

Historicizing “Korean Criminality”: Colonial Criminality in Twentieth Century Japan*

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Introduction

*Crime is a phenomenon of organized social life, and is the open rebellion of an individual against his social environment.*¹

*The tremendous power of persuasion inherent in the main ideologies of our times is not accidental.*²

On August 17, 1946, just slightly over a year after Japan surrendered and accepted the Potsdam Declaration, Progressive Party member from Hokkaido Shiikuma Saburō viscosly bemoaned the reported lawlessness

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1 W. E. B. Dubois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899), 235.

2 Hannah Arendt, “Race-Thinking before Racism,” *The Review of Politics* 6-1 (Jan. 1944): 39.

of Taiwanese and Koreans in the black markets that had become a pervasive presence in occupied Japan.

We refuse to stand by in silence watching Formosans and Koreans, who have resided in Japan as Japanese up to the time of surrender, swaggering about as if they were nationals of victorious nations... The actions of these Koreans and Formosans makes the blood in our veins, in our misery of defeat, boil... Koreans form the nucleus of all black-markets operations and their *lawless actions* influence all commercial transactions and social life in Japan today.³

The vociferation goes on and on. Allegedly written in the Home Ministry, this studied appeal to Japanese racial impulses did not appear in a semantic vacuum.⁴ It was crafted to incite dormant suspicions of Taiwanese, and especially, Korean criminal predisposition. The concept of criminality is pertinent to this point. While criminality within the discipline of criminology tends to refer to the actual criminal characteristic of an individual, such as evidence of their criminal record, it has also come to refer to the extent to which a person or group of people are perceived as being criminally disposed. Theories of criminality also focus on issues of power and powerlessness because those in positions to enact law are inevitably the ones in power.⁵ In the context of the colony, these power relations are significantly more pronounced, and it is the combined force of colonialism and criminality that will be the focus of this article.

3 David Conde, “The Korean Minority in Japan,” *Far Eastern Review* 16-4 (Feb. 26, 1947): 42. Emphasis added.

4 Conde, “The Korean Minority in Japan,” 42.

5 For more on the concept of African American criminality: Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010); Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Specifically, this article will examine the arsenal of knowledge built up over time to epistemologically position the colonial subject as the criminal necessitating domination, surveillance and punishment. The discourse of colonial criminality stemmed from Japan's late nineteenth century epistemological commitment to imperialism and concomitant knowledge of law and the legality of colonial subjects. Through an analysis that historicizes the "criminal Korean" (*futei senjin*)⁶ epithet in the prewar and the emergence of *yami* as a signifier of Korean economic criminality throughout the 1940s, I illustrate how both the racialization of Koreans was both framed in terms of crime and subversion and how that criminality functioned as a justification for postcolonial legalized exclusion and discrimination. In particular, discourses of criminality and deviance that were enacted during the colonial era reinforced the image of lawless and subversive Koreans in the postwar. This is significant, I argue, because it set the tone for the nascent national Japanese state and American occupiers to exclude Koreans from the project of national reconstruction. The criminal racialization of Koreans witnessed in the postwar was in large part a response to the crisis occasioned when the Japanese colonizers were threatened with the requirement to share social space with the colonized without the legal safeguards of the colonial state. With liberation, the removal of the juridical barrier between Japanese and Koreans played out most visibly in the police scramble for jurisdiction over Koreans in the Japanese metropole.

I use the term "racialization" in the preceding paragraph tentatively, but intentionally. Drawing on Patrick Wolfe's assertion that "race is colonialism speaking,"⁷ race's development as a set of classificatory regimes under a colonialism that seeks to order subject populations differentially in pursuit of historical agendas requires further elucidation. In this historical

6 The Japanese term *futei* means both disrespect of the law and a sense of immorality. *Senjin* was a derogatory term for Koreans.

7 Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London: Verso, 2016), 5.

setting, racialization is the process by which a colonial-inscribed hierarchical relationship was established and maintained while at the same time relying upon a set of practices that sought to impose domination. It is also important to note the priority of practice. No account of race can be complete without dealing with its emotive virulence. Fear, hatred, rapine, violence, callousness and cruelty are of the essence of race. Furthermore, racism, as a pathology of modernity cannot simply be reduced to a rational calculus of interests. We might consider the example in which Koreans were targeted after the Great Kanto Earthquake, which will be dealt with later. Koreans were targets of Japanese fear, hatred and violence after the massive earthquake due to Japanese accusations that they were committing arson and poisoning wells. Koreans were massacred on a scale that is still debated fiercely today. Yet this demonic redundancy, stepping so far over the line that the justification for killing thousands of people becomes completely redundant, moves far beyond reason. Without some sense of the visceral force of race's appeal, we cannot begin to account for it. As this example suggests, race mobilized the most immediate of nervous responses. However, the emotive response race beckons operates in the everyday interactions between people inhabiting a particular social space. Race as a marker of difference demands immediate recognition and reinforcement, ensnaring all into its violent hierarchy. The categories of race provide a stable zone of ascribed and continuing identities that bind social reproduction to biology. Wolfe argues that racialization, the process of creating racial definitions and social relations to which racial meanings are attached, represents a response to the crisis occasioned when colonizers are threatened with the requirement to share social space with the colonized.⁸

For Koreans trapped in Japan's imperial project, that process began with the colonization of the peninsula, became heightened as Koreans migrated to the Japanese metropole during the colonial era and greatly intensified in the wake of Korean liberation. Korean liberation in the

8 Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 14.

wake of World War II became what could be considered a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it removed the colonial and juridical apparatus that had subjugated them to the Japanese. While at the same time, it liberated the Japanese from the paradoxical discourse of imperial inclusiveness that had previously provided the veil for interracial harmony (*Hakkō Ichiū*).⁹ As evident in Shiikuma Saburō's rant about Korean criminality, the political context of the Allied Occupation in the late 1940s provided the backdrop for the language of race to retrieve and reorient the rhetoric of inequality to combat the perceived threat posed by Korean liberation. This article will trace the genealogy of Korean criminality from within Japanese colonialism and elucidate its role in perpetuating depictions of Koreans as criminals in postcolonial Japan.

Japan's Korea Episteme

Epistemologies of Korea first emerged in Japan from the late nineteenth century. The 1876 Kanghwa Treaty established diplomatic relations between the Meiji state and the Chosŏn dynasty. This signaled the Korean state's political independence from its tributary and cultural ties with Qing China. In Japan, the first generation of Korean experts were graduates of Tokyo University's Department of History. These students of *Tōyō gaku*, or Eastern Studies, represented a new breed of Japanese scholars. They were not only trained in classical Chinese historical literature, but also the western enlightenment disciplines of geography, geology, paleontology, archaeology, art history, physical anthropology and ethnography.

9 For more on the inclusion of Koreans in Japanese imperial discourse, see Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 35-77; Eiji Oguma, *A Genealogy of 'Japanese' Self-Image* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002), 64-92.

Studying under the guidance of Shiratori Kurakitchi, students of Eastern Studies in Japan, Ikeuchi Hiroshi, Torii Ryūzō and Imanishi Ryū were attempting to grasp Japan’s place and role in the context of late nineteenth century East Asia. As Stefan Tanaka has argued, from the late nineteenth century Japanese *Tōyō* historians constructed the idea of *Tōyō* to distinguish Japan from the Orient by orientalizing China as Japan’s premodern past.¹⁰ This also ultimately informed much of their overall interpretative framework of *Chōsenjin* or Korean studies that, according to Hyung Il Pai, selectively utilized anthropological surveys, documentary studies and archeological data to reconstruct a unilinear evolution scheme for Korean civilization that highlighted four main arguments: “(1) the theory of *Nissen dōsorōn*, that is, the common ancestral origins of the Korean and Japanese races; (2) the assertion that Japanese emperors ruled Korea between the fourth and seventh centuries; (3) the overwhelming impact of Chinese civilization on Korea and the consequent lack of unique Korean origins; and (4) the backwardness/stagnation (*teitairon*) of Korean civilization.”¹¹ Colonial historical analysis that drew attention to Korea’s racial and cultural inferiority to Japan and dependency on China has been largely denounced by post-liberation nationalist historians as providing the intellectual and historical justification for colonial occupation.

Empowered by western academic methodological legitimacy, Japan’s epistemological appropriation of *Chōsen* had deep and profound ramifications on the ground. Japan’s paradoxical colonizing mission underscored the archeological and racial origins of both Korea and Japan, while simultaneously emphasizing the inherent deficiencies in Korean culture necessitating improvement through assimilation. This paradox manifested itself through the *naichi/gaichi* (inner lands or metropole / outer lands or colonies) divide. With the penetration of Japanese capital and political power

10 Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

11 Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing “Korean” Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 36.

into the Korean peninsula, colonized Koreans also slowly but surely penetrated the metropole.¹² The colonial presence in the metropole was intimately related to the psychological and cultural effects of maintaining the empire. Colonial discourse, having to constantly justify and legitimize the relationship between the two peoples, mobilized the aforementioned scientific knowledge to create and maintain the image of Koreans and other colonized peoples as backward, immature, inferior and uncivilized. Unlike European empires, which colonized lands often geographically distant and peoples racially and culturally distinct from the metropole, Japan's colonial subjects were racially and culturally similar enough to at times cause confusion. What emerged was a stereotype and mode of stigmatization that borrowed from assumptions and academic biases within *Chōsenjin* studies. As this article will demonstrate, the image of the malcontent, subversive and criminal Korean proved to be one of the most ubiquitous, potent and lasting tropes of Koreanness in metropolitan Japan.

Transference to the Metropole

Due to Japan's proximity to its colonies, physical exchange between the metropole and colonies became evermore frequent. According to Ministry of Justice data, in 1911 approximately 2,500 Koreans resided in Japan. However, due to the economic boom induced by Japan's participation in World War I, that population had swelled to over 32,000 by 1921.¹³ By 1937, there were over 700,000 and close to two million Koreans by 1945.¹⁴ As Michael Weiner has demonstrated, Korean students involved in workers and socialist movements were rendered a threat to

12 Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 38-93.

13 Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan*, 53.

14 Young-hwan Chong, *Chōsen Dokuritsu heno Airo: Zainichi Chōsenjin no Kaihō Gonen-shi* (The Narrow Path to Korean Independence: 5-year History of Zainichi

imperial Japanese authority.¹⁵ Their grasp of the Japanese language and use of Western-style clothing and hairstyles meant Koreans were increasingly invisible to the Japanese authorities. In addition, news regarding Koreans’ protest and armed struggle in the colony influenced the way in which Koreans and Koreanness were associated with violence, danger and criminality in the metropole.¹⁶ This intensified colonial anxiety was to be countered with intensified stigmatization, surveillance and repression.

The suspicious death of Emperor Kojong on January 21, 1919 symbolized, for many Koreans, the end of both the dynasty and a sovereign Korean identity associated with the imperial lineage. Following President Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points” speech outlining the right to self-determination in January 1919, Korean students studying in Tokyo published a statement demanding Korea be released from colonial rule. News of the statement declaring independence spread to Keijō (present-day Seoul) where, at 2 p.m. on March 1st, 1919, thirty-three activists read the Korean Declaration of Independence based on Wilson’s doctrine of self-determination. In subsequent months, the call for Korean Independence expanded and transformed into a nationwide popular movement with participants from all walks of life. The Japanese colonial police responded to these protests with arrests, imprisonment and violence. As a result of the immense outcry against the Japanese colonial government’s violent reaction to the large-scale political demonstrations calling for independence, colonial officials were forced to revise their policies and practices in Korea. In a shift from the overt coercion of military rule, the government general of Korea loosened its grip and allowed limited political and cul-

Korean Liberation) (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 2013), 54; Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan*, 198.

15 Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan*, 63-93.

16 Shōji Yamada, *Kantō Daishinsaiji no Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu to Sonogo—Gyakusatsu no Kokka Sekinin to Minshū Sekinin* (The Great Kantō Earthquake and Ensuing Massacre of Koreans—Japanese State and People’s Responsibility for the Massacre) (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2011), 56-87.

tural freedoms.¹⁷

News of the uprisings in Korea was reported replete with references to the involvement of *futei senjin* from the Manchurian borderlands in metropolitan Japan.¹⁸ Koreans were increasingly being described in the Japanese press as a threat to both the Japanese economy and law and order.¹⁹ The depiction of Koreans as subversive and criminal had gained enough discursive legitimacy, to only require a single provocation for the Japanese to react in racialized violence. At around midday on September 1st, 1923, the first of many intense earthquakes shocked Tokyo and Yokohama. They unleashed pandemonium on a monumental scale, killed tens of thousands and let loose uncontrollable conflagrations that left the city in ruins. In the wake of the intensely destructive earthquake, rumors began to spread as fast as the fires that were engulfing the city. Rumors that “bands of lawless Koreans had started fires, looted shops and homes, poisoned wells, murdered women and children, and even organized an assault on what remained of the capital all found adherents.”²⁰ In response to this perceived threat, by the middle of September 1923, 3,689 neighborhood vigilante groups (*jikeidan*) had formed to rebuff this rumored

17 Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 46-54; Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan*, 94-11.

18 “Chōsen Sōjō no Keii, Chōsen Sōtokufu Happyo”(Details of the Korean Riot, Korean Colonial Government Announcement), *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*, May 20, 1919; “Yakkai na Futei Senjin”(The Troublesome Criminal Koreans), *Yomiuri Shinbun*, October 9-12, 1920.

19 “(Hachiman Seitetsujo Sōgi) Kahan ha Futei Senjin (Strike at the Hachiman Steelworks: The Majority are Criminal Koreans)/ Kyohakudan ni Kuwawatte Katsudō su (Operating With Gangsters),” *Yorozuchōhō* (Evening Edition, Kitakyūshū/Fukuoka), February 8, 1920; “Jūgoman-en Gōtō no Futei Senjin no Kataware (150,000 Yen Stolen by Korean Criminals)/ Kobe nite Tsukamaru (Arrested in Kobe)/ Tōnan no Chōsen Ginkō-ken wo Shiyō su”(Used Stolen Bank of Chōsen Notes), *Osaka Asahi*, February 11, 1920.

20 Charles Schencking, *The Great Kantō Earthquake and the Chimera of National Reconstruction in Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 26-27.

Korean unruliness.²¹ The final record speaks for itself. Although difficult to calculate true figures, it is estimated that around six thousand Koreans were murdered. Despite this, of the 125 vigilante group members prosecuted for crimes post-disaster, only thirty-two received formal sentences, two were acquitted and ninety-one received suspended sentences.²² Moreover, there was the unprecedented move to remove Koreans from the disaster zones of Tokyo and Yokohama (already under martial law) and place them in “protective custody,” as indicated in the following:

By the end of September, 23,715 Koreans had been taken to government-run detention centers: 9,980 had been taken into custody by police; 3,412 had been taken into custody by vigilante groups; 3,596 had voluntarily sought government protection; and 6,727 had been collected by military officials or had turned themselves in to other government agencies.²³

With six thousand massacred and over twenty thousand in government custody, over one-third of all Korean colonial subjects in metropolitan Japan were gravely affected by this tragedy. While quantifying and accurately tracking the source and content of rumors is historically challenging, Yamada Shōji’s account of the massacre of Koreans after the earthquake illustrates the widespread use of the term *futei senjin*.²⁴ The way these rumors were communicated as self-evident, indubitable facts is indicative of the racialized nature the epithet came to signify. The preconceived depiction of Koreans as subversive, rebellious or criminal was widely accepted enough to justify the widespread killing of Koreans, with or without absolute proof.

21 Schencking, *The Great Kantō Earthquake*, 27.

22 Schencking, *The Great Kantō Earthquake*, 28.

23 Schencking, *The Great Kantō Earthquake*, 55.

24 Yamada, *Kantō Daishinsaiji no Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu to Sonogo*, 59-62.

Koreans and the Japanese Statistical Revolution

Yet how did the conflation of Koreanness with criminality become so tenacious and unquestioned? The answer lies in the proliferation of statistics in the emerging social-scientific fields of criminology and sociology, especially by the Japanese Justice Ministry. The statistical language of colonial criminality was the glue that binds race to crime today as in the past.²⁵ Yet accusations of criminality and illegality (as in the case of illegal immigrants or over-stayers) are often conceived of as being completely unblemished by racism. Statistics themselves are often mobilized when denouncing Korean or foreign criminality in the perception that they themselves are race-neutral. As renowned criminologist Jock Young contends, “numbers are signs to be interpreted within specific cultural contexts, figures in themselves do not have any magical objectivity.”²⁶ However, the assumption that the statistical “numbers speak for themselves,” is often followed by the self-proclamation that one is not a racist. The statistical endorsement of the colonial Korean criminal remains one of Japan’s most pernicious and enduring stereotypes, deployed by xenophobic groups such as the *Zaitokukai*²⁷ to incite hatred and fear to this day. Yet only by tracing its origins to the academy, the way in which racial analyses and crime data lent an aura of intellectual credibility to prejudicial beliefs that linked Koreanness with criminality, can a more complete historicization of racism begin to emerge.

Japan has a long history of quantification. From the land allotment surveys and population registers of the Taika Reforms in the seventh century, numerical measures have always been valued for their role in governance

25 The discourse of “foreign crime” (*gaikokujin hanzai*) stems from the statistical analyses offered annually in the *White Paper on Crime (Hanzai Hakusho)*, which has consistently highlighted the threat of non-Japanese crime since the 1970s.

26 Jock Young, *The Criminological Imagination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 55.

27 Association of Citizens against the Special Privileges of the *Zainichi* Korean Residents.

and administration. However, the desire to quantify economic and social phenomena did not emerge until the mid-nineteenth century. Combining both the newer interest in international comparison and the older Japanese culture of quantification, translations of international statistical works experienced a publishing explosion in Meiji Japan.²⁸ After the Meiji Restoration, new government organs were created to carry out statistical research and by the end of the nineteenth century, a growing number of agencies were relying on statistical research to quantify a wide array of aspects related to Japanese economic and social life.

As industrial capitalism expanded both on the home islands and into the rapidly expanding empire in the 1920s, bureaucrats and scholars hoped to boost the accumulation of economic and social data. In the field of economics, the push to utilize statistics was felt in order to keep up with the pace of change in the real economy. A Central Committee on Statistics was formed within the cabinet at the end of the Taishō Period to make proposals on changes to the official statistical systems.²⁹ As factory and social insurance legislation came under consideration, the committee advocated the first government collection of data on labor conditions and standards of living. A decade-long campaign for the reform of the population survey system culminated in the national census of 1920. Population records before 1920 were “tentative and in the nature of estimates”³⁰ in that they were compiled on the basis of family records. The problem with this method of calculating census data is that any defects in the family registry are directly reflected in the population statistics. Furthermore, until 1913, Japanese living abroad, missing, enlisted in the Army or Navy,

28 Takeshi Yabuuchi, *Nihon Tōkei Hattatsu-shi Kenkyū* (Research on the History of Statistical Development in Japan), *Gifu Keizai Daigaku Kenkyū Sōsho* 7 (Kyoto: Hōritsubunkasha, 1995), 266-269.

29 Scott O’Bryan, *The Growth Idea: Purpose and Prosperity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 52.

30 Ohkawa Kazushi, *The Growth of the Japanese Economy since 1868*, Hitotsubashi University, Institute of Economic Research Series, No. 1 (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Bookstore, 1957), 136.

in jail and those residing in Taiwan, Sakhalin and Korea were not taken into consideration. Needless to say, the degree of discrepancies called for a more accurate quantification of the population.

The economic boom during the World War I years caused an increase in the number of Koreans living in metropolitan Japan. As with the Japanese population, discrepancies and a lack of accurate data concerning Korean criminality prompted the Ministry of Justice to survey the Korean population, their lifestyle, living conditions, working conditions, employment, salary, educational background, religion and of course, criminal tendencies.³¹ The Ministry reasoned that with time, not only would the number of Koreans increase, but they would also put down roots, have families, and be increasingly indistinguishable from Japanese.³² Since Koreans had different customs, manners, living environment and language to metropolitan Japanese, their criminal tendencies would also differ from Japanese. Therefore, it was reasoned, in order to quantify and comprehend (for the purposes of policing), a major study of Korean criminals was conducted between October 1931 and September 1932 in order to “statistically evaluate” the peculiarity (*tokushusei*) of Korean criminality.

This survey is representative of how the Japanese authorities attempted to *statistically* quantify Korean criminality. This crime data allowed the researcher to ascribe inherent immorality to Koreans and did little to search beyond lifestyle, living conditions and inborn racial characteristics. The statistical analysis concluded that theft, gambling and crimes related

31 Studies of Koreans had been conducted by the Justice Ministry previously but focused on Korean traditional and cultural practices and lacked any statistical legitimacy. See also: Arai Ikusa, “Naichi ni okeru Chosenjin to Sono Hanzai ni tsuite (Regarding Koreans and Korean Crime in [Prewar] Japan),” in Shihō Chōsaka, *Shihō Kenkyū* 5, Tokyo: Shihōshō (Dec. 1927), 1-124 (National Diet Library, Call Number: AZ-771-H7).

32 Shihō Chōsaka, *Shihō Kenkyū* 17, *Hōkokushū* (Judicial Research: No. 17, Collection of Reports), Tokyo: Shihōshō (Mar. 1933), 434 (National Diet Library, Call Number: AZ-771-H26).

to bodily harm were the most prevalent criminal offenses among Koreans. The author speculated that Koreans’ tendency to gamble was caused by Korean families living gregariously (*gunkyo seikatsu*) and their uncultured nature (*mukyōyō*). In addition, Korean proclivity for violent crime (*shōgai han*) was a result of Korean propensity for hostility (*sōtō-sei*) and herd mentality (*fuwa-raidō*).³³

The accumulation of census data, government reports, news accounts, in addition to statistical “scholarly” works facilitated the hardening of legal categories and legalized inequality. The underlying hold of scientific racism and social beliefs about Korean delinquency, subversive tendencies and criminality left little flexibility in attitudes towards Korean transgressions while policing practices and institutionalized racism within Japanese law enforcement remained outside the realm of academic analysis.

Korean Economic Criminality and the Rise of *Yami*

As Japan edged closer to total war in the late 1930s, the exigencies of an impending war dictated the allocation of resources be as precise as possible to ensure a Japanese victory. In order to achieve this, the empire was placed under constantly increasing economic restrictions that placed everyday economic activities, such as grocery shopping and eating out, under the control of the state. In 1938, Prince Konoe Fuminaro’s cabinet instituted the Central Price Committee and Economic Police.³⁴ Starting with just ninety commodities in September 1939, the Japanese government introduced price control measures to stave off hyperinflation similar to that seen in Weimar Germany during and after World War I. Slowly but surely, the price controls spread across the entire economy, regulating the price of foodstuffs and toiletries to tires and machinery. The more

33 Ibid.

34 Owen Griffiths, “Need, Greed, and Protest in Japan’s Black-Market, 1938-1949,” *Journal of Social History* 35 (Summer 2002): 827.

important commodities like food and clothing were progressively rationed to prevent mass starvation and poverty although neither was entirely avoided. April 1941 saw rice rationing in urban areas, and by October 1941, over 100,000 goods and services were controlled. Yet these control regulations brought about conditions susceptible to capitalistic opportunism, and many attempted to evade the unprofitable controlled distribution route and channel their goods into the *yami* or black economy. In fact, in the first three months of instituting price controls, an average of 94,000 persons were arrested per month. Fifteen months more than two million people were arrested, or three and a half percent of Japan's total population of 70 million.³⁵ In an attempt to gain the upper hand, the government introduced passbooks (*tsūchō*) and tickets that specifically instructed and recorded how much each person could purchase. Anyone found procuring goods by any other means would be prosecuted.

The classified 1940s publication *Keizai Geppō* (Economic Bulletin) was widely circulated among Japanese police and prosecutors and became a critical historical text for evaluating the Japanese authorities perception of Korean criminality. On a number of issues, it elucidates the manner in which Korean economic crimes were differentiated from Japanese (*naichijin*) crime and how Koreans were made the target of economic police surveillance. The January 1943 edition refers to troubles economic criminal prosecutors in Japan's eight largest cities were facing regarding the Korean community,

Korean economic crimes should be punished more severely as they are drastically increasing and becoming more malicious. Koreans obstruct food and commodity rations from their proper recipients, and are known to use the criminally misappropriated profits for hedonistic pleasures. It is no simple task to clamp down on such economic crimes, therefore the only way to eliminate it completely is to punish Koreans more severely. Toughening the

35 Griffiths, "Need, Greed, and Protest," 828.

punishments for Korean economic crimes is considered [by prosecutors to be] a pressing and critical issue.³⁶

In the February 1943 edition, the bulletin listing economic criminal offenses from the Osaka District Court chronicles Korean economic control violations as follows,

There are approximately 450,000 Koreans within the Osaka prefectural police jurisdiction, and they have infiltrated all aspects of Japanese society to the extent they are now a powerful social group. Recently, Korean economic criminal offences have been rising rapidly, and since *Koreans lack the intellectual ability (chinō-teiretsu) and morality to reflect and regret on their crimes*, they often do not disclose their whereabouts or lie and otherwise obstruct Japanese police investigations. Thus, at this point in time, conducting investigations [into Korean criminal activity] is extremely difficult.

Attention should also be paid to the opportunistic Korean misuse of Japanese industrial equipment. Koreans have taken over facilities such as stores and factories that have gone out of business to manufacture and peddle a variety of controlled commodities for exceptional profits. Koreans have been known to collect scrap metal such as copper, lead, tin, and aluminum for manufacturing.

36 *Keizai Geppō* (Economic Bulletin) 3-1 (Jan. 1943): 107. Original citation from Kim Su Hyang’s research presentation at the *Zainichi Chōsenjin Undōshi Kenkyūkai* (Zainichi Korean Movement Research Group) 29 (Nov. 2015); see also Su Hyang Kim, *Senji Sengoki Nihon no “Keizai Hanzai” Torishimari to Chōsen Minshū: Tōsei Keizai wo Sasaeta Keizai Keisatsu, Keizai Hanji, Keizai Kenji wo Chūshin ni* (Wartime and Postwar Japanese Control of “Economic Crimes” and Korean People: The Economic Police, Economic Judges, Economic Public Prosecutors that Maintained the Control Economy), (MA diss., Hitotsubashi University, 2016). Emphasis added.

Some Koreans were also known to manufacture products from recycled rubber they had collected. It is not possible to prevent crimes such as these with the mere punishment of arrest.

The [Osaka] public prosecutor's office recommends special provisions to be taken and enforced on Korean criminals, and will therefore specially mark all documentation relating to Korean criminals to be shared with the Osaka Prefectural Police, the Special Higher Police (*Tokubetsu Kōtō*), the Labor Relations and Economic Safety Division (*Rōseika Keizai Hoanka*), the Labor and Employment Division (*Rōmubu Shokugyōka*) from October [1943]. In dealing with the current situation, this office plans to take measures aimed at the proper deployment of idle Korean labor, as well as deportation [to the Korean colony] for malicious criminals.³⁷

In August 1944, the *Keizai Geppō* ran a feature article titled "Investigation: Korean Economic Crimes in Japan." The article opens by proclaiming Korean economic criminality to be double that of the Japanese. The Japanese prosecutors who authored this investigation calculated the statistical figure by simply dividing the number of Koreans arrested for economic crimes in January and February by the known Korean population in Japan proper and correlated it with the corresponding figure for the Japanese population. This haphazard statistical analysis is characteristic of 1940s investigations of Korean criminality in that there is no regard for: Japanese policing practices; Korean demographics in Japan proper; the socio-economic situation of Koreans; Korean employment opportunities; or institutionalized racism.³⁸ This investigation singles out the eve-

37 *Keizai Geppō* (Economic Bulletin) 3-2 (Feb. 1943): 149-150. Emphasis added.

38 Takahashi Masami, "Haisengo no Nihon ni okeru Chōsenjin no Hanzai (Korean Crime in Defeated Japan)," *Keihō Zasshi* 1-2 (1950): 119-144; Makoto Kanzaki and Masamitsu Takeyasu, "Sengo no Hanzai Genshō ni kan suru Jisshō teki

ryday practice of “food crimes” (*shokuryō hanzai*) as contributing to the higher proportion of Koreans represented in the Japanese criminal statistics, as noted below.

Korean’s propensity to deal in organized *yami* (black marketeering) and the [illegal] acquisition of commodities has left the general public with a sense of discontent. Koreans are the primary source of *yami* (illegal) trade in rice, wheat and other foodstuffs. We therefore welcome the arrest of Koreans (*hantōjin*³⁹).⁴⁰

Under total war conditions, in which the entire economy came to be regulated and controlled, Koreans were increasingly being seen as the source of disruption, opportunism and criminality.

The term *yami*, which denotes darkness, gloom, disorder, illegality and black marketeering, became synonymous with the underground or black market trade in foodstuffs and controlled commodities throughout the wartime and Allied Occupation era. According to this report, Japanese police justified their intensified surveillance of Korean criminality in wartime Japan for the following three reasons. The first was reports from Tottori, Aomori, Yamaguchi, Mito and Shizuoka of Koreans buying foodstuffs directly from farmers (*kaidaishi*). The second was the so-called “ghost-population rations,” whereby Koreans would supposedly create fictional apartment registrations and collect rations for such listings. Police investigations into rations being resold into the *yami* black market for a profit were reported in Nagasaki, Matsuyama and Osaka prefectures. The third reason given for increased police surveillance of Korean economic criminality was the illegal butchery of livestock. Japanese police

Kōsatsu,”(Demonstrative Study of Postwar Criminal Phenomena) *Hōsō Jihō* 2-3 (Nov. 1949): 52-73.

39 *Hantōjin* (半島人) is a derogatory term for Koreans widely used in Japanese newspapers and by the Japanese bureaucracy during the colonial period.

40 *Keizai Geppō* (Economic Bulletin) 4-8 (Aug. 1944): 2.

claimed there was an increase in Korean beef and pork brokers operating illegal butcheries in the metropolitan areas of Japan. Japanese prosecutors maintained that these crimes should not simply be thought of as violations of the food control laws, but more as issues of sanitation and acts aimed at wreaking havoc on Japanese military supplies. In reference to Korean butchery practices, the report notes, “Koreans have no qualms about brutally slaughtering and butchering animals, then selling the meat for an exorbitant profit.”⁴¹ In closing, the report quotes the Kyoto district public prosecutor, “it is obvious that Koreans are cleverly able to remain self-sufficient on *yami* (black market) foodstuffs to the extent they do not even need to rely on official food rations.” Evidence for Korean *yami* black marketeering is provided as follows,

- 1) Koreans have not been sighted in the lines waiting to enter restaurants or eating-houses.
- 2) Koreans have been inviting large numbers of people to their cultural and ceremonial events at which they celebrate with an abundant amount of supplies. Koreans refuse to refrain from these extravagant practices despite the dire situation occasioned by the war.
- 3) Despite food shortages, there are many Koreans producing *do-buroku* (bootleg unrefined sake).
- 4) Requests for police emergency rice are at the same rate as Japanese, despite having fewer family connections and binge-eating habits (*tashoku-heki*).
- 5) Generally speaking, Koreans have become much wealthier which has led to increased decadence and self-indulgence (*hōitsu-na mono*) in their personal lives.⁴²

In conclusion, the article speculates on the common characteristics of

41 Ibid: 4.

42 Ibid: 6-7.

Korean criminality. First, it is widely believed by Japanese authorities that Koreans “lack any sense of nationhood, nor do they respect the law. Rather, they are preoccupied with turning a profit by any means necessary, and are only concerned with their own desires and pleasures.”⁴³ Furthermore, a public prosecutor’s report titled “Testimony of Korean suspect charged with crimes related to Korean Independence Movement” is introduced as evidence of Korean criminality.

Korean economic control measure violations are significantly damaging the Japanese economy. Most Koreans that immigrated to Japan proper (*naichi*) are ignorant and uneducated, and their only purpose for coming to Japan is to make money. Therefore, if they think they can make a profit they will commit illegal (*yami*) acts anywhere they can. Therefore, a drastic rise of black market prices and increasing wages causes great disruption to the economic control measures [such as rationing and fixed pricing]. No matter what economic offences the Japanese authorities crack down on, nor any efforts at explaining the dire economic and political situation seem to have any impact. Korean people don’t consider profiting from this dire situation a criminal offence, and even if they do consider it a crime they do not believe it to be wrong. Even if they were to consider it wrong, they would not attempt to change. This is due to Japan’s poor colonial policies in Korea. In other words, Japan’s colonial policies on the Korean peninsula are the real cause of Korean economic criminality and Japan is getting what it deserves (*jigō-jitoku*).⁴⁴

Despite the astoundingly contrite admission that Korean criminality was intimately tied to Japanese colonial policies on the Korean peninsula, this article informed Japanese police, prosecutors and bureaucrats in the criminal justice system of the threats to not only Japanese society but to

43 Ibid: 11.

44 Ibid: 11-12.

the ongoing total war effort. Economic criminality under the guise of *yami* was to become an enduring stereotype of Korean existence in postwar Japan. Despite a brief hiatus in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the economic control measures, economic police and the criminal justice system that supported it remained largely intact. The purposes of economic control may have shifted from total war to postwar economic recovery, but the way Koreans were associated with criminality persisted and facilitated the continued subjugation of Koreans in postwar Japan.⁴⁵

Postcolonial Criminality and “Third-Country Nationals”

By August 1945, the wartime economy was in disrepair. The vast majority of retail and department stores were closed; the neighborhood associations (*chōnaikai*) that administered the ration program were severely debilitated; and stocks of all essential goods were insufficient. The threat of starvation left most with no option but to rely on the informal economy. Furthermore, the police were severely weakened and in no state to enforce the voluminous price and distribution control measures carried over from the early 1940s. A mere five days after Hirohito’s surrender broadcast, under the slogan “The light shines from Shinjuku” (*Hikari wa Shinjuku yori*), Ozu Kinosuku’s *Kantō Ozu-gumi* established the open-air black market outside Shinjuku station’s east exit. This phenomenon rapidly spreads across Japan, usually centering around major commuter train stations. At its peak, around 17,000 black-markets were recorded.⁴⁶

45 For detailed studies of immediate postwar Korean criminality see: Takahashi, “Haisengo no Nihon ni okeru Chōsenjin no Hanzai (Korean Crime in Defeated Japan)”; Kanzaki and Takeyasu, “Sengo no Hanzai Genshō ni kan suru Jisshō teki Kōsatsu.”

46 Ko Ui, *Zainichi Korian no Sengoshi: Kōbe no Yamiichi wo kakenuketa Mun Dongon no Mihatenu Yume* (Postwar History of Zainichi Koreans: Mun Dongon, the Kobe Black Market, and His Dream), (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2014), 97; John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W.

Japan’s acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration held within it great hope for Japan’s newly liberated colonial subjects. Yet not one day had passed after Japan’s surrender, when the Japanese Higher Special Police were instructed to maintain law and order at coalmines in Japan where labor disputes between Koreans workers and Japanese managers were becoming widespread. Even the slightest perception of Korean subversion should be met with the greatest of force.⁴⁷ While the political and legal structure of the Japanese Empire had become defunct, the intransigent nature of racialized stereotypes was restored in a new postwar form. As early as January 1946, the Justice Department began documenting the difficulties it faced when dealing with former colonial subjects. The Justice Department claimed they “experienced innumerable hardships unseen in Japanese history hitherto.”⁴⁸ Japan’s international position as a defeated and occupied nation rendered it unable to control its foreign relations. This has caused complications when dealing with criminal cases involving Koreans, Taiwanese and Ryukyans. As with Shiikuma Saburō, the Justice Ministry claimed that with Japan’s defeat, Chinese, Taiwanese and Koreans have acted as if they were “war victors” and falsely believed they enjoyed extraterritoriality rights. The Ministry speculated that colonial migrants were enacting revenge against the oppression they suffered during the colonial era.⁴⁹ This led to a myriad of criminal activities by Koreans and Taiwanese and has become an issue of central importance to policing in Japan.⁵⁰

Norton & Company, 2000), 140; Tatsurō Uchino, “Infure to shokuryō kiki”, in *Shōwa Keizaishi*, edited by Arisawa Hiromi (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1976), 258.

47 Chong, *Chōsen Dokuritsu heno Airo* (The Narrow Path to Korean Independence: 5-year History of Zainichi Korean Liberation), 27.

48 Shihōsho Keijikyoku, *Shin Keiji Geppō* (New Detective Bulletin) 1-1 (Jan. 1946) (Tokyo: Shihōsho) (National Diet Library: Call Number VH1-S1438).

49 Ibid.

50 Naimushō Keihōkyoku, *Keisatsu Tōkeikyoku* (Police Statistical Records) (Tokyo: Naimushō Keihōkyoku, 1946), 103 (National Diet Library, Call Number: a317-

Under Allied Occupation censorship, Japanese media were restricted when referencing Koreans and other former colonials.⁵¹ Therefore, references to *futei senjin* and other derogatory epithets almost entirely disappeared from public discourse.⁵² What took its place was a seemingly benign term suggestive of the legal quagmire the former colonial subjects of Korea, Taiwan and Ryukyu fell into. In her analysis of the emergence and development of “third-country national” discourse, Utsumi Aiko maintains it was precisely the ambiguity of the term “third-country national” (*dai-sankokujin*) that facilitated the term coming to not only signify Japanese fear, antipathy and contempt towards newly-liberated Koreans in the immediate postwar, but also became a code-word for Korean economic criminality.⁵³ Utsumi insists the prewar epithets *senjin*, *hantō-jin*, and *yobo* that referenced Koreans were merely shifted into a more politically correct register that corresponded with the postwar geopolitical situation.⁵⁴ In his analysis of the epithet “third-country national,” Mizuno Naoki debunks the commonly held assumption that the term originated from GHQ/SCAP⁵⁵ documentation and therefore devoid of any Japanese racial or cultural biases.⁵⁶ Mizuno rightly points out that the only terms used by GHQ/SCAP to describe the former colonial subjects of Korean

142).

51 Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 411.

52 The main exception to this was the national Diet, where, as mentioned in the Introduction references to Korean economic underhandedness and criminal activities were often recorded. For further examples of references to Koreans as *dai-sankokujin* (third-country nationals) and related criminality, see Naoki Mizuno, “‘Dai-Sankokujin’ no Kigen to Rupu ni tsuite no Kōsatsu (Concerning The Origin and Spread of ‘Third-Country Nationals’),” *Zainichi Chōsenjin-shi Kenkyū* 30 (Oct. 2000) (Tokyo: Ryokuin Shobō): 15-21.

53 Aiko Utsumi, “‘Dai-sankokujin’ to iu Kotoba (The Term ‘Third-Country National’),” *Chōsen Kenkyū* 104 (Apr. 1974) (Tokyo: Nihon Chōsen Kenkyusho): 20.

54 Ibid.

55 General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers

56 Mizuno, “‘Dai-Sankokujin’ no Kigen to Rupu ni tsuite no Kōsatsu”(Concerning the Origin and Spread of ‘Third-Country Nationals’), 12-13.

and Taiwan were “liberated nationals” (*kaihō-kokumin*), “non-Japanese” (*hi-nihonjin*) and nationals of “Special Status Nations” (*tokushu-chi’i-koku*). It was not until June 1947 when the first mention of “Third Nationals” appeared in any English-language GHQ/SCAP documents, and both Utsumi and Mizuno surmise it to be a direct translation from the Japanese authority’s use of the Japanese term “*dai-sankokujin*.”⁵⁷ However, Mizuno argues the way the term was first used in newspapers offers the best account of its purport. The term first appeared in the *Mainichi Shinbun* on December 31st, 1945, and it was reported that a regional office of SCAP had ordered the Japanese police crackdown on crime. Yet there was more to the story as described below:

When referencing police efforts to enforce the law, the Allied regional military government had ordered the Japanese authorities and police to crackdown on criminal activity irrespective of nationality (*kokuseki no ikan wo towazu*). However, the Hyogo prefectural police department issued a statement to the Japanese press in which they claimed to *even crackdown mercilessly on “third-country nationals”* (*daisankokujin to iedomo*).⁵⁸

This sleight of hand by the Japanese police and media should not be understated. Despite no reference to “third-country nationals” by the Allied military government directive, the term was mobilized to allude to Korean and Taiwanese criminality. The extant assumption of Korean criminality was the link through which the racialized language of the empire found its way into postcolonial discourse. Whereas the structures of imperialism facilitated the oppression of colonial subjects under colonialism, with the collapse of the Japanese Empire in August 1945 the criminal justice system came to facilitate analogous practices of oppression in the name of criminality.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 10.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 11; emphasis added.

The Japanese authorities' tendency to perceive Koreans in postwar Japan through the lens of criminality was not lost on Jules Bassin Legal Attaché to the Mission in Japan during the Allied Occupation who stated,

“[The Japanese] never quite assimilated the Koreans or the Taiwanese, and they considered the Koreans as conquered people, people of lesser authority. And I don't think they ever considered them as Japanese citizens. Now they may have been Japanese nationals. Of course, any time a crime took place, they treated them...they said it was a Korean criminal. All crimes were committed by Koreans and not by Japanese.”⁵⁹

Postwar politicians continued perpetuating the myth of Korean criminality. The immediate postwar politician Shiikuma Saburō, along with Yoshida Shigeru in his infamous letter to MacArthur,⁶⁰ Ishihara Shintarō in a 2000 speech at a Self Defense Forces facility in Tokyo⁶¹ and the contemporary *Zaitokukai* anti-Korean group collectively and explicitly connect Korean criminality to a repudiation of political rights and justification for institutionalized racism in the policing and criminal justice system.⁶² The perceived neutrality of bureaucratic tools such as crime statis-

59 Interview with Jules Bassin, “Oral History Project on the Allied Occupation of Japan,” conducted by Marlene Mayo, October 9, 1979, Washington DC, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://prangecollection.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/bassinjules2.pdf>.

60 PM Yoshida asked General MacArthur to repatriate all Koreans in Japan to South Korea because they were a burden on Japan's aggravated food situation since they did not contribute to Japan's economic recovery and that many of them were criminals. See Sonia Ryang, “Korean Ethnic Schools, 1945-52,” in *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*, edited by Sonia Ryang (London: Routledge, 2000), 153-154.

61 See also Aiko Utsumi et al., eds., “*Sankokujin*” *Hatsugen to Zainichi Gaikokujin* (The “Third-Country National” Remark and Foreigners in Japan) (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2000).

62 It should also be noted that Koreans in Japan are widely assumed to be deeply

tics reinforce the racialized language of empire that remains as potent as ever today. The postwar witnessed a hardening of racial categories along the lines of citizenship, and the exclusion of Koreans from Japanese postwar democratic, social and political reforms was justified in the nascent language of the nation. The deprivation of Japanese nationality in 1952 was the final legal barrier that confirmed long-term legal segregation and legitimized institutional and legal inequality.

Yet what can be said for a major shift in the attitude and positioning of Koreans in Japan after the end of empire? Australian anthropologist Ghassan Hage argues that liberation can trigger a shift from a racism based on exploitation, to one of extermination.⁶³ The economic potential of the Korean peninsula as a colony was always at the forefront of colonial planning as evidenced in the first colonial land surveys after annexation, the supplementing of rice to the Japanese main islands after the 1918 Rice Riots and the injection of Korean forced labor into the total war machine to work in mines, factories and serve in the Japanese Imperial Military. Yet with imperial foreclosure and Japan's embrace of the postwar national polity, Koreans remaining in Japan were faced with few employment opportunities, economic hardship and exclusion from the social benefits of a newly democratized Japan. This represented a shift to postcolonial relations founded on a racism of extermination, one that "dominates when the racialized are considered harmful, or at least when they are evaluated to be more harmful than they are useful."⁶⁴ Elements of this brand of racism are evident in contemporary race-relations. Major features of the anti-Korean stance of groups such as the aforementioned Zaitokukai are accusations of Korean criminality. In the xenophobic group's opening remarks, without reference or citation, it accuses Koreans of committing

involved in Pachinko-related underground businesses and the activities of the Yakuza.

63 Ghassan Hage, *Alter Politics: Critical Anthropology and the Radical Imagination* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2015), 181.

64 Hage, *Alter Politics*, 181

crimes in Japan and denounces Koreans for their supposed use of the *tsūmei* (Korean resident's Japanese name) to escape prosecution for crimes they have supposedly committed in Japan.⁶⁵ In a list of seven "promises" (*yakusoku*), the organization claims to adhere to, the final one states, "We will continue to expose how Japan is suffering at the hands of criminal (*futei*) *Zainichi* Koreans."⁶⁶ Replete with the prewar racist epithet *futei*, the organization specifically targets the supposed criminal nature of Koreans in Japan today.

There is much to be said for the structuring role of colonialism and anticolonialism throughout the twentieth century. To contextualize the world wars, the Cold War and contemporary global capitalism as embedded in a larger set of imperial continuities is to offer an indispensable corrective to the overemphasis of 1945 as an epistemic break, as is commonly coded into renditions of Japan's postwar. The racialized criminalization that occurred in the name of "third-country nationals" in the postwar ensured the persistence of postcolonial racial inequality. The cruel fiction of the *futei senjin*, *dai-sankokujin* and assumptions of Korean criminality published in government reports and statistical analyses facilitated the hardening of postcolonial legal segregation and institutionalized racism. The ongoing role of colonial criminality in reinforcing stereotypes and racial exclusion remains insufficiently researched. Furthermore, highlighting and understanding the colonial specificity of racist epistemes is important today against those that attempt to banalize racism and dehistoricize it from facile allegations of an anti-Japanese (*han-nichi*) brand of "reverse-racism."

65 “在日特権を許さない市民の会 公式サイトへようこそ,” accessed December 6, 2016, <http://www.zaitokukai.info/modules/about/zai/speech.html>.

66 “在日特権を許さない市民の会 7つの約束,” accessed December 6, 2016, <http://www.zaitokukai.info/modules/about/zai/promises.html>.

Conclusion

In chronicling the emergence of deeply embedded notions of Koreans as a subversive and criminal race from within Japanese colonialism, this article has revealed the enduring influence such ideas had on the Korean livelihood in postcolonial Japan. The discourse of colonial criminality originally derived from Japan’s imperial quest and the acquisition of Western academic knowledge. Assumptions and academic biases from *Tōyō* and Korean Studies within Japan permeated the image of Koreans first on the Asian mainland and was later transferred to the Japanese metropole. The burgeoning field of statistics provided the cement that was to obstinately link Koreans to a version of criminality so pernicious and compelling that by the 1940s police surveillance of Koreans was well engrained in Japanese police practices. Moreover, the economic conditions occasioned by Japan’s commitment to total war proved fertile ground for Korean criminality to slip from subversive criminality to an economic criminality centered on *yami*. Early 1940s Ministry of Justice reports on Korean crime attest to the extent Japanese authorities had mobilized the discourse of a racialized criminality to target and stigmatize resident Koreans. While Japan’s defeat in August 1945 rendered the Japanese empire obsolete, the discourse of Korean criminality proved to be far more tenacious. The perceived threat Korean liberation posed to a defeated Japan was swiftly countered by the retrieval and reorientation of racist rhetoric into the political space of postcolonial Japan. Shiikuma’s deliberate appeal to Japanese racial impulses introduced in the first paragraph operated to extend legal exclusion and racial discrimination in the name of Korean criminality.

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<Abstract>

Historicizing “Korean Criminality”: Colonial Criminality in Twentieth Century Japan

Joel Matthews

In the context of Japanese colonialism, this article examines the discourse of colonial criminality that came to epistemologically position the Korean colonial subject as criminal and therefore necessitating domination, surveillance and punishment. The discourse of colonial criminality stemmed from Japan’s late nineteenth century epistemological commitment to imperialism and concomitant knowledge of law and the legality of colonial subjects. Through an analysis that historicizes the “criminal Korean” (*futei senjin*) epithet in the prewar and the emergence of *yami* as a signifier of Korean economic criminality throughout the 1940s, this article illustrates how the racialization of Koreans in Japan was both framed in terms of crime and subversion, and how that criminality functioned as a justification for postcolonial legalized exclusion and discrimination.

Keywords: *Zainichi* Korean, Japanese Colonialism, Criminality, *Futei Senjin*, *Yami*, Third-Country Nationals (*Daisankokujin*), Postcolonial Racism

〈국문초록〉

“불령선인 (不逞鮮人)”의 역사적 고찰: 20세기 일본의 ‘피식민인=잠정적 범죄자’ 담론

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이 연구는 일본 식민지배의 맥락에서 조선인들을 잠정적인 범죄자로 몰면서 지배와 감시, 그리고 처벌을 동반하였던 담론을 다루고자 한다. 피식민인들을 잠정적인 범죄혐의자로 보는 이와 같은 담론은 19세기 후반 일본의 제국주의 인식 및 피식민인의 법적 지위에 대한 지식으로부터 기인하였다. 이 연구는 전간기 “불령선인(不逞鮮人)” 호칭 및 조선인들의 경제적 우범지대로써의 1940년대 암시장의 등장을 분석하였으며, 그를 통해 인종적으로 조선인을 규정짓는데 범죄와 파괴의 기준이 적용된 것, 그리고 잠정적 범죄혐의자 인식이 전후 재일조선인에 대한 합법적인 배제와 차별을 정당화하게 된 과정을 보여준다.

주제어: 재일조선인, 일본 식민주의, 범죄, 불령선인(不逞鮮人), 암거래, 제3국민, 포스트식민주의적 인종주의