same period was 26.7 percent.

58. Statistic Review of Immigration, pp. 84-90.

59. Adams, Peoples of Hawaii, p. 45
reflected the keen interest of Korean immigrants in the education of their children. One source stated:

Along educational lines they have certainly distinguished themselves. A large percentage of the Korean population is pursuing higher education than any other race in the territory. It is also true that the percentage of illiteracy is very low among the Koreans. Very early in their history here...they established schools for such of their numbers as could not afford to educate themselves.60

In summary, a careful examination of the available data enables us to portray the general socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of Korean immigrants. Unlike Chinese and Japanese immigrants who came from the rural farming areas of specific regions, Korean emigrants were from widely distributed areas throughout Korea. Most of them came from the seaports or large cities. Very few migrated directly from the rural districts, so that the farming class comprised less than one-seventh of the entire group.

In occupational status, two-thirds of the Korean immigrants were common laborers or coolies, although other occupations comprised a substantial proportion. Some evidence suggest that not a few had been uprooted from their native villages in the countryside by famine, wars, and oppressive taxes. They drifted into urban centers in search of jobs. They were periodically engaged in

60. Tai Sung Lee, "The History of Korean Immigration," Mid-Pacific Magazine 14 (August 1932): 140. This article also appears in kim and Patterson, Koreans in America, pp. 106-108.
unskilled or semiskilled work in the cities prior to emigration. There some of them were exposed to Protestant missionaries and converted to Christianity. As a result, a large proportion of Koreans, unlike the Chinese and Japanese, were already Christians, and most Korean immigrants ultimately became church members later in America.

Most of the Koreans, who migrated to Hawaii during the years of 1903-1905, worked on the sugar plantations. Some of them soon moved to California for better economic and social opportunities. A great majority of Koreans were single young men between twenty and thirty-nine who were physically active and economically productive. The ratio of men to women was roughly ten to one, indicating the extremely unbalanced sex ratio among Korean immigrants. This became a source of instability in the Korean community in America.

Regarding literacy level, Korean immigrants, especially during the "mass migration" period, were largely uneducated, lacking extensive formal education. However, their illiteracy rate of 38.1 percent was relatively low, particularly compared to those among non-European ethnic groups. The rate was progressively reduced, and by 1930, nearly all second-generation Koreans were literate.
CHAPTER V
WHY THEY LEFT: "PUSH" AND "PULL" FACTORS

Emigration requires powerful motivation. Creatures of habit and tradition, human beings have a tendency to stay where they are and endure what they must, rather than confront uncertainty and the unknown. Emigration overseas is thus a matter of resolute determination and bravery, however hard the emigrant's living may be, and however well off he may expect to be in the new land. The venture of pioneer Koreans across the Pacific was undoubtedly the outcome of strong motivational forces.

Reflecting the heterogeneity of their social and geographical origins, Korean immigrants had a variety of motives for migration. Some people migrated for a single reason—political, economic, social, educational, or religious. For others, it may have been a combination of two or more reasons. This section will discuss in some detail the reasons for emigration in terms of "push" and "pull" factors.

One prominent motive for migration was the hope of making a quick fortune in America. Korean immigrants were mostly young men, coming as sojourners. They hoped to gain wealth quickly in the "land of gold" and to return to Korea as persons of status. They had no intention of staying in America and making it their home. This "sojourner" theory
of emigration was commonly applicable to Chinese and Japanese immigrants.

Despite China's repressive emigration policy, the Chinese first came across the Pacific in the 1840's to seek their fortunes in the land "where the streets were rumored to be paved with gold." They called America "Chin-shan" or "Mountain of Gold." The discovery of gold in California served as a tremendous incentive for emigration. Most thought that, with a few years of hard work, they would be able to return to their home villages and live in wealth and comfort. Most Chinese immigrants came from rural farming areas in the southeastern provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien where the land was densely peopled and economic conditions wretched. A shortage of food and arable land there pushed the migration movement.

1. Sung, Mountain of Gold, p. 10. For an excellent discussion about motives for Chinese immigrants, see Ling, "Causes of Chinese Emigration," pp. 74-82. According to Ling, the Chinese seldom left their country for political freedom or religious tolerance. The main impetus was economic betterment.

2. Sung, Ibid., pp. 11-16; Henry P. Fairchild, Immigration: A World Movement and Its American Significance (New York: Macmillan Co., 1928), p. 8. According to Fairchild, the economic causes of migrations are the earliest and by far the most significant. They were mainly products of the pressure of population upon the resources of the soil. Ta Chen elaborated on this point by classifying four basic causes of Chinese emigration: driving force, that of population pressure and poverty; environmental factor, that of geographical accessability to the ocean; psychic force, that of energetic and adventurous traits of young men; controlling force, that of better wages and working conditions. See Ta Chen, Chinese Migration, with Special References to Labor Conditions, United States, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin no.
The "sojourner" theory of emigration was illustrated to a lesser extent by the Japanese. Like the Chinese, they had the same motive of quick economic betterment. Their motive was to go, make money, and return to Japan, and thus to better the economic and social position of themselves and their families in Japan. The United States would be temporary, Japan their permanent home. They did not leave their homeland to seek religious freedom or to escape political persecution. Japan had been "a country with a dense and rapidly increasing population, with limited natural resources and a scarcity of capital." Consequently, economic improvement was a cardinal motive for Japanese migration. Immigration appealed to small farmers or tenant farmers in the Southwest district of Japan.

Korean immigrants were also "sojourners." They saw

340, 1923, pp. 5-11.


America as a paradise that could offer them a chance of getting rich quickly. In many instances, they planned to return home after a few hard years to enjoy the fruits of their labor.* They were confident of their chances for success. They thought that fortunes were awaiting to be made in America. Like the Chinese and Japanese, Korean immigrants had a common psychological trait—the adventurous spirit. They had to have something of the venturer in them, for the trip, so far as they knew, was a gamble of life and death. But the news of life in America, and especially tales of success and money remittances home which seemed to prove them made even the more conservative willing to go.

The optimistic prospect for the future was mainly due to the exaggerated advertisements by the immigration company and its agents. Newspaper articles helped to shape the images the Korean public held of America. For instance, in an editorial about the American presidential elections of 1900, one newspaper described America as the richest country in the world.7 American missionaries also affected the images of Korean people had of America by introducing into Korea a prosperous, middle-class, American way of life along with Christian beliefs and modern


scientific technology. Many missionaries brought their families and built large houses, filling them with furniture and servants. Koreans tended to equate material wealth with Christian beliefs and practice. The idea that God had rewarded Americans with the good things in life because of their faith and virtue, and that Koreans could follow the same path, was an integral, if not explicit, part of the Protestant message.

As time passed, however, Korean immigrants were soon disappointed and disillusioned. The situation on the sugar plantation was very different from what they had expected. The extremely hard physical labor, the sixty-nine cents daily pay, foreign diet, and unfamiliar subtropical climate became unbearably harsh for many of them. They found that money did not grow on trees in Hawaii. Even fifty years after the immigrants first came to Hawaii, few had "realized the original dream of all immigrants, to return to the land of their birth after amassing a fortune on American soil." One immigrant came to Hawaii in 1905 at the age of twenty-eight to "make a lot of money and return home to Korea." But he "never made too much money" and was

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compelled to stay on indefinitely.10 One second generation Korean recalled his parents:

Their intention was to return to their land as soon as they had saved some money. In this hope they were disappointed, for they soon found out that it was not so easy to save money as they thought it would be. However, they became so used to the climate, freedom, and advantages of this land that they no longer desire to leave this land permanently.11

Those who were motivated by the quick-rich prospect in Hawaii were likely to be single young men or family heads who left their families in Korea. They expected to join their families after a few years of labor. However, they had to face the reality of wages of sixty-nine cents a day. They wanted to return home because of the hard labor in the sugar plantations and the difficulty in adapting to the Hawaiian mode of life. Many of them began to save merely to pay for the return passage to Korea. These sojourners would be the least likely to remain permanently in America.12

A second major reason for emigrating was political uncertainty in Korea. The fear of Japanese domination served as a "push" factor that drove Koreans overseas. Many Koreans, especially those in the cities, were aware of the buildup of Japanese power in Korea in the early


12. Ibid., p. 426.
1900s. Soon after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904, Japan took a definite step toward destroying Korea's sovereignty as Russian influence withdrew and American policy began to side with Japan.

When Japan landed troops on Korean territory in 1904, Korean King, Ko-jong, appealed to President Theodore Roosevelt to protect Korean independence on the ground of the Korean-American Treaty of 1882. The treaty provided for "perpetual peace and friendship," stating that "if other powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either Government, the other will exert their good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable arrangement, thus showing their friendly feeling." President Roosevelt, however, ignored the Korean King's plea because of his reluctance to interfere with Korean affairs. The United states sided with Japanese imperialism for its own national interests.14

Japan forced Korea into an alliance, creating in

12. Increasing Japanese domination was one of the reasons used by Horace N. Allen, the American minister to Korea, to persuade Korean King to permit emigration to Hawaii in 1902.

everything but name a virtual protectorate in 1905. Japan controlled Korea's foreign relations. The Korean government was not allowed to make any international agreement without prior approval by the Japanese government. Japanese troops were stationed in great numbers in Seoul, making a great demonstration of military force. Moreover, Japan appointed as her representative a Resident-General in Seoul whose main duty was to direct "matters relating to diplomatic affairs."

The Resident-General became a supreme administrator in Korea working under the direction of the Empire of Japan, not that of Korea. In other words, Korea was entirely to surrender her independence as a state. This insecure political situation gave the Korean people a fear of losing their national entity. This was especially true for soldiers and governmental officials who were directly affected by a Japanese takeover. They were forced to leave their jobs because they were not fit for the Japanese scheme of control over Korea. About 500 ex-soldiers and some government officials thus left for Hawaii late in 1904 and 1905, expecting to profit in economic and social status.

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15. The Japanese Protectorate Treaty over Korea was signed on November 17, 1905.

Out of fifty surviving first generation of Korean women immigrants, twenty-nine wished to escape life under Japanese domination. When asked why she came to America, one of them readily answered, "to be with my husband and escape the horrible memories of Japanese terrorism and fear of people." One author stated:

Korea, then stifled by Japanese military rule, afforded little opportunity for a satisfactory life. Arbitrary reforms in education, government, business, as well as controls on press and employment made the decision to leave their native land an easy one.

Those who had this political motive would be the least likely to return to Korea, especially after the Protectorate of 1905 and the annexation in 1910. It might also be noted that these people showed a strong sense of patriotic zeal. They became actively engaged in a national movement in America for Korean independence.

The educational opportunity in America served as one important "pull" factor leading to emigration. Some

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18. Harold Hakwon Sunoo and Sonia Shinn Sunoo, "The Heritage of the First Korean Women Immigrants in the United States: 1903-1924," Korean Christian Scholars Journal: 2 (Spring 1977): 158-163. This article is based on the interviews with the first generation of Korean women immigrants. The average age of the women was eighty-five years, and most of them resided in Southern California, in and adjacent to Los Angeles when interviewed in 1975.

Koreans migrated to America in order to receive education, to learn a new way of life, and to become familiar with modern technology. Young parents felt that educational opportunities for their children were very limited in Korea. Thus, in order to provide their children with a better education in America, some parents willingly suffered the socio-economic dislocations that resulted from the emigration.

Rev. George H. Jones observed in 1906 that "fully half of the Koreans in America are there in the hope of getting some kind of an education."\(^{20}\) Horace N. Allen points out that Korean people "were usually keen on getting a foreign education, and this has taken quite a number to the United States."\(^{21}\) Allen states:

There are quite a number of Koreans now residing in the United States, whither they had gone chiefly in quest of an education, the desire for which is so strong that genteel Koreans have taken up menial callings to that end. Other Koreans wish to get to the United States...The idea of obtaining an education for their children seems to be an incentive as well.\(^{22}\)

Deshler utilized these Koreans' desire for an education and the learning of a new modern life. He advertised in his recruiting poster using these incentives. Even though he mentioned high wages, good working conditions, medical care benefits, and fuel and water


\(^{21}\) Allen to Dole.

\(^{22}\) Allen to Hay.
supplies, he pointed out the educational opportunities in Hawaii. He emphasized advantages such as school education for those willing to study in the evening schools and free education for children.  

Since the Koreans were ardent supporters of the schools run by the churches, this favorable appeal induced many people to migrate to Hawaii. Kang Young-sung, one of the pioneer Korean immigrants, stated: "My mother had a great ambition to see that I got the very best of education [in America]...I, too, had lust for education." Yang Choo-en joined the first emigration group in 1902, primarily because he would have an opportunity to learn Western civilization in the United States. Paek Il-kyu decided to migrate to acquire useful knowledge. Later he graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, majoring in economics, and he became a prominent leader of Koreans in America.

Closely related to the educational motive was the hope

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23. See footnote 24 of Chapter III of this study.
27. Kim, Chaem Hanin Osinyon-ga, pp. 265-266. Paek Il-kyu was born in Pyongan Province and educated in Chinese classics.
of reform or modernization of Korean society. During the last years of the Yi dynasty, a group of young intellectuals championed "Open Nation’s Door to Progress." Yu Kil-jun, So Chae-pil, and Yun Chi-ho were three notable intellectuals who were associated with the enlightenment movement in Korea. They all studied in America, thus developing a friendly attitude toward American culture. Apparently inspired by the ideals of civil rights and democracy, they attempted to impart Western liberal ideas to others when they returned to Korea.

Through editorials and articles in vernacular newspapers, they proposed the introduction of Western liberal ideas and scientific technology to strengthen Korean independence and national wealth. They launched various campaigns of enlightenment and adopted an open door policy, providing the people with knowledge about the world.

28. A few organizations were established among the Koreans in Hawaii whose main aim was reform of the home government. The Sinminhoe was an example.


30. Such newspapers as Tongnip Shinmun [The Independent], Hwangsong Shinmun [The Imperial Palace News] and Cheguk Shinmun [The Imperial News] published stories about the people and customs of Western countries, introducing new ideas and advanced technology to Korean people.
beyond the borders of Korea. They also strongly felt the need for diplomatic and trade relations with Western countries.

Allen suggested that since the Korean public advocated "Open Nation's Door to Progress," it would be desirable to send some young students and intellectuals abroad to learn the liberal ideas and modern scientific technology of the West. Korean migration to America in this sense could be seen as a by-product of the open door policy and the enlightenment movement in Korean society in the late nineteenth century. Since emigration was one way to contact Western civilization, the opportunity given by Deshler's Immigration Company was a great inducement to Koreans who wanted to migrate to America.

Religious freedom was one of the motives which led some Koreans to settle in America. Tai Sung Lee stated such a motivation in the 1930's:

To the timid, stoical Korean, the message

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51. Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipnyon-sa, p. 4; So, Miju Hanin Ch'ilsipnyon-sa, p. 21. One source, however, disputes this argument for two reasons. First, the Korean people generally viewed the West as barbarian, an attitude that had been developed by court scholars in the 1860s. Thus the subject of Western civilization was far from the average Korean's mind in those days. Second, most Koreans in America came from low social classes. Sixty five percent of them were illiterate. Thus, it is hard to believe that many of them went to Hawaii in order to help reform and modernize Korean society through the introduction of Western civilization. See Yun, "Early History of Korean Immigration to America (1)," p. 22.

52. He served as executive secretary for the Korean Student Christian Movement of Hawaii in the 1930s.
[Christianity] was one of hope and life. Eagerly he asked of its power and a sample of its results...Soon the United States was the hope of Korea, for was it not there that the wondrous Cross had brought beneficent results? Was it not there that the pagan ceased from troubling and the Christian could resist? Was it not worth the while of any timid, down-trodden Korean laborers to make the attempt of reaching this heaven of peace and plenty? 

"As the Korean embraced Christianity," said Lee, "he began to look for a place where it might be lived in peace. So, when in 1903, the call came for him to emigrate to a country where he could enjoy religious freedom...The teachings of the missionary had prepared him for emigration."

There was a close connection between American missionaries and the emigration enterprise. I have already noted that missionaries encouraged Korean converts to move to America, for mission work would be more successful, they believed, with Koreans away from home since Christianity still met with some opposition in Korea. We have also seen that most Korean immigrants came from the

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34. Lee, ibid., pp. 136-140.
35. Horace N. Allen, a medical missionary for the Presbyterians, was the first American missionary to arrive in Korea. Others soon followed and the first baptism was conducted by Rev. Appenzeller in 1886. By 1890 there were 150 missionaries in Korea who were aided in their work by unofficial American policy to "spread the word." Out of 174 missionaries in 1905, 148, or eight-five percent were Protestant and most of these were American. See Harrington, God, Mammon, and the Japanese; Kim and Kim, Korea and Politics of Imperialism, p. 189.
urban centers where the missionaries and their converts were heavily concentrated.

Korean Christianity primarily took its root among the lower and uneducated classes in the urban areas. Admiration of Western learning and culture was combined with a dismal situation of poverty, political oppression, unemployment and heavy taxes which fell most heavily on these underprivileged people of Korean society.\textsuperscript{34} These people became chief objects for conversion to Christianity.\textsuperscript{37} They turned to missionaries for advice and assistance, and thus had opportunities to migrate to America.

As a result, a large proportion of Korean immigrants became Christians, regardless of whether their main reasons for emigration were political, economic or educational. And this largely explains why Protestant churches became a major community organization among Koreans in America.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{34} This does not necessarily mean that all the underprivileged people of Korean society were Christian converts. A large percentage of Korean people, imbued with traditional way of thinking inherent in their history and culture, regarded Christianity as a barbarian custom or an immoral religion.

\textsuperscript{37} Paik, \textit{History of Protestant Missions}, pp. 205 & 249. According to Paik, poverty and political oppression were two main causes for the increase of Korean converts, although the idea of sin and of salvation through Jesus Christ seemed to be the dominant ideas of the native Christians.

\textsuperscript{38} Prior to emigration, about four hundred Korean immigrants were already baptized Christians. Within a decade, the number of Korean Christians grew rapidly and reached two thousand and eight hundred. Eventually almost
According to Hulbert, thirteen Korean evangelists did earnest and successful work in Hawaii under the care of the Methodist Mission Board.39 Even non-Christian immigrants were eventually involved in church life because the churches became the only means for social interaction in Korean communities in America.40

A desire for a better life along Western lines was another primary reason not only for conversion to Christianity as we have seen above but also for emigration to America. Some Koreans were attracted to Christianity because of its close connection with Western learning and culture. They were impressed by the activities of American missionaries—the operation of schools, hospitals, and other social work beyond purely religious activities. These evangelical works enabled the missionaries to reach the upper class of the Korean society as well as the people at large.

Since Christianity was the major religion of the advanced nations of Europe and America, some Koreans believed, it might help Korea to become modern in a similar

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40. Nam Han, "Korean immigrants in America and the History of Their National Independence Movement," Han'guk ilbo, 17 May 1975.
way. Allen put it this way:

They [Koreans] mark our cheerful faces and our enjoyment of life and wonder at the cause. They listen to the tales of the achievements of Western science...When they realize that all this is the outcome and development of our religion, the practical value of Christianity makes a powerful appeal to them.

One Korean immigrant, who was converted to Christianity, said that he "began to have a desire to go to new lands, to see new faces, to give his children all the educational advantages there are in America and to live a broader and fuller life." Those who migrated for religious freedom or better life along western lines were likely to become permanent residents. These people very probably were Christians or had had opportunities to study at the mission schools in Korea.

The above mentioned reasons undoubtedly served as important "push" or "pull" factors in the decision of many Koreans to migrate to America. However, taking into account bad crops, famine, natural disasters and the ensuing hardships in Korea around the turn of the century, poverty and the dismal conditions in Korea at the time

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1. Korea's acceptance of Protestantism opened its door to Western civilization which in turn brought a change to the Korean people's spiritual concepts. Protestantism thus played an important role in setting a major social reform in motion in Korea. See Mun, Hanmi Osipnyon-sa, pp. 251-253.


served as the most crucial "push" factor. Here, bad conditions in Korea combined with the optimistic reports about Hawaii.

One newspaper also noted that immigration to Hawaii was due to economic reasons. Just a week after the first group left Inch'on, it said that some people went north to Russia and others went to Hawaii because famine and starvation had reached a point beyond their endurance. Faced with political instability, poor crops and economic disaster in Korea, many unemployed Koreans found that the labor recruiting advertisements for the Hawaiian sugar plantations suggested an attractive alternative. The prospect of work in the sugar fields seemed better than the dismal situation at home. Thus famine and food crisis in Korea, combined with reported good earnings and prospects in Hawaii, brought about Korean immigration to Hawaii.

Famine was not the only problem facing Korea at the turn of the century. Various epidemics raged, adding to the burdens of a recent drought and flood. As a result of the wars, banditry in the countryside remained unchecked. Inflation and monetary instability was caused by the counterfeiting of nickel pieces. In short, it is clear that the malaise of the last ten years of the Yi Dynasty affected almost everyone and everything. Corruption, high taxes and general mismanagement were prevalent as the Yi

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". Hwangsong Shinmun, 29 December 1902.
Dynasty slid into near chaos. Thus many Korean immigrants moved to this "land of gold" during the years of severe socio-economic strain of the early 1900s. "Considerable numbers [of Koreans] have desired to go to the islands," Allen stated, "with the hope of bettering their condition and escaping the persistent oppression of their tax collectors."**

A leader of the Korean community in Hawaii also stated his reason for migration:

The laborer was worse off than the beggar. His life was but a mere existence just beyond the pale of starvation. To the laboring class in Korea the call to work where fuel and shelter were assured with any kind of a cash wage was a call to the land of abundance, and he came because of his opportunity to earn what to him was a respectable wage.***

One immigrant recalled those hard days in Korea and his motive to migrate: "Times were hard. The country had been passing through a period of famine years...My occupation as tax collector, barely kept me from starvation's door as I travelled from village to village."**** Thus, he moved to Hawaii with his family for economic betterment. Another immigrant named Ahn Young-ho said that he had "nothing to

**. Allen to Hay.


****. Quoted in Hawaii Korean Golden Jubilee Celebration Committee, Fifty Years of Progress (Honolulu, 1953), p. 4.
eat. The reason I left Korea was because I simply couldn't live there...Through letters from my cousin, I knew it was a better life in America." 

One of the first Korean women immigrants recalled painful experiences of her family with a voice filled with emotion: "[My family] left Korea because we were too poor...We had nothing to eat...there was absolutely no way we could survive." When asked whether she repented of her coming to America, she said, "No, it was better than Korea because in a month we could get rice, soy sauce, and if you needed anything, it eventually could be brought...There was no way to earn money there [Korea]." Morris Pang's father, one of the sugar plantation workers in Hawaii, had a similar economic motive. He told his life story to his son:

When we arrived in Korea [from Japan], we had no money left, and found that there were no opportunities for work of any kind and that conditions were bad. It was then that we heard of a man [emigration agent] who was talking a lot about the opportunities in Hawaii. He promised to give us work, free houses, and adequate pay. It all looked very lucrative and so after reading the contract, which seemed quite suitable, thirteen of us signed. We were shipped to

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49. Interview with Ahn Young-ho, Oakland, California, 6 January 1976, Sunoo, Korea Kaleidoscope, pp. 53-72.

49. She was ninety-five years old when interviewed in 1975.

Some social outcastes like actors and butchers, the lowest social class in Korea, were also interested in positions on the sugar plantations. Discriminated against and often unemployed, they willingly moved to America not only to seek economic betterment but also to improve their low social status. They saw America as a land of wealth and opportunity. A few criminals also joined the mass migration. One immigrant, for example, escaped to Hawaii to evade criminal punishment. He was a chief of a small town, but he embezzled much public and private money, so he decided to flee to far off places. He thought Hawaii would be an ideal sanctuary.

In summary, Korean immigrants had a variety of motives for emigration. Like the Japanese and Chinese before them, some Koreans came as sojourners intent on getting wealth quickly and returning to Korea as rich and respected men in their villages. A few left because of political reasons, especially the fear of political uncertainty and of Japanese dominance after the Russo-Japanese war in 1904. A few left for educational opportunity for themselves or their children. Still others left seeking religious freedom and the reform of the Korean government presumably


32. So, Miju Hanin Ch'ilsipnyon-sa, p. 27.
through efforts conducted abroad. It is probable that in many cases more than one of the reasons discussed above operated to cause the ultimate decision to be made.

While the foregoing reasons are significant, it is clear that most Koreans migrated to another land for the same reasons that most immigrants shared throughout history—dismal prospects in their homeland and hope for a better life in the new country. Whatever other motivations there were, the majority of Korean immigrants left because of bad conditions in Korea, combined with promising reports about America.

Political uncertainty, wars, poverty, famine, heavy taxes, cholera epidemics, banditry, inflation, general mismanagement, and government corruption in Korea—all these served as "push" factors involved in Korean emigration to America. They were the outcome of political and economic calamities derived from both foreign encroachment and domestic failure to meet the crisis. Under these circumstances, the exodus of Korean immigrants was an expected phenomenon.

On the other hand, optimistic reports about Hawaii—economic betterment, improvement of social status, educational opportunity, religious freedom, combined with the demand for inexpensive foreign labor in sugar plantations in Hawaii—worked as "pull" factors that were conducive to Korean emigration. A coincidence of catastrophe in Korea and opportunity in America supplied
the expulsive and attractive forces that linked the "Hermit Kingdom" to the United States, working together to push some 7,000 Koreans out of their native land between 1902 and 1905.
PART TWO

A NEW SOCIETY IN THE NEW WORLD
No matter what its origin, every immigrant group tends to recreate a part of its homeland in order to provide a friendly and familiar environment in the new world. Korean immigrants were no exception. Upon their arrival in America, they attempted to transplant to the new world their old-world cultural heritages—institutions, customs or ways of life. However, these cultural practices, which functioned properly in the old country, did not fit American conditions well. Korean immigrants thus had to modify their customs to cope with the new problems in an alien land.

Koreans' adaptation to the new life began even before their departure for America. Expecting to travel soon to an unknown country, they felt the need for some modifications in their customs or ways of life. During the waiting period before the crossing, the prospective immigrants were given basic orientation by the emigration agents in Korea. They were instructed in emigration procedures and taught about new ways of life in Hawaii. They were advised to discard their old customs, to change
their native clothes\(^1\) and to cut off their topknots. Sometimes unrefined, cotton-made western style clothing was distributed to them.\(^2\) One immigrant experienced this while applying for emigration:

I went to the [emigration] company...to prepare to travel. Returning home, my cousin gave me a Western suit and undershirt and told me to take it and go. I felt shy wearing that suit and only took it in the suitcase when I went to the company...When I left Korea I had one Western suit and chip sin [shoes made of rice shoots], so I was ashamed to be seen.\(^3\)

In 1895, the Korean government announced a haircut decree, urging that all adult males cut off their long hair (topknots). Many Koreans, however, refused to do so because cutting off the topknot, they believed, would be worse than cutting off their heads. The topknot hair style had been a symbol of their ancient and venerated beliefs. Most immigrants, except for a few young progressive Christians, left Korea with their topknots and traditional clothes.

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1. At that time Korean men usually wore wide and baggy cotton trousers narrowed above the ankles to terminate in a kind of sock. Their upper garment was an outer tunic of similar material, split at the sides. Women usually wore white cotton pantaloons which also tapered towards the ankles. Over them they invariably wore apron-like skirts. Their upper garment was a short jacket. During the winter, both men and women wore thick white cotton clothes.

2. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Sonwu Hyok, Honolulu, 20 July 1974, Moon, "Korean Immigrants in America," p. 67.

While going through immigration procedures, however, the pressure mounted for them to abandon traditional customs, because the emigration company wished to make a good impression on the plantation owners. After leaving Korea, the emigration ships usually stopped at Kobe or Yokohama in Japan. There, Korean immigrants took rigorous physical examinations because the Korean medical system was not officially recognized at that time by foreign countries. In the examination, about five percent of all Korean immigrants were rejected, and subsequently sent back to Korea.

During the short stay in Japan, Korean immigrants obtained American work clothes from the emigration agents. After this, most discarded their native costumes and continued to wear western ones except for special occasions. This adaptation of new dress was "based on their convenience for work and accessibility of them in the

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During their short stay in Japan or aboard the emigration ship, most male Koreans cut their topknots off. When they reached Hawaii, "all but two in a hundred had cut their hair."

When Hulbert, a pioneer American missionary in Korea, visited Hawaii in 1905, he saw no Koreans in native dress or topknot; all were clothed and groomed in the western fashion. The cutting off of the topknot and wearing of Western clothes were quite symbolic acts of initial cultural adaptation. Korean immigrants adopted American clothing or habits more quickly than any other Asiatic immigrant groups. Another observer, George Jones, commented that, "as a rule the Koreans live well," and they "wear American clothing, eat American food, and act as much like Americans as they can."

Changes in Korean women were somewhat slower than those in men. Unlike Korean males, women were neither advised to change into Western-style clothes nor to cut their hair. With the exception of discarding winter clothes, there were few changes in the matter of dress. Korean clothes were worn and Korean fashions persisted long


after women emigrated to America. They arranged their hair close to their heads with a part in the middle. A knot in the back was held in place by a silver rod-like ornament called the Pina.10

The slow change in women’s clothes and hair style was not due to their strong attachment to the old customs. Rather it was because of their living patterns or conditions in Hawaii. Since Korean women were usually engaged in house work like child-care, cooking and laundering, the need for the changes was not as urgent as it was for men. Moreover, Korean women were not accustomed to making Western style clothes during the first years of their lives in Hawaii.11

All East Asians—Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans—shared many common features, although they were quite different from one another in many ways. Before the formal contact with the West, the Chinese world was a social universe in the mind of Koreans and Japanese. Chinese culture—its written language, social and political institutions, and value systems—provided all East Asians with the basic framework of their world order. Confucianism was the basis of the sharing by Asians of the


11. Hyun, Han’guk Yuimin-sa, p. 303.
Confucian values imposed an enduring stamp on the institution of the Korean family. They governed both internal and external family relationships:

Within the family household an individual's status depended on her generation, relative age, and sex. Generation was the primary factor, and grandparents and parents of either sex had to be treated with considerable respect by their descendants. Within a generation, however, sex and age were the determinants; a wife was inferior to her husband, a sister to her brother, a younger brother to his older brother. Within a large societal context, an individual's status was in part related to his age but was also greatly related to the status of his family in society, whether noble or common, a family of scholars or of peasants. Family status also depended on the number of generations of ancestors whose memorial tablets were kept and honored.

Under the influence of the Confucian values, Koreans closely attached themselves to the family. Its preservation and enhancement became a foremost social norm, and loyalties and obligations toward the family superseded all others.

In American society, the individual moved away from the family to go on his own. In Korean society, however,

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the unit of society was not the individual but the family and, more broadly, the clan. Life was oriented for the benefit of the entire extended family rather than for the individual. Individuals counted themselves as "not so much integral factors of society as mere fractions of a social whole." Familism dominated an individual's social and economic activities. Someone who didn't have any family connections was considered as "an outcast and a vagabond." The family was the real foundation of Korean society. This traditional family system, transplanted to America, served as the most important social institution. It carried out the duty of implanting the social and cultural lives of the home country in the children of the immigrants.

In the traditional family, the highest position was reserved for the elderly folks—grandparents and their contemporaries. It was customary for Koreans to call all male members of the society in their father's generation "uncles" and female members "aunts." This gave them a sense of family consciousness, and showed their respect for the elders. The primary male-head dominated the overall family, exerting great control over its members.

Much pressure was placed upon the individual members

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of the family "to gain a good education, to be obedient to parents, and to give the family a good name." 16. Bad actions of a family member--criminal acts, disobedience, low achievement, for instance--brought feelings of guilt and shame to the entire family. In order to control family members and to maintain individual obligation to the family, parents usually used guilt-arousing techniques like "threatening to disown the person, verbally censuring the individual, or having the individual engage in activities that accentuate his feelings of guilt and shame." 17

Filial piety was another supreme virtue in the family. It was not merely a matter of decorum but a tremendous force in the personal motivation of conduct. 18 Also, each member of the family was obliged to help the others, and in turn could expect protection and aid. Thus the family system was better able to "satisfy a basic need for


18. For instance, many Korean laborers willingly endured the hardships and loneliness in an alien country, expecting that they could send some money to their families in Korea.
interpersonal intimacy and to provide social support. It worked as an ideal shock-absorber against the impact of stress in times of need, poverty or unemployment. In the traditional family, the relationship between husband and wife was that of authority and prestige for the man while the role of the wife was a secondary one. A woman was not considered her husband's equal, and there was no thought of companionship.

The cultural setting of America, along with its living and working conditions, was quite different from that of Korea. It was not conducive for the preservation of the old-world practices. As soon as Korean immigrants landed in Honolulu, groups of ten or fifteen persons were randomly parcelled out to different plantations, so that many relatives and friends were widely separated. Their lives on the sugar plantations were extremely uncomfortable and hard. Transplanted to an alien land, they were physically and mentally frustrated by feelings of loneliness and alienation. Much of the old life was broken off. As plantation laborers, they were exploited and treated as a mere means of production by the planters. Their time was not their own, so they could not carry on leisurely activities and ceremonies as they had in Korea. As a result, changes in the old family system were inevitable.

In Korea, married women seldom appeared in public. Their place was always at home. The higher their position, the more complete was their seclusion. However, during the crossing of the Pacific, Korean immigrants encountered unfamiliar circumstances. Aboard the emigration ship (it was not a passenger ship but a freighter), they experienced the transition from a closed to an open society. In the crowded conditions of steerage class, men and women mixed together in the same cabins.21 This was a new experience for people who had just left a traditional society where even a seven-year-old boy was not allowed to share a seat with a girl of his age. Such an experience weakened their sense of Confucian distinction between the sexes, and helped them to accept equality between the sexes and to adjust themselves to a new situation of group life in America.22

In addition to the change in the traditional relationships between the sexes, there were changes in food and religion. Aboard the emigration ship, Korean immigrants encountered Japanese cooking. While soy sauce was used as a primary seasoning in all East Asian cooking, it was manufactured differently in each country, so that the flavors varied between China, Japan, and Korea. Korean

21. Ibid., p. 87.

22. Ibid., pp. 56-87; Yun Yo-jun, "Seventy Years of Immigration to America," Kyonghyang Shinmun, 6 October-27 December, 1973 (23 installments), Series no. 8.
immigrants found that food seasoned with Japanese soy sauce was too sweet for their tastes. This was remedied by the addition of salt. In America, Koreans immigrants had to make adaptations from both Chinese and Japanese foods since they did not have their own market. Substituted and supplemented by American, Japanese, and Chinese staples, traditional Korean dishes were modified by using the materials available in American markets.

As noted previously, many Koreans were converted to Christianity prior to their emigration. Among the first group of 102 Korean immigrants who arrived in Honolulu, Hawaii on January 13, nearly half had already embraced Christianity as their religion. According to one immigrant's testimony, on every emigrant ship at least one Korean Christian minister started his mission work from the beginning of the passage to Hawaii. The minister gave inspiration and hope to the despairing immigrants and led them toward a meaningful life. It was a tremendous help to

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their morale. Most Korean immigrants "discarded their time-honored beliefs and embraced Christianity." The legacy of women's seclusion was further broken down after years of living in America. The association with other cultures, especially the heritage of communal living among the native Hawaiians, helped to encourage more equal relationships between the sexes. The old custom of separation of the sexes was much more difficult to maintain because of the different living and working patterns in America. Since most Koreans lived in a limited area in the plantation camps, men and women were inevitably thrust into contact with one another frequently and intimately. Their lives were closely interwoven. Some Korean women took part in field labor along with the men. This undermined the traditional division of labor between the sexes.

Since the Korean church was the only place for their communications or social intercourse, Korean women gradually came to participate in church services. Church services were usually held in the boarding-house kitchen, the only large room available in the plantation camp. At first, the age-old Korean custom of separation of the sexes constrained women from attending. As time passed, however, they joined the camp congregations, sitting as a group.

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28. Interview with Kim Tai-yoon, Honolulu, Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 7 January 1973. Kim was ninety-three at the time of interview and emigrated to Hawaii as a picture-bride in 1905 at the age of eighteen.

27. Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 87.
either in front, at the back, or along one side of the room.  

Some Korean women were not reluctant to run boarding houses or to take part in other forms of community life. These situations further accelerated the breakdown of the traditional distinction between the sexes, liberating women from the confinement of house affairs. Once this new freedom began, progress was fast. Women, along with their husbands, joined various social and political organizations to promote Korean interests in American society and to support the cause of Korean independence.  

They became the forerunners of those boycotting Japanese goods in Hawaii and California during the 1910's. 

The roles of husband and wife were also changed and became more intimate and cooperative. Often, the wife was not capable of carrying out any work without instructions from her husband who had been in America considerably


29. The Korean Women's Association, one of the first to be organized in 1913, was led by Whang Maria who had arrived as immigrant head of household in 1905. The society's purpose were "to promote Korean language education, to refuse things made by the Japanese, to assist other social organizations, and to help Koreans in need." This group later merged with the Korean Ladies Relief Society in 1919 in order to make a concerted effort for the Korean independence movement." See 75th Anniversary of Korean Immigration to Hawaii, p. 18.

30. Shinhan Minbo, 3 May 1919. This was the first Korean weekly newspapers. Printed in English and Korean, it was published in San Francisco in 1909.
The husband had to teach his wife how to cook with the limited resources available in a strange setting. He had to accompany her to market and supervise her housework. Because the wife was unfamiliar with American conditions, the husband had to perform many tasks which would not have been his responsibility in Korea. Again, he had to be with his wife constantly in teaching her new techniques such as the use of electricity, utensils, and strange staple foods. Although the husband still exerted a great influence upon all family affairs, cooperation and mutual understanding became the new norms of family life in America.

As the second-generation Koreans established their households, the traditional relations or roles of husband and wife were greatly modified until the position of the wife in the family came to equal that of the husband. The husband was no longer the absolute head of the family. Decisions concerning family financial affairs were made with respect to the needs of the family, and the wife participated in the decision making.

There was no absolute role assigned to one sex only. The husband and wife both performed certain roles interchangeably. The husband would cook sometimes and shop

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31. Korean wives were mostly picture-brides. They were recruited to provide households for the already settled single males. Therefore, Korean wives came to America much later than their husbands.

for his wife. The wife would discipline children and go to
the bank for business transactions. Children were expected
to work and behave without regard to their sex. For
instance, a male child would help his mother to cook
without feeling out of place. The girl would work with her
father in the field and also learn to be independent from
her brothers. In short, the roles of husband and wife in
the second generation families came to resemble those of
American families.

In the extended family in Korea, the elders took a
controlling role in family affairs. They formed an
informal council to regulate the activities of family
members. The young wife was controlled and directed by her
mother-in-law and had little opportunity to break with
tradition. In America, however, the absence of a parental
generation weakened loyalty and obligation to the original
family. The family elders were unable to come to America
to set up the family council. Far away from the home
environment, Koreans in America were no longer controlled
by the old customs or codes. Hence, their behavior,
directed by impulse rather than by social tradition, tended
to become independent and individualistic.

Since most Korean immigrants were single males in the
prime of life, the shortage of women was a critical problem
in the Korean community in America. Because of the
inequality in the sex distribution, a large portion of
Korean males were unable to marry Korean women. This
situation inevitably led some Korean males to marry Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian wives. In these mixed-marriages where race lines crossed, a Korean husband would not set up a household like that in his homeland, for his wife, being of an alien culture, was unfamiliar with the practices of Korean customs or ways of life.

In Korea, the family was the center for the observance of certain rituals like ancestor worship, birthdays and anniversaries, and native holidays. When Koreans migrated to America, they could not break completely with the past. The observance of Korean holidays constituted one of the major social events in the Korean community in America. Especially celebrated were the August Full Moon Day, the Korean Thanksgiving Day, and the Lunar New Year, a week-long celebration of the new year with traditional food and cultural activities. Since 1920, Koreans have commemorated the Korean Independence Movement Day, honoring the massive Korean people's revolt in 1919 against Japanese rule in Korea. A few Koreans set up shrines and ancestral tablets in their houses. On some occasions, even the entire family lined up to bow toward the West as a sign of love and respect to the parents in the homeland. But this

32. Specially celebrated were the sixtieth birthday of parents and first birthday of the first son.

55. They also celebrated American holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving, but with less enthusiasm. Their celebration of American holidays was superficial and imitative of their American neighbors.
family orientation of the practice of rituals declined gradually in America.

There are several reasons for the decline of old family rituals. Far away from the ancestral halls and graves of their homeland, Korean immigrants tended to conform less meticulously to the ancient codes. Many parents or elder siblings in the homeland passed away. Two or three decades after their emigration, their communication was mainly with those of the younger generation, nieces or nephews in Korea.\textsuperscript{15} The lack of direct links with their parents' generation, along with weakening of bonds among distant relatives, further hastened the break with the homeland.

Another reason for lack of communication was the tight control by Japan of correspondence and of the shipment of goods to Korea. The Japanese government feared a possible influx of money from America in support of the underground independence movement. Any families which received help or claimed members in America were endangered by continued contact with them. This virtually eliminated contact with the families in Korea for a long time.\textsuperscript{14} In addition, burdened by the heavy plantation work, immigrants had little time and energy to carry on the leisurely activities and rituals as in Korea.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 27.
Since Korean immigrants embraced Christianity rapidly, the church became an important communal center in America. Almost all Koreans, Christian or not, went to church on Sundays to meet each other and to help those in trouble. Korean immigrants could not reconcile their new faith with the old customs because Christianity, which preached the equality of men and the brotherhood of mankind, disapproved of ancestor worship and the rites of Confucian mourning. Naturally their new faith subverted the old-world practices and family rituals which were largely Confucian.

In the traditional family system, the success of a marriage depended upon the number of children, especially sons, a husband's faithfulness, harmonious relationships with in-laws, and the thriftiness of both partners in maintaining a comfortable living. Males were usually given a position of superiority. A boy was "welcomed to a household with a wild delight, to which it is wholly impossible for an Occidental to do any justice" while a girl was "very likely to be unwelcome though this is by no means invariably the case."

The idea of male superiority was transplanted to America. Boys still gave status, and a man with several sons seemed to have a high standing in the Korean community. This was especially true among the first

38. Ibid., p. 258.
generation Koreans. In his social casework study, one author described the feelings of a Japanese father who did not produce a boy in his family, a feeling that would be shared by many first-generation Korean fathers:

The [Japanese] father, although apparently physically strong, declared himself sick and unable to work. There were eight girls in the family but no boys and the man seemed to feel a strong sense of inadequacy because of this. There were no physical findings as a basis for his illness...his failure to become the father of a boy contributed in some degree to his [feelings of deficiency and frustration].

Korean immigrants were exposed to such progressive American values as freedom, equality, and individualism. This further weakened traditional social values including the idea of male superiority. Life in a new country inevitably made the old values or criteria change. Thus Korean immigrants counted the health and longevity of partner as the primary criterion for a successful family life. Having children, particularly sons, was not as important as it had been in Korea. Because the extended family system was not present in America to insure security in old age, financial success was considered more important than having children. This point was emphasized by one Korean women who was widowed in 1942. She had six children but considered her marriage to be "unsuccessful" because it

had not provided a means of support for her children.  

In the old society, marriage was not a merely personal matter but a concern of the whole family. It was for the perpetuation of family status rather than simply a means of achieving individual happiness. There was no room for sentimental or romantic consideration in it. And the event was planned and conducted with great propriety and the observance of many elaborate rites. Most marriages were arranged by professional match-makers. The wishes of the bride and groom were seldom considered and their consent was not indispensable. All decisions were made by the head of family.

The old marriage practices could not be followed entirely in America. Yet many Korean parents tried to follow the oriental pattern. Actually, most of the first generation Korean families in America resulted from the "picture bride" system, a kind of arranged marriage. Many old-style parents presumably exercised their supervisory power. According to one newspaper report, one Korean couple dissolved their daughter's engagement simply because her fiance did not please them.

One of the major conflicts between the generations concerned the matter of marriage, particularly the parental role in mate selection. Members of younger generation,

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41. Shinhan Minbo, 14 May 1914.
especially those born in America, mingled freely in the schools and began to follow the example set by American youth. They rapidly adopted Western ways of courtship and marriage. Their selection of mates was based on personal choice and love. They tended to reject arranged marriages, though they were often not without a sense of guilt in rejecting their heritage. Many old-fashioned parents did not want their daughters to associate with boys or become friendly with them. They refused their children's selections and asked match-makers to arrange marriages. One college girl in Hawaii described this situation well:

My parents are quite arbitrary in their ideas concerning matrimony. It would break their hearts if I married on my own initiative; it would be the final act of filial disloyalty. They suspect that thoughts of marriage are current in my mind and they try to question me in their quiet dignified manner. My parents believe that because I am so young and inexperienced they should select a life partner for me and I should approve their choices.

Despite the shortage of Korean women, the first generation Koreans had a strong antipathy towards mixed marriages. They seldom married outside their ethnic group. They were proud of their racial purity and cultural homogeneity, and did their best to maintain them. However,

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42. Some of the younger generation intelligently and maturely integrated both cultures, while others aligned themselves completely with their own culture, remaining critical of anything which threatened it. See Blackey, "Cultural Aspects of Case Work," p. 36.

the younger generation Koreans were associated frequently with children of other racial groups daily in their work, their education, and their social activities. Their consciousness of racial lines was far less sharp than that of their parents. Naturally inter-racial marriages greatly increased among them, creating serious conflicts with their parents.44 The mixed marriages resulted, in many instances, in the breakdown of Korean cultural identity and racial homogeneity.

A few Korean parents disinherited or ostracized children who married outside their own nationality.43 However, in an attempt to solve the conflicts with their children, they showed a less rigid devotion to the old mores than did their counterparts in Korea. In order to make a successful adjustment, both parents and children had to resolve many of their conflicts which resulted from the differences in age, education, and cultural background.

44. There were several reasons for the high ratio of mixed marriages among the younger generations. First, it was due to the small number of Koreans in America, which forced them to search for spouses beyond their own ethnic group. Second, it resulted from the weakening of nationalistic sentiment among them which had been one of the strongest characteristics of the first generation. Thirdly, related to the weakening of nationalism, a negative Korean image in the past worked as a critical factor which prevented the second-and third-generation Koreans from identifying with their home country. See C. K. Cheng and Douglas S. Yamamura, "Interracial Marriage and Divorce in Hawaii," Social Force 36 (October 1957): 77-84; Adams, Interracial Marriage in Hawaii, pp. 188 & 198; Lind, "Some Types of Social Movements," pp. 5-14.

For instance, the Korean parents allowed their children to get mates of their own choice, but only after careful consultation with their parents. In the long run, parents, as well as children, sought accommodation in achieving the common goal of a successful family life. In doing so, some parental resistance was weakened and many parents came to realize that old-world customs were inadequate for their offspring, the products of another cultural heritage.44

In his research on the changing attitudes about family practices during the process of assimilation, J. W. Conner found that American-born Japanese children had a weaker tendency to identify with the family name, traditional customs or ways of life than did Japanese-born children.47 This was also true for second-generation Koreans in America.48 From this arose inter-generational conflicts. And the conflicts were generally characterized by emotional reactions. Rose Lee's statement about the Chinese in America is equally applicable to Korean immigrants in America:

44. This gradual process of adjustment was shown in many Korean families in America. See Gregor, "Korean Immigrants in Gresham," pp. 7-34.


The foreign-born parents settling in a new land have firmly established behavior patterns, norms, values, and attitudes. The transmission of this culture is reinforced by members of the given immigrant group, social organizations, and relatives. Until the children come in contact with members of the dominant group, they are not aware of the inconsistencies of the old and new world cultures. The degree of mutual and emotional confusion that ensues depends upon parental expectations, the children's ability to cope with them, and by which group they want to be socially accepted.49

Increasingly exposed to the values and standards of the larger host society, the younger generations tended to disregard traditional social values. Parents tried to influence their children with native customs and ideas, but they met with little success. The older generation soon found a barrier hampering communication with the younger one.50 The generation gap worked as a disruptive force in family life among Korean immigrants in America.

What, then, were the major factors that contributed to the generation gap? First, a distinct difference of values was responsible for the gap. The first-generation parents held traditional Eastern cultural values. They tried to decide their children's future regarding education, occupation, marriage, and even spare activities. They thought that their children did not truly understand the


50. For a case-study of the cultural conflicts between the generations, see Tae-kil Kim, "On the Difference of Values Between the Old and New Generations in Korea," Korea Observer 1 (October 1968): 76-90.
meaning of filial piety. They became dogmatic in their demands and wishes. They also tended to disregard the rights of their children. The American-born children, in turn, considered their parents to be unduly authoritarian, distant, and too much preoccupied with the traditional cultural practices.  

The younger generation was little concerned about the preservation of Korean cultural heritage and ethnic purity or identity, which was a major concern of the first generation. A young Korean's comment indicates this:

So far I have read very little about my parents' native land. I have never felt a sense of pride in knowing about my parents' native land but I have pity and sympathy for them.  

The younger generation had "very little knowledge of, and appreciation for, their ancestral connections. To them only the glimmer and comforts of American life appeal; nothing else matters." The lack of mutual understanding and respect produced a "credibility-gap," and became an obstacle to the communication between the generations.

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Second, the language barrier prevented full communication between the generations. The American-born Koreans could speak English better than their parents. They also seemed reluctant to speak their ancestral tongue, preferring the English they acquired in public schools.\textsuperscript{34} The schools, unintentionally, opened a wide chasm between the generations. In some families parents and children could converse about only the simplest matters of everyday life. The language problems that almost all immigrants faced were further complicated by the difference in linguistic structure of Korean and English. "Oh lie" the parents of an immigrant would say, but that actually meant "all right."\textsuperscript{33}

The third factor which exacerbated the generational conflicts was the difference in the life perspectives and philosophies of the two generations.\textsuperscript{34} The primary

\textsuperscript{33}. Some parents ironically encouraged their children to learn English. In one instance, the parents were so intent on raising their children properly that they spoke English only in front of the children. Dale White, "Koreans in Montana," \textit{Asia and the Asians} 17 (March 1945): 156.

\textsuperscript{34}. Moon, "Korean Immigrants in America," p. 116.

\textsuperscript{34}. Despite many differences, the second generation tended to inherit the occupational attitude of the first generation. There was a strong and close relationship between the antipathy of the first-generation for manual labor and the tendency of the second generation to move to the city and to seek non-agricultural work. Many parents were desirous of having their children rise to a position of dignity and honor. A second-generation Korean recalled: "My parents always told me to study hard and become a great man or scholar and not a laborer. They even said that they would pay whatever was required for my education in college." Interview with Samuel Choi, San Francisco, 21
objective of the first generation was to survive by hard labor, and then to save money for future security. By contrast, American-born Koreans sought blue-collar jobs, and spent the money they earned on recreation and pleasure. For instance, the older generation's first concern was to buy a house while that of the younger generation was to buy a car.

Before they left their homeland, the first generation Koreans had seen their national sovereignty gradually eroded by Japan. After their arrival in America, most of them kept a burning patriotism for Korea, and they actively participated in the effort to regain Korea's national independence. The first generation as a whole had a political cause to fight and live for throughout their lives. However, to the young generation, the national independence movement was more ideological rhetoric than political imperative.

While many Korean parents spent much of their energy, time, and money for the national cause, their American-born children felt that their parents devoted themselves too much to the cause of Korean national independence. One second generation Korean said that, "I hear my parents talk about it. My father's in that...but I don't pay any

August, 1974, see Moon, "Korean Immigrants in America," P. 117.
attention to it."37 For the most part, the younger
generation tried to turn away from parents' political
ideas. They showed "a distinct lack of interest in the
nationalistic aspiration and quarrels of the first
generation."38 In most cases, the attitude of the younger
generation toward the Japanese was much more tolerant than
that of their parents since they frequently mixed with the
second-generation Japanese in the schools and playgrounds.

In summary, the generational conflicts resulted from
the differences in political, cultural, and social values.
The first generation tried to maintain the status quo while
the second generation was indifferent and rebellious.
Although the second generation was raised under the strong
cultural influence from their parents, they felt strange at
times and somewhat alienated when their values conflicted
with those of their parents. Second-generation Koreans
were bi-cultural in their family lives. They retained some
or the characteristics of the Korean family, and at the
same time adopted many traits of the American families
around them. Although they were generally inclined to be
Americanized in their way of life, many characteristics
survived from the original Korean culture transmitted by

37. Quoted in Lauriel E. Eubank, "The Effects of the
First Six Months of World War II on the Attitudes of
Koreans and Filipinos Toward the Japanese in Hawaii" (M.A.

Gregor, "Korean Immigrants in Gresham," p. 54.
their parents. Theirs was a family in transition.57

It is also true that many first generation Koreans tried to preserve some of their cultural heritage. They wanted to educate their children as Koreans, not as Americans. Far away from the home environment, however, they had to modify their traditional values to cope with the new problems in the new world. They gradually accepted some Western values in an attempt to understand the younger generation's mentality. In this sense, like their children, they were also in a state of transition.

57. Gregor, ibid., pp. 32-33.
In their settlements on the sugar plantations, Koreans' lives were full of discomfort and hardship. When they arrived at Honolulu, they realized that the sugar planters had already made plans for their future lives. Deprived of their names given by their parents, they were tagged and assigned numbers. Reduced to commodities, they were placed in a labor market where planters selected the ones they wanted. Then, some were taken by horse-drawn carts to the plantations on the island of Oahu. Others were transferred to smaller boats or freighters that would take them to the plantations of other Hawaiian islands: Hawaii, Maui, Kauai, or Molokai. Groups of ten or fifteen persons were randomly parceled out to various sugar plantations, so that many relatives and friends were widely separated.


2. Four plantations received the bulk of the Korean immigrants. Between 1904 and 1906, the HSPA made the following assignments--Ewa Plantation on Oahu, 1,193; Hawaiian Sugar Co. on Kauai, 784; Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Co. on Maui, 807; and Oiaa Plantation on Hawaii, 525. The above figures do not include women and children. See Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 101.
Korean laborers lived in one big camp provided by the planters. The camp usually consisted of big barracks made of rough lumber and covered with tin roofs. One big barrack was made of twenty small cottages of about twelve feet square where single men lived together. One Korean Immigrant recalled:

I lived in the camp where [it] looked like the army barracks. We slept on wooden beds or just on the floor with one blanket over the body. Four single men lived together in one room...sometimes I could not sleep at all due to the hot air.

Married couples were given one barrack for themselves or, in some cases, private rooms in bachelors' barracks. Their lives were so closely knitted together that everyone knew what everyone else was doing. One Korean woman said that she and her husband were assigned to a corner room of a barrack. Since their room was so loosely separated from bachelors' quarters by thin board with openings, they had little privacy.

According to the sanitary rules in Hawaii, every residence occupied by contract laborers or lodgers should have "a capacity of not less than 300 cubic feet of space for each adult, or 900 cubic feet for a man and wife and

two children." All buildings were to be separated by at least ten feet of clear air space from any adjacent building. Also there should be eight square feet of window space, of which at least one-half should be available for ventilation. According to the rules of the Territorial board of health, sanitary inspectors were employed "to inspect daily or at short intervals all laborers' quarters and to enforce proper cleanliness." The rules were often violated and plantation camps were usually shabby and overcrowded.

Plate 1 is a photograph of an old camp, a type commonly found on the plantations during the early 1900's. As revealed in the picture, it "harbored rats, and drew its water supply from the rain-water barrel." Typhoid epidemics and bubonic plague occurred frequently in camps of this kind. It held many small cottages which were poorly divided from each other by thin boards with openings. Plate 2 is a photograph of an old, deteriorated laborers' shack which represented the poorest housing conditions on the plantations. It was filthy and termite-

- Third Report of Labor, p. 120.
- Ibid., pp. 120-121.
- Ibid, p. 35.
Plate 1. Plantation Laborer's Old Camp

Plate 2. Plantation Laborer's Shack

(Plate Sources: U.S., Congress, Senate, Labor Conditions in Hawaii, Senate Doc., 432, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1915, pp. 34-35.)
Plate 3. Japanese Laborer's "One Family" House

Plate 4. A Representative Good Camp

(Plate Sources: U.S., Congress, Senate, Labor Conditions in Hawaii, Senate Doc., 432, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1915, pp. 34-35.)
ridden, having defective windows and roofs. Most Korean laborers lived in this kind of unsanitary shack in the old camp. Plate 3 and 4 show laborer's "one-family" house and a representative good camp respectively, which "showed much improvement in water supply, sewage disposal, bathing facilities, and in general cleanliness of camp surroundings."\(^{11}\)

During the years 1910 to 1913, when many Spanish and Portuguese laborers arrived, the planters built new villages of family houses to accommodate them. In order not to discriminate against the laborers already settled, and in accord with the general policy of improving housing conditions on the plantations, the old camps occupied by Japanese and other Asians were improved.\(^{12}\) However, since other racial groups had already established their camps, the Koreans as the newest arrivals (also smallest in number) were given the more deteriorated buildings. Moreover, the Koreans would not benefit from such superior family-houses or living quarters because Korean emigration was actually stopped after 1906.

The plantation camps were divided by race, with each having a segregated part. For instance, the Japanese occupied one building, the Chinese another, and the Koreans still another. One camp usually accommodated about eighty

\(^{11}\) Ibid.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.
to ninety people. A typical Korean camp was usually set apart from other camps, but some were part of Japanese, Chinese, or Spanish camps because Korean laborers were too few to secure a separate camp. There was very little intercourse between different racial groups, although their relations were relatively amicable and peaceful. Racial separation was hardly diluted "under the common aura of Americanism." Rather, each group voluntarily tended to segregate itself from other ethnic groups on the plantations.

The separation of the camps by ethnic groups was one way of controlling foreign laborers effectively. The planters utilized a strong sense of ethnicity to induce their laborers to be more disciplined and willing workers. This "divide and rule" policy was designed to maintain the highest levels of profits and the minimal level of expenses. Although different ethnic camp units helped to preserve the social and psychological cohesion of the groups, it was feasible for the planters to take advantage of this situation for their own purposes.

The working groups could not communicate with each other. Each was not accustomed to the others' ways of life, habits, and mores. As a result, it was hard for them

to forge a unified front for their common interests. Rather this situation produced some feelings of confrontation or antipathy among various isolated labor groups. The planters skillfully exploited this situation. If the Chinese of a certain plantation went on a strike, Japanese laborers could be induced to work in their place for extra pay. The Koreans also served as strike breakers too. In December 1904, 1196 Japanese field laborers went on strike in the Waialu plantation demanding higher wages and the redress of minor grievances. Korean laborers were hired to break the strike and to weaken the solidarity of the Japanese labor group. When, on May 8, 1911, seventy Japanese longshoremen struck at O. R. & L. Warehouse in Honolulu for an increase in wages and shorter hours, Korean workers were again hired in their place.14

The appearance of the cottages for bachelors was very similar to that of bunkhouses for American cowboys. Clothes, hats, boots, and other personal things either stuck in the space under the bunks, or hung on the four walls. At night Korean laborers slept on the bunks using Japanese straw matting as their cover. It was very difficult for Koreans to secure mattresses because they did not have enough money. The best they could do was to get some thick cotton cloth on credit from the plantation

store, and stuff it with dried grass found around the camp.\textsuperscript{17}

The plantations provided public baths for their employees. The use of the baths was usually free, although some plantations charged fees. In a few cases, the bath house was leased to a contractor who supplied his own fuel. He, in return, charged the employees from twenty-five to thirty-five cents a month for bathing.\textsuperscript{18} Some bath houses were quite elaborate, "with cement bath tubs and a furnace for heating water," while others had "wooden tubs with sheet-iron bottoms," under which the fire was made directly in a homemade firebox.\textsuperscript{19}

The Japanese used a single large tub in which both sexes bathed together. This Japanese bathing custom was very eccentric to Koreans, and it disgusted them. It was a direct violation of the Korean belief in separation of sexes.\textsuperscript{20} Also the Koreans were greatly vexed by Japanese men who routinely passed through the Korean camp wearing only towel loin cloths, which the Koreans considered offensive. Koreans frequently got into fights with the Japanese because they felt their women were insulted by this lack of propriety.

\textsuperscript{17} Koh, Han'guk Iminsa Yongu, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{18} Third Report of Labor, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{19} Labor Conditions in Hawaii, pp. 36-37.
\textsuperscript{20} Third Report of Labor, p. 122.
Most plantation employees were also given free medical and hospital care, although ten cents a month, in some places, was charged for the medical care.\(^1\) Language and cultural barriers between doctor and patient rendered medical care difficult to administer, sometimes even dangerous. According to Dr. Chales A. Davis of the Ewa plantation, even prescribing medicine was not always a simple matter, for many patients had never seen a pill before. Given pills to swallow, many of them were uncertain what to do with them until instructed by their experienced friends. Occasionally some patients chewed the pills as they would be a piece of cake.\(^2\)

The problem of communication was sometimes more serious. Many Korean laborers felt frustration because, due to the language barrier, they were unable to explain their bodily afflictions to the doctor. Yang Choo-en recalled painfully: "I saw with my eyes some of my good friends die in the plantation camps. In fact, one of them died in my lap with an unknown illness after he got back from his doctor."\(^3\) As a result, many Koreans used traditional medicines purchased from Chinese herb shops in

\(^1\) In some isolated districts, no hospital or adequate medical attendance was provided for the plantation workers. See Labor Conditions in Hawaii, p. 37.


\(^3\) Interview with Yang Choo-en, Choy, Koreans in America, p. 295.
nearby towns, or turned to fellow workers who were familiar with acupuncture.\textsuperscript{24}

The plantation doctors were not kind in treating their patients. When a Korean laborer died in the Waipahu plantation hospital, the Koreans charged that the doctor involved, a Dr. Hoffman, had killed him by kicking him in the stomach. In July 1904, two hundred Korean field hands went on a strike, complaining of poor medical treatment and the laborer's death.\textsuperscript{23} To appease the strikers, the case was investigated. When the plantation investigators announced that the patient actually died of abdominal disorders, the Koreans refused to believe them. The climax came when Dr. Hoffman was nearly mobbed on July 31 as he tried to leave his working place.\textsuperscript{24} The rioters grabbed him by the neck, preventing him from boarding a train. A fire broke out in the cane field during the strike and the Koreans were blamed for it.\textsuperscript{27}

The planters supplied dishes, utensils, long wooden dining tables, and other cooking and dining facilities for their laborers. The majority of single men ate together at

\textsuperscript{24}. Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," pp. 118-119.

\textsuperscript{23}. Pacific Commercial Advertiser (Honolulu), 30 July & 31 August 1904; Reinecke, Labor Disturbances in Hawaii, pp. 11-12.

\textsuperscript{26}. Pacific Commercial Advertiser, 31 August 1904.

\textsuperscript{27}. Ibid. The strike soon ended partly because the workers didn't have enough money to continue it, and partly because nobody except themselves backed their cause.
A boarding house was usually operated by one of the few Korean women in the camp. Thus, for single men cooking and eating were not pressing problems. For the married couples, however, meals presented a serious problem. In the old-style camp-house, there was no kitchen, no cooking facilities, no dining room. They had to cook in the open, over makeshift stoves, and meals were served in the family's one all-purpose room. Sometimes, they took meals while workers sat on the outside benches.

The average charge for board was about six to eight dollars a month per worker. The diet was a mixture of Korean and American fare. In the morning, the laborers usually ate boiled rice with vegetable salad, kim chee (pickled, pepper-spiced cabbage), meat, soup, and bread and butter. Dinner was not very different from breakfast, except for an additional vegetable or sometimes a fish dish. It consisted of soup, boiled rice, and either a soy-seasoned dish of vegetables, meat, or fish, or a dish of corned beef and onions.

At dinner, Korean laborers were also supplied with a salad of fresh vegetables and beef stew. "Burned rice

28. For example, each bachelor at Honokaa, Hawaii, in 1905 paid Kim Tai Yoon six dollars a month for their meals. Mrs. Kim had been sent by the HSPA to the Big Island Plantation to run the boarding house.

29. Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," pp. 113-114; Choy, Koreans in America, p. 94.


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tea," brewed from rice burned to the bottom of the pot, was the beverage. A plantation manager said the Koreans would buy the cheaper parts of animals, including the head and refuse meats. Sometimes they "buy beef on the hoof, slaughtering it themselves." The Koreans ate much fruit, especially the papaya and the pineapple. Later they accustomed themselves to an American style diet, although they preferred Korean foods.

The dining manner of Koreans was sharply different from that of other groups. The Koreans always ate with spoon and chopsticks, never using their hands to eat as many other groups in the plantations did. They thought their dining manner was more cultured than that of the Chinese and Japanese who used only chopsticks. They looked with disgust at the European and Puerto Rican habit of eating lunch with ones hands, using no utensils at all.

The Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese usually spent an equal amount of money for food, lodging, and clothing, although the distribution of expenses among the three items was not the same for all these racial groups. As a rule, the Chinese ate more expensive food, and especially consumed more meat, than the Japanese. In this respect the Koreans resembled the Chinese, even though at first they were "apt to stint themselves in the matter of

31. Ibid., pp. 117-118.
provisions."

The Japanese spent more for clothing and usually demanded better living quarters than did the Chinese and Koreans. The miscellaneous expenses of the Japanese were generally higher than those of the Chinese and Koreans. This was largely due to their pattern of life. Unlike Chinese and Korean immigrants, many Japanese emigrated with their families, intending to settle permanently. As a result, they spent much more money and energy to make their lives comfortable than the Chinese and Koreans did.

It was the general opinion among plantation people that "the Korean spent more money the longer they remained in Hawaii, increasing their standard of living with longer residence." During his trip to Hawaii in 1905, Homer B. Hulbert observed that all Koreans were well clothed and well groomed and in good shape, having already discarded their native dress and hair styles. Another observer commented that "as a rule the Koreans live well. They wear American clothing, eat American food, and act as much like Americans as they can." They apparently did not much use opium as did the Chinese, but they occasionally had "a

33. Third Report of Labor, p. 117.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., p. 118.
lively and jovial time after pay day," being "fond of intoxicating liquor."\(^{38}\)

Plantation labor was highly routinized and regimented, following the same pattern day in and day out. Plantation workers were awakened by the five o'clock whistle.\(^{39}\) At five-thirty, after a quick breakfast, workers gathered at a meeting place, being shortly transported in cargo trucks or trains to the fields. Except on Sundays, they normally worked ten hours a day from six o'clock in the morning to four-thirty in the afternoon.\(^{40}\) But they often worked extra hours when work was demanded, and sometimes seven days a week at harvest time.\(^{41}\)

The white planters employed foremen, called lunas in Hawaiian, to oversee the plantation work. They got assignments for the day's work from the manager, who ran the plantation on behalf of the planters.\(^{42}\) Foremen and their workers belonged to different races. For example, Korean workers were under the supervision of German foremen; Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and Portuguese were under Korean, Japanese, or Chinese foremen. This was the

\(^{38}\) Third Report of Labor, p. 118.

\(^{39}\) To prepare breakfast and lunch for their fellow workers, the cooks usually arose at about three o'clock in the morning. They received free meals for their services.

\(^{40}\) Takaki, Pau Hana, pp. 57-58.


\(^{42}\) Ibid.
way to control the laborers effectively and to increase productivity. Every worker was given his own number as an identification, and was called by number instead of name.

When the workers reached the fields, the foreman made them line up in one row. The fastest workers were placed at the head of the line in order to get more work out of them. One of the most backbreaking tasks was hoeing weeds. Workers had to "hoe hoe hoe...for four hours in a straight line and no talking," said a laborer. They stopped only to sharpen the blades and then walked to the next lot. As they hoed, they were neither allowed to engage in private conversation nor to stand up straight and ease the pain in their shoulders and backs. After a few days of work, many workers felt as if they had been "kicked and beaten all over."

Ruthless and domineering, foremen were very strict with their workers. They often used violence and arbitrary fines in dealing with their workers. One second-generation Korean wrote:

They [foremen] were of caucasian race, were very rough and cruel fellows. They came to the camp every morning on horseback with their long snakelike leather whips and raised the "dickens" with the laborers for the least mistake. These two men were terrors to the people of the camp. I was terribly afraid of them and whenever they came to the camp, I ran and hid myself until they went away. I thought that they were some sort of demons or terrible gods, such as found in the

\[3\] Quoted in Melendy, *Asians in America*, pp. 86-87.
Korean fairy tales.44

A ninety-five year old Korean woman, when interviewed in 1975, said "yes!" emotionally when asked if her work had been hard. Recalling her early degrading experiences, she stated:

I will never forget the foreman. No, he wasn't Korean—he was French. The reason I'll never forget him is that he was the most ignorant of all ignoramuses, but he knew all the cuss words in the world...He wanted us to work faster...he would gallop around on horseback and crack and snap his whip...he was so mean and so ignorant!43

Lee Hong-Kee, one of the early Korean immigrants to Hawaii in 1903, worked on the Kolora Plantation on Kauai Island. He said:

He [German foreman] was very strict with us...If anyone violated his orders, he was punished, usually a slap on the face or flagellating without mercy. We couldn't protest against his treatment because we were in fear that we would be fired.44

One Korean immigrant recalled:

[My mother's] hands, so blistered and raw that she had to wrap them in clothes. One morning she overslept and failed to hear the work whistle. We were all asleep—my brother and his wife, my older sister, and myself. I was seven years old at the time. Suddenly, the door swung open, and a big burly luna burst in, screaming and cursing, 'Get up, get to work.' The luna ran around the


43. Interview with one of the pioneer Korean immigrant women (anonymous), California, 1975, Sunoo and Sunoo, "Heritage of First Korean Women Immigrants," p. 156.

44. So, Miju Hanin Ch'ilsipyon-sa, pp. 27-30. See also, Choy, Koreans in America, pp. 95-96.
room, ripping off the covers, not caring whether my family was dressed or not. I'll never forget it." 47

Another immigrant said that "we worked like draft animals, cows and horses, in the plantation fields,...We lived also like animals in the working camps, which were similar to barns." 48

For some Koreans, whose previous occupation was farming, the plantation jobs were not so difficult because they were already accustomed to similar work. However, since the bulk of Korean immigrants had not worked regularly and steadily at hard labor jobs, they found the plantation jobs to be extremely demanding and harsh. Many Korean immigrants were "not particularly fit for plantation type of labor." 49 Some were "unused to hard toil," had too little strength or [were] in enfeebled health." 30 One Korean worker said:

...cutting away at the cane stalks [we] worked in the hot sun for ten hours a day, and the pay was fifty-nine cents a day. I was not used to this kind of work and I had a difficult time. This type of work was indeed harder than the type of contract work that I did in Russia. However, I did the best I could and struggled along [like] the rest of the men. 51

47. Quoted in 75th Anniversary of Korean Immigration to Hawaii, 1903-1978, p. 50.


Ill-suited to the hard plantation work, many Korean laborers were abused and frequently beaten by the foreman. The hardships they faced were due to their lack of experience in working long hours at hard common labor. Bernice Kim, in her interviews with the Korean laborers during the 1930s, stated "how some boys and even men, with fair hands blistered, faces and arms torn and scratched by the cane leaf stickers, would sit between the rows of cane and weep like children." Whang Sa-sun, who emigrated to San Francisco in 1913, held all kinds of odd jobs for daily bread. He once had a chance to work on a tomato farm near San Francisco. This work was his first experience with manual labor. He recalled:

I was assigned to plant the tomato seeds...I had a hard time...I waited for lunch time to come so that I could rest for awhile. When lunch time came, I did not eat my lunch, because the weather was so hot and I was very tired and lost my appetite. Instead of eating my lunch, I laid down on the ground and rested until the others finished their lunch. When I finished my day's work, I hardly could walk back to my rooming house...During the night I was unable to sleep, because my whole body was sore and I felt pains all over.

Despite the harsh treatment by the foremen, most Korean laborers seldom dared to protest against their

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53. Interview with Whang Sa-sun, San Francisco, 18 February 1974, Choy, Koreans in America, pp. 301-303. Whang later studied at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. He served for fourteen years as minister of the Korean Methodist Church in San Francisco until he retired in 1942.
treatment since they depended almost wholly upon the plantation for their livelihood. Moreover, because of the language barrier, it was very hard for them to express their difficulties to the foremen or planters. Being paid well and keeping close relations with the foremen and planters, the interpreters tended to take sides with them. Under these circumstances, Korean laborers seemed to be "just helpless human beings in the white man's society." 34 Like other ethnic groups on the plantations, many Korean laborers developed "an attitude of submission toward the white bosses, for the fear of losing their jobs." 35

Every day the plantation manager inspected the camps after the workers left for the fields. Then he went to the field to check how the workers performed their work. The laborers stopped working at four-thirty, returning to their camps. They then ate dinner, bathed, and went directly to bed. This was their everyday routine. Excepting during the harvest season, Sunday and holidays were not workdays. Some workers just relaxed or slept through the day, while others gambled and drank. Some visited friends or went to church.

There were two kinds of working patterns, based either on piece work or on a monthly salary. The former paid wages in accordance with the amount of work each worker


did. It was about $1.25 a day. The latter paid workers about sixteen to eighteen dollars a month, averaging from sixty-five to seventy cents a day. Female workers were paid considerably lower wages than their male counterparts. Women's wages ran from forty-nine to fifty-five cents a day. The following table shows working hours and wages of Korean workers during the years of 1905-1915.
### TABLE 8

**Working Hours and Wages of Korean Laborers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Position</th>
<th>Average Hours Per Week</th>
<th>Average Wage Per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1905 1910 1915</td>
<td>1905 1910 1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cane Cutter (Male)</td>
<td>58.7 58.1 60.0</td>
<td>$0.66 0.94 1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cane Loader (Male)</td>
<td>58.2 60.1 -</td>
<td>0.81 0.99 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Cultivator</td>
<td>60.9 60.6 -</td>
<td>0.74 0.87 1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Hand (Male)</td>
<td>59.7 59.9 -</td>
<td>0.65 0.73 0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Hand (Female)</td>
<td>59.4 59.8 -</td>
<td>0.49 0.53 -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The plantation laborers usually worked for twenty-six days a month and fifty-nine hours a week. Male field hand workers, which most Koreans were, earned $0.75 per day in

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If he worked twenty-six days a month, he could receive at least $18.00 a month. Actually, however, there was no winter rest season in Hawaii, so that tropical laborers, even the Koreans, would not work that much steadily. Because of the harsh plantation work and bad working conditions, workers were easily racked and exhausted. So, the actual monthly income probably did not exceed fifteen dollars a month during this period. It was "little more than a subsistence wage for an oriental with a family."36

Compared with other ethnic groups in the plantations, Koreans were much more economically distressed. The distinct socio-economic division or stratification according to different ethnic groups was one of the peculiar features of plantation life.37 The white planters controlled the money economy in Hawaii and retained their upper class position. They became the single most powerful economic group in Hawaii. The Portuguese, due to their being white, had the positions of middle men. Many of them worked as foremen or supervisors in the direct employment of the planters.38 The Chinese, having been on the Islands

37. A great majority of Koreans, 3,039 out of 4,619 in 1905, were engaged in field hand work that did not need many skills and experiences.


longer, had advanced farther economically than any other immigrant ethnic groups. The Japanese began to develop their own economic base within their subculture. Along with the Puerto Ricans and the Spanish, the Koreans, however, came in at the bottom of the social structure in Hawaii and felt all the prejudices leveled at the lowest economic group. One source stated that the wages for Korean laborers were the lowest for all classes of work at that time. As their monthly income has been estimated at approximately $16.

As noted previously, the cost of food for an adult Korean, according to the diet then prevailing among them, was six to seven dollars a month. One more dollar went to pay for laundry services. A small family spent at least ten dollars a month for food and laundry. Thus the wages were rarely enough to cover the monthly expenses of the plantation workers, because some of them had families and many had to send money back home to Korea. Moreover,

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*2. S. F. Moore, "One Night with the Koreans in Hawaii," *Korea Review* 3 (December 1903): 531.


*5. Despite their meager subsistence wages, some Korean laborers presumably could save more money in America than they could in Korea. In their home country they had never earned over four dollars a month. In Hawaii, however, they could earn about $18.00 a month, if they worked steadily. Since the average laborer's expenses were not more than ten dollars a month, it was theoretically...
every month for a certain period, the planters deducted from Korean laborers' wages for "passage money," that is, the cost that had made it possible for them to emigrate to Hawaii.*6 The planters were also not very conscientious in making the payments as required by the contracts. Fines were assessed for infractions of plantation rules and for violations of contract.*7

Neither recreation nor sports facilities nor public parks existed at that time in the plantations. Plantation workers were isolated from the outside world and segregated from the mainstream of white society. The overwhelming majority did not speak English and had little knowledge about the customs of the American people. They were possible to save about eight dollars a month. Actually, a few Koreans were able to send some money to their families in Korea. See Moore, "One Night with Koreans," p. 531.

*6 Since the Koreans were recruited as free laborers, they were supposed to arrange for their own transportation and other necessary provisions. However, most Koreans were too poor to raise the necessary funds for emigration. As a solution, the so-called "Deshler Bank" in Inch'on, managed by the HSAP, paid their passport fees, loaned each individual his passage fare and "show money." The loans were to be paid back by deducting a sum from their pay check every month. Since their wages were already low, this exaction was an added burden on Korean immigrants. See Choy, Koreans in America, pp. 93-94; Patterson and Kim, Koreans in America, p. 23; Houchins and Houchins, "Korean Experience in America," p. 552.

*7. "[plantation laborers] would be fined two days' pay for leaving without permission. A fine of a quarter's day pay was imposed if they were ten minutes late to work. Since the lunas...was the only one with a watch, such fines could be applied arbitrarily." See Asian-American Studies Center, Contacts and Conflicts: The Asian Immigration Experience (Los Angeles: Resource Development & Publications, University of California, 1975), p. 27.

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handled "not as human beings but as a means of production." Yet they could not complain because nobody would listen.

The life of an immigrant's wife was no better than that of her husband. Kim Tai-youn who came to Hawaii to join her husband in 1905 recalled her early Hawaiian life:

I felt very gloomy and did not expect any bright hope for the future in this strange land of Hawaii. When I looked at the living quarters provided by the planters, I was disappointed and began to worry, because I had to live in this camp under the Hawaiian hot sun.

She operated the boarding house for single men working on the plantations. She charged each man six dollars per month for room and board, but the money was not enough to cover all her expenses. She said, "what could you do, since the wages of the plantation workers were so low?"

Most of the workers had to send money home to Korea to take care of their families. Mrs. Kim planted corn, red peppers and other vegetables in a vacant lot in order to supplement her meager income and meet her expenses. Sometimes she picked up beef innards from a nearby slaughter house to make soup for the plantation workers.

Mrs. Kim had to prepare meals for her husband and

**. Choy, Koreans in America, p. 95.

**. Han'guk ilbo, 12 January 1973. This was a special edition to mark the seventieth anniversary of the first Korean migration to Hawaii. See also Choy, Koreans in America, p. 96.

*70. Quoted in Choy, ibid., p. 96.
twenty bachelors. She arose at three-thirty every morning to prepare a Korean-style breakfast. For six days each week, she packed twenty-one lunch boxes which usually contained rice and salted dry fish. In addition, Mrs. Kim, during the day time, would wash work uniforms and sacks for all twenty one people at the nearby river and dry them under the sun. Each laborer paid her one dollar a month for this service. At night, after washing dishes, she would iron the washed clothes for the next day with a charcoal-heated iron. So her working hours lasted from three-thirty in the early morning until almost midnight.  

One Korean woman came to Hawaii, dreaming of education as her goal. But she was saddened by her poverty and meager existence and the long hours of toil and hardship. Somehow, she managed to get a sewing machine and earned some extra money as a seamstress.

I made custom shirts with hand-bound button holes for 25 cents—of course, customers brought their own fabric. My mother and sister-in-law took in laundry. They scrubbed, ironed and mended shirts for a nickel a piece. It was pitiful! Their knuckles became swollen and raw from using the harsh yellow laundry soap. We hid our brother in the house so the plantation owners wouldn't get after him. He had the brains of an Edison but was

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1. Han'guk Ilbo, 12 January 1973; Interview with Kim Tai-youn in Honolulu Star Bulletin, 7 January 1973. Mrs. Kim thought her living conditions were a little better than those of most other immigrants at that time. She operated the rooming house for seven years. Later she and her husband moved to Honolulu, where they opened a used-furniture store and also repaired shoes. Her story was in many ways typical of the early Korean immigrants in Hawaii.

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not fit to be a laborer.\footnote{Quoted in Sunoo and Sunoo, "Heritage of First Korean Women Immigrants," p. 154.}

Another Korean woman emigrated to Hawaii between 1903 and 1905 at the age of nineteen with her mother, two brothers, and a sister-in-law. Her family struggled and labored long hours under the most wretched living and working conditions on the sugar plantation. She recalled:

If all of us worked hard and pooled together our total earnings, it came to about $50.00 a month, barely enough to feed and clothe the five of us. We cooked on the porch, using coal oil and when we cooked in the fields, I gathered the wood. We had to carry water in vessels from water faucets scattered here and there in the camp area.\footnote{Ibid. For similar stories of hardships and trials among pioneer Korean women, see Helen Shular, "Halmunee with a Korean Accent," \textit{Paradise of the Pacific} 69 (1957): 22-24; Sonia S. Sunoo, "Korean Women Pioneers of the Pacific Northwest," \textit{Oregon Historical Quarterly} 79 (Spring 1978): 51-63.}

In contrast, however, a few sources—not from Korean immigrants themselves but from foreign observers like American businessmen and missionaries—paint quite a different picture of the living and working conditions of Koreans in America. During his trip to Hawaii, James W. Hunt, then vice-manager of the Wonsan gold mine in northern Korea, stated that the mine workers in Korea were paid twenty-five cents a day, and they were happy with that wage.\footnote{Choy, \textit{Koreans in America}, p. 97.} Another observer said:

They [Korean laborers] spend $7 or $8 a month for board, and are well satisfied. Their total...
expenses are not more than ten dollars a month. In Korea they never earn over $4 or $5 a month, and spend $2 or $3 for living. They spend more in Hawaii, but still are able to save more than at home.\(^5\)

This implied that the Koreans in Hawaii were paid much more and treated better than the mine workers in Korea.

George H. Jones, one of the most influential American missionaries in Korea, visited various plantation camps in Hawaii. Then he published an article in which he stated:

I had many a meal with Koreans which though homely, was well cooked and as good as any man might wish. As a rule, the Koreans live well. They wear American clothing, eat American food, and act as much like Americans as they can...There is a total absence of the "Jim Crow" spirit in Hawaii and the good nature with which the various races mix there is wonderful...Under such conditions the Korean grows and develops very rapidly. Hawaii is the land of great possibilities for him...Hawaii becomes to him a vast School of Agriculture where he learns something of the character and treatment of different soils; method of irrigation and fertilization; care and system in the handling of the crops...If a thousand selected Koreans a year could be permitted to emigrate to Hawaii in a few years, they would return and develop the natural resources of Korea, adding many fold to the value and financial resources.\(^7^6\)

Jones' observation were far from accurate. The idea that Hawaii was "a vast School of Agriculture" where Koreans could learn new methods in farming, as Jones suggested, is hard to accept. The Korean immigrants in Hawaii did not need to learn how to raise sugar because the

\(^5\) Quoted in Third Report of Labor, p. 117.

\(^7^6\) Jones, "Koreans in Hawaii," pp. 404-406.
Korean peninsula did not produce sugar. Many Koreans felt that the work demanded by the white planters was difficult and sometimes unreasonable, while the financial return scarcely provided enough to avoid starvation. They were exploited as instruments of production and arbitrary abused by the foremen like "draft animals."

According to the Report of the governor of Hawaii to the Secretary of the Interior, between June 14, 1900 and June 30, 1910, 2,280 Koreans left Hawaii for either Korea or the American Pacific Coast. Deprived of everything but the barest sustenance, and unable to bear the hardship of plantation work, about 1,200 Koreans returned to their homeland. Nearly 1,100 left Hawaii for the Pacific Coast during the years of 1904-1907 in search for better wages and working conditions. Of the remaining 5,000 Koreans in Hawaii, a majority of Koreans left the plantations, moving to cities such as Honolulu and Hilo—"environments with which they were more familiar" because of their original


urban backgrounds. These migrations of Koreans indicate that their lives in Hawaii were far from the vision of paradise they had expected when they applied for emigration.

CHAPTER VIII

MARRIAGE AND "PICTURE-BRIDE" SYSTEM

The majority of Korean immigrants were single men, ranging between the ages of fifteen and forty-five.\(^1\) Their average age was about twenty-five.\(^2\) Only a few early Korean immigrants, less than ten percent, migrated with their families, or sent for them after making initial economic and social adjustments. Many single males lived a lonely and sometimes miserable plantation life in the strange land. Working under inhumane conditions and receiving meager wages, they toiled long hours in the fields from dawn to sunset and spent their nights in a corner of the camps.

As examined previously, one of the critical problems of Korean immigrants during the settlement in America was the extremely unbalanced sex ratio. In 1910, the sex ratio was 653 males to every 100 females in Hawaii; 910 males to every 100 females on the mainland. Because of the shortage of women, only a very small portion of Korean single males were able to marry and to maintain ordinary family life.

\(^1\) Statistical Review of Immigration, pp. 44-51 & 88-94. Since only 718 women out of 7,790 Koreans emigrated to the United States during the years, 1899-1910, women were less than ten percent. For detailed statistical data concerning the number of Korean immigrants by sex and age during the period, see Table 4 of chapter IV of this study.

For the racial groups under-supplied with women, it has been customary to marry women of other racial groups. However, the first-generation Koreans had a strong antipathy towards mixed marriages. They seldom married outside their ethnic group. They were proud of their racial purity and cultural homogeneity, doing their best to maintain them. The following table reveals the strong "in-marriage" preference among Koreans in Hawaii.

TABLE 9

Index of In-Marriage Preference, 1912-1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Caucasian</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Hawaiian</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This index is based on the possible maximum of 1,000. The index 950 for Koreans indicates that 950 out of 1,000 favored their "in-group" marriage. Korea's index rate is the second highest one among ethnic groups in Hawaii. Despite the disparity between the number of males and

3. According to the 1910 census of Hawaii, of the 3,632 Korean male immigrants of fifteen years of age and over, 1,633 or 44.9 percent were married, but there were only 295 married females in the same age group in Hawaii. A few Korean males had married outside their own group, but that number was comparatively small.

females, this distinct "in-marriage" preference of the first-generation Koreans seemed to be the result of their ardent national patriotism.  

As an oppressed ethnic group which was deprived of its national entity by the Japanese, Koreans, unlike other immigrant groups, had a common cause: achieving their nation's independence. Their passion for the cause was even more intensified than would have been the case if they had been in Korea. It was this national loyalty that made the Koreans cohesive and united. Incidentally this racial solidarity made Koreans averse to marriage with non-Koreans. Thus Korean antipathy towards mixed marriage was grounded, to some degree, on racial prejudice but more on a passion for harmonious group unity and solidarity.

The aversion to interracial marriages, coupled with the unfavorable sex ratio, served as an obstacle to

\[ \begin{array}{cccccc}
1912-16 & 1920-30 & 1930-40 & 1940-49 & 1950-59 \\
Grooms & 26.4 & 17.6 & 23.5 & 49.0 & 70.3 \\
Brides & 0.0 & 4.9 & 39.0 & 66.7 & 74.5 \\
\end{array} \]

See C. K. Cheng and Douglas S. Yamamura, "Interracial Marriage and Divorce in Hawaii," *Social Forces* 36 (October 1957): 77-84; Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, pp. 188 & 198; Lind, "Some Types of Social Movements," pp. 5-14. For the reasons for such a relatively high ratio of interracial marriages among the younger generations, see footnote 44 of Chapter VI of this study.

+. Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, p. 188.
maintain the ordinary family life among the Korean population in America. Here lies the critical problem. Most Koreans were bachelors, approaching their thirties. Some were over forty. Korean society was family-centered, and marriage was one of the most important events in one's life. Since bachelorhood was regarded as an unnatural state, the establishment of families for Korean males became a critical problem. Marriage was not only a personal problem but also a social issue because it was closely related to the population growth within the Korean community in America.

We have already noted that most Korean laborers had no intention of staying in America and making it their home. After a few years of plantation life, however, they realized that their aim, whether it was money or education or other goals, could not be accomplished as quickly as they had expected. It was also precarious to return to Korea under Japanese rule. Around this period, Korean laborers began to move from one plantation to another in search of better wages or working conditions. They became uneasy and restless, difficult to hold steadily as workers on the plantations. Thrown into an alien land far away from their

7. Most Chinese and Japanese immigrants came to Hawaii before the annexation of 1898 as "penal contract" laborers which kept them more stable, at least until the contract expired. However, Koreans came after 1898 as free laborers. They were not bound by contract to work on a plantation for a fixed time. This made them move frequently from one place to another with the hope of their social and economic betterment.
homeland, they also suffered greatly from physical and emotional frustrations. As a result, many dishonorable things took place during Korean community's early years in Hawaii. Some depressed bachelors drank heavily, smoked opium, and gambled. Some fought with each other over women.

The sugar planters were concerned about the instability of Korean laborers in Hawaii. Since Korean laborers moved so frequently, the planters attempted to stabilize them as a labor force. They tried to regulate the wandering life of Korean laborers by importing Korean women through the exchange of photographs. The planters thought that if Korean bachelors had families, they would settle down to work steadily. A stable and healthy plantation life would in turn improve the quality of work, and thus eventually increasing the planters' economic profits.

Some Korean leaders showed a keen interest in the increasing social tensions within the Korean community in America that mainly resulted from the shortage of young women.

- Warren Kim, Koreans in America, p. 22; Choy, Koreans in America, p. 88.

- By January 1889 the Board of Immigration in Hawaii and the planters cooperated in bringing to Hawaii the wives of men whose contracts were about to expire and who were willing to remain on the sugar plantations if their wives were brought over. This first applied to Japanese bachelors, later to Korean male immigrants.

- Shinhan Minbo, 14 December 1910.
women.\textsuperscript{11} They feared interracial marriage among Korean bachelors, for it would undermine Korean ethnic purity and cultural homogeneity. In order to solve these problems and, at the same time, to build a healthy and harmonious Korean community, they were eager to bring Korean women from the motherland. Following Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, anti-Japanese activities grew among Koreans in America. This development was a great concern to the Japanese. The Japanese government thus encouraged the planters to recruit young Korean women under marriage contracts as a means to quiet political passions among Koreans in America.\textsuperscript{12}

The "picture-bride" system was thus introduced as a device to ease the difficulty of finding wives for young bachelors.\textsuperscript{13} It was one of the by-products of the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, a voluntary treaty between the United States and Japan to limit the immigration of

\textsuperscript{11}. One of Korean community leaders, Rev. Min Chan-ho, started to arrange the importation of picture brides. See Shinhan Minbo, 24 November 1909.


\textsuperscript{13}. It was not unique to the oriental immigrants in Hawaii and California around the turn of the twentieth century. During the colonial period of America there were many picture-marriage cases in the middle and southern colonies when women and girls were brought over from England and France to become wives of the colonists.
Japanese laborers. The Japanese government agreed not to issue passports to skilled or unskilled laborers, but would continue to do so for "parents, wives, and children of residents" already established in the mainland United States or Hawaii. Koreans were also subject to this law thereafter.

As early as 1908 the specific problem of picture brides came to the attention of the United States authorities. The Japanese Consul-General in San Francisco asked Robert Devlin, United States Attorney General in Northern California, about California law regarding

14. The Agreement was an extension of President Theodore Roosevelt's Executive Order on March 14, 1907, which restricted Japanese and Korean immigration. It proclaimed that "Japanese or Korean laborers, skilled or unskilled, who have received passports to go to Mexico, Canada, or Hawaii, and come therefrom be refused permission to enter the continental territory of the United States." See U.S., Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, Immigration Laws and Regulations of July 1, 1907, Rule 21, p. 44; Bradford Smith, Americans from Japan (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1948), p. 138.

13. Fourth Report of Labor, p. 51; Melendy, Oriental Americans, p. 112. The Agreement did not entirely cut off Japanese or Korean emigration to America, for it did not affect students, merchants, and professional men, of whom there was a colony of some size in America.

15. During the years of 1905-1945, when Japan dominated Korea, depriving Koreans of their citizenship in an independent country, Koreans were legally subject to the laws and regulations of the Japanese government. Although the Korean government originally issued passports to its subjects, their status in America was frequently regarded as equivalent to that of the Japanese. President Theodore Roosevelt's Executive Order, in proclaiming restrictions of future Japanese immigration, also included Koreans along with the Japanese.
marriages contracted between Japanese in California, and Japanese women residing in Japan by the exchange of photographs. The Consul-General described the practice as valid under Japanese law.

The Attorney General's response was positive. He said that if one of the two parties was a resident in America prior to the marriage, an exchange of pictures would be interpreted as a valid marriage. But, any women applying for admission to the United States should "claim to be destined to men in this country, to whom they have been married by the photograph method," and "have a wedding ceremony "whose legality is recognized in the state in which the port of entry is located." The United States immigration authorities approved the arranged marriages through the exchange of photographs and granted the brides the rights of permanent residence.

Since marriage in Korea was normally arranged by a professional "go-between," Korean laborers wrote to their match-makers to ask for suitable wives. Pictures of both parties were exchanged. If both parties agreed to marry each other, the man would send traveling expenses for his

18. Ibid., pp. 126-127.
19. The picture marriage was actually based on the legal principle in American law that a wife acquired the same rights as her husband.
prospective bride. Upon her arrival at the port of entry, they would be married on the docks. The United States government then permitted the picture-brides to enter America as a permanent resident.

Until the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act in 1924, marriage upon American docks immediately upon the arrival of immigrants and before admission by the United States was legally practiced by immigrants from all nations. 5,749 Japanese picture brides arrived in America through this method. A considerable number of Korean picture-brides were thus permitted to come to America even after Korean emigration was officially prohibited in 1905. Along with these picture brides, wives who had been left in Korea began to join their husbands when travel expenses could be sent. Dependent children were also brought over by their fathers. As a result, between 1910 and 1924, the period from the Japanese annexation of Korea to the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act

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21. The act made oriental immigrants ineligible for citizenship and prevented further immigration from Asia. For a good look at the contents and processes of the Oriental Exclusion Act, see Melendy, Oriental Americans, pp. 114-131.
23. Ibid., p. 160.
24. Koh, Han'guk Iminsya Yongu, pp. 219-220.
Exclusion Act of 1924, wives and relatives of the immigrants formed the bulk of Korean immigration to the United States.

It is hard to estimate the exact number of Korean picture brides because different sources give different figures. Won-yong Kim states that 951 Korean women came to Hawaii, and 115 to the mainland United States as picture brides. Bong-youn Choy calculates that more than 800 picture brides came to Hawaii and more than one hundred to the mainland, especially to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Portland, Oregon. Kingsley K. Lyu, on the other hand, estimates that about 600 picture brides were brought to Hawaii and the United States. Official United States Immigration statistics show that, between 1910 and 1924, 842 Korean women entered the entire United States, including Hawaii, as immigrants, unfortunately with no indication of their status. Since not all of these women were picture brides, we can estimate that the total number of picture brides was less than 842.


27. Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities (I)," p. 27.

28. Based on Annual Report of the Commissioner-General, 1909-1925. The same statistics, on the other hand, presents that 859 Koreans came to Hawaii as immigrants with no identification of their sex.
As Korean males came from diverse geographical and social backgrounds, so did the women. A majority of Korean picture brides in Hawaii were from the southern province of Kyongsang, which was one of the most populous farming areas in Korea at that time. Most of the brides who migrated to the mainland were from central Korea and the northern province of P'yongan. In social status and educational level, the picture brides were, in many cases, much higher than their husbands. Unlike their husbands who were mostly from the low social stratum, some picture brides came from middle-upper classes of Korean society. Picture brides were generally much more educated than their husbands.

Some progressive women had attended American mission schools in Korea and learned English, Western arts and sciences, Christian religion, and American democracy. This was largely due to the American missionaries who were much interested in advancing the status of Korean women. After receiving higher formal education, they had taught at

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26. Kingsley K. Lyu stated the opposite view that a majority of picture brides had not received formal education. In written tests at the Honolulu Immigration Station upon their arrival, according to him, many picture brides, like their husbands, were scarcely able to read and write. See Lyu "Korean Nationalist Activities (I)" p. 27.

27. The missionaries provided Korean women with the first opportunity for a formal education and set up girls' high schools in greater numbers than those for boys. See Alice Y. Chai, "Attitudes of America-Educated Korean Students Toward America and Americanization" (M.A. thesis, Ohio State University, 1957), pp. 4-5.
primary or secondary schools. Some wanted to pursue their advanced education in America. In general, picture brides were much more liberated and Christianized than their husbands. Many had worked as teachers, nurses, or social workers.

Why did these young brides, between the age of seventeen to twenty-five, leave their homes and decide to migrate to America? Their homes in Korea were in overpopulated, poverty-stricken towns or villages. They suffered from famine and poverty, which resulted from nationwide droughts and floods, and from the economic exploitation of Japan. The young brides risked marrying unknown men as a means of relieving their parents' financial hardship. Some even welcomed the exchange of photographs for arranged marriages in the hope that the wedding expenses they would receive might give them a new

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32. One of the picture brides was Hwang Hae-soo who graduated from Kyungsin School and taught at several places in Korea. Besides Hwang, Yang choe-hyun, Lee Hae-chun, Chang Kyung-ae, and Kang suk-un were reported as educated and progressive picture brides, see Shinhan Minbo, 14 June 24 October & 4 November 1911.

33. Based on interviews with pioneer Korean women who came as picture brides between 1910 and 1924, see Sunoo, "Korean Women Pioneers," pp. 51-53; 75th Anniversary of Korean Immigration to Hawaii, 1903-1978, pp. 40-51. Like other weaker and oppressed social groups, Korean women were much more susceptible to Christianity and its Messianic doctrine which promised equality and freedom to the subordinated.
life. Reports some Koreans in America had done very well in farming and in business also greatly encouraged them to emigrate.

A desire for personal liberation was another crucial reason that motivated them to leave their loved family and homeland. It might be called a progressive or independent attitude. Some women wanted to get away from the feudalistic social system which had no regard for women's rights. They courageously dared to defy the traditional Confucian system in which the treatment of women was inhumane and brutal.

A seventy-eight year old woman recalled vividly her teenage rebellion against such a feudal society. Ever since she attained maturity, her movements outside home became restricted and almost forbidden. The restrictions and taboos put upon her adolescent life became increasingly intolerable. Her infrequent trips to the market place became her sole source of information of the world outside her home. It was there that she first heard of "picture-bride" marriage. She said in her interview:

Ah, marriage! Then I could get to America! That land of freedom with streets paved of gold!...Since I became ten, I've been forbidden to step outside our gates, just like all the rest.

34. One of the picture brides, Pak Myung-sun married Park Man-guk because of economic necessity. The bride was twenty-three and the groom was thirty-nine. See So, Miju Hanin Ch'ilsipnyon-sa, pp. 79-80.

of the girls of my days...become a picture bride, whatever that was, would be my answer and release. That was all I could think of and I gathered as much information as possible--whom to see, how to get to a contact in Pusan, etc.  

She told of a sense of guilt about her devious activities. Yet, she realized that she had no other choice if she was to liberate herself from the environment which she had grown to detest.

Another woman also emigrated to America in defiance of a decaying feudal system. Her mother was a women of the aristocracy and her husband was a high official entitled to acquire a concubine. In fact, high officials were expected to do so in the feudalistic society. She was deeply hurt and saddened when her husband retained a concubine without feelings of guilt and responsibility. It was a tremendous blow to her pride. She felt personal humiliation and denigration. She defied the authority of her husband, seeking a new life by moving to America with her two sons and daughter. Considering the oppressive feudalistic society, what these women thought and did at such an early age was indeed courageous and certainly audacious. They struggled against the feudalistic social system, willingly enduring hardships and misfortunes under the most wretched living and working conditions in Hawaii.

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3*. Quoted in ibid., p. 149.

37. Ibid., pp. 152-154.

Like the earlier Korean laborers, many would-be brides had pleasant illusions about Hawaii. They saw Hawaii as a Pacific paradise. They were filled with romantic notions of the American continent. Of course, at home there was much want and poverty, but their expectations of life in America were too high. The brides expected too much of their prospective husbands, not being informed of the real economic situation. Anna Choi, who migrated to Hawaii as one of the picture brides, recalled later:

I had heard in Korea that Hawaii was a paradise. People spoke of clothing that grew on trees, free to be picked, and the abundance of fruits and all kinds of foods. Money, they said, was not necessary for survival and could be saved for future use. I heard only of prosperity and wealth in the islands.39

Most of the picture-brides could not resist the temptation to follow their dreams, and so accepted the proposals. They were delighted to think of a new life in the "land of gold." Nam Chong-suk, who had worked as a nurse in Korea, sailed to Hawaii when she was nineteen years old. She recalled her experiences as follows: "I used to go to the movie houses to see American film. So it was natural to start envying the spectacular American civilization."40 Another woman named In-sook "dreamed of being married to a man in America, of an independent life


40. So, Miju Hanin Ch’ilsipnyon-sa, p. 80.
offering her freedom, ease, and luxury.\textsuperscript{41}

The story of the picture brides was a story of comedy as well as the tragedy in the lives of early Korean immigrants. The brides expected their chosen mates to be not too different from what their pictures portrayed. Unfortunately, however, many prospective husbands deceivingly sent young, nice-looking pictures of themselves. They would rent a nice suit and decorations, having their pictures taken inside or in front of a mansion. So, the bride might assume her future husband was a handsome and wealthy man. When the brides first met their intended husbands at the immigration station in Honolulu, some were greatly disappointed because their grooms were much older than they had looked in the pictures, and much uglier than they imagined.

The grooms were usually fifteen to twenty years older than the brides. One picture bride recalled:

When I first saw my fiance, I could not believe my eyes. His hair was grey and I could not see any resemblance to the picture I had. He was a lot older than I had imagined...he was forty-six years old. He was more like a father than my husband and he did treat me more like a daughter.\textsuperscript{42}

Another picture bride stated:

I saw him for the first time at the immigration Station. He didn't look like his picture. He was really old, old-looking. So my heart stuck. My

\textsuperscript{41} Sunoo, "Korean Women Pioneers," p. 52.

cousin in Honolulu arranged the marriage, and I was very angry at her. I'm so disappointed, I cry for eight days and didn't come out of my room. But I knew that if I don't get married, I have to go back to Korea on the next ship. So on the ninth day I came out and married him. But I don't talk to him for three month."43

Surprised and shocked to find older men waiting for them on the dock in Honolulu, many of the picture brides fainted and cried bitterly. The grooms were perplexed, and did not know what to do. They stood on the dock, their hands clasped behind their backs, absolutely speechless in front of the disappointed brides.44

Many picture brides were also disappointed to discover that their grooms were less educated than themselves, and were merely penniless laborers. Many grooms had to borrow some money for their brides' passage money from financial backers since few men had adequate resources of their own. Upon their arrival, many brides were compelled to work along with their husbands to reimburse their debts. "Oh what a destiny! How come I have to work in this strange cane field!" One woman recalled those unhappy days: "I cried many nights but soon I gave up."45

Despite their anxiety and disappointment, most picture brides had no choice but to marry because they did not have


44. Choy, Koreans in America, p. 89.

enough money to go back. Also a broken engagement was a great shame for women in Korea at that time. Afraid of being shipped back to Korea as if rejected by their prospective grooms, they would be forced to go through their short, unhappy wedding ceremonies at the port of entry. However, a few liberal brides broke off their engagements and refused to marry men twenty to thirty years their senior. This situation often became the major contention against picture-bride marriage for many Korean bachelors.

On a personal level, the marriages between Korean immigrant males and picture brides were not generally happy ones. Many tragic misunderstandings arose from differences in ages, educational levels, regional origins, expectations and aspirations, as well as from social and economic backgrounds. One American social worker describes the life of a picture bride in Hawaii:

In 1920, a Korean man weary of his lonely life on rural Hawaii negotiated for marriage with a picture bride who was seventeen years of age and fifteen years his junior. The young girl felt no love for her husband and became homesick and despondent. When her husband died five years later, alone and without resources, she allowed a second marriage to be arranged through a matchmaker. This marriage, too, had nothing of love in it...the family today sees four children who are the targets for a disillusioned mother and a disinterested father. Other marriages of this nature have been accepted by both man and wife as an inevitable part of their culture and

**. See Shinhan Minbo, 10 September 1914.

** Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities (1)," p. 29.
there is no thought of rebellion.**

The big difference in ages often made some brides widows in their young years, with many children. With their poor English they had to raise their children after working twelve to sixteen hours a day. Sometimes Korean wives endeavored to make the best of their situation despite the economic hardship. But the husband was often indifferent to her hardship and lived under old Korean customs. Consequently, the unhappy picture marriages tended to easily lead to break-up and divorce.** This was also because such a marriage had to meet the strain of a growing spirit of American independence that the brides unconsciously absorbed through life in America.

During the peak of the picture-bride emigration, 1917-1924, the Korean divorce rate was one of the highest among Asian immigrant group in Hawaii. The divorce rate of Koreans during the years of 1913 to 1916 was 3.66 per 1,000 married couples, compared with 4.97 among the Japanese, and 2.41 among the Chinese. Korean divorce rates jumped to 7.59 between 1917 and 1920, and went up again to 8.50 during 1921 to 1924. During the years of 1925 to 1927 the


**. One picture bride named Shin Sang-chul migrated to San Francisco expecting a plentiful life in America. After her marriage, she had to work as a housemaid. In order to buy her new clothes and new things, he spent about $900.00 for her and the in-laws. When his resources dried up, she filed for divorce asking for $250.00 divorce cost, and $85.00 alimony per month. For details of this story, see Shinhan Minbo, 24 October & 5 December 1917.
The "picture-bride" system had some significant socio-economic effects upon the Korean community in America. First, it helped to create a healthy and harmonious Korean community in America by furnishing houses for drifting young single males. For the first time, many restless bachelors had homes to return to after work, having been freed from the crowded and unkempt bachelors' cottages of the plantations. Naturally, their habits of drinking, gambling, gossiping, and sometimes fighting over women were greatly diminished because of their normal family life.

Second, the system accelerated the urbanization of the Korean population in Hawaii and on the mainland. The prospective grooms came to port cities to meet their future brides. Since they had enticed their brides with glowing accounts of the plentiful and pleasant life in America, many of them did not like to take their young wives to the hard life on plantations or the rural areas of the mainland. Their young wives had many illusions about their husbands and American life, so they expected to live in urban areas, especially after seeing the excitement in port

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50. Adams, Interracial Marriage in Hawaii, p. 214; Cheng and Yamamura, "Interracial Marriage and Divorce in Hawaii," pp. 77-84.

51. Adams, ibid., p. 222.
cities. Therefore, the newly married couples tended to settle in port cities such as Honolulu, San Francisco, and Seattle.  

As the picture brides settled in America, the Korean community gradually changed from a rural to an urban one. The arrival of the brides provided a major incentive for Korean men to leave the plantations and seek urban employment. With the accumulation of a little capital, the Koreans established small family-operated businesses or purchased real estate. Later many of the women ran rooming houses and bought homes and apartment buildings. Considering their length of residence in Hawaii, the Koreans as a group showed a relatively high proportion living in urban centers.

Third, the "picture-bride" system helped to modify an ancient North and South sectionalism. Many grooms were Northerners while nearly all of the brides came from the southern provinces of Korea. As a result, the ancient sectionalism gradually disappeared, giving way to an attitude of toleration. Today, it can be said that Korean sectionalism is negligible in America while still discernible in Korea.

Fourth, in the short term, the picture-bride marriage

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became a severe financial burden for many Korean bachelors because it cost a man about $300 to $400 to bring in a picture bride and to establish a household. In addition, they usually had receptions after marriage, inviting thirty to fifty guests to a big restaurant. The travel expenses added to the cost. Sometimes the debt for a marriage ran as high as $800.00. In the long term, however, it contributed greatly to the improvement of economic conditions among Koreans in America.

Upon their arrival in America, most brides began to work gainfully as cooks, laundresses, field hands, and in other manual occupations. They provided added income for their families. After they moved into cities, they became more enterprising by opening up small laundries and tailor shops, running rooming houses, managing apartments and so on. They helped to lay a firm foundation for the economic prosperity of the Korean community.

Fifth, the system ensured the great expansion of the

33. Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities (1)," p. 28. Some Korean bachelors raised money for this purpose through the fiscal Kye, a cooperative voluntary pooling of monthly membership fees, with the total assets of the combined membership going each month to the highest bidder. See Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1934)," p. 411. For a full discussion on Kye, see Chapter XI of this study.

34. In one case, Kim Chong-nim, a wealthy Korean farmer, spent about five thousand dollars for his marriage ceremony. See Shinhan Minbo, 5 December 1917 & 7 March 1918.

Korean population in America. The picture brides played an important role in continuing the life of the Korean ethnic stock by giving birth to a second generation of American-Koreans. When the picture marriage inflow began in 1910, there were 107 second-generation Koreans in Hawaii; by 1920 there were 345 in the ten to seventeen age group alone, thirty-nine percent of whom lived in Honolulu. The high birth rate of Koreans was mainly due to the youthfulness of the women who had come to Hawaii in the child-bearing period. Without them, Koreans in America as an ethnic group would have faced certain extinction after the first generation passed away.

Many of the second and third generations received American educations, obtaining white-collar jobs. They moved very rapidly into such fields as law, medicine and teaching, as compared to other ethnic groups. They recorded one of the highest rates of professionalization. As Arthur L. Gardner stated:

Koreans [in Hawaii] rank proportionately high in representation in the business and professions. This is a noteworthy achievement for those immigrant families of relatively modest social background who made their way to a new and

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38. Smith, Americans in Process, p. 212 (Table XVI).
strange country less than seventy years ago.\textsuperscript{1} They contributed to the development of the Korean community as well as to American society as a whole.\textsuperscript{2} Without the picture brides, the Korean community today might be quite different from what it is. That the Korean community in America today teems with third-and fourth-generation Koreans is undoubtedly due to the picture brides.

\textsuperscript{1} Arthur L. Gardner, \textit{The Koreans in Hawaii: An Annotated Bibliography} (Honolulu: Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawaii, 1970), p. 4. For a similar view, see \textit{75th Anniversary of Korean Immigration to Hawaii, 1903-1978}, p. 19.

PART THREE

SEARCH FOR KOREAN IDENTITY
CHAPTER IX

SEARCH FOR INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY:
THE CHURCH AND VILLAGE COUNCIL

Despite the changes that inevitably occurred, the traditional family was perhaps the most significant social institution transplanted by Korean immigrants to America. But it alone could not transmit all the social and cultural values or patterns of the home country to the new immigrants and their children. That function of the family was supplemented by a variety of organizations with different structures and functions. Among these, the church and village council were the two main institutions uniquely representative of the Korean community in America.

The Chinese and Japanese were homogeneous immigrant groups. They were predominantly farmers or coolies from specific agricultural districts. As a result, they could create community organizations based on the clan, and on regional and business affiliations of their respective homelands.1 However, Korean immigrants' lack of

1. For instance, Chinese immigrants in America established the following associations: 1) District Association; members' recruitment was based on the original place of birth; 2) Chinese consolidated Benevolent Association; overall representative of the Chinese association; 3) Tongs, Merchant's Association, Sworn Brotherhood; originally mutual-aid organizations wherein their members sat down and exchanged social amenities. In practice, however, they became secret societies which were utilized by overseas Chinese to attain objectives which larger society did not sanction. See Lee, Chinese in the
homogeneity eliminated the possibility of clan association or secret societies such as the Sworn Brotherhood. District or regional associations were hard to establish because Korean immigrants came from widely scattered port cities and large towns throughout Korea. Their diverse socio-economic backgrounds also made it difficult to set up mutual-aid organizations such as merchant guilds and gentry-type benevolent associations.

In the absence of other more elaborate organizations, many social functions and services were performed by Korean churches and village councils. The Christian church was a major social institution in the Korean community in America. By fostering common social and cultural activities, it played a vital role in forming the character of Korean communities. It also provided the Koreans with an opportunity to express their national identity and solidarity. Just as the Catholic Church in Ireland became a centripetal force for the political and cultural unity among the Irish against English domination, so in America did the Korean Churches maintain sentiment for national

U.S.A., pp. 142-182.


Traditional religions like Buddhism, Shamanism, and Taoism persisted among the Japanese and Chinese in America. Especially, Buddhism was a major institution of the Japanese community which served as a central force for Japanese ethnic solidarity. Koreans, however, turned away from their old religions within a few years of their emigration although a small group of Koreans still practiced them.
independence and ethnic solidarity among Koreans. As a result, a majority of Korean immigrants became more and more obsessed "with maintaining their identity as Christians and as Koreans."

Within six months after Korean immigrants landed in Hawaii, the first Korean church was established without contact with the American mission churches. The first church service was held under the leadership of Kim Ii-je on July 5, 1903, on a sugar plantation in Mokolia, Oahu. The place of worship was the living quarters of the camp. In October, 1903, a group of men representing various plantations established a church in Honolulu with no denominational affiliation.

Greatly impressed by Koreans' devotion to Christian work, the American Mission Board in Honolulu designated Superintendent S. L Pearson to help Koreans set up their own Methodist Church. This developed into the First Methodist Church in Honolulu in 1905, with chapels organized in Ewa, Waipahu, Waialua, and Kahuku, Lahaina, Hamakua Poko and Spreckelsville in 1906. The Rev. John W. Wadman became the superintendent of the Korean Methodist Church. For about ten years Wadman and his wife did their

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5. Warren Kim, Koreans in America, p. 28; Kim, Chaemi Hanin Usipnyon-sa, p. 40.

best to develop the Korean Methodist Church, as well as to establish a Korean school for the immigrants and their children. Hong Sung-ha became the first minister of the Methodist Church. Also, in 1908 Isaiah Iksung Kim was made first lay leader of St. Luke's Episcopal Church which established a Korean Church under the Episcopal denomination.

The period between 1903 and 1918 thus witnessed a rapid growth in the number of Korean Christians. Almost every Korean community in America established churches. During the period, about 2,800 Koreans were converted to Christianity and thirty-one churches of various denominations were established in Hawaii. Seven churches were set up with 452 members on the mainland. This numerical increase was a remarkable achievement considering that the total number of Korean immigrants at that time was less than eight thousand. This rapid growth was certainly


8. For a brief history of Korean Church in America, see 75th Anniversary of Korean Immigration to Hawaii, 1903-1978, pp. 28-33.

9. Although there were many different denominations, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians were predominant. See Choy, Koreans in America, p. 257.

not a mere historical accident. It was closely related to the history of evangelism in Korea and the cause of Korean emigration to Hawaii.

As early as 1631, Christianity came to Korea in the form of Roman Catholicism, when one member of a Korean mission to China brought in many books on science, and scientific artifacts, together with a book on Christianity (The Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven, written by Matthieu Ricci, a Jesuit missionary in Peking). Later, a few scholars, the so-called Namin (the Southern Political Faction), embraced Roman Catholicism even before any foreign missionaries entered Korea.

As late as 1783, Yi Seung-hun went to Peking with the Korean annual Mission to China where he was baptized. Catholicism gained converts shortly after its arrival in Korea. Many people, who were dissatisfied with their lot in the present life, turned to the new faith because it promised a better life in the next world, no matter how vaguely they understood the real meaning of life after death. Others embraced the religion because it symbolized Western scientific knowledge.

As many Koreans turned to Christianity, the Korean government became deeply concerned with its doctrine that preached equality of men and the brotherhood of mankind. The doctrine was considered dangerous to the preservation

11. Paik, History of Protestant Missions, p. 34.
of the Confucian system of loyalties and human relations, which had been the ideological foundation of the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910). The government was also afraid that Christianity disapproved of ancestor worship and the rites of Confucian mourning. Many Confucian scholar-officials in Korea branded Christianity as heresy, fundamentally inimical to their world view and social order. They urged its outright rejection by those who wished to uphold the orthodoxy of Confucianism. As a result, the Korean government issued an edict in 1785 banning Christianity. Christian adherents were ordered, on penalty of death, to give up their faith. From then on, for more than one hundred years, Christianity was strictly prohibited, and it maintained only a limited and underground existence until the 1880s.


13. Shortly after the ban, many Korean Christians along with a Chinese priest were put to death and the persecution of Christians continued. In 1839 three French missionaries and their Korean followers were executed. This incident angered the French government, which sent a ship to Korea in 1846 to demand an explanation. As late as 1866 three bishops, seventeen priests, and numerous Korean Christians suffered Christian martyrdom.

The Korean-American Treaty of 1882 opened a new era in the Christian history of Korea. Although the Korean government was fully aware of the imperialist powers' naked pursuit of material gains posed for Korean society and nationality, it was nevertheless favorably disposed toward America over all other powers. The Korean people had heard that the Americans as a whole were less vicious, more humane and square dealing than other "barbarians" from the West. In fact, even before 1882, the Korean government was informed that the Americans were less dangerous barbarians because, unlike the Japanese and Europeans, they had no territorial ambitions in Asia. The Korean government was therefore eager to establish a special relationship with the United States. When American Protestant missionaries came to the "Hermit Kingdom" after the treaty of 1882, they were well received by Koreans who were impressed with their activities in all fields.

Horace N. Allen, the first American Protestant missionary, was sent to Korea in 1884 by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions of the United States. Shortly after his arrival in Seoul, an incident occurred that helped him gain the confidence of Korea's King, and which subsequently led to the approval of Christianity in Korea.

In the abortive coup of December 4, 1884 led by a group of radical reformers opposed to the conservatives then in power, Prince Min Young-ik, the queen’s nephew, was seriously wounded and left for dead. As a missionary physician to the American Legation in Seoul, Allen cared for Prince Min and cured him with the help of Western medicine and surgical science. Allen thus secured an influence and trust based on solid gratitude. Allen soon became the court physician and King’s personal advisor. Allen’s special relationship to the royal family greatly benefited American missionary work from the beginning.

During the first two decades of the century, Protestant Christianity achieved remarkable success in Korea, compared to other countries in Asia. The number of the converts increased amazingly: 746 in 1895, 8,496 in 1896, and 18,081 in 1900. When the "mass-migration" of 1903 was organized, many Koreans had already been exposed

14. Allen was “honored by being made medical officer to the court and maritime customs service, and was provided with a hospital in which to treat the thousands of natives who had conceived the most exaggerated ideas of the virtues of Western medicine and surgical science, because of the fact that their prince had been saved thereby.” See Horace N. Allen, Things Korea: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908), pp. 71-72.

17. Allen was later appointed as American minister to Korea, making a great contribution to the Korean emigration to Hawaii during the years of 1903-1905. For a full discussion, see Chapter III of this study.

to Christianity, or had already become active converts. In 1910 when Japan annexed Korea, there were already 807 churches, 200,000 converts, over 400 Korean pastors, 257 foreign missionaries, 350 schools directly attached to Christian missions, 15,000 students [attending mission schools]..., and fifteen hospitals under mission management.” 19 Between 1903 and 1918, Koreans in America also converted to Christianity in great numbers.

What contributed to such a phenomenal growth? Political unrest, effective missionary activities through church schools and hospitals, the desire of Korean people to gain new knowledge and their willingness to embrace a new and more "modern" faith pushed Korean conversion in this period. 20 The high quality of American missionaries also contributed to the success of the missions in Korea. Most missionaries had been graduated from America's ranking colleges, and had taken further professional training in medicine, theology, social work, and other fields.


20. For a good look at the missionary activities and church growth in Korea, see Paik, History of Protestant Missions, pp. 158-404. O'Connell expressed a similar view. The remarkable success, according to him, was due to the world-wide Christian organizations, their emphasis on education and western culture, and especially their messianic hope for the oppressed. See James T. O'Connell, "The Korean Nationalist Movement" (M.A. thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1938), p. 29.
Moreover, having learned some important lessons from the earlier experiences in China and Japan, they were "generally imaginative, liberal, and pragmatic in dealing with problems, although their theological view was conservative."\(^21\)

The most important factor, however, was political.\(^22\) When Korea was forced to open its doors to the West around the turn of the century, it was vulnerable and impotent, finding itself helpless in the game of imperialist power politics. While the ruling class was politically divided and confused in its search for a new direction for the country, the masses of people were left neglected to subsist barely in abject poverty. In 1901 and 1902, a nationwide famine took place, caused by an unusual drought followed by floods. Various epidemics raged. Inflation and monetary instability was caused by the counterfeiting of nickel pieces. Corruption, high taxes and general mismanagement were prevalent as the Yi Dynasty slid into near chaos.\(^23\)

At this critical time, Korea had no distinct and controlling religion. When Christianity took hold in Korea, all the ancient faiths were in a state of decay. In


\(^{22}\) Paik, History of Protestant Missions, pp. 354-356 & 404.

\(^{23}\) Kim and Kim, Korea and Politics of Imperialism, p. 115; Choy, Koreans in America, p. 73.
his study of the relations between Christianity and Korean tradition, Palmer points out the weakness of pre-Christian religions—the long decay of Buddhism, the position of Confucianism, which never gripped the masses, and the prevalent practice of shamanism—as the main reason for the success of Christianity in Korea.24

Buddhism was "too mystical to appeal to the people in its more philosophic aspects," having fallen into disgrace during the Yi Dynasty.25 On the other hand, Confucianism was "too cold and materialistic to appeal to the emotional side of the ordinary Korean's nature, and so became simply a political ideology, the moral elements of which never found any considerable following among the masses."26 Visitors to Korea in this period often commented that Korea was "a land without a religion."27 Without a spiritual force to assure the hope and promise in times of pessimism and uncertainty, the whole nation waited for something fresh and powerful to lift its spirit up from the state of


27. Paik, History of Protestant Missions, p. 22.
despair. Christianity and its American carriers found an eager and genuinely interested audience in Korea.28

The Korean cultural background also contributed to the rapid conversion to Christianity. In Korea, the word Hananim, composed of the words "Heaven" and "Master," is the Korean counterpart of the Chinese word "Lord of Heaven." The Koreans considered this being to be the supreme ruler of the universe. Thus the word Hananim was similar to the concept of Jehovah which Protestant missionaries universally accepted as the term for use in teaching Christian beliefs.29 Although the Koreans didn't have any dominant religion, they had the concept of one God long before they had come into contact with Christianity. The simple Korean alphabet also expedited the process of their conversion. James S. Gale, one of the American pioneer missionaries, stated:

The East and the Far East have generally had a poor reception for missionaries from the West because of the general inability of the masses to read the Bible. Perhaps China was worst of all, since she sailed along complacently on her literary ideals, while her poor and unlettered ones had to live on the bones of rumor, hearsay and superstition. In the Far East, Korea has been the one great exception by virtue of her simple

and efficient script.\textsuperscript{30}

Why, then, did a majority of Korean immigrants, unlike the Chinese and Japanese, become Christians and create a unique Christian community in America? Conversion was a form of acculturation, a form of Americanization which entailed a complete change of attitudes, emotional reactions and behavior patterns. Transplanted to an alien land and removed from traditional social and cultural norms, Korean immigrants expected some protection by converting to a Christianity with which the host society was familiar and of which the host society approved. A desire to be accepted and secure played a crucial role in converting them in a strange land.

In the 1930's Bernice Kim observed that "all the young Koreans were eager to succeed in their venture, so one and all professed to become Christians. Nominally, at least, everyone became a Christian"\textsuperscript{31} This statement is a little exaggerated but basically sound. The Christian church was the only social institution in which both Koreans and Americans could mutually share without any prejudice. During the initial period of Korean settlement, American Christians became the first and best Caucasian friends of Korean immigrants. The racial barrier was in many ways

\textsuperscript{30} Keith and Scott, ibid., p. 21. For a similar view, see Harry A. Rhodes et al., \textit{The Fifth Anniversary Celebration of the Korean Mission} (Seoul: Y.M.C.A. Press, 1934), p. 22.

\textsuperscript{31} Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 87.
eliminated by missionary zeal.

American Christians wished to set up their missions in Korean communities in order to show their good will toward poor Koreans in America. On the other hand, the Korean church leaders wanted American Christians to understand the Korean national issue—restoration of independence from Japan—and Korean community problems. The Korean church leaders thought of themselves as the representatives of Korea, and of the Korean church in America as a Korean national body. Christianity was also used as a means of gaining sympathy from the white Americans, who tended to assume that Christian Koreans were more moral and deserving of sympathy than non-Christian immigrants. One observer wrote:

One third of all the Koreans in Hawaii are professing Christians. They dominate the life in the camps on the Islands of Oahu, Kauai and Maui where they are stamping out gambling and intoxication. The Koreans have fallen into sympathetic hands in Hawaii.32

The church promoted Korean ethnic solidarity by maintaining brotherly love and cultural cohesiveness in a hostile land. Korean immigrants spoke the same language and shared the same values and customs. Much of their unique cultural behavior was reinforced in the social intercourse provided by the church. The church also provided its members with opportunities to experience deep communication and intimacy, through the worship service and

the post-worship fellowship.\textsuperscript{33} Since many social and cultural events were usually held in the church building, there was a certain degree of group or psychological pressure on non-Christians. As a result, many non-Christian Koreans, nominally or seriously, turned to Christianity. They saw the Church as a meeting place for social or business affairs.\textsuperscript{3*}

Another reason for the rapid conversion to Christianity can be found in the connections of Christianity to Western civilization. Korean immigrants believed Christianity to be the essence of Western civilization, and thus to be the panacea for the ills from which they were suffering.\textsuperscript{35} They were convinced that the Christian Church would guide the future of Korean civilization. In their struggles for independence and search for identity, they found comfort and peace in the simple teachings of the Gospel. "A people without a country must have something to believe in and to hold to," commented one Korean community leader. "In Christian principles we have found a pattern for our future--both as


\textsuperscript{3*}. The Church was a good place to look for friends or relatives if they were Christians. One Korean immigrant, Sonwu Hyok, went to Church to see his friend Yim and was persuaded by Yim's father to convert to Christianity. Interview with Sonwu Hyok, Honolulu, 20 July, 1974, Moon, "Korean Immigrants in America," p. 225.

\textsuperscript{35}. Paik, \textit{History of Protestant Missions}, p. 344.
individuals and as a nation."  

Under the influence of American missionaries of "puritanic zeal and Wesleyan fervor," fundamentalism held firm in Korea. In theology and biblical criticism, Korean missionaries were conservative. They strongly demanded righteousness and guilt-feelings about personal misconduct and behavior. One source stated:

The typical missionary [in Korea]...was a man who still kept the Sabbatic much like his New England forbearers [had] a century earlier. He looked upon dancing, smoking, card-playing, and the drinking of liquor as sins in which no true follower of Christ should indulge.  

The conservative nature of Korean missions was utilized by many sugar planters in Hawaii and agricultural employers on the mainland who encouraged their workers to convert to Christianity. Control over labor, an essential part of plantation and farm management, they believed, should be extended far beyond the matters of hours, wages, and working conditions. That control had a bearing on even religion and politics. Since gambling, drinking, and frequent quarrels lowered work efficiency and productivity, the planters and employers tried to prevent such happenings through the conversion of their workers.

Rev. John W. Wadman, Superintendent of the Methodist Mission in Hawaii, said that "Drunkards and gamblers, as well as opium smokers, in several places have been brought

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34. Quoted in White, "Koreans in Montana," p. 156.

to Christ." He further stated that most plantation managers did their best to "better the moral condition of their laborers, feeling that in the end it is a paying investment." Between 1908 and 1910, some planters were much concerned about the misconduct of Korean laborers, but in 1912 they extolled Methodist missionary work:

These Koreans make the most sincere Christians I have ever known. They are becoming more and more the most desirable and efficient laborers...Your work...is showing excellent results. I shall certainly build a school house for their children as you request. They are among my most faithful employees.  

On the mainland, when several hundred laborers gathered in one place during the harvest season, farm managers often invited Korean ministers to hold revival camp meetings. These meetings were common in southern California. Dozens of Koreans were converted to Christianity at the revival meeting. Sometimes, church members and farm owners provided good will parties after harvest, and Bibles and church bulletins were distributed to Korean laborers.

In addition to regular religious ceremonies, the

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40. Shinhan Minbo, 22 August 1913.

Korean churches performed other services for Korean immigrants. First, the churches were the centers of hope and social life for the despairing Koreans. Korean church leaders, as dedicated Christian servants, had a strong sense of responsibility for the welfare and interests of Korean immigrants. A majority of Korean immigrants were bachelors, isolated from the mainstream of American society by a language barrier and cultural conflicts. They were also discriminated against for racial reasons. Their lives in the plantation camps were onerous and monotonous. Often they suffered bewilderment and hardship as well as homesickness. Therefore, Korean immigrants, whether Christian or not, needed someone who cared for them and gave them some hope for bettering their lives in the future.

Whenever Koreans were in trouble about domestic affairs or job matters, they first visited church ministers for help. When Korean students came to America for advanced studies, they usually called on Korean ministers for advice about their studies as well as for financial aid. The church buildings were open to needy Koreans. Persons who lost their jobs or students who were short of

\[\text{Sometimes Korean students had troubles with immigration authorities over visa extensions or violation of immigration rules. Then the Korean minister often helped them by talking to the concerned authorities. Between 1910 and 1918, a few hundred Korean political refuges and students could come to America without passports because the church ministers, together with the Korean National Association, became sponsors for them.}\]
money were welcome to stay in the church, where they could have free room and board. On Sundays, Korean immigrants worshipped together and gathered after the services. They enjoyed meeting friends and talking to each other in their native language. They shared their problems and helped each other.

Second, the Korean churches became matrices for the Korean independence movement. Since many young patriotic intellectuals became ministers, they played a crucial role in leading Koreans toward this pursuit. Korean ministers regarded themselves as spiritual leaders, and at the same time "freedom fighters" for the cause of national liberation. Naturally, the Korean churches became headquarters for the national independence movement. Policies and activities were debated, and national celebrations and protest meetings were held in the church buildings. The San Francisco Korean Methodist Church was used for these purposes for many years until the Korean

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43. Despite their good educational background, most young intellectuals were unable to secure desirable jobs because of the racial discrimination that pervaded America at that time. They had three possible ways to choose: to go back to Korea where they would be under Japanese persecution; to search for jobs in American society, although they were menial; and finally to work for Korean community. But positions in community organizations were limited. The churches were the only visible institutions which could give employment, although they offered only meager wages. So, many Korean intellectuals turned to church work. Choy, Koreans in America, pp. 257-258.

44. Ibid., pp. 259-60. For instance, the Rev. Lee Dae-whee served as minister of the Korean Methodist Church during the years of 1910-1928 while working for the KNA.
National Association building was constructed in Los Angeles in 1937.\(^4\)

The Korean churches supported propaganda and diplomatic efforts to restore Korea’s independence. The Korean independence movement was financially supported by a great number of small contributors, most of whom were members of Korean Christian churches.\(^4\) When the Korean Commission \(^7\) issued bonds to generate the first $250,000 of the $5 million to be used for diplomatic and propaganda purposes, many Korean Christians willingly purchased them despite their meager wages.\(^4\)

Third, the Korean churches became educational centers for Koreans in America.\(^4\) Korean immigrants had had few

\(^4\) Ibid., pp. 257-258.

\(^4\). A careful count of the people who promised to make contributions, as reported in an official bulletin published by Dongji-hoe [Conrade Society], indicates that a total of sixty-nine persons promised a sum of $1,026, or less than $15 per person. See Korean Pacific Weekly, 14 June 1941, p. 19.

\(^7\). The Commission was established sometime in the autumn of 1919 in Washington D.C.

\(^9\). Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipnyon-sa, p. 379.

\(^10\). There were a few reasons why the churches were chosen as educational institutions. First, there were already churches established in various work camps, and they already had such facilities as classrooms and playgrounds. Therefore there was a basic organizational structure for the task. Second, most of the people qualified to teach children anything about Korea were pastors, who were literate enough to instruct them. Third, due to lack of teaching materials, the Bible and Christian hymnbooks were used as parts of basic textbooks. See Choy, Koreans in America, p. 272; Kim, "History and Role of Church," p. 137; Helen Lewis Givens, "The Korean Community

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opportunities for education in Korea. About sixty-five percent were illiterate. But they knew that education provided a road to economic independence. The quest for education for their children had been one of the motives for leaving Korea. There were already foreign-language schools operated by the Japanese and Chinese in America, and Korean immigrants were determined not to be surpassed in this crucial area. Thus the church leaders were eager to establish Korean language schools.30 One Korean immigrant stated:

Many immigrants who came to Hawaii did not know even the Korean alphabet, and evening and Saturday Korean schools were established in every Korean community to teach adults as well as immigrant children...Every Korean overseas thought that Japan would destroy the Korean history and culture, so that we Koreans in America thought [that] we should preserve our culture and urged Koreans to support the Korean school financially.31 Korean language schools served as instruments for promoting national and cultural identity. Many parents

in Los Angeles County" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 1939), p. 38.

30. While Korean parents sent their children to public schools, they patronized Korean language schools. Between 1907 and 1940 there were eighteen different schools in Hawaii. In 1924, the total enrollment was 241; by 1931 ten schools had an enrollment of 520 students. On the mainland, too, Korean language schools were founded in California at Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, and the San Joaquin Valley towns of Delano, Dinuba, and Reedley. These schools were sponsored by Korean churches with the teachers' salaries paid from tuition. See Korean Student Bulletin (Hawaii) 13 (1935), p. 8.

tried to inspire the second generation with their Korean heritage and national loyalty. They wanted to bring up their children as Koreans by teaching Korean history, language and culture. They also saw an opportunity to put the Korean language to the practical use of educating their children, who were attending public (English-language) schools. They expected that their children would serve them as interpreters.\textsuperscript{32}

As a result, within a ten-year period, illiteracy among Korean immigrants was wiped out, while Korean children were able to read and speak their ancestral language and to have some background in Korean history and culture. This undoubtedly helped to promote the communication between Korean parents and American-born children while Korean traditional values were, with some degree of success, reinforced in the Korean community. However, as with other ethnic language schools, most children were unwilling students who were good at English and inadequate in Korean. The teachers, all Korean-born, on the other hand, were unable to communicate clearly in English. As the younger-generation Koreans assumed leadership in their communities, they saw no need for language schools, which then disappeared.\textsuperscript{33}

Finally, the Korean churches worked as arbitrators in

\textsuperscript{32} Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities (I)," pp. 46-51.

\textsuperscript{33} Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," pp. 196-197; Warren Kim, Koreas in America, pp. 42-45.
case of lawsuits (civil or criminal) or conflicts in the Korean community. Two incidents give evidence for this. The first involved a murder trial of five Koreans who were charged with murdering a fellow plantation worker on the island of Hawaii in 1906. The controversial case was finally taken up by the Honolulu Social Science Club for investigation as to the justice of the prosecution. In articles which reported the development of the case, Rev. J. W. Wadman was constantly referred to as a mediator and counselor of the charged Koreans. He also administered last rites to the three Koreans who were finally sentenced to death.34

The second incident involved the anti-Japanese activities of the Korean National Association (KNA) in Hawaii. When the Japanese community accused Lucius E. Pickham, Governor of the Territory of Hawaii, of furthering anti-Japanese sentiments among Koreans in Hawaii, Pinkham said that the activities of the Korean community were controlled almost exclusively by the Methodist Episcopal Church and that any contact he had with the Korean community was merely formal courtesy.35 A statement was also made by William Henry Fry, speaking on behalf of the Methodist Mission Board on July 27, 1915, confirmed the

34. Honolulu Advertiser. 21 March 1906.

35. Hawaii, Governor, Governors' Files, Pinkham-U.S. Departments, Interior Department, July-September 1915 (Honolulu: Hawaii State Archives).
relationship between the Mission Board and the Korean community:

By arrangement with the Hawaiian Mission Board, the Methodist Episcopal Mission had charge of the Korean work in this territory. We have a large central school in Honolulu located on our mission property known as the "korean Compound."

It seems evident, then, that the Korean Church under the influence of the American Mission Board had dominant control over secular activities of Korean immigrants. The two cases also reflected the fact that Korean immigrants in Hawaii had close ties with the Christian church. They retained the Christian religion as a means of group identity in a relatively successful manner, which added to the group's stability.

Having discussed the Korean church, and its roles and contribution to the development of the Korean community in America, we may now look at another self-governing body, the Donghoe or village council. Although Korean immigrants lived under the American system of jurisprudence, they banded together to create their own legal system. In a strange country without proper Korean government protection through diplomatic channels, the village council filled a vacuum and, along with the Korean churches, guided Korean immigrants in building a more livable, more cohesive community in America. It further solidified Korean immigrants through self-government and mutual assistance.

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54. Ibid.
While the church was established for the spiritual guidance of Koreans, the village council served as a legal agency to maintain law and order in the Korean community.

Korean immigrants migrated to America as plantation laborers. They were mostly unmarried and poor. They were, with few exceptions, not educated or of a socially prominent class, and somewhat disinterested in Korea's past. Generally speaking, they had weak national consciousness. Yet the lonely life in a land of strange historical and cultural background made them feel a strong love for Korea and the Korean people. The small numbers of Korean immigrants and the political situation in Korea further intensified Korean ethnic solidarity, fostering a spirit of brotherhood and ethnic self-consciousness. Each Korean looked upon other Koreans as brothers or sisters and "the esprit de corps was admirable."

While the isolation of the Koreans enforced racial solidarity, sometimes it brought about conflict with other interest or ethnic groups. If a Korean, involved in trouble with someone of another nationality, was unjustly

57. Asian immigrants, in most cases, lived together in such large port cities as Honolulu, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. They were subject to the same racial discrimination and laws. Nonetheless, they were racially segregated and reluctant to mingle with other groups. The contacts between the Asians were very limited, mainly because of the language barrier and cultural differences. Especially among the small groups, like the Koreans, everyone knew everyone else, and therefore contacts were primary, and the immigrants kept to themselves. Being clannish, Korean immigrants maintained their own group cohesion.
treated or beaten, the entire camp would band together to demand adequate redress which usually took the form of a mob fight. The following two cases give evidence of this:

July 30-31 or longer, 1904; Waipahu sugar plantation; 200 Korean field hands. Strike in protest against Dr. Hoffman, who they claim has killed a patient by kick [sic] in the abdomen (the man actually died of abdominal disorders). Hoffman is nearly mobbed on July 31.

May 29, 1905; Paia plantation; 160 Korean field hands; 80 Koreans are fired for beating a luna; 80 more at Kailua camp strike in sympathy. Four leaders are arrested; a near riot results. Strikers are asked to return to work.

With physical and social characteristics so different from the rest of the American people, it was, perhaps, inevitable that Koreans felt more group unity than ever before. Regardless of what happened in the work camps, the entire Korean community felt a joint responsibility for the behavior of their fellow countrymen. This strong group unity and brotherhood helped to create the unique Korean legal system.

The Donghoe was based on the village system of rural

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38. Pacific Commercial Advertiser, 30 July & 1 August 1904; Reinecke, Labor Disturbances in Hawaii, p. 11.

60. Pacific Commercial Advertiser, 5 June 1905; Reinecke, ibid., p. 12.
Korea. Its origin goes back to the Silla Kingdom. The ruling class of Silla exercised a primitive form of democracy in selecting their ruler and in governing their people. Important affairs of a village were decided by a majority of the village people. This practice was carried on throughout the centuries, and was kept intact even under Japanese rule. Transplanted by Korean immigrants to America, this form of self-government was established almost immediately on every plantation where a community of more than ten Korean families existed. The first village council was set up on Kahuku Sugar Plantation, Oahu Island in 1903. The village councils continued to remain active until 1910 when the KNA was formed with its headquarters in San Francisco, at which time the Korean community seemed to take on a more national awareness, due to Japan's annexation of Korea.

The head of the village council was the Dongchang, the village chief. He was elected once a year by popular vote at a meeting of all adult male Koreans on the plantation.

1. Silla was one of three kingdoms which conquered the other two—Koguryo and Paekchae—and unified the Korean peninsula in 688 A.D. Silla imported Buddhism from India via China, and embraced many cultural features of Chinese civilization. The cultural heritages of the Silla Kingdom—including many Buddhist temples, monasteries, arts, and sculptures—have an enduring beauty and give evidence of the advanced Korean civilization. See George M. McCune, Korea Today (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 11.


The village chief was assisted by the Sachal [Sergeant-at-arms] or policeman. Normally two policemen worked under the village chief, reporting to him violations of the rules. Chosen by the town meeting, the policemen also had full power to go into any Korean house at any time, and the Koreans were supposed to permit such inspections.™

The Dongchang had a broad range of authority to judge every aspect of town life and to supervise his policemen. He represented the Korean plantation community in the social life of America. He listened to the problems of the village people and served as the arbitrator in disputes or conflicts among members. He also meted out fines and punishment when the rules were violated. Any Korean accused of having broken the rules was brought before the chief, who reviewed the case with his policemen. He convened and adjourned the town meeting whenever he saw fit. He was "the camp functionary on ceremonial occasions or when visitors arrived."™ Any visitor to the town "had to call on the headsman first, and the latter saw to all his needs and comforts."™ He would remain in his position as long as his services satisfied the majority.

In order to be selected as the Dongchang, one needed

™. Shinhan Minbo. 25 January 1911.
the following qualifications: be among the oldest males*7 
(presumably the wisest), manifest upright behavior, honesty 
and sincerity, and have a good education.*8 Since it was 
very hard to find a man with all of these qualifications, 
the age was not always considered to be a crucial factor. 
A younger person could be often elected over the oldest 
male if his other qualifications were strikingly 
discernable.*9

Why did Korean immigrants set up the self-governing 
village councils? The main purpose was to maintain law and 
order in each Korean community. Korean immigrants, 
transplanted to a strange country, experienced profound 
changes in matters of morals and manners as well as their 
living patterns. The lack of traditional social restraints 
induced many Koreans to drift uninhibitedly towards 
pleasure-seeking games. Fist fights, gambling and 
drinking, except during working hours, were common in every 
plantation camp.

The extremely unbalanced sex ratio among Koreans 
created many disputes over women, and quite a few husbands 
felt uneasy over their wives. In this early period, even a 

*7. This reflected Korean traditions of "respecting 
the elders." The oldest male of the Korean community, as 
had been the case in Korea, was not only highly respected 
but also had considerable power over the younger members.


trivial matter could easily lead to fighting over wives.70 Also a small number of married women consorted with single males in the work camp.71 Accordingly, fostering "respect and protection of women" became one of the major tasks of the village council.72 Gambling, drinking and fighting were strictly prohibited. Violaters were fined or otherwise punished in conformity with the rules and regulations.

Another important motive for the formation of village councils was politics. The village council, like the Korean Christian church, was instrumental in the Korean independence movement. As a small immigrants group, Koreans needed unity and solidarity to carry out their nationalistic campaign. Naturally, therefore, the village council, especially during the 1910's, emphasized political action. It tried to solidify the Koreans' anti-Japanese feelings and tried to regulate all aspects of Korean life to show how they were well-behaved compared with other Asians, especially the Japanese. This became one way of

70. Kyonghyang Shinmun, 16 November 1973 (Series no. 14).
71. In Ewa plantation several single males seduced a certain Mr. Pak, infuriating all the Koreans in the camp. The seducers were asked by the "town court" to leave the camp. See Tongnip Shinmun, 14 July 1906.
72. The first village council on Kahuku Sugar Plantation, Oahu in 1903 was initiated by the necessity to protect women. Kim Hong-kyu was selected as the village chief. Three simple rules were adopted: 1) strengthen love of fellowship; 2) respect and protect women; and 3) prohibit gambling, drinking and attendance at the camp by any suspicious women. Hyun Soon, "My Autobiography," p. 64.
asserting Korean ethnic identity.

Every village council, though differing slightly in its operation, had similar laws and regulations adopted by a general village meeting.73 They were very simple, mainly designed to curb dark aspects of plantation community life. The basis and the amount of fines varied in accordance with the degree of offense. Fines, collected at a general meeting once a month, were used for educational support of children, care of the ill, expenses incurred at holiday times, and to send back to Korea any invalid who could not earn money to buy his ticket.74

The village council in Riverside, California had the following rules, which were typical of other village councils:

Drunkenness (Article 2 & 7): first offense-$0.50; second offense-$1.00; third offense-$3.00; more than three offenses-severe punishment.75

Gambling (Art. 3 & 8): first offense-$2.50; second offense-$5.00; third offense-$10.00; more than three offenses-severe punishment.

Opium Smoking (Art. 4 & 9): Those who smoked opium were asked to quit the habit within one month. If they failed to do so, they would be severely punished.

Fighting (Art. 5 & 10): simple bickering-warning; assault and battery-$ 5.00; in dramatic

73. Shinhan Minbo. 18 December 1911.


75. "Severe punishment" usually meant the deportation of the offender from the town.
cases, the offender would be punished severely."

Sexual behavior was strictly regulated. With women few in number, problems inevitably arose. Some camps ruled that any man found guilty of a first sex offense would be fined three dollars. He could be also driven from the camp. If a woman were the seducer, she and her husband both would be told to leave town since the husband had failed to control his wife. In the case of actual liaisons, the couple and the other party were both asked to leave."

Thus Koreans attempted to confine what could have developed into explosive situations. Korean immigrants were very strict in handling such "affairs" in their community, as in the case of puritan communities in New England in colonial America. This reflected the conservative and puritanical characteristics of the Korean community.

As the Korean community grew more refined and prosperous in later years, the rules became more specific; they covered more delicate aspects of community life. For instance, in two Korean communities at Upland and Claremont, California, no work was allowed on Sundays except for kitchen work. This indicates that most Koreans

74. According to another rule, if the policemen overlooked the offender privately, they would get twice the punishment of the original offenders. For more detailed rules and regulations, see Shinhan Minbo, 18 December 1911.

77. Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 110; Kongnip Shinmun, 14 July 1906 & 3 July 1908; Shinhae Minbo, 20 February 1919.
were Christians and that they strictly observed the Sabbath.\textsuperscript{78} Rules in the Korean community of Manteca, California also attest to this trend. Article 3 prohibited gossip or rumors that would injure the personal relationship between males and females. Article 7 prohibited the following things which might cause adverse criticism of Koreans: 1) bad Korean habits; 2) dishonest words and deeds; 3) poor sanitary conditions. Article 17 stipulated that everyone in the village would advise parents who were too lazy to educate and control their children.\textsuperscript{79}

Despite written rules, and despite the voluntary participation of Koreans, the village council did not fully act as an ultimate legal authority. Korean immigrants still lived under the American system of jurisprudence. The rules actually were only advisory. People were bound by them only to the extent that they were willing to be so bound. Stricter implementation of the rules was impossible because they had no binding legal force.

In Kipahulu plantation, on Maui Island in Hawaii in 1909, several unruly Koreans stirred up a Korean camp by fist-fighting, drinking, and gambling. The village chief

\textsuperscript{78}. For Upland, California regulations, see Shinhan Minbo, 5 February 1912, and for Claremont, see 25 June 1911.

\textsuperscript{79}. Ibid., 16 November 1916. Article 17 indicates that the education of young Koreans and control of their behavior rested upon the entire community, as well as on the individual family.
ordered his policemen to arrest them and convened a town meeting to discuss this problem. The offenders were simply delivered to the American authorities for punishment.\(^8\)

When five Koreans were charged with murdering a fellow plantation worker on the island of Hawaii in 1906, the Korean community transferred the case to the Honolulu Social Science Club for investigation, which eventually turned the case over to the civil authorities. Three Koreans were subsequently sentenced to death by law in 1906.\(^8\)

*Also, in 1904, eight Koreans were charged with assault for beating an immigration clerk named Taylor. Taylor tried to collect one hundred dollars for passage expenses which Korean immigrants had agreed to pay after their settlement in Hawaii. But some immigrants felt the demand unjust and refused to pay. The case was taken to trial but dropped upon Taylor's disappearance.\(^8\) So, from the beginning, it was evident that the village councils were not recognized as legal authorities. Members of the group were still subject to a greater law of America--a law they did not ask for nor create.*

In summary, reacting to cultural shock and transition in an alien land, Korean immigrants established, with some

\(^8\) Ibid., 10 February 1909 & 11 August 1909.

\(^8\) Honolulu Advertiser, 21 March 1906.

\(^8\) Bernice Kim, "Koreans in Hawaii (1937)," p. 86.
degree of success, their own peculiar institutions as did other ethnic groups. The Korean church, together with the village council, played a vital role in the development of the Korean community in America. Both spiritually and secularly, each helped to solidify the Korean community's stability and to maintain law and order in the hostile country. In a way the Korean church took care of the Koreans spiritually, and the village council took care of the Koreans' secular life. The two institutions provided Korean immigrants with a more secure and satisfying basis for new life in the new world. Through these institutions, Koreans managed to identify themselves as a distinct ethnic group while making their community more visible and more cohesive during a time of racial discrimination.
"Politics," in Charles Frankel's words, "is a substitute for custom; it becomes conspicuous wherever custom recedes or breaks down."¹ This means that politics could be a substantial form of group identity and cohesion in case of the breakdown of cultural values. Frankel's statement aptly reflects the reality of the Korean community in America. Soon after they settled in America, Koreans established religious, social, and cultural institutions to create a cohesive and viable Korean community. However, it was politics which superseded all other aspects of Korean lives as a cohesive factor in their communal lives.

The independence movement against Japanese rule was one type of social movement in which Korean immigrants collectively "sought to establish a new order of life" in America.² Political identity was so important to the Koreans that it took precedence over their economic, 


². Lind, "Some Types of Social Movements," pp. 5-14. Lind discusses three types of social movements which provided the immigrants in Hawaii with a meaningful life for their racial identity. They were the missionary, philanthropic, and nationalistic movements.
cultural, or religious directions. Once they lost their political identity, they thought they also lost their history, culture, and even their self-respect. The only way to regain it was to regain Korean national independence. As a result, between 1903 and 1924, Korean immigrants devoted much of their energy to this objective. They generated a nationalistic sentiment out of all proportion to the size of their population and created an almost politically "neurotic" community.

Korean ethnic nationalism was well expressed when, on May 1, 1905, Korean immigrants sent a letter to the Foreign Minister of Korea, asking for a Korean consul in Hawaii. They said that they would provide all necessary funds to establish and operate the Korean consulate. However, on May 5 the home government appointed the Japanese consul in Honolulu, Saito Kan, as honorary Korean consul. This was due to Japanese pressure. Koreans in Hawaii did not recognize the Japanese consul and continued to request a Korean government representative.

In August 1905, the Korean community sent Lee Dong-ho

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2. Shinhan Minbo, 21 September 1910 & 30 August 1911.
4. Ibid., 6 May 1905.
5. Ibid., 6 May 1905.

6. The Japanese minister to Korea, Hayashi Gonsuke, visited the Foreign Ministry and asked why it had not yet appointed the Japanese consul as honorary Korean consul, in spite of the fact that the Korean King Kojong had already approved such an appointment. See Hwangsong Shinmun, 6 September 1904; Kyonghyang Shinmun, 20 November 1973.
as its representative to Seoul and petitioned the Korean King Kojong to appoint a Korean consul in Hawaii. The Hwangsong Shinmun carried the petition, which was so emotionally touching that those who read it shed tears:

Although we [Koreans in Hawaii] have little knowledge about international affairs, we know well the simple fact that just as there cannot be two suns in the heaven, so there cannot be two kings in a country. We are living in a foreign country far away from the homeland, but we have a strong sense of patriotism and take pride in our loyalty to the King of Korea. Many other ethnic groups in Hawaii have their own consuls for the protection of their lives and property. Unfortunately, however, we don't have our own consul, although some 7,000 Koreans live now in Hawaii. We are likely to be a folk of sheep without shepherd and a boat without an oar. We have requested several times the home government to send our consul...If the home government appoints a foreigner as Korean consul, we will never recognize him as our consul. If the home government has financial problems, we will willingly raise the money necessary for establishing and managing a Korean consulate in Hawaii.

Considering the fact that Korean immigrants were, with few exceptions, not educated or of a socially prominent class, their loyalty to the King and Korea was faithful and conspicuous. However, the home government was too weak politically and economically to accept the request. King Kojong was a mere figurehead, and Japan held the actual power of his government.

7. Lee visited the Foreign Ministry, but it is not known whom he met at the ministry and what reply he received. See Hwangsong Shinmun, 10 August 1905.

8. Ibid., 15 August 1905. It is not known who wrote the petition, but it was brought by Lee Dong-ho to the home government.

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Koreans' next political action was to petition President Theodore Roosevelt to exert his influence for the Korean cause at the Portsmouth conference held to conclude the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. On July 9, 1905, Koreans in Hawaii banded together to adopt a resolution:

We earnestly hope that Your Excellency will see to it that Korea may preserve her autonomous government and that other powers shall not oppress or maltreat our people. The clause in the treaty between the United States and Korea gives us a claim upon the United States for assistance, and this is the time when we need it most. *

Rev. Yun P'young-gu was chosen to present the resolution to Roosevelt.

John W. Wadman 10 and acting territorial governor Atkins introduced Yun to the Secretary of War, William Howard Taft, who had stopped in Hawaii on his way to Tokyo for a secret meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister, Katsura Taro.11 Yun obtained from Taft a letter or introduction to President Roosevelt.12 Yun arrived in San Francisco and had a meeting with Korean residents. Then,

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* The petition is printed in F. A. McKenzie, The Tragedy of Korea (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1908), pp. 311-312.

10. Wadman was then the Methodist Mission Superintendent in Hawaii. He was a pro-Korean evangelist who had helped to erect the Korean Methodist Church and evening and Sunday schools in Honolulu.

11. Taft and Katsura made the so-called Taft-Katsura secret pact on July 29, 1905. See footnote 20 of this chapter.

12. It has not known why Taft wrote the recommendation letter to Roosevelt.
accompanied by Syngman Rhee, who was then a student at George Washington University, Yun went to Oyster Bay, New York, where Roosevelt was spending his summer vacation. The New York Times reported their arrival under the following headline: "They are at Oyster-Bay; Have a memorial not from their king, but an awakened people--point to our Treaty."14

After submitting Taft's letter of introduction, the Korean delegates were allowed to meet Roosevelt for half an hour.15 They presented the resolution to Roosevelt and appealed for his mediation in favor of Korea. Although Roosevelt read the resolution with interest, he politely refused their request. Roosevelt said that such an important diplomatic matter should be presented through official government channels.16 However, the petition through official channels was actually impossible because the Korean Minister to Washington, Kim Yun-chong, was pro-


Japanese. When the Korean delegates later called upon Minister Kim to endorse the memorial and send it to the State Department, he refused on the pretext that he had no such instructions from the home government, which was practically controlled by Japan.\(^{17}\)

President Roosevelt was pro-Japanese and reluctant to intervene in the Korean case which might cause friction between the United States and Japan. He said that "we can not possibly interfere with the Koreans against Japan."\(^{18}\) Roosevelt supported the policy of a balance in the Far East in which Japan would control Korea and have a major influence in Manchuria. For the sake of "spheres of influence," Roosevelt was ready to sacrifice the Koreans, thereby violating the spirit if not the letter of a treaty between Korea and the United States in 1882.\(^{19}\)

On July 29, 1905, the United States and Japan made a secret pact which sealed Korea's fate. In the so-called Taft-Katsura Agreement,\(^{20}\) the United States endorsed

\(^{17}\) Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: Man Behind the Myth*, pp. 88-89; *Kojong Sidaes-sa* (Vol. 6), pp. 296-297.


\(^{20}\) For more information about the Taft-Katsura agreement and Roosevelt's foreign policy in dealing with Korea and Japan, see Raymond A. Esthus, "The Taft-Katsura Agreement: Reality or Myth?" *Journal of Modern History* 31 (March 1959): 46-51; Jongsuk Chay, "The Taft-Katsura Memorandum Reconsidered," *Pacific Historical Review* 37
Japanese domination over Korea in exchange for a pledge that "Japan does not harbor any aggressive design whatever against the Philippines." Russia, defeated in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, recognized Japan's paramount political, military, and economic interests in Korea. The British government also recognized "the rights of Japan to take such measures of guidance, control and protection in Korea, as she may deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance their interests." Receiving international recognition of her suzerainty over Korea, Japan subsequently forced Korea to conclude the Protectorate Treaty on November 17, 1905. Its main points were to yield diplomatic rights to Japan and to close down all Korean legations and consulates abroad. On February 5, 1906, the Japanese government advised all Koreans abroad to place themselves under the jurisdiction of Japanese consulates.


2. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

22. As a result of the Treaty, all foreign affairs were directed by the Japanese Foreign Office in Tokyo. Japan acted as intermediary in all treaties and agreements between Korea and all other nations. The Japanese Resident General had de facto control over Korea's domestic affairs. It was at this time that the official Korean emigration to America was terminated due to pressure from Japan.

24. Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipyon-sa, p. 310.
Outraged by the news of the Protectorate Treaty, Koreans in America jointly called a protest rally. They passed a resolution which condemned Japan's aggressive policy in Korea and pledged themselves never to recognize Japanese authorities either in Korea or abroad. As an expression of anti-Japanese sentiment, Koreans adopted a "non-recognition" or "non-cooperation" policy. They opposed any intervention in Korean community affairs and refused any help from the Japanese Consulate in the United States.

During the San Francisco earthquake in April, 1906, fifty-three Koreans were injured and the buildings of the Korean church and the Mutual Cooperation Federation were destroyed. No Korean was killed in that catastrophe. The Daihan Daily News (No. 228) in Seoul, however, published an inaccurate report, supplied by the Japanese consul in San Francisco that twenty-four Koreans had died and eight-four had been wounded during the earthquake. It further stated that the Korean King sent a relief fund of $2,000 to be distributed to the victims through the Japanese consul. Korean community leaders investigated the matter and made a strong protest against the Japanese Consul-General, stating that Koreans would not tolerate any further false information about their affairs. On June 24, 1906, they

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24. Ibid., pp. 75-76.
sent the following announcement to all Korean residents:

We are resolved to be anti-Japanese, so we shall not accept any relief fund from the Japanese Consulate, and we shall reject interference [of Japanese authorities] in our [community] affairs. No matter how great a plight we are in, we must refuse Japanese help.27

Despite this statement, a Korean evangelist in San Francisco received about $500, thirteen bags of rice, and three barrels of soy sauce from the Japanese consul, apparently for humanitarian reasons to help Korean victims. However, the Koreans branded him as "pro-Japanese" and an embezzler of the relief fund, so the evangelist fled the city. Koreans' emotions in this matter were so high that the Korean King sent $2,000 in relief funds through a minister of the Foreign Mission in New York (not through the Japanese consul), asking him to distribute the fund to needy Koreans in San Francisco.28

Strong anti-Japanese sentiment was also reflected in the labor relations in the Hawaiian sugar plantations. Workers' strikes, mostly led by the Japanese, were frequent during the 1920s. Although many Koreans were sympathetic to the cause of strikes, they showed a hatred for the Japanese because of Japan's harsh control in Korea. Many Koreans thus supported the stance of the KNA:

we place ourselves irrevocably against the Japanese and the present strike. We don't wish to

27. Kongnip Shinmun, 30 June 1905. See also Warren Kim, Koreans in America, pp. 76-77.

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be looked upon as strike-breakers, but we shall continue to work...and we are opposed to the Japanese in everything."

Korean laborers were against practically every Japanese strike and showed their national solidarity over "class solidarity." Taking advantage of this situation, the sugar planters employed Korean laborers as strike-breakers when Japanese strikes broke out.

In addition to the search for national identity through diplomatic action, Korean immigrants were also engaged in more violent anti-Japanese activities. The assassination of Durham W. Stevens was typical. According to a protocol between Korea and Japan, signed in August 1904, the Korean government agreed to employ a Japanese financial adviser and a foreign affairs adviser of a third power recommended by the Japanese government. The pro-Japanese Stevens was chosen apparently to impress the United States. It was hoped that his appointment would improve the chances for favorable American reaction to

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30. Ibid., 9 October 1905.
31. Reinecke, Labor Disturbances in Hawaii, pp. 11-16.
Japan's control over Korea.33

Steven's political services against the interests of Korea were widely condemned by Koreans at home and abroad. He assisted the Japanese government in formulating the Protectorate Treaty over Korea in 1905, writing that the Protectorate Treaty was the result of peaceful and voluntary action by Korean officials, and not of threats by the Japanese.34 Stevens was "more Japanese than Japanese officials themselves," Koreans complained, and regarded him as a faithful Japanese servant.33

On March 20, 1908, Stevens arrived in San Francisco on his way to Washington ostensibly on a leave of absence after his years of service in Japan and Korea. In fact, he had a "special mission" to Washington. He hoped to modify complaints by American businessmen about unfair treatment of them in Japanese-dominated Korea since 1905. American

33. Stevens had many Republican friends in Ohio and Washington under the McKinley and Roosevelt administration, and he was a good friend of Roosevelt. In this respect he was very useful to serve in the Japanese scheme to control Korea and modify American reaction in this regard. See Yur-bok Lee, Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea, 1866-1887 (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), p. 58.

34. Kongnip Shinmun, 7 January 1906.

business interests had suffered under Japanese control in Korea. The American government was also concerned about the Japanese monopolization of the Korean economy, which was contrary to the Open Door policy that America had long advocated in the Far East. In this situation, Stevens was sent to Washington to explain the Japanese position and perhaps to lobby for an adjustment of American interests in Korea.34

In an interview with the San Francisco Chronicle, Stevens said that Korea actually benefitted from Japanese administration and that American business would also profit in the long run. Stevens made four major statements on Japanese policy in Korea. First, since Korean government officials corrupted and exploited their people, the Korean people had little confidence in their own government. Second, the Korean people were incapable of governing themselves because they were illiterate and backward. Third, if Korea were not under Japanese protection, it might now be under Russian control. Fourth, Japan was presently working for the interests of the Korean people, who were very happy and enjoyed a better life in every way than they had before.37

34. Houchins and Houchins, ibid., p. 558; Warren Kim, Koreans in America, p. 79; Melendy, Asians in America, p. 149.

37. The interview article appeared under the headline, "Japan's Control as Benefit to Corea." See San Francisco Chronicle, 21 March 1908.
Koreans in San Francisco were indignant at Stevens' remarks. They held a mass-meeting immediately at the Korean Methodist Church to discuss measures against Stevens. Four Korean delegates were sent to the Fairmont Hotel where Stevens was staying. The delegates argued that Stevens' interviews with local newspapers were not a real portrait of the Korean situation, and they demanded that he retract his derogatory statements. When Stevens refused, Chong Chae-kwan, one of the delegates, struck Stevens' face with his fist and Stevens tumbled under the chairs. The fight was stopped by guests at the hotel.

Returning to their meeting place, the delegates reported their encounter with Stevens and regretted that they had not harmed him more seriously. "Our motto," one Korean said passionately, "is liberty or death; we don't regret what we did and are willing to be punished. We want to be arrested." Hearing this, every Korean of the meeting was outraged and hotly debated what steps to take next. During the meeting, Chun Myung-wun and Chang In-hwan

38. Ibid., 23 March 1908; Kongnip Shinmun, 25 March 1908.


40. Quoted in San Francisco Chronicle, 24 March 1908.

41. Chun and Chang migrated to Hawaii in 1905 as plantation laborers. They soon moved to San Francisco where they worked at various jobs like railroad workers, dishwashers, and Alaskan fishermen. While Chang belonged to the Taedong Pogukhoe [Restoration Association] in the city,
volunteered to take care of Stevens in their own way.  

Early in the morning on March 23, Stevens, accompanied by Japanese Consul-General, Shoji Koike, approached the San Francisco Ferry Building to make his railway connections to Washington. A waiting Chun rushed Stevens and hit him in the face. As the two men were engaged in a fist fight, Chang fired three shots. While Chun was wounded in the chest, Stevens was shot twice in the back, falling down to the ground. Chang was arrested on the spot by the police. Chun and Stevens were rushed to the hospital by ambulance. Two days later, Stevens died. Chang was charged with murder and Chun with attempted assassination. Chun charged Stevens as a man who came to


42. It was not clear whether Chun and Chang conspired together, and this became one of the critical issues during their trials. Most sources, however, stated that their acts were spontaneous, not planned deliberately in advance. Because of their hatred for Japan and their bitterness against Stevens, all the Koreans at the meeting did not disapprove Stevens’ assassination. But the plot was neither ordered nor sanctioned by the meeting. See Dong-A-Ilbo, 24 April 1927; San Francisco Chronicle, 24 March 1908.

43. San Francisco Chronicle, 24 March 1908, reported the incident under the headline “Korean Youths Attempt to the Assassination of D. W. Stevens,” with pictures of Stevens and two Koreans. See also San Francisco Examiner, 24 March 1908.

44. San Francisco Chronicle, 27 March 1908.
the United States "to tell lies about Corea," and a collaborator of the Japanese who were "robbing Corea's wealth and the nation."43

During the course of his trial, Chang offered stately testimony in court:

I was born on March 30, 1875, in a northern Korean province and became a baptized Christian in my early age. When I saw my country fall into the hands of the Japanese, I was filled with sorrow, but I was unable to do much to help. I came to Hawaii as an immigrant to learn something in order to help my country...While hundreds of thousands of Koreans are dying at the hands of the Japanese invaders, Stevens has the effrontery to invent the lie that the Koreans are welcoming their Japanese aggressors...When Stevens was in Korea, he claimed to be working in the interest of Korea, but when he came to the United States, he made a complete about-face in attempting to cheat the public and in creating public opinion by means of dishonest propaganda, such as what he published in the San Francisco Chronicle. If Stevens ever got back to Korea, he would have done more to advance the interests of the Japanese. As a traitor to Korea, Stevens...made the Japanese occupation of Korea possible...To die for having shot a traitor is a glory, because I did it for my people.44

Because of heightened anti-Japanese feelings in this period, the reaction of the American public was generally sympathetic to the Koreans. The San Francisco Chronicle assigned front-page headlines, an entire second page, and much of the third page to the matter, presenting a quite favorable view about the Koreans. It never indicated any derogatory statement about the violent act while reporting

43. Ibid., 24 March 1908.
44. Kongnip Shinmun, 25 March 1908; No, Chaemi Hanin Sayak, pp. 44-46.

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On March 25, 1908, in its editorial under the headline "Koreans Still Alive," the New York Times also showed compassion toward the Koreans although it denounced any political violence. It viewed the incident as a sign of the Koreans’ capacity to fight for their freedom and liberty. It stated:

The attack upon Mr. Stevens, however, was quite... indicative of the survival among the Koreans of some slight ability, as well as a strong inclination, to use a strong hand in the direction of their own national destinies. These young fellows, undeterred by the probability of death and the certainty of punishment, deliberately, boldly, and openly attacked the man who, whether rightly or wrongly, seemed to them to have betrayed Korean interests by helping the Japanese. Of course, it was as little a pretty as it was a wise thing to do, but...,it had certain merits.

It further stated that Korea was not quite as weak and degenerate as she had seemed. "[R]esistance to foreign domination, even though it be hopeless, is usually better than that for a nation not utterly lost to self-respect."

From this incident, Koreans could assert in part their self-respect and identity against the Japanese domination over Korea.

Koreans in America rallied and directed their efforts to support the court defense of Chang. They hired lawyers, provided interpreters, solicited defense funds, and

"", San Francisco Chronicle, 24 March 1908.
collected evidence. The defense attorneys argued in court that the "passion of patriotism" had motivated Chang to take his action, so that he should not be considered a mere murderer. Although some evidence showed that the incident was a political assassination, the San Francisco police announced the shooting as the act of two individuals who had no such motive.

Legal proceedings lasted the rest of the year. On December 22, 1908, after nine ballots, the jury found Chang guilty of murder in the second degree while acquitting Chun for the reason of insufficient evidence. Early in 1909, Chang was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison. In a final statement in court, Chang said that he "preferred martyrdom by death rather than by imprisonment." He received a parole for good behavior after ten years and died in 1930 at the age of fifty-five.

The Stevens incident became the catalyst for consolidating diverse units of organizations into one unified body. In October, 1908, representatives of different political, social and religious organizations

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48. Overseas Koreans in the United States, Mexico, China, and Japan contributed $7,390 to the court defense of Chang. See Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipnyon-sa, p. 327.

49. Warren Kim, Koreans in America, pp. 82-83.

50. Korean community organizations were heavily represented at his funeral and accorded him high honors as a great patriot. In 1975, Chang's corpse was transported to Seoul and was buried in the National Cemetery of Korea. See Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipnyon-sa, pp. 318-330.
throughout the United States met in San Francisco to establish the Korean National Association (KNA) which was officially launched on February 1, 1909. This was a very important event as it signified a successful move toward united political action and cultural integration among Koreans in America. The KNA had its central headquarters in San Francisco, and four regional offices in San Francisco, Honolulu, Manchuria, and Siberia. It had 130 local chapters with a membership of 3,200.3

The KNA enlisted the support of Korean immigrants in America. Its main goals were to achieve Korean national independence and self-government and to promote the welfare and interests of all overseas Koreans. Its programs, including two Korean-language newspapers,32 were funded solely by Koreans. The Association led a number of protest meetings and founded a military school and corps in Hawaii. It also sent Korean delegates to international meetings to make a case for Korean national liberation and self-government before world opinion.

When the Treaty of Annexation was imposed on Korea on

31. 75th Anniversary of Korean Immigration to Hawaii, 1903-1978, pp. 34-35; Warren Kim, Koreans in America, p. 54.

32. Warren Kim, ibid., pp. 46-48. They were Shinhan Minbo [The New Korea] and Shinhan Kukbo [The United Korean Weekly]. The former started publication on February 10, 1909 and is still published. The latter, published on February 15, 1909, succeeded all other Korean newspapers in Hawaii. In August, 1913, its name was changed to Kulmin-bo [The Korean National Herald] under which it still published today.
August 22, 1910, Koreans in America held protest meetings everywhere. They declared that Japan's annexation of Korea should be null and void because it was the act of Japanese agents in Korea and a few national traitors, and not the wish of the Korean people. They pledged never to accept Japanese rule under any circumstances, and were determined to fight for the restoration of national independence.

Another event illustrating Koreans' antipathy toward Japan occurred on June 27, 1913, shortly after the passage of the Alien Land Law in California. One apricot orchard owner of Hemet in southern California hired eleven Korean laborers at a much lower wage than was normally paid to local laborers. Upon their arrival at Hemet, the Koreans were met by a crowd of several hundred white farm workers. The mob attacked the Koreans, dumping their camping equipment and luggage on the ground, and threatened


34. Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipnyon-sa, pp. 341-342.

35. The white farm workers were unemployed partly because of their demand for higher wages and partly because the fruit cannery was not open for operation. See Los Angeles Times, 27 June 1913.
to kill them if they did not leave the town at once. The Koreans were forcefully shipped to Los Angeles.36

Since Korea was a part of Japan after the Treaty of Annexation in 1910, the Japanese Consulate in Los Angeles, regarding Korean immigrants as Japanese nationals, felt an obligation to protect them in every way. Thus the Japanese Consulate investigated the incident immediately and stepped in to offer assistance, asking the orchard owner for compensation for the Koreans.37 The nationalistic Koreans, however, flatly refused any Japanese aid. They asserted that they were Koreans, not Japanese, asking the Japanese to keep hands off of the "purely Korean problem."38 "We are responsible for ourselves even though we should perish in this or any other country," said the Korean spokesman of the KNA. "We should not look to Japan for redress for our troubles."39

The Koreans were incensed because the Japanese Consul acted as if he was the authorized spokesman for Koreans. David Lee, President of the KNA, felt the necessity to convince the United States Department of State that Koreans were a separate people and to eliminate once and for all

36. Los Angeles Times, 27 & 28 June 1913; San Francisco Chronicle, 27 June 1913; Asian American Studies Center, Contacts and Conflicts, p. 33.
37. Shinhan Minbo, 4 July 1913.
38. Ibid.
39. Hemet News (Hemet, California), 11 July 1913.
Japanese interference in Korean matters. On June 30, he sent a telegram to William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State:

I have the honor to inform you of the recent expulsion of Korean laborers from Hemet, California and to address you concerning the Japanese Consulate's demand for indemnity. We, Koreans in America, are not Japanese nationals, for we left Korea before Japan's annexation of Korea, will never submit to her as long as the sun remains in the heaven. The Japanese intervention is illegal, so I request you to discontinue the discussion of this case with the Japanese government representatives.60

In response to the telegram, Secretary Bryan stated that Koreans in America were not Japanese subjects, and that the United States, therefore, should deal directly with the KNA on all matters concerning Koreans.61

Unlike Theodore Roosevelt, Bryan, during the Woodrow Wilson administration, was not pro-Japanese. His approach to foreign policy was based on "good will, moral uplift, and the advance of democratic process."62 Bryan talked incessantly of America's mission "to liberate those who are


in bondage" and "to champion human rights and peace." As a result, Bryan showed an antipathy toward Japan which was indicated by his protest in 1915 against the Japanese Twenty-One Demands on China, by which Japan insisted upon a virtual protectorate over all of China. Bryan also opposed Japanese rule over Korea. He doubted the possibility of a truly just Japanese colonial policy. Naturally, he was sympathetic with Koreans in America and decided to rule in favor of the Koreans in the Hemet incident.

The Hemet incident provided an opportunity for the KNA to be officially recognized by the Department of State. Approved as a formal organization representing Koreans in America, the KNA acted as a de facto Korean Consulate which tried to protect Koreans' lives and property through diplomatic negotiation with the United States government. After the Hemet incident, the KNA asked immigration authorities in San Francisco and Seattle to permit Koreans without valid passports to enter the United States as Korean nationals. Between 1910 and 1924, more than five hundred students and intellectuals migrated as exiles to America.

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***. Shinhan Minbo, 4 November 1913 & 6 August 1914.
America by way of Shanghai, Siberia or Europe. When they arrived in the port, the KNA acted as the Korean Consulate, either endorsing or disapproving the validity of their status, and vouching for their future conduct.

The KNA also issued membership certificates in English and Korean. The certificates in many ways served Korean immigrants in lieu of passports and provided them with considerable advantages to contact with American officials. In short, the Hemet incident and its diplomatic results greatly bolstered Koreans' self-confidence. Recognized as an independent ethnic group, Korean immigrants could assert their national identity which they had long cherished.

On January 8, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson set forth his Fourteen Points, which included the doctrine of "self-determination." He also proposed a "general association of nations" to insure "political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike." This provided hope to small oppressed nations throughout the world; it encouraged the Korean people to rise up against the Japanese military government with bare fists. Koreans in America also began to increase their activities for the

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46. Ibid., 9 April 1912.
47. Ibid., 7 November 1914.
freedom and liberty of Korea.

Immediately after Wilson's proclamation was released, the officers and some members of the KNA met in San Francisco and sent an open letter to all Koreans in the United States and Mexico, calling for unity and devotion to the cause of national independence. The KNA also decided to dispatch Korean delegates, Syngman Rhee and Henry Chung, to the Paris peace conference in order to present the Korean case to world opinion.  

The delegates first went to New York to work with advocates of the League of Nations, and then to Washington to apply to the State Department for passports. The Department refused to issue passports on the ground that, since Koreans were subjects of Japan, only the Japanese government could sanction travel permits for them. The delegates then attempted to obtain visas from other countries, including Britain and Canada, but without success.

It was at this time, perhaps in desperation, that the delegates sent a petition proposing a trusteeship for Korea under the supervision of the League of Nations to Wilson, who was attending the peace conference in Paris. On this the New York Times commented as follows:

President Wilson has been asked by the Korean National Association to initiate action at the

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Peace Conference looking to independence for Korea, with the country to be guided by a mandatory until such time as the League of Nations shall decide that it is 'fit for full self-government.'

Since this petition requested the placement of Korea under the mandate system of the League, many nationalists denounced the delegates as having betrayed the spirit of independence. Moreover, the delegates had acted without the approval of the KNA, whose representatives they were supposed to be.

At this time, the Korean people advocated complete independence, and much of the world clamored for national self-determination by small nations. The proposal was, under the circumstance, inappropriate and unwise. It aroused the anger of Koreans abroad, and the Korean community in America demanded an apology from Syngman Rhee. However, the KNA feared a split among Koreans when concerted efforts were desperately urgent, so it merely directed the delegates to resign from their mission, and took no further action. Adamant and stubborn, Rhee refused to resign and so further divided the American Korean community.

By contrast, however, Korean nationalists in China, acting independently of the KNA in America, were successful

71. Ibid., 17 March 1919.

72. Warren Kim, Koreans in America, pp. 118-120. Rhee argued that the petition was intended to stimulate propaganda, not to hinder Korean independence. See Lee, Politics of Korean Nationalism, pp. 149-150.
In sending a Korean delegate to the peace conference. In January, 1919, Kim Kyu-sik, an American-educated Korean youth, arrived in Paris where he carried out extensive propaganda activities for Korea. Kim submitted the "Petition of the Korean People and Nation for Liberation from Japan and for the Reconstruction of Korea as an Independent State" and the "Claims of the Korean People and Nation" to the peace conference. However, the Allied powers, including the United States, refused to give any support to the Korean people. It was due to strong objections by Japan, one of the victors in the war. The Japanese delegates argued that the Korean issue was a domestic problem, just like the American administration of the Philippines.

Greatly stimulated by the principle of national self-determination advocated by President Wilson, the Korean

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73. Kim was a graduate of Roanoke College, Virginia. He served in the Korean provisional government as minister of education, minister of foreign affairs, and vice-chairman. After the liberation of Korea in 1945, he returned to South Korea and served as chairman (speaker) of the Interim National Assembly. He was captured during the Korean War and died in North Korea.

74. The texts are printed in Carlton W. Kendall, The Truth About Korea (San Francisco: Korean National Association, 1919), pp. 59-70 & 71-93. The arguments in Kim's petition are essentially the same as those presented in the declaration of independence in Seoul in March, 1919. In this respect Kim's activities in France were an extension of the March First movement.
people proclaimed the Declaration of Independence on March 1, 1919, and participated in the massive demonstrations for national liberty and freedom from the Japanese military government. When news of the "March First movement" reached the United States, Korean immigrants called protest meetings and carried out various nationalistic activities under the guidance of the KNA.

The KNA sent a letter to the American government, stating that Korea lost its independence "through the violation of [a] most solemn treaty obligation on the part of Japan and in defiance of the wishes and aspirations of the Korean people." It appealed to the American government for its sympathy and support "in the struggle for liberty, justice and freedom now being waged by the Korean people." At the same time, Ahn Ch'ang-ho, chairman of

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73. The Declaration was originally written in Korean by Choi Nam-son, one of the patriotic writers. It was signed by the thirty-three representatives of various political, social, religious and cultural organizations in Korea. For the full text of the Declaration, see McKenzie, Korea's Fight for Freedom, pp. 247-250.


77. The KNA's letter to F. L. Polk, Acting Secretary of State, April 5, 1919 & Letter of David Lee, General Manager of the KNA, to Dept. of State, May 14, 1919,
the Executive Council of the KNA, issued the following appeal to the Christian churches in America:

With no more right than Germany when she crushed Belgium under her hell and brought down upon herself the condemnation of Christendom, the Japanese government has not only robbed us of national liberty, but has deprived us of those rights which are the heritage of every human being. It has deprived us of justice, of freedom of thought [and religion], of our language, of the right to educate our children according to our ideals,...They have also taken from us the sacred right of religious freedom. The Christians have been the repeated objects of brutal and nation-wide persecution and oppression, many having suffered imprisonment and barbarous and inhuman treatment without any just cause...At last our race has arisen and proclaimed to the world, in no mistaken terms, its desire for liberty and for freedom from oppression and unbearable tyranny. No force has been employed. The new government in Korea which has attracted the attention of the world is no more than a legitimate and spontaneous expression of a national conviction...The great war has ushered in a new day for the human race...The world has been rejoicing over the incoming of a new era when international oppression and of small nationalities are to be protected by a World League of Nations. To you, citizens of that nation which has been the leader in the epoch-making movement, we appeal."

In the public news in April, 1919, the KNA urged

Records Relating to Internal Affairs of Korea. Microfilm no. 426, Roll 2 (File Number, 895/596). A copy of the Proclamation of Korean Independence of March 1, 1919 and two pamphlets entitled "Korea's Appeal for Self-Determination," and "Japanese Diplomacy and Force in Korea" were also sent to the United States government.

Koreans to boycott Japanese goods and refrain from any private or public contacts with Japanese authorities or people in America. The boycotting of Japanese goods was carried out spontaneously in every community in America. The following sign was posted in almost all Korean stores in Hawaii and California: "In accordance with the direction of the KNA, this store will not sell Japanese goods. We sincerely hope for your understanding and cooperation." Koreans seldom shopped in Japanese stores. When necessity forced them to, they dared not shop or trade publicly, because violators of the boycott in some areas were fined $100. The boycott movement continued until the end of World War II when Korea achieved national independence and established a self-government.

For several decades before and after the annexation of Korea by Japan, Koreans in America took seriously and optimistically the role of resisting Japanese rule. Nationalism became the dominant spiritual force. With both religious and nationalistic ideals merging, liberating their homeland took first priority. Their hard-earned money went toward financing the independence movement. It was reported that by October, 1919, 2,907 individuals had

79. Shinhan Minbo, 26 April 1919.
80. Ibid., 29 April 1919.
81. Ibid., 13 May 1919.
contributed $34,034.05.

As the Koreans struggled hard for their national identity in a strange land, they became imbued with a heightened political awareness. Identified with the causes of their fellow countrymen, Koreans in America were vigorously involved in anti-Japanese activities. Much more real to them, however, was the presence of a large number of Japanese in America. Koreans' anti-Japanese sentiments were further intensified due to their racial similarity to the Japanese who were being socially attacked at this time. Koreans were sometimes mistaken for Japanese. In order to understand the background of Koreans' anti-Japanese sentiment, two factors should be further discussed. One is the immigration policies of the United States, and the other is the effect on Koreans of the anti-colonial rhetoric of American political thought.

After the Japanese Protectorate Treaty over Korea in 1905, American immigration policy held that the Japanese and Koreans had the same legal status. On February 20, 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order, stating that Japanese and Korean laborers, skilled and unskilled, who had received passports to enter Mexico, Canada or Hawaii, be refused permission to enter the

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"75th Anniversary of Korean Immigration to Hawaii, 1903-1978, p. 17."
mainland United States. This became known as the Gentlemen’s Agreement. On February 24, 1913, a further executive order was issued by William Howard Taft calling for a government hearing to determine the admission of Asian immigrants to the mainland United States since no laborers were free to migrate.

Deprived of national liberty as citizens of an independent nation, Korean immigrants felt humiliation and frustration. They found themselves in a no man’s land because they refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Japanese government as their own. However, what was much more unbearable was the fact that their newly adopted country regarded them as citizens of that very nation which oppressed their homeland. Being considered Japanese citizens, the Koreans found themselves subject to United States anti-Japanese discrimination policies, which made survival and acceptance in America very difficult. This bolstered their anti-Japanese hatred.

The Japanese in America became targets of the Koreans’ prejudice. Because of the large number of Japanese, the Koreans felt the pressure of more dominant Japanese culture. As a result, they could easily liken the economic

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and social oppression of their Japanese competitors to the political oppression of the homeland. The prejudices of the mother country were transferred to America. From the very beginning, they thought that the local Japanese were of the same stock as their oppressors in Korea. Lauriel E. Eubank notes:

Every alien Korean consulted, whether coming to Hawaii when only a few months old, or arriving here when full grown, had stories to tell of the atrocities suffered by their families (and seen or heard) preceding and following annexation...it is sufficient to say that inside Korea, the population never willingly acquiesced to the imperialistic procedures of the Japanese.

Significantly, Korean immigrants found themselves in agreement with white society in their antipathy towards the Japanese. This provided an important point of agreement between the Korean minority group and the society into which they were to be assimilated. The Koreans could dwell on their anti-Japanese sentiment and make it rather public because it was condoned by the social order under which they lived. In this situation, they could distinguish themselves from the Japanese, and they hoped to prove themselves different: that is, more American. Upon coming to America, Korean immigrants were exposed to such political ideas as democracy, liberalism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. Bernice Kim states:

86. Ibid., p. 25.
[American] political and government philosophy was to imbue the Koreans...Freedom of the press and speech were to be exercised widely, sometimes, with little discretion...More specifically, after the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910, the Koreans found fertile soil upon which to develop the spirit and ideal of independence.67 American principles of democracy became the justification for the Korean nationalist movement.

The analogy of the American colonies and their fight against British oppression attracted Koreans, who identified themselves with the oppressed American people under British rule. Oscar Handlin states that "the meaningful question is not whether [immigrants'] loyalties are divided, but whether they can be justified in terms acceptable to all Americans."98 The reasons behind Korean nationalistic activities were actually in keeping with the American beliefs and thereby provided a source of legitimacy for the Koreans' nationalism.

It seems appropriate at this point to note some similarities between Korean experience and that of the Irish on the East Coast.99 The Irish were also actively


99. Koreans were often described as "the Irish of Asia," which fitted them before Ireland achieved her freedom, for the Koreans suffered from the "inevitable psychological reaction of being victims of a lost cause." See Albert W. Palmer, Orientals in American Life (New York:
involved in expressions of Irish nationalism:

...Irish nationalism was the cement, not the purpose of Irish American organization. Essentially they were pressure groups designed to defend and advance the American interests of the immigrant. Nationalism gave dignity to this effort, it offered a system of apologetics that explained their lowly state, and its emotional appeal was powerful enough to hold together the divergent sectional and class interests of the American Irish. This nationalism was not an alternative to American nationalism but a variety of it. Its function was not to alienate the Irish immigrant but to accommodate him to an often hostile environment. 90

Similarly, Koreans in America eagerly worked for their national independence and self-government. Being men without a country, they were tormented by feelings of injustice and frustration. These sentiments intensified a sense of unity, being epitomized in acute patriotism and ardent anti-Japanese attitudes. As a result, Koreans could certainly justify their cause as the Irish did.

Korean nationalism and its causes made Korean immigrants "more American" because they felt that they were working for the realization of the "democratic dream." It also provided a sense of martyrdom which compensated them in part for their low economic situation and accompanying social status. In 1937 Romanzo Adams noted:


In so far as the Koreans are exceptional in the maintenance of social organization, it seems to be the result of their intense national patriotism. As representative of an oppressed people they have a cause—a cause that commands their allegiance even more fully than would be the case if they were living in Korea. While there is much controversy relative to policies and leadership, there is a common loyalty to their cause. It is this loyalty that gives unity to the group...

Taken in this context, the Korean nationalist movement served as a significant factor in fostering ethnic solidarity and in preserving a collective group orientation. By placing themselves in a certain group which was politically cohesive and culturally uniform, Korean immigrants could search for a meaningful social life in a new society.

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Except for the Filipinos, Korean immigrants were among the last of the Asian ethnic groups to arrive in America. The Chinese had emigrated to America beginning in 1848, shortly after gold was discovered in California. The Japanese had been in America since 1868. By the time Koreans began to come in 1903, both the Chinese and Japanese had a significant head start. Along with the Filipinos and Hindus, Koreans were a "minority among the minority groups" in the numerical sense, as well as in regard to their socio-economic background. Their late emigration and smallness in numbers were conducive neither to the creation of a viable Korean community nor to survival in the alien environment.

In addition, Korean immigrants encountered the racial discrimination, individual and institutional,\(^1\) that also affected all Asian Americans. Their arrival in the early twentieth century coincided with the emergence of the "Yellow Peril," the fear that Asian immigrants, pushed by the "population explosion" in their homelands, would

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\(^1\) Individual racism involves a person's attitudes and behaviors towards Asian Americans. Institutional racism refers to systematic discrimination in such fields as law, education, government, and industry.
inundate white American society and threaten every American institution. Before discussing how Korean immigrants managed to accommodate to a racially prejudiced society, it seems appropriate first to examine the extent of racial discrimination from which Korean immigrants, like other Asian ethnic groups, suffered.

Racial hostility toward Asian immigrants came after the economic "boom" in the West subsided in the late nineteenth century. When the trans-continental railroad construction was completed, many Asian workers lost their jobs and were dumped into the western labor market. They sought work in mines, farms, factories, and in domestic service, often throwing whites out of work. Asian immigrants were generally diligent and hardworking. They worked from ten to twelve hours a day for lower wages than most white people would accept. Some leased farm land and sold their products below the general market price. As a result, white Americans claimed that they were evil and dirty, an inferior people who would eventually take over all the jobs from the working-class people. The Asians were also condemned because they depressed wages and undercut the American standard of living.

Above all things, however, the racial discrimination resulted from cultural conflicts or misunderstandings which basically sprang from different cultural values, and from racial stereotyping. White Americans treated all Asians, regardless of their nationality, as being alike, as members of a single mongoloid race. They regarded Oriental races as alien "in every sense." This led to many popular misconceptions as indicated in the following quotations:

The color of their skins, the repulsiveness of their features, their undersize of figure, their incomprehensible language, strange customs and heathen religion...conspired to set them apart had they not themselves exhibited a disposition to hold aloof from the white race. Their camps were always removed to a comfortable distance from the camps of the white miners, as much from choice as from recognition of the unfriendliness visible in the looks and acts of their American and European neighbors.3

Whether the incompatibility of the peoples of Asia and America can be attributed to race repulsion, race antipodalism, or race prejudice, one indispensable ground of race conflict remains, namely, that of race difference. The race difference...is radical and irreconcilable, because it reaches to the most fundamental characteristics of each. It is not a matter of tongue, of color or of anatomy, although in each of these respects the difference is very clearly marked, but of morality and intellect.4

The Chinese were famous for keeping their own traditions and customs no matter where they lived. Some


male Chinese wore black caps and smoked long-stemmed pipes. Chinese women usually wore Chinese dresses, and some still practiced foot-binding. Opium-smoking and gambling could be often seen in the Chinese community. They spoke loudly in the home as well as in the street. They were very money-minded, tending to save all they could and to send their savings to the home country. They stuck together and lived in their own communities where a language incomprehensible to Americans was spoken and strange customs were practiced. The Japanese also tried to continue their customs. Japanese males tied samurai-style bands around their heads and usually wore undoshi [loincloths] in the summertime. Sometimes men and women bathed together in a single large tub. They ate sashimi [raw fish] with chop sticks. They bowed low several times when greeting one another.

Koreans were about the same. They retained their own traditions. Some wore native clothing and smoked long pipes. They also talked loudly, both in private and public. They ate Kimchhee, which have a strong odor that was noticeable in any Korean residential area. Like the Japanese and Chinese, Korean immigrants erected evening or Sunday schools which taught Korean history, culture, and language to their children. They also banded together to create political, social, and religious institutions as a means of ethnic or national identity. Like "China Town" or "Little Tokyo," the Korean Christian community served as a
"home away from home," which reinforced the original culture.

All these Oriental customs and attitudes seemed very eccentric to white Americans and sometimes disgusted them. The American public was not ready to accept such Oriental cultural heritages, nor did they attempt to understand them. Asians' physical features and their habits, customs and traditions, so unconventional to the American mind, set Asian immigrants apart, making them easily identifiable targets. Many Americans considered Asian immigrants impossible to assimilate and distinctly different in their way of life. They looked down upon the Asians as an uncivilized people. Such emotional tones of racial prejudice and hostility led white Americans to forge an unfavorable stereotype of Asian immigrants.

Various kinds of research utilizing "social distance" tests have been conducted to determine the status of many minorities in American society. The stereotyped picture of certain minority members was so deeply fixed in some minds that it seemed impossible for the individuals to be

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free from bias. Emory S. Bogardus asked 110 businessmen and school teachers in the 1920s about their willingness to socialize with twenty-three different ethnic groups in several specific ways: by marriage, by being friends in the same social club, as neighbors, as fellow workers, as citizens of the United States, or whether they preferred complete separation. Bogardus’s social distance test showed the following order of preference among white American businessmen and school teachers: Canadians, English, Scotch ---- Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, Negroes, Mulattoes, Hindus, and Turks. This indicated that Americans preferred persons with whom they had the most contact or whom they believed were the most like themselves. Americans generally regarded Asians in terms of stereotype rather than as the individuals they actually were.

Asian immigrants were often assailed with verbal and physical indignities by white Americans. In Hawaii, where white planters of Anglo-Saxon stock had maintained dominant control in virtually every field, immigrant laborers on the plantations, to borrow the sociologist Andrew Lind’s words,

7. Emory S. Bogardus, "Measuring Social Distances," Journal of Applied Sociology 9 (1925): 299-308. For a similar study, see Borgardus’s another work, Social Distances (Yellow Spring, O.: Antioch Press, 1959). 2,053 persons were selected throughout the United States for a study of their racial relations. Of the thirty different racial groups reported in his study, Koreans were reported to be the last in racial quotients (greatest social distance).
"were regarded much like draft animals." The Koreans, being of Asian stock, were of course subjected to the same racial discrimination. However, it was most intense in California, where most of the Asian racial groups gathered together to form their own communities.

Asian Americans were also subject to legislative and judicial discrimination by local, state, and federal governments. "Before 1905, anti-Japanese agitation had been an offshoot of the drive for Chinese exclusion." However, after that year it achieved a separate and permanent impact on the Pacific Coast states. The labor unions, supported by small businessmen and farmers, initiated the anti-Asian movement. Publishers of powerful California newspapers launched a racist attack against "little brown men," using every means, political and otherwise, to attain their ends. Politicians also quickly grasped that campaigning for Asian exclusion was an

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11. See *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 February-6 March 1905.
unfailing method of winning public support.\textsuperscript{12}

On May 14, 1905, a mass meeting supported by San Francisco labor unions was held to organize the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League. The league, renamed the Asiatic Exclusion League in December, 1907, maintained that both Koreans and Japanese were undesirable alien elements.\textsuperscript{13} The league endorsed an earlier resolution of the American Federation of Labor which had been adopted at its 1904 annual convention in San Francisco:

\begin{quote}
Resolved, that the terms of the Chinese Exclusion Act be enlarged and extended so as to permanently exclude from the United States and its insular territories, all classes of Japanese and Coreans other than those exempted by the present terms of that act...\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

In December, 1905, two California Republicans of the House of Representatives, Duncan E. McKinlay of San Francisco and Everis A. Hayes of San Jose, proposed separate measures to prohibit Japanese and Korean laborers

\textsuperscript{12}. For more information about how American political institutions, especially political parties and state governments, had a decisive impact on creating a system of exclusion and discrimination against Asian Americans, see Daniels, \textit{Politics of Prejudice}.


from coming to the United States. The Japanese and Korean Exclusion League claimed Hayes' bill as its own. In a 1906 letter to California labor unions, the league urged:

Pledge the candidates for Congress in your district and the United States Senators to work and vote for our bill, No. H. R. 8975, which extends the Chinese Exclusion Act to all Japanese and Koreans. If your representatives try to evade or straddle this question, or if they are hostile to labor's cause and the people's interest, you must, if you are true to yourselves, VOTE THEM DOWN AND OUT AT THE POLLS.

On February 14, 1907, Olaf Tveitmoe, President of the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League, sent telegrams to Representative Hayes and San Francisco Mayor Eugene Schmitz, who traveled to Washington to meet with President Roosevelt. Tveitmoe argued that both the Japanese and Koreans had to be bracketed with Chinese. Total exclusion, he concluded, was the "only solution to the problem."

The anti-Asian hostility also affected the education

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17. Japanese and Korean Exclusion League, Minutes, 10 March 1907, pp. 4-5.
of Asian children. On October 11, 1906, the San Francisco school board decided that students of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean ancestry could not attend the same schools as white children but had to attend separate schools for these minority groups. Two days later this decision was endorsed by the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League which urged the extension of the Chinese exclusion laws to the Japanese and Koreans. The Japanese government sharply protested this show of prejudice, and the matter became a diplomatic issue. President Theodore


20. Melendy, Oriental Americans, p. 106. For a full account of the school controversy, see Thomas Bailey, Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crises: An Account of the International Complications Arising from the Race Problem on the Pacific Coast (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934); David Brudnoy, "Race and the San Francisco School Board Incident: Contemporary Evaluations," California Historical Quarterly: 50 (September 1971): 295-312. During the 1920's, the so-called English Standard schools were established in Hawaii. Only students who passed an English Standard test could attend these schools. Others had to attend regular public schools. Since most of the students who passed the test were white, the English Standard schools actually served to segregate public school students along racial lines. See Fuchs, Hawaii Pono, pp. 275-279.

Roosevelt managed to persuade the school board to retract the school segregation rule. The rule was subsequently revoked on March 13, 1907.\(^2^2\)

Realizing the determination of Californians to end Asian immigration, however, President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Root made an agreement with Japan during late 1907 and early 1908 by which both governments would reciprocally exclude each other's laborers. Japanese authorities also agreed not to issue passports to laborers except "former residents" of the United States, the "parents, wives, or children of residents," and "settled agriculturalists."\(^2^3\) This "Gentlemen's Agreement" of 1907 temporarily halted the influx of Japanese and Korean immigrants and brought some respite in racial agitations in California. On March 14, 1907, Roosevelt had issued an executive order that denied admission of Japanese and Korean laborers who had received passports to go to Mexico, Canada or Hawaii, and had come from there to the mainland.

\(^2^2\) Griswold, *Far Eastern Policy*, p. 355. However, in some areas of California, such as the Sacramento River Delta, Japanese children were forced to attend segregated schools with other minority children up until World War II. See Ken Suyama, "The Asian American Experience in Sacramento River Delta," in *Roots: An Asian American Reader*, eds. Amy Tachiki et al. (Los Angeles: Continental Graphics, 1971), pp. 298-301.

\(^2^3\) U.S., Department of Justice, Commissioner General of Immigration, *Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration*, 1908, p. 125. The Agreement did not entirely cut off Japanese or Korean emigration to America, for it did not affect students, merchants, and professional men, of whom there was a colony of some size in America.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
From 1911 through 1916, however, the anti-Asian agitation grew nationally. Congressmen in the western states developed a list of Asian nationalities to be excluded. In 1911, Hayes introduced an omnibus bill (H.R. 4677) in the House to regulate the immigration of specific Asian groups—"Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Tartars, Malays, Afghans, East Indians, Lascars, Hindoos, and other persons of the Mongolian or Asiatic race." He introduced the same measure in 1913. Representative Edwin Roberts of Nevada introduced a similar bill (H.R. 14126) in 1911 to control the admission into the United States of the Oriental ethnic groups, and tried again with the same bill in 1915. These proposals indicated concern that Asians migrating to America would increase the dangers of the "Yellow Peril." Such fear was also reflected in the platforms of three leading parties in California (Republican, Democratic, and Socialist Party). All three parties called for immediate


federal legislation for the exclusion of Asian laborers.14

In May, 1913, the California state legislature passed the Alien Land Act which prevented "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from purchasing agricultural land or leasing such land for more than three years. This meant that Koreans, Japanese, and Chinese alike could not buy land or other real estate such as houses, apartments, and commercial buildings. Approved by all political parties as well as by organized farmers and labor groups in California, this act manifested the "height of discriminatory treatment" to which Asian immigrants were subject on the Pacific Coast.27 The national phenomenon of intense anti-Asian hostility was demonstrated by the fact that similar land laws were enacted in Arizona, Delaware, Idaho, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Missouri, Nevada, Texas, and Washington.28

The anti-Asian hostility reached its apex with the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act in 1924. This restrictive legislation was designed to control the racial composition of the American population. It regulated all immigration to the United States by setting a quota system


based on national origins. To insure the predominance of the so-called Nordic race, the quota system heavily favored the countries of western and northern Europe, while giving eastern and southern European nations much smaller quotas. The Act stopped immigration from Asia by a clause that prohibited the admission as an immigrant of any alien ineligible for citizenship. As a result, no Koreans were permitted to enter the United States with the exception of students for advanced studies in American educational institutions. Many Korean immigrants suffered because there was no way they could reunite with members of their families in Korea. They thus did not receive the basic human rights and protection that white European immigrants received.

The discrimination also extended to the occupational fields. When Japanese and Koreans entered the laundry business, as had the Chinese, they aroused the united opposition of the Laundry Worker's Unions and the laundry proprietors. An Anti-Japanese Laundry League was organized in San Francisco in 1908, and one in Oakland somewhat later. Also, the cooks' and waiters' union was active in this agitation because many Japanese and Koreans were employed in city restaurants.

Many states enacted laws which restricted aliens from

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following certain occupations. Twenty-seven occupations in New York were restricted to citizens who were mostly European immigrants. All states, including Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia, required attorneys to be citizens. Twenty-one states required physicians to be citizens. Interestingly enough, legal restrictions were widely imposed in such occupations as barbers (9 states), guides (9), peddlers (5), plumbers (4), and chauffeurs (2). Colorado law prohibited aliens from working as waitresses, dishwashers, or even janitors in any establishment licensed to sell liquor.30

In consequence of such discrimination, Korean immigrants were forced to seek marginal and noncompetitive occupations, though it was impossible to avoid contact with white workers altogether. After years of trial and error, they retreated into furniture-making, tailoring, laundry and restaurant work, the trades least competitive with white neighbors. Furthermore, since they were denied naturalization, and since many states required citizenship to perform a number of jobs, Korean immigrants were sensible enough to withdraw to those trades in which the right to work would at least not be questioned by the law.

Besides all of these legal restrictions, Korean immigrants were often rebuffed by the white workers at

their jobs. Many such cases were reported. The Hemet farm affair, previously described, was one such incident. The "Steward Incident" was another example of an explosive racial riot. Mary E. Steward, a native of Missouri and a Christian, owned an orange orchard in Upland, California. She employed Korean workers and the Koreans camped on her property. One night, white farmers and workers attacked the Korean camp with stones and rocks, threatening to kill the Koreans if they did not leave the camp at once. Frightened, but having no other place to go, they stayed at the camp site. At this critical moment, Steward reached the local police and was given permission to buy guns so the Koreans could defend themselves. She told her Korean employees that if anyone invaded their camp, they were to shoot. She also managed to contact the local newspapers, making the incident as well as her actions public.

The white farmers in the neighborhood sent Steward threatening letters, demanding that she expel all the Koreans from her orchard at once. But she rejected their demands, saying:

The minority Korean people in this great country of America have a right to live and work just as other nationalities. They are hard working, diligent and honest people who are struggling for a decent life. Therefore, your hostile attitude toward these people cannot be justified.\(^1\)

Steward's firm actions saved the camp from further

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\(^1\) Kim, Chaemi Hanin Osipnyon-sa, pp. 80-81; Choy, Koreans in America, p. 109.
troubles, and the trouble subsided. Steward later introduced Koreans to her neighbors as excellent workers. Thereafter, many Koreans, including students looking for summer jobs, were able to find employment as orange-pickers in southern California.

In addition, Korean immigrants were refused service in restaurants, barber shops, and public recreation facilities. White landlords often refused to rent them houses or to lease them farm lands. American-born Koreans, although they were citizens, could not get white-collar jobs even if they had college or university degrees. They were treated as second-class citizens. Young Korean students and intellectuals, who came to America as political refugees after anti-Japanese activities, faced as much hardship and racial discrimination as the other Korean immigrants had. Since they could not find jobs in their fields, they worked as houseboys, janitors, dishwashers, or busboys.

Chang Lee-wook, who was involved in Korean community affairs for many years, described his experiences with racism in America:

I entered a restaurant [in Los Angeles] to have lunch. Although there were few customers, the waitress did not wait on me. After a while, a young manager came to me and said with a low voice that, 'we can't serve you lunch, because if we start serving lunch to Orientals, white

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The same year, 1918, Chang met with another ugly incident on the train to Dubuque University. At dinner time, a black passenger entered the dining car. The waiter led him to a seat and then pulled a curtain around him to prevent anyone from seeing him eating in the same dining room as the white passengers. Chang concluded by saying that:

"After fifty years, I could see with my own eyes some of the great changes that took place in the matter of human relations in America, although racial discrimination still exists and many problems remain to be solved."

Korean immigrants suffered further racial conflict as a result of the antagonistic race relations between Koreans and Japanese. Between 1903 and 1905, in order to replace or supplement Japanese laborers, who were beginning to venture out from plantation life, over seven thousand Koreans were recruited as sugar plantation laborers in Hawaii. The importation of Korean laborers was also designed to counteract the predominance of Japanese workers in the Hawaiian labor markets. This situation aroused considerable Japanese suspicion against Koreans.

White sugar planters frequently used Korean laborers as strike-breakers during labor disputes involving Japanese laborers. This act further aggravated ethnic hostilities.

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34. Ibid.
between the two groups. To be sure, such racial animosities between Koreans and Japanese were reciprocal. But it was most unfortunate for the Koreans, for they came in contact with the Japanese, the numerically largest ethnic group, more than any other ethnic group on account of their cultural, economic, and occupational proximities.

In the face of white racism, Korean immigrants developed three patterns of racial accommodation. The first was a form of the avoidance so frequently used by minority members of the society. Having had unpleasant experiences during which white Americans displayed intense dislike or prejudice toward them, they tried to avoid giving whites the opportunity to discriminate. Korean immigrants usually hesitated to go anywhere unless they were sure no restrictions would be imposed. They were, in a way, forced to stay together as a group, separated from the white American community.35

Korean laborers often met with violent actions by the rioting white mobs, as shown in the Hemet and Steward incidents. Many such cases were reported during the early

35. Nonetheless, Korean contact with white society, by the necessity of religion and politics, was far more frequent than it was with other Asian groups. The Korean Christian churches, centers of the Korean community, were largely supported or supervised by American Christian denominations. Korean immigrants were devoted nationalists who struggled for their national independence and self-government. They frequently held mass-meetings and passed resolutions to appeal the Korean case to the American government and people. These situations led inevitably to close ties or contacts with the white American society.
years in which Koreans were in America. In most cases, however, the Koreans responded passively or stoically. They withdrew, avoiding confrontation, rather than engaging in active protests themselves.

Except for their sustained hostility toward Japan, Koreans tried to minimize racial confrontations. They preferred to avoid any place where they were not wanted. They would likely not have gone to Hemet, e.g., had they known of the feelings of white workers there. Koreans quietly sought compensation for discrimination. Soon after the Hemet incident, the Korean labor agent Choe Sun-song met orchard owner Simpson, and asked only that Koreans be paid the cost of trip to Hemet; he did not ask for payment for damage to their dignity. Through such amicable and quiet negotiations, the Koreans were paid about $70 for round trip expenses to and from Hemet and also pay for two days of work. They did not complain about anything except the undue Japanese interference in the Korean matter.

As discussed in Chapter V, most Koreans came to America as sojourners. They hoped to gain wealth quickly and to return to Korea as persons of status. This "sojourner attitude" led many Koreans to maintain psychological and social separation from the larger

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34. For a typical case, see Kongnip Shinmun, 12 August 1908; Shinhan Minbo, 17 February 1909.

37. Shinhan Minbo, 4 July 1913; Hemet News, 11 July 1913.
society. They tried to insulate themselves against the full impact of the dominant society's values, norms, attitudes, and behavior patterns. As a result, Korean immigrants clung to the cultural heritage of their homeland and tended to associate exclusively with people of their own ethnic group. They generally lived in isolation, being unwilling to assimilate into the host society.3*

Racial separation or insulation was strongly maintained by Korean ethnic solidarity and national loyalty which were conducive to the creation of many political, social and cultural institutions. Korean immigrants, on a smaller scale than either the Chinese or Japanese, also had fraternal organizations which had "a function of government and lodge."3* All of these institutions further reinforced Koreans' social detachment from the host society.

There was a definite tendency among many immigrant groups to congregate in large cities so that they might insulate themselves from the larger society and create "ghettos' within a city. According to Henry Fairchild, the city was their landing place; It offered an opportunity to congregate with native-born friends; it provided better and


more public relief and private benevolence agencies.40 Fairchild's conclusion is drawn from the experience of immigrants on the Eastern coast, but the same generalization is also applicable to Asian immigrants who lived together in the metropolitan areas of the West. Especially during the peak of anti-Orientalism, jobs were difficult to find and hostility was high as the economic depression became apparent. Koreans sought the safety of group life in urban centers and began to work at whatever they could find to maintain the minimum level of subsistence.41

The second form of Korean racial accommodation was to seek "real" causes of racial discrimination and to regenerate themselves as much as they could. The misconduct and misbehavior of Asian immigrants, many Koreans believed, fostered current racial discrimination. One newspaper stated in this regard:

The reason for discrimination against Asians results from the unfortunate situation of the Chinese who came to this country without abandoning their filthy habits and customs. Everywhere they go, they create disorders. The Japanese have entirely different habits from white society and could not mingle with the white...They spend as little as they can for food and houses...So they are becoming a target of hatred from white workers.42

41. Ibid.
42. Shinhan Minbo, 8 June 1910. For the similar view, see ibid., 5 February 1911.
Korean immigrants were also not free from this criticism. Despite race-solidarity, intensive national loyalty, and a high degree of mutual aid, Koreans in America did more than their share in creating social problems and adding to the public burden. One study of ghettos and slums in Honolulu in 1930 indicates that the Koreans, along with the Puerto Ricans and Spanish, had the highest rate of public dependency. The Korean divorce rate was one of the highest among Asian immigrant groups in Hawaii.

Unhappy family life, an unfavorable sex ratio, lack of social cohesiveness, economic deprivation—all caused the relatively high crime rate among Koreans in their early


44. Cheng and Yamamura, "Interracial Marriage and Divorce," pp. 77-84.

45. The socioeconomic background of Korean immigrants was more important than anything else. Unlike the Chinese and Japanese, Koreans were a heterogeneous ethnic group which emigrated from all provinces of Korea. Most of them were "uprooted" or "displaced" farmers, urban laborers, scholars, soldiers and students. Because of their small numbers, they had difficulties in maintaining their old country life and moral ethics. The Chinese and Japanese, along with well-organized clan and regional associations, maintained Buddhism as an effective ideology in asserting old moral standards. However, many Koreans were converted to Christianity which helped greatly in their "Americanization" but at the same time destroyed their old standards. Apparently the more Korean immigrants became "Americanized," the more they were inclined to commit crimes. See Lind, "Some Ecological Patterns," pp. 37-38; Adams, Interracial Marriage in Hawaii, p. 163.
period. Gambling, drinking (a violation of liquor laws), and fist-fighting were major problems. Gambling was a popular recreation, which tended to lead to drinking, the use of opium, petty theft, fraud and even to murder.

The juvenile delinquency rate for the Korean group was much higher than that of the Japanese or Chinese. Since Koreans were a small ethnic group, the young people necessarily had many outside contacts. When they went to school, they were removed in considerable measure from Korean influences. The Korean language was of little use to them; they had to depend upon English. As a result, they generally spoke English better than the Japanese or Chinese. Many of them lived in slum-like areas in Honolulu or San Francisco where the best American influence

"... Although the Korean criminal ratio was much lower than that of Americans, Koreans showed a relatively high ratio of crimes among the Orientals. For instance, the criminal rate in Hawaii during the years of 1919-1924 was 1.562 per 1,000 Korean civilian males, as compared to 0.878 for the Chinese and 0.402 for the Japanese. Adams, Peoples of Hawaii, p. 52.

"7. The actual number of cases was few, but since the entire group itself was small, the statistical results are unduly high. During the years of 1914-1926, the juvenile delinquency rate for the Korean youth 10-17 years of age was 4,216 per 100,000, as compared to 2,415 for the Chinese and 1,312 for the Japanese. See Smith, Americans in Process, p. 212. For additional data, see Andrew W. Lind, "Some Measurable Factors in Juvenile Delinquency in Hawaii," in Hawaii, Governor, Report of Governor's Advisory Committee on Crime (Honolulu, 1931), pp. 183-192; Albert W. Palmer, Orientals in American Life (New York: Friendship Press, 1972), p. 110.

was absent. These situations tended to "Americanize" the young Koreans rapidly. As a result, the Korean youth broke away from parental control and became delinquent more rapidly.44

Realizing that all these dark aspects of Korean lives affected white Americans' negative attitudes toward them, Koreans attempted to curb undesirable activities which might cause adverse criticism of Koreans. We have already seen that Korean immigrants erected the Christian churches and village councils for ethnic or group identity as well as for community stability. Under the influence of American missionaries of "puritanic zeal and Wesleyan fervor," the Korean churches in America were conservative in theology and biblical criticism. They strongly demanded righteousness and guilt-feelings about personal misconduct and behavior. They looked upon dancing, smoking, card-playing, and the drinking of liquor as sins in which no true followers of Christ should indulge.30

The village council served as a legal agency to maintain law and order in the Korean community in America. Gambling, drinking and fighting were strictly prohibited. Violators were punished according to the rules and regulations. Fostering the "respect and protection of women" became one of the major tasks of the village

council. As the Korean community grew more refined and prosperous in later years, the rules covered more specific and delicate aspects of community life, prohibiting or regulating such things as bad Korean habits, dishonest words and deeds, poor sanitary conditions, and gossip or rumors that would injure personal relationships.31

In the face of the high rate of juvenile delinquency, Korean immigrants also put much of their effort into the education of their children with very impressive results. They knew that education not only corrected the misconduct of their children but also provided a road to economic independence. The percentage of illiteracy among the Korean youth between ten to twenty years of age was progressively reduced and was virtually nonexistent by 1930.32 This was obviously due to the great emphasis placed on education by their parents.

By 1930, the rate of Korean children attending school was the second highest among all ethnic groups in Hawaii,

31. Shinhan Minbo. 16 November 1916.
32. The Percentage of illiteracy for the youth between ten to twenty years of age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Races</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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See Adams, Peoples of Hawaii, p. 43.
exceeded only by the Anglo-Saxon race. Second-generation Korean children stayed in school longer than any other ethnic group, including Chinese, Japanese, and Caucasian. One source stated:

With formal education given first priority, both school attendance and performance have been reported to be excellent. Over a period of time, the Korean group had the highest survival percentage. Of all the 1919-1920 second graders, 40.7% were continuing on up to the 12th grade in 1929-1930.

The education of children had always been a very deeply rooted tradition in Korea, and obviously this tradition was carried on in America.

Korean immigrants tried to minimize the racial discrimination among groups and tried to reform themselves as much as they could. Although Asian immigrants were discriminated against, Koreans thought that they would be accepted and invited to work harmoniously along with white Americans, if the Koreans worked hard to avoid their disfavor. Occasionally, it worked. In 1915, there were over seventy Koreans working with white laborers in Upland, California. Although Upland was one of the strong areas of

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54. Livesay, ibid., pp. 71 & 81.


56. Shinhan Minbo, 24 October 1913.
racial discrimination, there was no discrimination made against the Koreans who were trustworthy and hardworking. There was not a single Japanese there because of discrimination.57

Rapid occupational adjustment was the third aspect of Korean racial accommodation.58 The general procedure of occupational adjustment was as follows. Many Koreans were first agricultural laborers who worked on "piece work," "contract cultivation" or tenant farming, and then became independent farmers. Koreans in urban centers, like other Asian racial groups, were excluded from labor unions and thereby blue collar occupations. Thus many Koreans were first employed as common laborers in such businesses as laundries, restaurants or tailoring establishments. Then later they became self-employed in small businesses or

57. Ibid., 11 April 1915. The desire to be excluded from the racial rejection was not a phenomenon peculiar to Koreans. "As the turn of the century, in what may have been the first political demonstration by Japanese in America, delegates to an anti-Chinese convention in San Francisco were advised by leaflet and oratory that while it was quite proper to exclude Chinese, Japanese were different and should not be shut out. In the 1920's, a Japanese newspaper editor in Hawaii could attack incoming Filipinos as 'cheap Oriental labor.' And, to cite a final example of inter-group hostility, just after Pearl Harbor Chinese often sported buttons which proclaimed, 'I AM NO JAP' or 'I AM CHINESE--I HATE JAPS TOO.'" Quoted in Conroy and Miyakawa, East Across the Pacific, p. 85.

58. For a good look at this subject, see Wayne Patterson, "Upward Social Mobility of the Koreans in Hawaii," Korean Studies 3 (1979): 81-92.
The socioeconomic background of Korean immigrants clearly showed their general denigration of manual labor. Also their spirit of independence was clearly shown in their work performance and choice of occupation. They were ambitious and anxious to better their economic lives, to insure security in old age, to educate their children, or to contribute some money for the Korean independence movement. As soon as they accumulated a small amount of money, they became independent tenant farmers or small shopkeepers. Even if some of them remained in manual labor, they preferred to work on the "piece work" or "contract cultivation" system which paid according to their production. Sometimes they tried to learn, and to get promoted to, more highly-paid jobs such as engineer, truck driver, or foreman. Once they got good positions, "a Korean rarely ever lost a position or resigned from a job, except for a better one.

In the urban centers, where racial hostility was much more intensive than the rural areas, Koreans were heavily concentrated in self-employed small businesses or service occupations. Especially shopkeeping served as a stepping-stone to socio-economic improvement from servile and menial

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labor to independent and prestigious commercial business. The Koreans were "noticeably inclined toward this particular channel of advancement."*1 Although on a somewhat limited scale, Koreans in Hawaii entered into many areas of commercial venture such as furniture-making, tailoring, laundering and the running of barbershops, restaurants, grocery stores, and lodging-houses. Since they entered business with their savings from labor, they did not have much capital to start with. That was why most Korean business was limited to the above-mentioned areas which required small investment.*2

In the face of the sweeping anti-Asian hostility and racial discrimination, Korean immigrants, as in the case of the Chinese and Japanese, had to depend upon peculiar "ethnic organizations and values" for their economic success in the hostile environment. The Kye system, a financial cooperative organization transplanted from the traditional Korean "mutual benefit association," greatly contributed to the accumulation of capital which helped Koreans to venture into independent farming or small business.*3

*3. For a full discussion about the traditional Korean Kye, see Yong-Rak Kim, Man'guk Kyeui Yirongwa Siliae [Theory and Practice of the Korean Kye] (Seoul: Chongja Sowon, 1967); Gerald F. Kennedy, "The Korean Kye: Maintaining Human Scale in a Modernizing Form," in Korean
The general procedure of the Kye was as follows. Through saving parts of their wages, each member made regular contributions to a common pool for a particular purpose. Each month whoever needed a sum of money immediately bid for a high rate of interest, and the money went to the highest bidder. Each month this was repeated in the same manner. The remaining members profited by the rather high rate of interest. A member could receive the lump sum only once, rotating the turn until the unpaid member automatically received the total. It was usually organized among intimate friends and relatives or persons from the same district of the home country.*4 This "rotating credit" association served many of the functions of Western banks and helped to "assist in small scale capital formation."**


*4. This system was also prevalent in variant forms among the Chinese and Japanese who called it respectively Hui and Ko. These ethnic organizations were designed to "develop the resources of entrepreneurship as well as to control intra-ethnic competition and conflict." They were central to Asian solidarity in business enterprises in America. For a detailed discussion, see Ivan H. Light, Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 19-61; Illsoon Kim, "Asian Americans and the American Economic Order," in Dictionary of Asian American History, ed. Hyung-chan Kim (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 67-76; Blackey, "Cultural Aspects of Case Work," pp. 30-45.

**. Light, ibid., p. 23. The Kye also played a major role in financing educational needs and passage money for the picture brides.
Because of the small numbers, Korean businesses did not have a guaranteed ethnic clientele. That is, unlike the Japanese and Chinese who could count on their own people as possible customers, the Koreans faced a far more insecure position. As a result, the Korean entrepreneur had to assimilate into the business world and solicit customers from all the ethnic groups. Even the economic sub-structure of the group was greatly subject to the will and whims of people from without that immediate community. For example, when a member of a small minority group ventured into business, he was obliged to seek success beyond his ethnic group. As Romanzo Adams points out:

When a young university graduate set up as a printer the fact of his being a Korean was no help. He had to find his business in the general business community. If he got it at all, it was because he was a good printer not because he was a good Korean.**

In this situation, Korean immigrants had to rely on their peculiar ethnic values for the success in their respective occupations. East-Asians shared a common value system largely derived from Confucianism. Asians cherished such Confucian values as a concern for propriety, the control of impulses and emotions, respect for age, deference to authority, and diligence and industriousness. As for the socioeconomic adjustment of Korean immigrants, there is a value congruence between Confucianism and the Protestant ethic, even though they are derived from

**. Adams, Interracial Marriage in Hawaii, p. 182.
different sources and point to different views of the world.47

The Confucian values are compatible with, but not identical to, white middle-class Protestant values such as hard work, politeness, family authority, diligence, and cleanliness. Many social scientists have attributed the "Asian success" to the comparability of Asian cultural values with Protestant values.48 Asians could achieve tremendous economic mobility by overcoming all kinds of

47. This perspective in explaining the interconnection between ethnicity and economic structure was first studied by Max Weber and Werner Sombart, who explained how cultural or religious attitudes were transferred to economic behavior. See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1958); Werner Sombart, The Quintessence of Capitalism (London: T. F. Unwin, 1915).

adversity through their cultural strength. This cultural thesis particularly fitted well to the Korean immigrants who were, in a large number, converted to Christianity before and after emigration to America. Their newly adopted Christian faith was compatible with their long-acquainted Confucian social values. From this arose social values for their economic success as well as for their everyday social life in America.


70. By the early 1970s, the Koreans had achieved the highest per capita income and the lowest unemployment rate of any ethnic group in Hawaii, including Caucasians. See Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 10 September 1973.
CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

From the beginning, Korean immigrants were different in their origins, motives, and character from other Asian groups. Unlike the numerically larger Chinese and Japanese groups, which came from the rural farming areas of specific regions, Korean immigrants were from widely distributed locations throughout Korea. Most of them came from the seaports or nearby large cities, and few migrated directly from the rural districts. They were also heterogeneous in their social origins, coming from all walks of Korean life.

Reflecting the heterogeneity of their social and geographical origins, Korean immigrants had a variety of motives for migrating. As with the Chinese and Japanese, economic betterment was a key motive, but the educational opportunity, the possibility of an improved social status, and the religious freedom, which were believed to await immigrants in America, all worked as "pull" factors that induced Koreans to emigrate. On the other hand, dismal prospects in Korea--political uncertainty, wars, poverty, famine, heavy taxes, inflation, banditry, and government corruption--served as "push" factors which encouraged Korean emigration to America. These "push" factors were the outcome of political and economic calamities derived from both foreign encroachment and the domestic failure to
meet the resulting crises. Under these circumstances, and
given the Hawaiian sugar planters' eagerness for cheap
foreign labor, the exodus of Korean immigrants to America
was all but inevitable.

Despite the diversity of their socioeconomic origins
and of their motives for emigration, Korean immigrants had
a common psychological trait: naivety or ingenuousness.
They were for the most part simple and poorly educated
people. Most came from the lower classes of Korean
society. They were ill prepared for life in a new and
culturally remote environment. The country of origin was a
"hermit" kingdom, remote and isolated, geographically and
culturally, from the Western world. The receiving country,
on the other hand, was the United States, a rapidly
developing modern capitalist power.¹

Korean immigrants were also basically conservative in
nature although they were, as a group, much more
progressive and liberal than those who remained in Korea.
They had been reared under the influence of Confucian
social values. Under the familial social system of Korea,
where the status of a man was largely dependent upon his
family's status, there were few chances for the testing of
individual capacities. On the other hand, America was a

¹. Kyung-dong Kim, "Koreans in America: Their Cultural
Adaptation and Contributions," in Reflections: On a Century
of United States-Korean Relations, ed. Academy of Korean
Studies and the Wilson Center (New York: University Press
mobile society, although the upper class attempted to organize and maintain a fixed economic and political class structure. Still, once a man cleared immediate obstacles like labor contracts or debts, there were many avenues of social and economic gain open to him in America. These two characteristics—naiveté and conservatism—were combined with the immigrants' anxiety to improve their standing in new circumstances.

Recruited as agricultural laborers, most of the Korean immigrants at first lived on various plantations in Hawaii. The plantation thus became a new frontier where they had to settle and adjust themselves to the strange environment. This plantation-frontier stage lasted for about three years, the length of the usual labor contract, even though most Koreans came as free laborers. This was a stage which introduced Korean people—but not Korean life—to Hawaii. The planters laid down rules and conditions of life which were designed to harness any laboring people, whatever

2. The frontier in Hawaii was not like that of the American West, which has been treated as synonymous with the word "frontier." The Hawaiian frontier had some of the ingredients of the American frontier, such as materialism (making a quick fortune in a short period), cooperation (through division of labor into cane cultivating, cutting, loading, etc.), hard work, crudeness, and drabness, but none of the freedom and democracy, and little of the opportunity for individual self-advancement. For a full discussion of the frontier characteristics of the American West, see Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893); Ray Allen Billington, America's Frontier Heritage (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966) & The Far Western Frontier: 1830-1860 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1956).
their race or cultural background, to one end—the production of sugar.

During this stage, economic improvement for Korean immigrants was not feasible, because they were used as a means of production by the planters, whose main concern was to make profit by exploiting labor. In this plantation-frontier, life was tough, and work was arduous. Living quarters were primitive. Food was unsatisfactory. Quarrels were frequent. It was a male society, with only a few women to provide a stable family life. The general spirit of the frontier was much like that of a mining camp in the American West. The plantation camps were "noisy [and] happy-go-lucky," and characterized by "high feelings[s] of fellowship, drinking, gambling, and careless generosity."

The plantation-frontier held a reservoir of Korean people who wanted to adhere to their own customs, but its nature made it impossible for them to do so. In general, the effect of plantation life was not beneficial to the Koreans in matters of morals and manners. Since they lacked social relations as practiced in their old homes, their plantation life greatly weakened traditional social values. The lack of normal social restraints also induced many Korean laborers to drift uninhibitedly towards pleasure-seeking games. Fist fights over women, gambling

and drinking were common in every plantation camp, except during working hours.  

Like the incipient stages of all social movements, the plantation-frontier stage was marked by widespread social disorganization. Mores and institutions broke down, and the traditional definitions of life and conduct were no longer meaningful. There was no place for most things Korean in this first stage. It was hard to preserve Korean social and cultural traditions. Dress, ceremonies, holidays—all were modified or abandoned, though not all Korean ways vanished. Even in such a situation, Korean immigrants continued to practice their language, some rituals, and some dietary habits. Korean women still wore the traditional clothing. They were not openly exposed to public activities outside the home, although they were much more progressive in manners or morals than those in Korea.

Like the Chinese and Japanese before them, many Korean immigrants came as "sojourners." Since most were motivated by economics, they expected to return home after amassing a fortune. However, a number of factors caused many Koreans to lose sight of their goal of returning to Korea. First of all, compared with other ethnic groups, Koreans were much more economically distressed. Every month for a

*. Despite these unattractive features, however, the frontier was thoroughly democratic within its own limits. All distinctions indicative of means vanished. The only capital required was muscle and hard work. Hard work was the normal lot of man in the frontier as well as a powerful force for rapid economic success.
certain period, the planters deducted from Korean laborers' wages for "passage money," that is, transportation and other necessary provisions that had made it possible for them to emigrate to Hawaii. The planters were also not very conscientious in making the payments required by the contracts. Fines were assessed against laborers for infractions of plantation rules and for violations of contract. Thus the laborer's wages, small already, were further reduced. As he did not accumulate money as fast as expected, he began to put off the day of his departure for Korea.

A second factor was the weakening of ties with the people at home. The distance was great. Communication, mostly by letter, was slow and infrequent. Few heard regularly from home. Parents, to whom filial piety was owed, were far away. The family, village, and other reminders of social obligation were absent. Little Korean merchandise reached America. Instead of Korean clothes they had brought, the Koreans were soon used to wearing blue denim and other American clothes. They learned to eat, if not to like, western food, and to speak a little English or Hawaiian.

Some examples of success inspired some Koreans to prolong their stay in America. They were encouraged by such stories as that of a Korean laborer who opened a boarding house and a community bath house on his plantation, and soon became an important man there, or
others who, after completing their contracts, entered into the coffee planting business. The less impressive but more common examples were the stories of Koreans who became independent farmers or who moved to urban centers to establish small businesses such as laundries, or carpenter and tailor shops.

These three factors—the difficulty of obtaining enough money to return with prestige to Korea, the weakening of home ties, and the dream of future prosperity in Hawaii—combined to produce the change of mind about returning home among Korean laborers during the plantation-frontier stage. Furthermore, when Japan forcibly annexed Korea in 1910, Koreans lost their independent national identity. Becoming "uprooted" wanderers in an alien land, they were men without an independent country to return to. In this situation, it is not surprising that most Korean immigrants decided to prolong their stay and attempted to improve their status in America. With the decision of Koreans to make a life in America, the Korean community was born and rapidly expanded.

Two bases of any organized human society are the job and the home. Among the early Koreans the job preceded the home. Most of them, coming as bachelors, worked toward an economic goal sufficient to allow the establishment of a home. Once a man had pulled himself above the economic limitations provided by the labor contract, he could look to establishing a home. His first need then was a wife.
Some Koreans were prosperous, and with prosperity there came a universal desire to marry and have a family. To accomplish this, they evolved a plan of finding wives through the exchange of photographs with young women at home. As a result, the "picture-bride" marriage system was introduced, greatly contributing to the stability of the Korean community.

The Korean community reached its maturity with the arrival of the picture brides in the years from 1910 to 1924. During this settlement period, the Korean community began to change from a stagnant society to a more active and prosperous one. Most bachelors now became family men. Since they felt responsible for supporting their families, many gave up their habits of drinking, gambling, gossiping, and sometimes fighting over women. Most of the families had American-born children, and Korean community activities increased with the growth of second-generation Koreans.

Strong ethnic solidarity was one of the striking features during this settlement stage. The isolated and lonely life in America tended to intensify Korean group cohesion. The smallness of the Korean community in America also helped to maintain this spirit of brotherhood. The annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910 further strengthened Korean ethnic patriotism, intensifying the feeling of oneness with the homeland. Each looked upon other Koreans as brothers or sisters and "all for one, and one for all" seemed to be the slogan. At this crucial stage of
adjustment, Korean immigrants turned East rather than West for the fulfillment of their desires. They set their energies to building a Korean community in America, rather than to breaking into the American community already established there.

The Korean community, as it increased in size and in wealth, could support the institutions typical of an organized society. Reacting to cultural shock and transition in an alien land, Koreans set up, with some degree of success, their own peculiar institutions, as did other ethnic groups. Unlike the Chinese and Japanese communities with organizations based on the clan, regional, and business affiliations of their respective homelands, Korean immigrants developed unique communities based on puritanical ethics and "vigilante" rules.

The Korean Christian church, together with Donghoe or the village council, played a vital role in the development of the Korean community in America. Both spiritually and secularly, each institution helped to solidify the Korean community's stability and to maintain law and order in the hostile country. In a way the Korean church took care of the Koreans spiritually, and the village council took care of their secular life. The two institutions provided Korean immigrants with a more secure and satisfying basis for their new life in the new world. Through these institutions, Koreans could make their community more visible and more cohesive. Through them, too, Koreans
managed to identify themselves as a distinct ethnic group while promoting their interests during a time of racial discrimination.

Korean immigrants were also anxious to be viable and independent economically. This was done sometimes by acquiring a better paying job on the plantation after a few years of backbreaking physical labor, but more successfully by leaving the plantation and seeking a new job or by opening a shop in the urban areas. With some capital accumulated by the "rotating credit" system, Koreans managed to establish small, family-operated businesses.

In the face of white racism, Koreans were forced to seek marginal and noncompetitive occupations, though it was impossible to avoid contact with white people altogether. After years of trial and error, they retreated into furniture-making, tailoring, laundry and restaurant work, the trades least competitive with white neighbors. Furthermore, since Koreans were denied naturalization, and since many states required citizenship to perform a number of jobs, they were sensible enough to withdraw to those trades in which the right to work would at least not be questioned by the law.

Koreans also had to depend on their peculiar ethnic values as a source of occupational success. The Confucian social values, compatible with the dominant white middle-class Protestant ethics, helped to promote their economic success as well as their everyday social life in America.
Within ten years of their arrival, many Koreans became self-sufficient and some became well-to-do. Although victimized by white racism, they ultimately overcame many barriers to "climb the ladder of success." Few Koreans enjoyed the "rags-to-riches" experience perpetuated in American folklore. However, a significant percentage of Koreans did experience what Stephan Thernstrom calls the rise from "rags to respectibility." This was especially true among the second generation Koreans who received American educations and obtained white-collar jobs.

Korean immigrants, like the Chinese and Japanese, suffered discrimination and isolation from the larger white society, but their experiences were nevertheless quite different. They tried to avoid situations which might expose them to racial discrimination. They avoided racial confrontation and attempted to fit themselves as much as they could into the American way of work, believing they would be accepted and invited to work harmoniously along with white Americans, if they were trustworthy and hardworking. And they were gratified to live and work in the "land of promise" where they could fight for their political causes, and where they could enjoy political freedom in their search for ethnic identity.

Always sensitive to white criticism, Korean immigrants labored to eliminate the darker features of Korean immigrant life. Religious and social organizations conducted moral reforms to remove gambling, drinking,
fighting, and other vices from their society. They tried to control the behavior of Korean immigrants in various ways and even cooperated with police authorities to have so-called undesirable elements deported. In the face of the high rate of juvenile delinquency, they also put much of their effort into the education of their children with very impressive results. They realized that education not only corrected the misconduct of their children but also provided a road to economic independence.

While Korean immigrants endeavored to create a small yet cohesive ethnic community in America with distinctive organizations, Korea underwent the profound political transformation from an independent kingdom to a protectorate in 1905, and to a Japanese colony in 1910. Koreans in America found themselves almost completely cut off from their homeland. Many wished to return home, but they could not because their country was under Japanese occupation. Deprived of national liberty and freedom as an independent nation, Koreans felt injustice and humiliation. They viewed themselves as political refugees. Once Koreans lost their political identity, they felt that they also lost their history, culture, and even their self-respect. This situation intensified a sense of group cohesion, being epitomized by their acute patriotism and vehement anti-Japanese attitudes.

Most Koreans felt sympathy for their brothers and sisters under harsh Japanese oppression in Korea. It was
simply unrealistic for them to separate their individual well-being from what went on in Korea, and their ardent national loyalty remained undiluted. Korean immigrants retained a sense of nationalistic fervor far out of proportion to their numbers. They mustered all their efforts to liberate Korea and to regain their national identity. Because of the freedom and liberty they enjoyed in America, they felt obliged to help their fellow countrymen under the harsh Japanese rule. They gave direct official, financial, moral, and sometimes physical support which ranged from trained fighting units to individual acts of assassination.

It has been traditionally assumed that such nationalism resulted from individual patriotism. But it was nurtured by an essential desire to assimilate to American society. In other words, certain major factors evident in American society played a significant role in creating this nationalist movement. Korean immigrants found fertile soil upon which to develop the spirit and ideal of independence. American democracy, coupled with such political ideas as liberalism, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism, became the ideological justification behind the Korean nationalist movement. The analogy of the American colonies and their fight against British oppression attracted Koreans, who identified themselves with the oppressed American people under British rule.

Korean nationalism and its causes made Korean
immigrants "more American" because they felt that they were working for the realization of a "democratic dream." It provided a sense of martyrdom which compensated them in part for their low economic situation and accompanying social status. It also provided Korean immigrants with a sense of purpose and justice so desperately needed while they were economically and socially being discriminated against. Through ardent nationalist activities, Korean immigrants could sustain their ethnic unity and cohesiveness while searching for a meaningful life and existence in the alien and often hostile environment.

A paradox should be noted about Korean immigrants and their community life. Although Korean immigrants lacked common socioeconomic backgrounds and although they were diverse in their motives for emigration, they maintained the strong ethnic unity and group loyalty which helped to create a politically "neurotic" community with puritanical ethics and legal authorities. Despite their strong ethnic solidarity, along with a high degree of mutual aid, Korean immigrants showed paradoxically a high degree of "out-marriages," constant court litigation, and early signs of disintegration. They had high rates of crime, divorce, and juvenile delinquency compared to those of other Asian groups. It also sounds contradictory that the more Korean immigrants displayed ethnic solidarity and national loyalty, the more they successfully became Americanized.

The first generation is all now gone, but their
legacy--passionate nationalism, a cohesive Christian community with elaborate organizations, a talent for rapid social and economic adjustments, and remarkable cultural achievements--was handed down to the family and community of present-day Korean immigrants in America. In the face of the double challenge of white racism and of the loss of their national independence, the first generation did its best to overcome numerous difficulties and to regain and then retain their ethnic identity.

They came to America as sojourners, but within ten years of their settlement, they became permanent settlers. Their status changed from that of poor, uneducated, and unstable plantation laborers to self-sufficient, literate, and trustworthy members of American society. They utilized their full resources and capacities for realization of their dreams to the extent the reality of the in America permitted. In spite of continual discrimination, they maintained their faith and confidence that all things were still possible in America, the land of freedom and opportunity.
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