## JAPANESE ASSIMILATION POLICIES IN KOREA

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## **BACKGROUND**

- With the signing of the annexation treaty, Korea was annexed to Japan in 1910.
- Japan was determined to incorporate Korea into its own empire.
- Thus, a period of assimilation of the Korean population began.

## WHAT IS ASSIMILATION?

- When a local culture is absorbed into a larger, more dominant culture.
- Many imperial powers tried to encourage what they believed were "lesser" cultures to adapt the culture of the imperial power.
- Examples: Native Americans in the U.S., Great Britain in India

## KOREAN LANGUAGE

- The Korean language was banned from being taught or spoken. Korean schools were required to teach Japanese.
- Many newspapers (especially Korean Language ones) were shut down. This restriction was later relaxed during the twenties, then enforced again during the late 30's.
- Despite the ban, many Koreans resisted by having the language taught at home.
- However, even this carried a risk of discovery by the secret police.

## **RELIGION**

- In addition to the native Confucianism and Buddhism, a decent number of Koreans were Christian.
- However, colonial authorities would later require Koreans to worship at Shinto Shrines.
- They were also required to take an oath to the Emperor of Japan, promising to be good, loyal subjects.

## NAME CHANGE

- Later in the colonial period, Japanese authorities encouraged Koreans to change their names to Japanese sounding ones.
- Though not outright required, those who refused to change suffered discrimination.
- Thus, many encouraged their children to change their names.
- However, Koreans found clever ways to keep their names while appearing to change them.

### RESISTANCE

- The death of the former emperor of Korea (Emperor Gojong) gave rise to the March 1<sup>st</sup> movement.
- Demonstrations were held all over Korea, demanding independence.
- Japanese responded by calling in the military, which proceeded to fire upon the demonstrators.
- Many activists were arrested and thrown into prisons such as Seodaemun.
- Others joined guerilla movements to attack Japanese possessions in Korea.

## DISCUSSION QUESTION

 What would you do if these policies were forced upon you? Would you resist? Or would you give in?

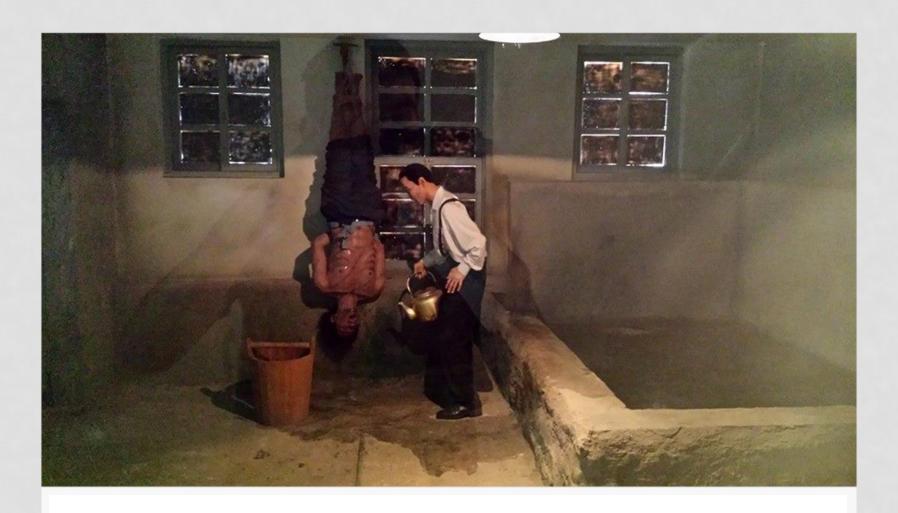


#### SEODAEMUN PRISON

WHERE MANY INDEPENDENCE ACTIVISTS, POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND OTHER "UNDESIRABLES" WERE IMPRISONED.

# WHAT DID THOSE WHO WERE ARRESTED HAVE TO DEAL WITH?

- Prisons such as Seodaemun were designed to inspire fear into the inmates to coerce a confession, whether genuine or not.
- Many were shot, tortured, and starved.
- Methods of torture were inhumane.



#### WATER TORTURE

PRISONER'S HEAD IS FORCED INTO WATER TO MAKE THEM BELIEVE THEY ARE BEING DROWNED.



FINGERNAIL TORTURE

SHARP SKEWER IS PLACED BETWEEN A PRISONER'S FINGERNAIL



#### **BOX TORTURE**

PRISONER IS PLACED INSIDE A BOX WITH SHARP NAILS. BOX IS THEN KICKED AND THROWN AROUND BY THE GUARDS.

## SECRET POLICE

- Policemen and informers were used to find people that were breaking any laws/encouraging resistance to Japanese rule.
- Even if one was released from jail, they would often be visited by the secret police.
- There were chances of being re-arrested on trumped up causes.

## CONCLUSION

- Throughout the colonial period, Japan tried (unsuccessfully) to fully assimilate Koreans into the Japanese culture and way of life.
- Many of the methods involved the use of terror and discrimination.
- All cultural policies were removed upon Korean independence in 1945.

## REFERENCE

• Kang, H. (2001). Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea. London: Cornell University