

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

Posted on September 21, 2018

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 colonies of Japan, and the Japanese soldiers highly tortured the Korean people. Korea has a violent history of war since a hundred years ago. 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 found a lot of 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 return for their selves, and it made the Chinese influence too weak on the 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 for Korea to count in the most significant and worst changes and significant upheavals. Koreans were unable to stand up for their selves because of a lack of people, power, arms, and any international support that could help them to make the intrusions step back or keep their way outside. 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. 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. There were outnumbered Korean people who left the Korean land and started living in the neighboring areas as well as in the different colonies of different parts of the world. Some of the Koreans went to Japan, where the groups started to agitate clandestinely. Many Koreans were found endangered by the Japanese because of their reforming 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 the Japanese princes. 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. They were entirely under the influence of Japan and were unable to stand for their rights, which resulted in the weakening of the Japanese rule as well as the rise of the 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 the Chinese, caused a great ignition to the 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 discussed that the time when South Korea found freedom from Japan's independence 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 finalized that the Korean land would now be free from any international intrusion.

The Cairo Conference finalized that the US and China would agree to the Korean Independence. China tried to tangle the date for independence and to keep control over that piece of land, but the other members of the conference strictly opposed it. In August 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union relations deteriorated, and the worst manipulations were done, which resulted in an agreement of Chinese troops to land over 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 the troops in Korean land as the Red Army had already intruded half of the Korean land, which resulted in half of the country being free because of the Chinese intrusion on the other side, 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 way, felt this movement was a substantial step toward getting free from the 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, the Koreans started education. The Korean literature, grammar, spellings, 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. His strikes became prominent in 1919, and the movement prominently started. Till 1945, the universities were used as a haven for the students as well as a source of support for the movement, which was highly required for the sustainability purpose of the society. The support of the universities for the movement allowed the schools to develop and facilitate. 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 was raised, and the movements concerning labor emerged more 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 observed as a contemporary as well as a rigid act that mostly results from negative effects on society. The social circles in any community by the historians and sociologists are designed in three main liberal groups including the religions and expatriate groups as well as the royalist influence.

The Korean religious group is Catholicism, and it faced great persecution in the 18th century. The Presbyterian, as well as the Methodist missionaries, were followed in the 19th century; the discussion of these religious groups was similar to the Western reforms. They also required the women's rights as well as the equality concerns. I followed the Confucian tradition strictly; these amendments to the 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.

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

Royalist Elites and Japan's Destruction of Korean Political Authority

The Royalist influence could be explained as the elite and the noblest. Japan made tremendous and severe steps to ruin the noble and royal families, including executions inside the Korean lands and

comprehensive assassinations of the royal community of Korea by the mercenaries of Japan are included on the top of the list.

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that Korean history is full of problems, and the country was unable to get freedom at all. There are hundreds of thousands of Koreans who died during the last two centuries, and the more deadly time was the 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.)

References

Library of Congress. (n.d.). Korea: A country study. <https://www.loc.gov/item/91039109/>

National Archives. (n.d.). Korean War. <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/korean-war>

Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). Korea. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Korea>