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Modern Korean Press – A Linguistic Model of New Social Communication

Abstract

The formation of the Korean press was closely related to the process of the rebirth of the Korean language, which widened its range of use, created and differentiated new functional styles, and as a language of communication took over most areas of society, all in a short span of three decades. This emancipation of the language of the Korean press was inextricably intertwined with the Korean modernization movement following the forced opening of the country in 1876. During the modernizing of Korea in the final decades of the 19th century, both the pro-Western court circles and the reform-minded intellectual elite of Korea realized the necessity of creating a modern press. From this time on, a modern Korean press was also to provide an exchange of information between a Korea opening itself to the world. In the years 1881 and 1910 there were about 140 various newspapers published in Korea. From the time of the Japanese-initiated war in 1941 until their surrender in 1945, even the provincial Korean newspapers did not have a chance to publish any article without censorial oversight by the occupying forces. Only Korea's recovery of independence enabled the rebirth of an independent press at least in the southern part of the peninsula, and three years later in the newly proclaimed Republic of Korea.

The daily press, an entirely new kind of social communication, appeared in Korea rather late, much later than in China or Japan, where newspapers of a Western genre had first begun to appear in the 1830s and the 1860s, respectively. For this reason, the external influences on the Korean press were not confined to European or American ones; in equal measures, they were also Japanese and Chinese.

The formation of the Korean press was also closely related to the process of the rebirth of the Korean language, which widened its range of use, created and differentiated new functional styles, and as a language of communication took over most areas of society, all in a short span of three decades. This particular emancipation of the language of the Korean press, its liberation from the domination of classical Chinese (known in Korean as *hanmun* 한문 漢文), was inextricably intertwined with the Korean modernization movement following the forced opening of the country with the Treaty of Kanghwa Island in 1876. The emancipation of the language was an important current in the process of building a modern nation and reforming its education and culture. And in this process of the formation of the kind of Korean language that we know today, it is the press that has played the most important role.

However, before examining these foreign influences, it would be necessary to begin with a sketch of the indigenous historical foundations of the Korean press. The author will then consider the effect of the Japanese influence on the Korean press and ask you to keep in mind the paradoxical nature of this influence; while Japan was of course engaged in active suppression of Korean national ambitions – after all, Korea was merely a province of the Japanese empire – the Japanese national press provided a model for the eventual reassertion and development of modern nationhood by Korea on its own terms.

There were two precursors of newspapers in 19th century Korea; one was the official bulletins published by the imperial or royal court in Han'yang / Hansŏng (today's Seoul), called in Korean the *chobo* 조보 朝報 “court gazette,” “court news,” or *kwanbo* 관보 官報, “the official record”; the other precursor was the more widely circulated genre of newsletter, the so-called *minbo* 민보 民報, or “the people's gazette,” “information for the subjects,” “news for the people.”

The *chobo* or *kwanbo*, and *minbo* bulletins were handwritten, and then copied by hand for further circulation. The first *chobo* bulletin was published on March 26th, 1520, by the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn* 승정원 承政院 office, which had been functioning in the royal circle at Han'yang almost since the beginnings of the Yi dynasty. This office occupied itself with publicizing royal edicts, and cooperated with other important branches of the government, namely the *Sŭngmunwŏn* 승문원 承文院, which we can understand as “The Office of Diplomatic Correspondence,” and which functioned as the equivalent of today's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as *Sayŏgwŏn* 사역원 司譯院, an “Office of Translators” which gathered together the court translators. The contents of these bulletins concerned mainly the political life of the Yi dynasty. One could be informed, for example, about the nominations of new ministers or their dismissal, or the sending of government supervisors to the provinces. Sometimes the bulletins included reports of official from various provinces of Korea, as well as source materials and reports concerning the social and economic situation of the country from the point of view of the court and its politics.

In 1577, under the reign of king Sŏnjo 宣祖 (1567–1608), these *chobo* began to be printed with movable type, although this method was soon abandoned due to its inefficient and complicated printing system.

It is also difficult to see any kind of institutionalized organization as far as the process of the publication of the *chobo* bulletins is concerned, because these bulletins were for the most part written by individual court officials, without the involvement of any kind of publisher, and motivated only by the commands or directives of the king himself or his highest assistants. These bulletins did not have any stable style or visual arrangement, and often they were not titled.

The readers of these bulletins were foremost those fluent in Chinese script, that is, members of the Korean elite at the time, especially when the official language of the Yi dynasty was classical Chinese, which functioned in oral communication in a Sino-Korean phonetic form, albeit in a very limited way. The basic limit had to do with the need of at least a partial conversion of Chinese into indigenous forms during the reading aloud of texts. The circle of recipients and readers of these bulletins was extremely circumscribed, constituting only the notables in Han'yang, higher court officials delegated to the provinces as province governor (called in Korean *kwanch'alsa* 관찰사 觀察使) or tax collectors, and sometimes the king himself as well as members of his family. A few copies of the bulletin reached the hands of so-called *sŏnbi* 선비, or those disciples of Confucian doctrines who were learned in Chinese, Korean upper class society called *yangban* 양반 兩班, who were representatives of the well-born class, and finally Buddhist monks.

It should be noted that the readers of these bulletins included higher officials, the king's family, as well as the king himself. Thus, the royal court tried to exert tight control over the contents of these bulletins, and I will not exaggerate if I say that there existed a particular and severe system of censorship. The king himself sometimes played the role of censor, preventing the publication of sensitive information concerning diplomatic relations with China, dynastic secrets, or reports that touched on conflicts within the court or on military affairs.

Another kind of control over the content of these bulletins consisted in the tendency to emphasize moralizing stories about the devotion of sons to their parents, about the notable achievements of loyal subjects, or about the boundless loyalty of faithful wives. All such stories meant to promote their heroes as role models, treating them as living incarnations of the Confucian virtues.

The terms *chobo*, *kwanbo* and *minbo* are Korean loan words from Chinese, and as Sino-Korean words, they have a compound structure, in which we can distinguish the suffix “-bo”, “~보”, “~報”, which signifies the genre of press report, and the meaning of which is usually translated as “writings, newspaper, bulletin, monitor”, and which has become assimilated into Korean, as we can see in 19th century terms such as *chubo* 주보 週報 (or 周報), meaning “weekly”, or *kongbo* 공보 公報, or “official gazette”, “popular news”, or contemporary terms such as *hwabo* 화보 畫報 translated as “illustrated paper” or “magazine”, or *ilbo* 일보 日報, meaning “daily” or “newspaper”. This word is an element within the names of most newspaper titles being published in Korea today.

Korean historians of the newspaper agree that the *chobo* or *kwanbo* court bulletins became an example of later newspaper in the sense that they were used for the purpose of circulating information during the Yi dynasty.

During the modernizing of Korea in the final decades of the 19th century, both the pro-Western court circles and the reform-minded intellectual elite of Korea realized the necessity of creating a modern press.

I want to emphasize that when I speak of the “modern Korean press”, I have in mind a genre of mass media formed by European and American influence from without, while the role of intermediary is nevertheless played by the Chinese and Japanese press, which developed some decades before the Korean press. From this time on, a modern Korean press was also to provide an exchange of information between a Korea opening itself to the world and the Western nations, which Korea had to solicit for recognition and diplomatic support; we can see this two-way communication as a decisive break with the one-sided social communication performed by the *chobo* and *kwanbo* bulletins.

The political situation in Korea of the last three decades of the 19th century was very complicated; sharp conflicts between pro-Chinese court circles, which rejected any attempt at opening to the outside world or conducting reforms, and reform circles associated with Queen Min, which tended to be pro-Western and pro-Japanese, led to ruthless competition for influence at the royal court in Hansŏng.

The first attempts at bringing to life a modern Korean newspaper come in the penultimate decade of the 19th century. The bringing into print of the first newspaper, while already comparatively advanced as a medium of communication, was nevertheless still quite conservative in terms of content, as it was thought of above all as an official government bulletin, is connected in the annals of Korean newspaper history with Pak Yŏng-hyo 朴泳孝 (1861–1939), a high-ranked court official, who at the time acted for the court, with plenipotentiary powers, in the affairs of the capital district, which gave him the *de facto* position of ‘manager’ of the capital district of Hansŏng. The official title of the office held by Pak Yŏng-hyo was *sushinsa* 수신사 修信使. Pak, as an important figure of the Korean elite at the time, belonged to the circle of the liberal and pro-Western proponents of the modernization of Korea, directly involved in the process of reforming the educational system and other branches of society influenced by modernization. Acting on the initiative of the King itself as well as pro-reform government circles, Pak Yŏng-hyo as well as several other politicians, including Kim Ok-kyun 金玉均 (1851–1894), Hong Yŏng-shik 洪英植 (1855–1884) or Sŏ Chae-p’il 徐載弼 (1866–1951) departed in 1882 to Japan as the head of an official delegation from the royal court in Hansŏng, known in Korean historiography as ‘the mission of people of high office’ (in Korean *shinsa yuramdan* 신사유람단 紳士遊覽團, literally, ‘a mission circuit of the well-born statesmen’, or ‘gentlemen’s sightseeing group’).

This mission arrived in Japan for the purpose of acquainting itself with the achievements of Korea’s neighbour, which initiated its own reforms more than fifteen years earlier, and was conducting them with great speed. Pak Yŏng-hyo and his companions undertook a trip lasting three months, during which they explored even obscure corners of Japan, and which included visits to regular troop units of an army which was at that time already the most modern in Asia, as well as to military training academies, public and private schools, government institutions, modern industrial works and factories, libraries,

post offices, museums, hospitals, just then under construction, ship building docks. This mission of ‘persons of high office,’ sent by the court of King Kojong 高宗 (1852–1919) to Japan with the task of initiating wider contacts with Japan’s political world, was received by the leading politicians of the Meiji Era, including Inoue Kaoru 井上 馨 (1836–1915) and Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909). But another goal of the Korean visit was to become acquainted with the new means of communication, unknown at that time in Korea: the newspaper. A meeting in Tokyo with Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉 (1834–1901), the famous Japanese thinker, public figure and spokesman for modernization, not only made a lasting impression on Pak Yŏng-hyo, Kim Ok-kyun and Sŏ Kwang-bŏm 徐光範 (1859–1897), but they also obtained from their new Japanese mentor letters of recommendation to the editorial offices of several leading Japanese newspapers. The authority enjoyed by Fukuzawa opened to them the doors of the most important press centers in Japan, and also made easier their visits to printing facilities and made possible a detailed examination of the entire process of Japanese newspaper publishing, which already then was highly advanced in its news gathering and publishing capabilities.

When Pak Yŏng-hyo returned to Korea, he was bringing with him modern printing machines; also, he had been able to convince a few Japanese reporters and printers to work in Korea. After a close analysis of the of the experiences gained in Japan, Pak Yŏng-hyo presented to King Kojong a project of founding a newspaper, for which he obtained permission on February 28, 1883. Two weeks later, on March 13, Pak Yŏng-hyo entrusted Yu Kil-chun 兪吉濬 (1856–1914), then a manager in Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in Korean: *T’ongni Kyosŏp T’ongsang Samu-amun* 통리교섭통상사무아문 統理交涉通商事務衙門), the work of directing the development of the first Korean newspaper. Yu Kil-chun gained his education in Japan, where he came into contact with Fukuzawa Yukichi. As a student, he had been fascinated by the personality of his teacher and by the impressive results of his educational campaign. It was thus not surprising that in his latter activities in Korea, concentrated on the creation of a modern press, he was assisted by another student of Fukuzawa, the Japanese Inoue Kakugorō 井上角五郎 (1860–1938). However, the presence of Inoue in Korea must be seen not only as the outcome of a friendship with Yu, but also as a sign of the already then clearly visible desire of aggressive groups among the Japanese political elite to pull Korea and its entire modernizing movement into the orbit of its own influences. Yu called the newly created (in October 1883) office supervising the creation of the press The Office of Educational Publications – *Pangmunguk* – (박문국 博文局). This office had as its task the starting of a modern newspaper in Korean, based on examples of the already developed Japanese press. The *Pangmunguk* office was already in possession of the first modern printing machines, which were ordered in Japan on the occasion of the official visit of the delegation grouped around Pak Yŏng-hyo, and imported to Korea.

The first issue of the newspaper, called “The Capital Gazette,” that is, “Hansŏng Sunbo” 한성순보 漢城旬報 was printed on October 31, 1883 in Chinese, i.e. the language known in Korea as *hanmun*. This paper appeared every ten days, (thence its descriptive

name, *sunbo* 순보 旬報, a word assembled from *sun* 순 旬, ‘decade’, and *bo* 보 報, ‘newspaper’). The first issue of this newspaper was dated in a traditional way, that is to say the 1st day of the 10th month of the 492nd year of the rule of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), otherwise known as Yi dynasty, from the royal clan name (*Chosŏn kaeguk* 492-nyŏn), and also the 20th year of the rule of King Kojong, which according to the Western calendar gives the date of October 31st, 1883. After the fourth issue, “Hansŏng Sunbo” was dated in the Western way as far as the year, while still according to the Korean lunar calendar as far as the counting of the months and days. This newspaper appeared for the entire following year, until October 17th, 1883, which in the lunar calendar was the fourth day of the twelfth month. An average issue of the paper counted twenty pages in a 16 x 24 cm format.

The text of the newspaper is enclosed in a traditional frame, identical to the one common in Chinese texts printed from wooden blocks. The pagination after the first page was included in the lower right corner, beyond the framed text. The text itself was not divided into columns, and neither did it have any punctuation, although the arrangement of the content was ordered by the squares, which each Chinese character implicitly filled, and by the headlines and titles of the individual news reports. Another means of ordering the text was the more or less constant names of the different sections of the newspaper, and topical columns. In the first issue it is possible to differentiate between seven such sections. The first was the preface to the newspaper, called *sunbosŏ* 순보서 旬報序), or the introductory article written by the editors, which opened the first issue of the newspaper. This article, in an erudite and high style, referred to the Emperor Yu, the legendary founder of Xia dynasty (in Chinese: *Xia-chao* 夏朝 “founded” in 2205 B.C.E.) the oldest Chinese dynasty.

In this way the editors of the newspapers sanctioned special ties of Korean diplomatic and civilizational dependence on China. This introduction also clearly illustrates the official-bureaucratic style of the newspaper.

Beginning with the first issue of *Hansŏng Sunbo*, domestic news, *naeguk-kisa* 내국 기사 內國紀事 and reports from abroad, *kakkuk-kunsa* 각국근사 各國近事 were placed in separate columns, differentiated by a for the most part four-character headline, with the date of the related event placed immediately below it.

Reports from abroad remind one of common newspaper articles, including extensive descriptions about the topic of the event, explanations concerning the place of the event and its actors, and also editorial analyses and commentaries.

In the pages of the “Hansŏng Sunbo” there also began to appear regularly from the first issue so-called *chigu-tohae* 지구도해 地球圖解, explanations of the map of the world which was included in the first issue on a separate pasted-in page between pages 14 and 15 of the newspaper, as well as *chiguron* 지구론 地球論, “the earthly globe,” a column thematically related to the map. This column includes extensive explanations of the geography of the world and of modern astronomy as they compare to the Korean heliocentric theory and the ancient geocentric theory, however without mentioning either Ptolemy or Copernicus. The readers of the newspaper were also able to acquaint

themselves with a world different than the China-centric one previously known to them. Besides this, articles in the column called *nonjuyang* 논주양 論洲洋 or “the geography of the world”, were also related to the map of the world, and presented to the reader the most important achievements of Western cartography. The map itself shows the globe as divided into two hemispheres, and the article, “the geography of the world” presents the foundations of physical geography along with the topography of the lands, the oceans and seas, deserts, mountain ranges, rivers and lakes, islands and peninsulas.

In the ninth issue of the “Hansǒng Sunbo”, dated January 18th, 1884, we find a new column called *kungnae-sabo* 국내사보 國內私報, that is, domestic information of a non-official character; there is a crime report about the murder of a son of a Korean pharmacist by a Chinese soldier who is living in the Seoul neighbourhood of Chongno). In any case, this article gave to Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901), the commander of the Chinese forces stationed in Hansǒng, an excuse for compelling the royal court to extradite from Korea the Japanese Inoue Kakugorō himself, the co-founder and one of the main editors of the “Hansǒng Sunbo”, who was inconvenient to Chinese interests.

One should notice that in the “Hansǒng Sunbo” there are illustrated the geopolitical conditions of small European countries such as Switzerland, wedged between France, the German Reich, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and Italy, or Belgium, neighbouring with France and with Bismarck’s Reich. Another article treats about the role of neutral countries, which as small national organisms do not threaten their powerful neighbours. This surely suggests the desire on the part of the authors to establish some kind of parallel with the situation of Korea, then as now situated between great powers competing with one another for influence on her territory. In the same article (from August 21st, 1884), Poland is also mentioned, which is perhaps the first mention in the history of Korea about our country, at least as far as the popular press is concerned. Poland is presented there as a country which had once used to be territorially extensive, and in which her closest neighbours, Russia, Prussia and Austria, saw a threat, through which she herself became their victim and was unable to maintain her independence.

As to the linguistic character of the newspaper “Hansǒng Sunbo” which was edited in the *hanmun* system, we have to mention about the problem of its stylistic and thematic uniformity of this newspaper.

As we have previously noticed, the “Hansǒng Sunbo” represents a rather particular kind of Korean newspaper in terms of its language, a newspaper published in classical Chinese, which for Koreans represented a separate style of language, called *hanmun*. The linguistic character of the *Hansǒng Sunbo* was meant entirely for visual reception, and the newspaper could not be read with any reference to the Korean language, which at the time was altogether a spoken one, used in everyday communication. No attempt at transcribing the *hanmun* text into a different graphical system, for example through the Korean alphabet *hangŭl* 한글, could improve the reception of the content, because in *hangŭl* its contents could have not been understood by the Korean readers.

All the notes appearing on the pages of the “Hansong Sunbo” written in classical Chinese, would have been read by contemporary Chinese in a way similar to that

which was in use in Korea at the time, that is to say, the text would necessarily have been commented or interpreted in 19th-century Chinese by Chinese readers of this information.

This meaning could theoretically have been put across with the *hangŭl* alphabet, that is transcribed into a Sino-Korean form through a purely phonetic writing, but this would not make it possible to understand the text even when were it to be read aloud. Therefore the written text could not be the subject of reception. The *hanmun* system made possible only a visual reading of the newspaper without any kind of references to native speech, to spoken Korean. Such references could be possible only within the commentary to the text. For example in a situation of group reading or discussion of the article, the particular terms, phrases, compound forms could be translated either orally through a replacement of the Sino-Korean morphemes by some native expressions, or through the introduction, still on the basis of spoken commentary, some explanations or native grammatical parallels. To be sure, the newspaper was intended for readers who were comparatively fluent in classical Chinese. An inadequate knowledge of Chinese excluded potential readers.

The style of the newspaper deserves attention in its own right. Despite attempts at differentiating articles and reports according to content, and distributing them in separate, columns, such a distribution was based exclusively on the subject matter, and did not lead to any stylistic differentiation. From the standpoint of style and form of the language, the newspaper written in the *hanmun* system was distinguished by a characteristic uniformity of style. All news reports and articles represented a rather official style close to a bureaucratic, government language, and one can say that a separate journalistic style of writing did not yet exist. This stylistic uniformity was also caused by the content of the articles published in the “Hansŏng Sunbo”. As one could surmise from the preceding presentation of journal articles from various issues of the newspaper, the main purpose of these texts was indeed to present news from the world to the reader, but such news as had a utilitarian character. A part of the articles was addressed by the government directly to the readers with the intent of convincing them about the correctness of its policy of modernizing the system of rule, or about the great benefits to be gained from the diplomatic relations established with the more important countries in the region and the world. Another important part of such materials sponsored by the government were recommendations or postulates concerning further modernization, for example those explaining the need for the change in the calendar system, or in the adoption of new styles of dress and military uniforms, the reform of the legal system, and the adoption of a new system of weights and measures. For this reason all kinds of materials were published which were to present in a sweeping manner the achievements of Western civilization, covering practically all walks of life, such as the legal system, technology, culture, the foundations of scientific knowledge in pertinent fields, and this meant that the articles published in the “Hansŏng Sunbo” could not be modernized or changed or even expanded in terms of their style, because their function was understood in a utilitarian way as the maximum possible transfer of information to the readers.

This newspaper could not reach a wider number or range of readers. The reason for this was not only the language, which was ossified stylistically, archaic, and not suited to the demands of a modern means of social communication. The model of communication itself assumed by the editors could not inspire much enthusiasm, since the newspaper consisted mainly of official government communiqués, decrees and decisions, as well as official summaries about the state of the nation. In this way the newspaper appeared quite similar to the traditional *chobo* courtly bulletins. Nevertheless, the newspaper did appear regularly and gave information to its readers, which was already an achievement.

As far as the political dimension of the “Hansŏng Sunbo”, its character as an official information bulletin, published by the government, did not situate it immediately within the range of publications having a decidedly pro-reformist bias, although the articles and commentaries published in its pages did make it an important source of information about the outside world, about world politics and economics. One could perhaps say that the “Hansŏng Sunbo” represented, due to its conservative linguistic form, a carefully pro-reformist direction, but rather authoritarian Enlightenment, characteristic of the first stage of the development of the new type of social communication.

As far as the genre of newspaper, the “Hansŏng Sunbo” is placed in the annals of Korean newspaper history among so-called *kwanbo*, that is, official bulletins. It stands for an example of a regular newspaper publication from the first stage of the development of the press in Korea, for which one linguistic and topical model was the traditional *chobo* bulletin, while another was the Chinese newspapers newspaper published within the territory of Korea.

When we talk about the newspapers and journals appearing in Korea during the time of the country’s modernization, we should also mention the daily papers co-created by the Japanese, whose role in the process of the formation of the press should not be overlooked. A contemporary educational activist and reformer of Japanese schooling, and the founder of Keiō University in Tokyo, the previously mentioned Fukuzawa Yukichi, was a close student of the development of the press in the Japan of the Meiji era as well as in the West, pointed to his countrymen the way for the expansion of the printed word. In 1866 he delivers an observation that is pregnant with significance: “Europeans and Americans always publish newspapers, in their own countries as well as wherever else they may reside.” (See Albert A. Altman, *Korea’s First Newspaper: The Japanese “Chōsen Shinpō”*, “Journal of Asian Studies”, Vol. XLIII, No. 4, August 1984, s. 686).

From that time on, this statement became one of the guiding principles of the political crusade against Korea and other countries of East Asia by the Japanese governing elites, quite against the intentions of its author, who was a scholar, an educator, and a real friend to many Koreans who saw the necessity of educational reform in their own country.

Such an example was surely the Japanese newspaper, published earlier in Pusan, partly in Chinese, the “Chōsen Shinpō”. The Japanese “New Korean Paper”, (in Japanese: “Chōsen Shinpō” 朝鮮新報) appeared between December 10th, 1881 and May 1882. This newspaper was published by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce (*Shōhō Kaigisho* 商法會議所) in Pusan.

And thus, on December 10th, 1881 (and thus two years before the birth of the first Korean newspaper, the “Hansŏng Sunbo”) there appeared in Pusan the first issue of the “New Korean Paper”, or “Chōsen Shimpō”, intended for Japanese residents living and working there: merchants, bankers, employees of the post office, medical and administrative personnel of the Japanese hospital, Japanese marine brokers, and their families. The number of Japanese living in Pusan rose eighteen-fold in seven years, from 100 persons in 1875 to over 1800 in 1882.

The “Chōsen Shimpō” however, as the very first much more important model for later Korean newspapers, because concerned directly with questions of the language of the information media. Published in mixed Japanese script, made up of Chinese characters and the syllabic writing *kana*, the “Chōsen Shimpō” pointed the way to the linguistic Koreanization of the press.

The “Chōsen Shimpō” dealt with a broad thematic spectrum, covering every topic that could interest the Japanese living in Pusan. However, the most important feature of this periodical was the fact that it was bi-lingual. Its *hanmun* part was aimed to the Korean officials. Besides this, it’s interesting to note that it was none other than the *Chōsen Shimpō*, in the issue of 25.03.1882, published for the first time in Korea an article in *hangŭl* officially confirming the existence of this alphabet and describing the negative attitude of many Koreans to their own writing system, in particular the royal court in Hansŏng and its officials, who appeared not to notice the existence of the native Korean alphabet. This article appeared in the same issue in a Japanese translation. The Korean press used both *hangŭl* and ‘mixed writing’ only in the first issue of the weekly “Hansŏng Chubo” on 25.01. 1886, almost four years later.

However, the introduction of the Korean language as the language of journalism only became possible with the appearance of the second Korean periodical, published under the initiative of Kim Yun-shik 金允植 (1835–1922), well-known in Korea as a Confucian innovator. This was the “Capital Weekly,” or “Hansŏng Chubo”, 한성주보 漢城周報 appearing between January 25th, 1886, and July 7th, 1888, that is, until the closing down of the *Pangmunguk* 박문국 博文局 or the Office of Educational Publications. In the other modern newspaper “Hansŏng Chubo” we can see the first attempts at a linguistic Koreanization of the press during the era of modernization of the country.

The second modern newspaper published in Korea in the *hanmun* system was called the “Hansŏng Chubo”, since it was published as a weekly, which meant an increased frequency of publication, and therefore the qualitative term *sunbo* was modified to *chubo*, literally “weekly news”, “weekly newspaper”. This newspaper was founded by the *Pangmunguk* office, which filled the role of its official publisher. The director of the Office at the time was Kim Yun-shik (1835–1922), the well-known propagator of the modernizing movement and at the same time Confucian activist.

The first issue of the “Hansŏng Chubo” appeared, as mentioned before, on January 25th, 1886, that is, the 21st day of the 12th month of the year *Ŭllyu* in the 22nd year of the rule of King Kojong, the 494th year after the founding of the Yi dynasty, i.e.,

Chosŏn-kaeguk 조선개국 朝鮮開國. The “Hansŏng Chubo” was published essentially as a continuation of the *Hansŏng Sunbo* and on the back cover of the issue we can see the *Pangmunguk* office with its headquarters indicated as being in the Kyonghwabang-Kyodong neighborhood, in the center of Hansŏng. The weekly “Hansŏng Chubo” appeared until June 6th, 1888.

Until the present day there have survived relatively few original copies of the “Hansŏng Chubo”. In the Korean libraries we can find only issues one through six, that is from January 25th to March 8th, 1886, and then issues 17 and 18, from May 24th and 31st of the same year, issues from 22 to 32, that is from June 30th to October 11th, issue 47, which appeared on January 24th, 1887, and then issues from 52 to 60, dating from February 28th 1887 to April 25th of the same year, then issues 67 to 75, from June 13th to August 8th, 1887, and finally issue 99, from January 23rd, 1888. There has also survived one unidentified issue of the “Hansŏng Chubo” without the cover; it is therefore impossible to determine its date, but based on the contents of the issue one supposes that most likely this is one of the issues between the 7th and the 16th, that is, between March and May of 1886. There has also survived a single title page of issue 106, from March 12th, 1888.

In distinction to the “Hansŏng Sunbo”, the title of the newspaper was presented as the main sign of the weekly “Hansŏng Chubo”, printed vertically along the entire height of the page, in large characters that remind one in their typography of the Chinese “official writing” (Chinese: *lishu* 隸書, in Korean, *yesŏ* 예서).

Directly under the title appears the pagination, which includes the consecutive number of the issue, while the title page of the newsweekly is surrounded by a meandering border, which creates a typically Korean design distinguishing the text, but is borrowed from Chinese printing. On the other side of the cover page we see the pagination, arranged vertically, in which there is included the date of the issue, in the Korean manner of dating, that is, the year after the founding of the Yi dynasty, or *Chosŏn-kaeguk*, and in agreement with the old lunar calendar. This is followed by the Chinese pagination, which takes notice of the year of the imperial era, the so-called *nianhao* 年號, (in Korean: *yŏnho* 연호), and the third type of pagination, following the Western calendar type (in Korean, *sŏryŏk* 서력 西曆).

All three separate dates were printed in large type and they created a pagination column separate from the masthead. This characteristic mixture of various pagination systems shows clearly that the “Hansŏng Chubo” represents a transitional, kind of newspaper, containing within itself several visible trends of language and content. For we have here on the one hand an example of the preservation of the traditional format and contextual arrangement of the Chinese-language newspaper, while on the other hand it is possible to see certain attempts at assimilating into its format certain contextual features of Western newspapers, while pride of place is given all the while to the pagination in the Korean system, which suggests that the authors, despite the linguistic shape of a newspaper which was, after all, printed in the *hanmun* system, attached considerable weight to its Korean character.

In the history of the Korean press, the weekly “Hansŏng Chubo” is treated as the first newspaper-type publication in which one tried consciously to supplement the classical-Chinese materials printed on its pages with materials printed in Korean. The “Hansŏng Chubo” was published essentially in three systems of writing. The majority of the articles appeared in the *hanmun*, but beside this there appeared the first attempts at an additional presentation of materials written and printed in Korean, using the Korean *hangŭl* alphabet.

In this way, the editors of the newspaper realized the postulate of the philologist Kang Wi (died 1884), who was a supporter of introducing the *hangŭl* alphabet in printing periodicals and books. At the same time, there appeared in the “Hansŏng Chubo” also articles written and printed in mixed scripted called *kukhanmun-hon'yong* 국한문 혼용 國漢文混用. It is thought that this newspaper in particular utilized this writing system for the first time.

An article from the *genre* of small news reports, which appeared in the “Hansŏng Chubo” on January 25th, 1886, that is, the 21st day of the 12th month of the 494th year since the founding of Chosŏn [the year *Ŭllyu*, the 22nd year since King Kojong assumed the throne] as well as the 11th year of the Chinese *Guangxu* era, is the first article written in such a way and published in the Korean press.

As for the typographical arrangement and the distribution of the text on the pages of this newspaper, they rather remind one of the arrangements in the “Hansong Sunbo”. In the first issue there appeared immediately on the first page an “introductory article,” called *chubosŏ* 주보서: 周報序.

Describing the first attempts at the Koreanization of Korean newspapers, which were undertaken by the editors of the “Hansŏng Chubo”, we must clearly distinguish attempts at Koreanization of the writing system from Koreanization understood as a means of emancipation or as bringing back to life the Korean language as a language of the newspapers. These two levels of Koreanization, which one can observe in many Korean publications, is a mixture of different aspects of the shaping of the language of the press. In Korean newspaper studies it is rather common to assume an equivalence between the system of writing which appears in the pages of the newspaper and its linguistic form, that is, the linguistic system, the structure of the language. These are not one and the same phenomenon. In many fragments of the text it is possible to see only one longer classical Chinese phrase as well as a series of shorter phrases, which are joined together with native Korean elements, such as predicative forms, declensions, as well as demonstrative pronouns and a significant participation on the part of the Chinese characters. This points to a certain dominance of both the Chinese lexicon and of classical Chinese grammatical connections, although one should notice that parallel to the Koreanization of the texts appearing in the “Hansŏng Chubo” there appear more and more native Korean words.

However, linguistic Koreanization was a drawn-out process; it required the resolution of many linguistic problems originating in the structural differences between the *hanmun* system and the spoken, common Korean that was used by the people at the time.

Another question, which ought not to be passed over is the fact of the revitalization of the *hangŭl* alphabet itself, which was consciously introduced into the “Hansŏng Chubo” by its editors. Undoubtedly a returning to normal functioning in the newspaper of a native alphabet, earlier abandoned and ill-esteemed up to then in intellectual circles heavily influenced by Confucianism, an alphabet called together with all of Korean by the pejorative word *ŏnmun* 언문 諺文, that is ‘simple writing’, ‘writing for the common people’, ‘writing for the crowd’, or ‘the language of everybody’, ‘the language of the rabble,’ was an epoch-making event.

Following the closure of the weekly in “Hansŏng Chubo” in 1888, for several years there did not appear in Korea either any journal published in classical Chinese *hanmun* writing or any Korean language that would have a countrywide reach. The only exception was the irregularly appearing court bulletins. One of these was the “Government Bulletin” “Kwanbo” 관보 官報, published in mixed writing. On April 1st, 1895, readers did receive a new periodical, one which built on the tradition of the official court bulletins, namely, “The Official Gazette of the Later Korea”, “Ku-Hanguk Kwanbo”, 구한국관보 舊韓國官報, which used *hangŭl* in some articles alongside the mixed style of writing, *kukhanmun-hon’yong*. This periodical ceased publication in 1910, when Korea lost its independence.

It was necessary to wait a further eight years since the closure of the “Hansŏng Chubo” weekly for the appearance of the first newspaper written entirely in Korean. And here special attention is merited by the surely first independent, bi-lingual Korean-British newspaper; this paper’s headlines and titles were also in two languages, and is part of the history of the Korean press both as the Korean language “Tongnip Shinmun” 독립신문, 독립신문 and its English version “The Independent”. Its first issue appeared on April 7th, 1896, and at first it was published every other day. Starting in July 1898, this newspaper became a daily, and its typographical layout and format remind one of modern Korean newspapers.

The editor and publisher of this newspaper was Dr. Sŏ Chae-p’il, educated in Japan and the USA, a naturalized American, a doctor of medicine, who is known outside Korea under his American name, Philip Jaisohn; he was a pioneer of a truly modern Korean journalism. From the very beginning of this newspaper’s existence, he consciously gave up the mixed style of writing, the *kukhanmun-hon’yong*, in favour of an indigenous Korean alphabet, *hangŭl*. Articles written in English and printed in its pages were a useful source of information about Korea for residents living there, because this was news from the source; for this reason, the paper was also considered by its Western readers to be “the true voice of Korea” reaching foreign embassies and thus a foreign readership. This paper sometimes ran a society chronicle, informing foreign residents about the most important affairs in their circle. It also included paid advertisements about services or goods from the West or Japan. These latter were printed in three languages: English, Japanese, and Korean (also in the *hanmun* writing system).

A second daily paper whose appearance was of equal significance to that of the “Tongnip Shinmun” was the “Taehan Maeil Shinbo” 대한매일신보 大韓每日申報,

published also in an English language version as the “Korea Daily News”. Its creators were the Englishmen Ernest Thomas Bethell (1872–1909) and Thomas Clark Cowen (1869–1906), and the Korean journalist Yang Ki-t’ak 梁起鐸 (1871–1938).

This newspaper appeared from July 18th, 1904, and its publication was preceded by a trial edition, which was prepared by the three aforementioned publishers on June 29th of the same year. Both of these newspapers are also notable because they are the first examples in Korea of private newspapers, functioning independently of government sources of information. We must remember, of course, that King Kojong, freshly proclaimed Emperor of Korea, did support the publication of these newspapers financially, since the Imperial court placed great hopes in the development of the press as part of the reform of the country.

The birth of private newspapers was also the fruit of foreign influences, which is indicated by their bilingual nature, and by the fact that their publishers were for the most part foreigners or Koreans educated abroad. Both E.T. Bethell and T.C. Cowen were experienced journalists and publishers, well versed in the details of publishing both English language newspapers and indigenous East Asian newspapers in China and Japan, while the previously mentioned Dr. Sŏ Chae-p’il had lived in America for many years, and was familiar with American newspapers. All of this gives an international character to the Korean editions of these newspapers in terms of their genre, graphical arrangement, and selection of news. Thus, the accelerated linguistic Koreanization of the newspapers published in Seoul should be seen in this context.

I should mention that the choice of language presented a specific challenge for the publishers. They did not aim to force anything onto their readers, but were open to experiment in trying to reach as wide an audience as they could. One interesting linguistic experiment was the publishing of two Korean editions of the “Taehan Maeil Shinbo”, one version in mixed writing with Chinese characters and *hangŭl*, as well as a version in which *hangŭl* predominated, with Chinese characters appearing only sporadically in the titles of the articles.

At this time, there continued to appear newspapers, or special editions, so-called *hooe* 호외 號外 (literally, “without number”), written in classical Chinese, which functioned as so-called *hanmun*. In this way, the process of formation of the language form of Korean newspapers could reach the stage of conscious choices and solutions, which tended toward the codification of the style of newspaper Korean. The reform of the writing system became a necessary condition of this codification. In the specific situation in which the Korean language found itself, with its recent promotion to the rank of a language of literature, science, mass culture, media, as well as an official language, this characteristic co-dependence of language and its way of writing became an important element of official policy toward the language, as well as a subject of animated debate, in the years to come.

During these next few years, there appeared various periodicals and journals similar in style to newspapers, which suggests that the Korean press had immediately entered into a phase of lively and intensive development. This heightened publishing activity

on the part of the Korean intellectual elite is noted with emphasis to this day by historians, because the great enthusiasm, stubbornness in overcoming difficulties, and a clear consciousness of the great civilizing role of the press as a means of popular knowledge, appear in dramatic times, when the Korean nation is facing a deadly threat to its existence.

In the years 1881 and 1910 there were about 140 various newspapers published in Korea. Many of them were the Japanese owned ones, published for the Japanese residents in Korea and there were also a short-life newspapers or magazines, which disappeared from the readers' market in Korea after only some weeks of existence. It is worthy to mention some main newspapers and periodicals of this time, highlighting aspects of genre and language:

– “Hyöpsönghoe Hoebo” 협성회회보 “Discussion Club Magazine”. Weekly appearing in Korean (*hangŭl*), published by Yang H o n g - m u k 梁弘默 (?-?) between 1.1.1898 – and April 1898;

– “Maeil Shinmun” 매일신문 “Daily Newspaper”. A daily appearing in Korean (*hangŭl*), published by Yang H o n g - m u k between 9.4.1898–February 1910. The editor in chief of this newspaper was Syngman R h e e (1875–1965) – (in Korean.: Yi Sŭng-man 이승만 李承晩), later the first president of the Republic of Korea;

– “Kyöngsöng Shinmun” 京城新聞 “Capital Newspaper”. A newspaper appearing initially twice a week (*hangŭl*), published by Yun C h ’ i - h o 尹致昊 (1865–1945) between 2.3.1898–April 1898, and afterwards as:

– “Taehan Hwangsöng Shinmun” 대한황성신문 大韓皇城新聞 “The Newspaper of the Capital of the Korean Empire”: A newspaper published in mixed writing out of the initiative of the same editor in chief Yun C h ’ i - h o, between 6.4.1898–September 1898, and after the assuming of the editorial reins by Namgung O k 南宮 憶 (1863–1939) appearing as “Hwangsöng Shinmun” 皇城新聞 “Capital Imperial Newspaper”, still in mixed writing, published between 5.9.1898–September 1910;

– “Cheguk Shinmun” 데국신문 “Newspaper of the Empire”. A newspaper appearing in Korean (*hangŭl*), published by three journalists, Yi C h o n g - m y ö n 李鍾冕, Yi C h o n g - i l 李鍾一 and Yi C h o n g - m u n 李鍾文 between 10.8.1898–August 1910;

– “Shisa Ch’ongbo” 時事叢報 “Actual Reports”. A newspaper appearing every other day, published in mixed writing between 22.1.1899–February 1900. Hong C h u n g - s ö p 洪中燮 (?-?) and Chang C h i - y ö n 張志淵 (1864–1921) were its editors-in-chief.

In the years 1905–1910, a time when the Japanese protectorate was imposed, there appeared in Korea other national newspapers, whose fate appeared to be sealed from the outset. Among these we can count:

A newspaper with the pathos-charged title “Mansebo” 萬歲報 “Freedom and Independence” (The Koreans use the word ‘*manse*’ 만세 萬歲; in Japanese: ‘*banzai*’; in Chinese: ‘*wansui*’, to distinguish and honor someone or to express support for some action. The term ‘*manse*’ means literally “ten thousand years”, and it is usually translated as “long life!”). In the last years of their independence, Koreans shouted ‘*manse*’ to support

Emperor Kojong, his son Sunjong, and defenders of independence.). This newspaper was founded by Son Pyŏng-hui 孫秉熙 (1861–1922), the third leader of the spiritual movement *Tonghak* 동학 東學 and *Ch'ŏndogyo* 천도교 天道教, written in mixed script, and published between 17.6.1906–July 1907; its editor-in-chief was one O Se-ch'ang 吳世昌 (1864–1953), a widely known publicist as well as an outstanding calligrapher. This newspaper was continued by the following:

(1) “Taehan Shinmun” 大韓新聞 “Korean Newspaper” was created out of the initiative of the well-known writer Yi In-jik 李人植 (1862–1916), who was at the same time the editor-in-chief and the publisher of this newspaper, which appeared between 18.7.1907–30.8.1910, and written in mixed script.

(2) “Taehan Minbo” 大韓民報 “Popular Newspaper of Korea”. This newspaper was also written in mixed script, and appeared from 2.6.1909–31.8.1910. Its editor-in-chief was O Se-ch'ang, also the founder of its predecessor, the *Mansebo*.

Two other newspapers are worthy of mention:

“Kungmin Shinbo” 國民新報 “New National Newspaper”, appearing between 6.1.1906–August 1910, with Yi Yong-gu 李容九 and Song Pyŏng-jun 宋秉駿 at its helm, as well as the “Kyŏngnam Ilbo” 慶南日報 (22.10.1909–1916) “The Paper of the Kyŏngnam Province”, appearing in Chinju every second day, and founded by Kim Hong-jo 金弘祚.

The next newspaper worthy of attention was the “New Daily Newspaper”, appearing in Hansŏng from 22.1.1894, at first as the “Kanjō Shimpō” 漢城新報, published entirely in Japanese, with an intended audience of Japanese residents in the Korean capital; however, exactly one year later, on 22.1.1895, this same newspaper became also a new source of information for Korean readers, since the “Kanjō Shimpō” now also became the Korean “Hansŏng Shinbo” 漢城新報, appearing in a bi-lingual Japanese and Korean versions. The sponsors of this newspaper were private persons closely associated with Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

After the merger of this paper with another bi-lingual periodical – namely the “Taedong Shinbo” or “Daitō Shimpō” 大東新報, created in 18.4.1904 – there began to be published from 1.9.1906 a new paper in two separate language versions, the Korean “Kyŏngsŏng Ilbo” and the Japanese “Keijō Nippō” 京城日報. Both versions, or perhaps one might more accurately say both newspapers, were official organs of the *Chōsen Sōtokufu* 朝鮮總督府, that is, ‘The Colonial Office of the [Japanese] Government’, although the Korean version was closed down a year later, in September, 1907, while its Japanese competitor or sister became an instrument of propaganda following the annexation of Korea (22.08.1910), reduced its audience to the families of the Japanese government officials in Korea, and finally became an official press organ of the Japanese government office, the “Chōsen Sōtokufu”. The “Keijō Nippō” was closed down by the American occupying forces on 1.11. 1945.

Between 1896–1910, there also appeared on the Korean market various popular interest journals – it would even be appropriate to call them mass-market, if we keep in mind the realities of the time – as well as some newspapers who might be compared to tabloids

in their focus; these were often ephemeral publications, enduring no longer than a few months or even weeks.

Almost all Korean newspapers ceased to appear in August or September of 1910, when the occupying forces forbade publishing activities, fearing the existence of a Korean-language press as an instigator of opposition and national rebellion. Only the “*Taehan Maeil Shinbo*” continued to appear regularly, as the only newspaper written in Korean, during the entire decade from 1910–1920. However, with the removal from its ranks of two of its founders, Ernest Thomas Bethell and Yang Ki-t’ak, this paper was not able to continue in its previous form, i.e., as it had been since February, 1904.

In 1910 the “*Taehan Maeil Shinbo*” was taken over by the Japanese, who bought out its publisher. From this time on, the new owners began to publish under a new name; initially, the word *Taehan* 대한 大韓 (literally: Korea), was removed, as too vividly signifying the Korean nation, which had after all only just ceased to exist. The change of ownership also led to a fundamental change in the character of the newspaper itself. The “*Maeil Shinbo*” 毎日申報 became a paper of an official nature, submitted to rigorous censorship, and was essentially allowed to continue by a concession from the Japanese “Colonial Government,” the *Chōsen Sōtokufu*. However, the extending of a concession did not provide security or safety to the editorial staff, since only half a year later, in January, 1910, the Korean editors were accused of subversive actions by the Japanese government, which arrested them. The main Korean publisher, Yang Ki-t’ak, received a ten-year prison sentence after a show trial. A new, more accommodating editorial office was controlled with even more rigorous oversight from the censorship bureau.

In the development of the Korean press, the 1920s and 30s are a time of great trial as well as of confrontation not only with the requirements of the continuing modernization of the country – a process that was deeply shaken but not interrupted by the events of 1910, indeed continuing even with the lack of national sovereignty – but also a fundamental confrontation with new, dramatic social tensions which took place in the memorable year of 1919.

In Korean historiography, the date of March 1st, 1919, is connected with the so-called *Samil Undong* 삼일운동 三一運動 (or *Manse Undong*) movement, and with the first and the most massive rebellion against Japanese rule. The impulse for the rebellion became first of all the sudden death – in circumstances unexplained to this day – of the penultimate king and, from 1897, the first emperor of Korea, Kojong, on January 21st, 1919. For the Korean intellectual elite of the time, as well as for students of universities and high schools, the death of this ruler, who had been forced to abdicate his throne, sealed the sense of the complete loss of independence, and this seemed unacceptable. The funeral rites provoked in the mourners sympathy for the deceased, but at the same time became an occasion to show explicitly a desire for a return of the independence and sovereignty of the country. The writers of the “Declaration of Independence”, which was proclaimed on March 1st, 1919, initiated a campaign of passive resistance against Japan, but events turned in a more violent direction, with spontaneous street protests, which were bloodily suppressed by the Japanese police forces. Protests soon erupted all over the country. The

uprising of 1919 was put down after two months, with an estimated 7,500 dead, but in the aftermath, fearing a negative reaction from Western countries, Japan moderated its policy in Korea, which allowed for the appearance of new Korean newspapers.

And so, on March 5th, 1920, a year almost to the day after the reading of the “Declaration of Independence” in Seoul’s Pagoda Park, there appeared the first issue of the daily “Chosŏn Ilbo” (known also as “The Chosun Ilbo”) 朝鮮日報 or “Korean Newspaper”, whose co-creators were Cho Chin-t’ae 趙鎮泰, Yu Mun-hwan 劉文煥, Namgung Hun 南宮 薰 and Shin Sŏg-u 申錫雨 (1894–1953). The last would serve as editor in chief of this newspaper for many years.

One month later, on April 1st, there began to appear the daily “Tong-A Ilbo” (also known as “The Dong-A Ilbo”) 東亞日報, or “Journal of East Asia”, whose creator was Pak Yŏng-hyo, the once-precursor of the modernizing movement during the final years of Korean independence, and the previously mentioned close advisor of King Kojong, as well as such journalists as Kim Sŏng-su 金性洙 (1891–1955), Yang Ki-t’ak and Yi Sang-hyŏp 李相協 (1893–1957). Both of these newspapers appear to this day, and are considered the most prestigious dailies published in Korean.

In the same month, there appeared also the “Shisa Shinmun” 時事新聞 (“Latest News”), which was initiated by a journalist and publicist by the name of Min Wŏn-shik 閔元植. However, this newspaper lasted only a year.

Later in the 1920s there also appeared daily papers of somewhat smaller reach, and whose existence was for the most part short, such as the “Shidae Ilbo” 時代日報 (“Times”) published from 1924 to 1926 by the well known historian and literary man Ch’oe Nam-sŏn 崔南善 (1890–1957) as well as the “Chungoe Ilbo” 中外日報 (“News from the country and the world”), published from 1926 to 1931 by Yi Sang-hyŏp.

In the 1930s there appeared the “Chung’ang Ilbo” 中央日報 (“Central Newspaper”), considered to be leftist-liberal in tendencies, and founded in 1931 by the initiative of No Chŏng-il 盧正一 and Ch’oe Sŏn-ik 崔善益. After two years, in February 1933, its name was changed to “Chosŏn Chungang Ilbo” 朝鮮中央日報 (“Central Newspaper of Korea”) and continued to appear until autumn 1937 by an editorial team led by Yŏ Un-hyŏng 呂運亨 (1886–1947). However, in November 1937 this newspaper also was closed down.

The last years of these two years in the history of the Korean press are a time of new tensions caused by the rising conflict between China and Japan, which begins in 1937 and which leads to a war hysteria in Japan that is encouraged by military circles which form the main pillar of government and which openly push for a militant nationalism.

As far as the political and social themes raised in these newspapers, especially in the first decade of the Japanese occupation, Korean newspapers with the correct nationalist attitude were able to discuss political question, but between 1920 and 1931 one can see a constant tendency toward the elimination of explicit political questions and themes in newspaper articles. This gap was filled more and more often by articles concerning the economy. For the Japanese, this was a much more topical theme, for it was at the same time more pragmatic in itself and also turned the attention of the public away

from sensitive questions of internal and international policy. After 1931, political topics were almost completely eliminated from the press, in favour of a propaganda that was as persistent as it was intellectually limited.

During this time, the Korean press was also compelled to face the necessity of taking a stand in relation to the propaganda campaign propagated by the Japanese under the slogan of *naichō-ittai* (kor.: *naesŏn-ilch'e* 내선일체 內鮮一體) meaning: “we (=Japanese) and Korea are one”. This slogan was meant to ground the energetic efforts to transform the Koreans into loyal subjects of the ‘Empire of the Rising Sun’. Another sign of the times was the increased effort to compel the changing of Korean names into Japanese ones, while to make sure of the spiritual loyalty of the citizens in respect to their rulers, *Shinto* shrines were erected, with their *torii* gates made of concrete, and Koreans were compelled to worship or at least give respect to the divine pantheon of the Yamato dynasty.

The aforementioned “Chosŏn Ilbo” and “Tong-A Ilbo” newspapers were the two leaders of the Korean press between 1920 and 1940. Both of these papers, despite strong censorship, were sometimes able not so much to resist but rather to maneuver around the restrictions, and to publish things that were not entirely in keeping with the ruling policies. In their pages there appeared introductory articles signed by the editorial office, the so-called *sasŏl*, 사설 社說 with their subtly formulated voice of opposition. This kind of cat and mouse game with the censors changed according to circumstances; naturally, when the screw was tightened, one wrote less, while during short periods of relaxation in the political climate, one wrote more. For we should remember that if everything that is said about the restrictive practices of Japanese censorship is true, it is also true that the Japanese policy toward the press was also a kind of delicate game. For the purpose of gaining greater trust among the Koreans, the newspapers were sometimes permitted to articulate national yearnings, while they were expected in return to make gestures of ethno-historical solidarity with the Japanese.

Everything that could be used was used in the propaganda wars of those years. The thesis about the common origin of the Japanese and Korean languages was formulated as a kind of incorporation of Korean into Japanese, where Korean was to be an inferior branch, an offshoot from the solid Japanese trunk, by those linguists who were scientifically less subtle while ideologically more energized. The thesis was meant to be the prelude to a scientific justification of the absorption of Korea by means of ethno-historical justifications, presented as the spreading of patronage over, as it was put, “younger brothers in need of civilizing”.

Korean newspapers, including both the “Chosŏn Ilbo” and the “Tong-A Ilbo” were compelled to participate in this propaganda campaign, which its initiators hoped would fundamentally change the outlook and opinions of Koreans. A common theme in this campaign was to refer to authoritarian-didactic slogans, in the spirit of the Confucian ethic of the obvious.

It is worthwhile to cite a few of these slogans, which are distinguished by historians of the period with the Sino-Korean and Japanese suffix *-ron* (-론 -論) “doctrine, thesis, theory, idea”. For example, we have the so-called ‘doctrine *taese-daebi*’ 대세대비 (Jap.:

taisei-taibi 大勢 對備, lit.: “preparation before assuming power”), which called for the need to give up hope for full independence in favor of an indefinitely long period of preparation, self-perfection, and striving toward civilizational progress.

Another slogan used was the “doctrine *Tong’yang-kong’yong*” 동양공영 (Jap.: *Tōyō-kyōei* 東洋 共榮 – “universal blossoming in the East”), which called for East Asian ethnic solidarity, understood here as civilizational progress under Japanese leadership. This slogan also referred to the idea of a Greater East Asia facing a sinister, imperialist West. Two other slogans are of importance here, one about an “East Asian crisis” caused by “Foreign forces inimical to Asia” (*Tong’yang-wigi* 동양위기 Jap.: *Tōyō-kiki* 東洋 危機) as well as “the inevitability of war” (*chōngjaeng-p’ilji* 전쟁 필지 戰爭必至; Jap.: *sensō-hisshi*) in an unstable world, where the USA and Europe are the “catalyst of political destabilization and disorder”.

A slogan strongly propagated by the Japanese occupiers at this time (in the thirties and forties) was the “appeal for *minjung-bonwi*” (lit.: “the common masses in first place” – Jap.: *minshū-hon’i* 民衆本位), one invented with almost a revolutionist’s cleverness, since in the totalitarian regime of the 1930s it could not be taken by anyone literally. And so this slogan was a threadbare play of words, giving no chance for any interpretation in terms of actual reality, and perhaps no other slogan could match it as far as cynicism and semantic emptiness. However, when needed, it could perform the function of a tool to accuse the patriotic Korean elite of separating itself from “the healthy trunk of the nation”.

Considering the circumstances, which I could only sketch here in a gravely abbreviated form, it is not strange that both of these newspapers also often published articles which formed a kind of offering to the Japanese government, describing the international situation from a Japanese point of view, and concerned with Japanese-Chinese relations, with the economic and political problems of other countries in the regions, and with the policies of the West toward Japan and toward an East Asia that was assumed its legitimate sphere of influence.

I should also mention that the “Chosŏn Ilbo” published commentaries about the foreign policy of the USSR and the relations between the USSR and the West or Japan. This is sometimes explained as showing a leftist-liberal bias among the editors of this newspaper.

During both decades, newspapers conducted campaigns to mobilize the public toward educational and social activism. Articles of this type often dealt with the topics of universal schooling, and the spreading of education among the people of both the cities and the countryside. There were also published many articles about improvements in public health and hygiene, as well as articles calling for change in traditional customs, and for the elimination of negative habits rooted in tradition or habit – for example the campaign against opium dens and the smoking of opium.

Educational concerns also included efforts to eliminate illiteracy, and to spread the knowledge of *hangŭl*. One should also mention the extremely important cultural role played by the daily press during these two decades. Korean poetry and prose often

appeared in the pages of newspapers, especially in weekend editions, while the “Chosŏn Ilbo”, which appeared already from 1924 twice a day, began to run comic strips or short illustrated stories in its weekend edition.

Between 1926 and 1940, the Japanese government suspended the publication of the “Tong-A Ilbo” and the “Chosŏn Ilbo”, while between 1926 and 1932 the Japanese censorship office confiscated entire print runs 587 times. The gradually more severe repressions directed against journalists and the stricter preventive censorship at the end of the 1930s led to the elimination, for all practical purposes, of the final beachheads of a Korean press, which was now independent in name only, while in August 1940 there was suspended the publication of all remaining Korean newspapers of nationwide reach suspended. Only local newspapers remained, with their distribution restricted by means of a law known as the *ichidō-isshi* (in Korean: *iltto-iltchi* 一道一紙), or “only one newspaper per province”.

From the time of the Japanese-initiated war in the Pacific theater in December 1941 until their surrender in August 1945, even the few provincial Korean newspapers did not have a chance to publish any article without censorial oversight by the occupying forces. Only Korea’s recovery of independence on August 15th, 1945, enabled the rebirth of an independent press at least in the southern part of the peninsula, and three years later in the newly proclaimed Republic of Korea.

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