

Japanese Imperialism and Korean Literature

Developed by Austin Murphy-Park

Target Grade/Classes: Upper Level High School (11th-12th Grade). The Ideal Course would be a dual department offering that teaches both Korean History and Korean Literature, examining the impact of historical events upon the themes and ideas present in the literature.

State Standards:

NJSLSA.R1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

NJSLSA.R2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

NJSLSA.R3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Social Studies 21st Century Skill. By the end of grade 12, students have a heightened understanding of the cause-and-effect relationship between past and present events, recognize patterns of interactions, and understand the impact of events in an interconnected world.

Vision: An education in social studies fosters a population that:

- Considers multiple perspectives, values diversity, and promotes cultural understanding.
- Appreciates the global dynamics between people, places, and resources.

Class Procedures;

- 1) Introduction - Do Now: What prior knowledge do you have about Japanese Imperialism before World War II? Write 2-3 sentences and then think-pair-share.

2) After discussion, PPT

(https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1YscIB2rYJgw_d8wgU6LHZvJmacVFtWFzVjxE2zb6fdk/edit?usp=sharing)

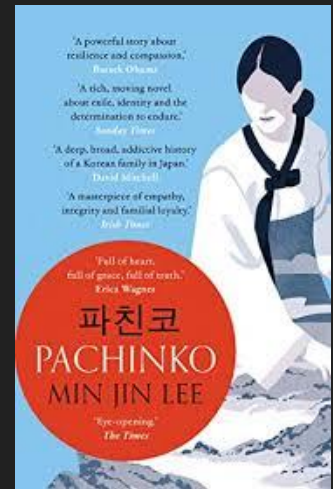
3) Activity - finding evidence of imperialism's impact on characters in the novel

- a. Students are put into groups of teacher choice (by table if the room is organized in that manner - otherwise collaborative groups of 3-4 should work well)
- b. Students will be given one of three characters - Sunja, Noa, Solomon, and asked to complete a [graphic organizer](#) showing the impact of history on the character's actions and/or thoughts in a portion of the novel (they are nearly done reading the novel in its entirety)
- c. Student groups take turns sharing with the class

4) Homework: Text-to-Self Connection: Ask a parent, guardian, or other family member about a historical event that influenced the direction of their life in some way. Write a brief description of what they tell you and be prepared to share tomorrow.

Korea under Japanese Imperialism and its impact on Characters in *Pachinko*

Austin Murphy-Park



Japan Annexes Korea (1910)

- In the late 19th century, Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War with the backing of the United States and Great Britain.
- Japan annexed Korea with the agreement of Russia and the support of the United States and France.
- Korea, having no support from any global power, lost its sovereignty.
- <https://www.history.com/news/japan-colonization-korea>



Japan exerts total control over Korea

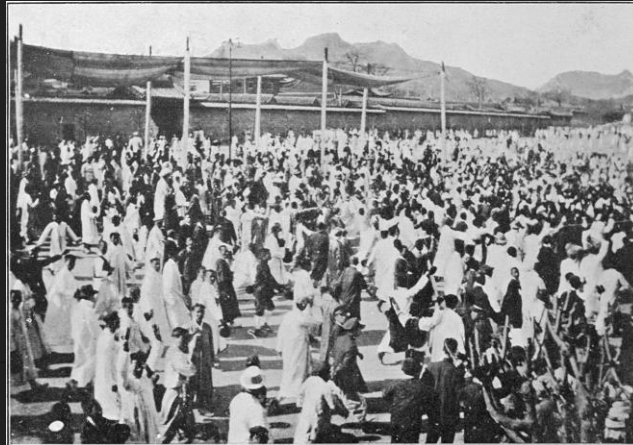
- Japan set up a government in Korea with the governor-generalship filled by generals or admirals appointed by the Japanese emperor.
- The Koreans were deprived of freedom of assembly, association, the press, and speech.
- Many private schools were closed because they did not meet certain arbitrary standards.
- The colonial authorities used their own school system as a tool for assimilating Korea to Japan.
 - Primary emphasis was placed on teaching the Japanese language.
 - Subjects such as Korean language and Korean history were excluded from the educational curriculum.
- The Japanese built nationwide transportation and communications networks.
- A new monetary and financial system was established.
- Japanese commerce in Korea was promoted, while Koreans were barred from similar activities.
- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41930866>

Censored Korean newspaper from the era



Koreans fight for their independence

- The March First Movement (1919) is remembered as a landmark event of the Korean independence movement and all of Korean history.
- The protests began in Seoul, with public readings of the Korean Declaration of Independence in the restaurant Taehwagwan and in Tapgol Park.
- Statistics on the protests are uncertain; by years end, there were around 1,500 to 1,800 protests around the world, with a total of around 2 million participants.
- <https://www.britannica.com/event/March-First-Movement>



Japan cracks down brutally

- Despite the peaceful nature of the protests, they were frequently violently suppressed.
- One Korean estimate in 1920 claimed 7,509 deaths and 46,948 arrests.
- Japanese authorities reported much lower numbers.
- Instances were observed where authorities destroyed evidence, such as during the Jeamni massacre (1919)
 - Japanese soldiers burnt down a church to destroy the bodies of around 20 to 30 Korean civilians they had lured into the church before killing.
 - <https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english-edition/e-international/100600.html>



Independence Movement Honored Today



Impact of Independence Movement

- The Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, established in Shanghai, China, is the country's first democratic republican government (1919).
 - It was equipped with a modern Constitution and a political system that separated the three basic branches (executive, legislative, and judicial) of government.
- Koreans also carried out armed struggles against the Japanese.
 - In the 1920s, more than 30 Korean independence army units engaged in resistance activities in Manchuria and the Maritime Provinces of Siberia.
 - In June 1920, the Battle of Fengwudong occurred in Fengwutung, Jilin province, China, between Japanese forces and Korean independence militias led by Hong Beom-do, resulting in a significant Korean victory.
 - The Battle of Qingshanli was fought over six days in October 1920 between the Imperial Japanese Army and the Northern Military Administration Office Army, led by Kim Jwa-jin, along with other Korean armed groups.
 - They won a great victory against Japanese troops in Helongxian, Manchuria.
 - <https://www.korea.net/AboutKorea/History/Independence-Movement>

Comfort Women

- Beginning in 1932 and lasting until 1945, the Japanese government operated a notorious systematized sex trafficking scheme.
 - This scheme involved women, girls, and boys from throughout the Japanese empire.
- Scholars believe the system ensnared 200,000 victims, although estimates vary from 20,000 to nearly 500,000.
- Some women were kidnapped into servitude, while others were defrauded with promises of overseas work with steady pay to send home to their families.
- <https://www.history.com/news/comfort-women-japan-military-brothels-korea>



Former Comfort Woman Tells Her Story



Japanese Denial

- Although Japan has recognized that this sexual exploitation constituted torture, they have done nothing to address the issue so far, apart from apologies in the 1990s.
- Some Japanese authorities are still denying the existence of sexual slavery.
 - Comments by the mayor of Osaka claimed that this system of sexual exploitation was necessary and that no one has proved that force was used against the 'comfort women.'
- Such accusations are particularly painful as they imply that the women willingly entered into some kind of 'prostitution.'
 - This places the responsibility on the victims and further stigmatizes them in most traditional societies.
 - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22650673>

Other Forced Wartime Labor

- Around 780,000 Koreans were conscripted into forced labor by Japan during its 35-year occupation, according to data from Seoul.
- This number does not include the Korean women forced into sexual slavery by Japanese troops.
- <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-labor-and-working-class-history/article/japans-forgotten-korean-forced-laborers-the-search-for-hidden-wartime-graves-in-hokkaido/A7913D417E14F8E727A4798FAF9F95C0>



Profits from Forced Labor

Major Japanese companies profited from forced Korean labor, among them Mitsubishi and the Nippon Steel Corporation.



**MITSUBISHI
MOTORS**



Modern Day Korea - Japan Relations

Seoul-Tokyo ties have long been strained over Tokyo's brutal 1910-45 colonial rule of the Korean peninsula, with the nations unable to reach final agreements on the extent of compensation and apologies.



Modern Day Korea - Japan Relations

- In two separate verdicts in 2018, the top South Korean court ordered Mitsubishi and Nippon Steel to compensate a total of 15 other Korean employees for forced labor.
- Japan was irked by these rulings, insisting that all compensation issues were already settled by a 1965 bilateral treaty that normalized their diplomatic relations.
- However, the 2018 South Korean court rulings stated that the treaty cannot prevent individuals from seeking compensation for forced labor.
 - Japanese companies' use of such laborers were deemed "acts of illegality against humanity" linked to Tokyo's illegal colonial occupation and its war of aggression.

Modern Day Korea - Japan Relations



[Article from March 2024](#)

Zainichi Koreans

Post-War, many Koreans who had been forcibly taken to Japan during Imperialism stayed. The term “Zainichi” means “residing in Japan”, reflecting the Japanese unwillingness to accept these new residents as full citizens with rights and privileges.

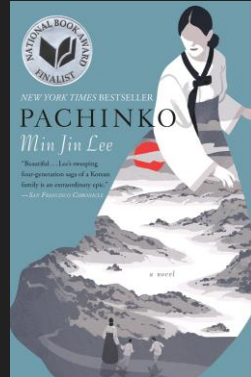
https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/docs/koreans_in_japan#:~:text=In%20the%20North%20Korean%20class,immigration%20authorities%20and%20co-nationals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWxUVjfKowU>

Korea-Japan Relations in Pachinko

Min Jin Lee's novel is a fictional family saga, but one that is rooted in real history and generational trauma.

[Read this article](#) in preparation for a discussion on how Min Jin Lee uses historical context to drive the narrative and character development in *Pachinko*.



Assignment

With your small group, you will be given a character - Sunja, Noa, or Solomon

Write a detailed account of a time when this character was directly affected by the Japanese colonial era after that era had ended. Discuss the actions in the story, but also the subtext of the character's feelings, and how the historical events helped shape their character as well as their responses.

In a larger sense, we are examining Generational Trauma. Prove the effect of the Generationally Traumatic event of Japanese Imperialism on your character.