Korean Independence and Foreign Influence from Japan, China, and the U.S.

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Korean Colonial History and the Struggle for National Independence

The world has faced some severe battles with its neighbors. Asian countries were engaged in civil wars for an extended period. Korea is one of them. South Korea and North Korea were collectively a colony of Japan, and Japanese soldiers severely tortured the Korean people. Korea has a violent history of war dating back a hundred years. A large number of nations ruled and left the country in drought, but the country still tried to rise and become prosperous. Chinese rule and policies also affected Korean land for a long period. With the help of the United States and many other nations, the Koreans gained independence. The main aim of the paper is to discuss the strategies and history that caused the Korean countries to gain independence from all international influences and live in peace (Library of Congress, n.d.).

Korea has suffered a lot in the past years because of the foreign intrusions. Before Japan's rule, Korea was independent and under the Joseon Kingdom, and after that, it was the Empire of Korea. Korea experienced many interventions from the Chinese dynasties. The disturbance was always a big problem for the Korean Empire to survive and prosper. Other international interferences were also a big problem for the Korean people at that time, including the Russians, Mongols, and the Japanese.

In the 19th century, most international intrusions eventually ended, but the Industrial Revolution caused a significant change in the communities' evolution. Western imperialism and other international trends could be added to the industrial revolution. The Chinese had a significant influence on Korea, but due to all the other changes in China, it was essential for the Chinese powers to turn their attention to themselves, which weakened Chinese influence on Korean lands.

Chinese Decline and the Opening of Korea to Foreign Powers

The weakened Chinese rule made the Korean land vulnerable to foreign encroachments. This period was roughly between the 1870s and 1910. It was a period in which Korea experienced some of its

most significant changes and upheavals. Koreans were unable to stand up for themselves because of a lack of people, power, arms, and international support that could help them repel the intrusions or keep them out. Large powers like imperial Russia, Japan, Great Britain, France, and the United States had an eye on the open lands of Korea and used them against each other.

The Japanese rule was one of the leading causes of the rise of resistance movements in the overall Korean nation. In 1919, these movements were observed in all parts of the country and were known as the first movement of Korean independence. The Japanese had a very difficult start to their rule in the Korean land as compared to their government in Argentina's city of Formosa. To secure the rule of the colonies and avoid any inconvenience as well as resistance, the Japanese troops arrested tens of thousands of Koreans. The harshness of the ruling was one of the main reasons for igniting the flame of independence. A large number of Korean people left Korea and started living in neighboring areas as well as in colonies in different parts of the world. Some of the Koreans went to Japan, where the groups started to agitate clandestinely. Many Koreans were endangered by the Japanese because of their reformist political activities.

After a period when the Koreans partially opposed the colonial policies, the harshness was limited, and many acts among the Korean and Japanese rulers were found to be quite friendly. The crown prince of Korea married a Japanese princess. The Korean newspapers were facing a lengthy ban, and it was lifted as the cooperative relationships between the two countries started to rise. The two well-known newspapers of that time, Choson Libo and The Dong-a Libo, were allowed to begin their publication with some restrictions. The Korean government workers were provided the same wages as the Japanese ones. The bonuses were only for the Japanese workers. Moreover, the interruptions of the law and enforcement in the burial, slaughtering of animals, peasant markets, or traditional customs were removed. Korean society found great relaxation and peace after these changes in the Japanese rule, but after a short period, World War II and the Chinese invasion started a new era of disturbance, which caused the Japanese to become harsh again.

Japanese Colonial Rule and the Growth of Resistance

The Korean Empire was a colony of Japan. It was entirely under the influence of Japan and was unable to stand up for its rights, which resulted in the weakening of Japanese rule as well as the rise of civil-war issues. North Korea and South Korea were both parts of a single Korean nation, and the Japanese left them in two parts as they were considered colonies of the Japanese nation.

World War II, as well as conflict with China, greatly intensified Japanese involvement in Korean society. The invasion of China was a result of the Japanese aggression in the northeast Chinese province in 1931. The Chinese government decided to avoid the war against Japan until the time when the Japanese empire would directly attack Beijing. It directly affected the Koreans as the Chinese defense caused the Japanese to get out of the land of China and from South Korea as well.

Many historians and analysts have argued that the time when South Korea would gain freedom from Japan was still not close. The Chinese and the United States both found Korean land vulnerable again and tried to occupy it, but due to equal powers and some other socio-economic factors, they concluded that it was not possible during the World War. The conference in Cairo at that time concluded that Korea would be free from international intrusion.

The Cairo Conference concluded that the U.S. and China would agree to Korean independence. China tried to delay the date for independence and keep control over that piece of land, but the other members of the conference strongly opposed it. In August 1945, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated, and the worst manipulations occurred, resulting in an agreement for Chinese troops to land at Pusan, Korea. The main aim of sending troops to Korea was to stop the intrusions of the Soviet Union toward the Korean lands. The United States accepted this act, but it was too late to put troops on Korean land, as the Red Army had already occupied half of Korea. This resulted in half of the country being free because of the Chinese intrusion on the other side, while the other part remained occupied. North Korea is now an occupied territory, but the southern part is considered a liberal and free country (National Archives, n.d.).

Multiple Movements and Competing Ideologies of Korean Liberation

In a discussion of the ideologies and concerns, it can be explained that there was no specified or single revolutionary movement in Korea. Instead of one, there were many separate movements against colonial rule under the Japanese influence. The main aim of almost all the movements was to get free of Japanese political rule as well as the Japanese military. The Koreans were more concerned about becoming a dominant alien state and acting as an independent colony. They also had a desire to start their political sovereignty and wanted to completely avoid all kinds of international intrusions, including Japan. Japan invaded Korea and made it partially weak, as well as stopped its modernization of the Korean empire. All over the world, the Korean nation was observed as an anti-militarist rebellion and anti-Japanese resistance. The Korean people, on the other hand, felt this movement was a substantial step toward gaining freedom from Japanese military rule and becoming an independent nation.

No tactics or strategies were being used during the resistance movement. Some stages were found to be prominent and had an influence on the Korean nation. At the start of the 20th century, during the period from 1905 to 1910, many movements were only seen among the elite class or the highly educated community. Japan made strict attempts to end the resistance and used the harshest methods to stop it. The movements were disorganized and scattered, so it was difficult for the Japanese to break as well as impossible to find the exact backbone of the resistance. From 1910 to 1919, Koreans focused on education. The Korean literature, grammar, spelling, and ways of pronouncing the alphabet were circulated in the schools. This caused an identification of a separate

identity in the Korean community, which also produced resistance to Japanese rule.

The students were eager to get an education in the Korean language, which also created opposition to the Japanese literature that was currently being taught. These strikes became prominent in 1919, and the movement gained momentum. Until 1945, universities were used as havens for students as well as a source of support for the movement, which was highly required for the sustainability of society. The support of the universities for the movement allowed the schools to develop and facilitate the movement. After World War I, Korea was suffering a great depression, and its economic conditions were not stable. Overall, the country was facing high socio-economic issues. The laborers were complaining about the grievances against Japan's rule. More than one hundred thousand disputes were under consideration among the Korean workers concerning their wages, and more than a thousand disputes among farmers regarding their tenant positions. In the middle of 1926, the number of disputes rose, and labor movements became more prominent during the independence movement.

Justice, Sovereignty, and the Moral Case Against Colonization

In overall consideration, it can be concluded that the Korean movement for independence was just, and the act of the Japanese was found to be wrong. Any intrusion into foreign lands is always viewed as a contentious and rigid act that mostly results in negative effects on society. The social circles in any community are divided by historians and sociologists into three main groups, including religious groups, expatriate groups, and royalist influences.

Catholicism was one of the religious groups in Korea, and it faced great persecution in the 18th century. Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries followed in the 19th century; the ideas of these religious groups were similar to Western reforms. They also advocated women's rights and equality. Korean society followed the Confucian tradition strictly; these changes to society were not accepted at all, and the tradition never accepted them. These groups had a primary goal, which was to gain independence from Japan and the Japanese military.

Groups in Pacific-linked areas, including Shanghai, Northeast China, eastern Russia, San Francisco, and Hawaii, are known as expatriate groups. The helping forces of these groups were the Korean National Army and the Korean National Association. University students are also counted among these groups. This group made a significant contribution to the division of Korean land into two halves.

Royalist Elites and Japan's Destruction of Korean

Political Authority

Royalist influence could be explained through the elite and the nobility. Japan took severe steps to ruin the noble and royal families, including executions within Korea and assassinations of members of the Korean royal community by Japanese mercenaries.

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that Korean history is full of problems, and the country was unable to get freedom at all. Hundreds of thousands of Koreans died during the last two centuries, and the deadliest period was Japanese rule. In the current situation, half of the Korean country is enjoying freedom and communication with the world as well as innovations in technology and multicultural status, but the other half is completely occupied with military interferences and martial law. There are discussions about the northern territory being free like the southern one, but the northern community is completely under the influence of the Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.).

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