



Research on Early Korean Independence Movement and the Patriotic Movement against Japan in Northeast China

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Abstract

On March 1, 1919, in Seoul of Korea the independence movement broke out, which is of great significance in Korean modern history. Two months later, in Beijing China, the May 4 Movement broke out, which is of great sense of enlightenment in Chinese modern history. These two great movements had produced profound influences on Fengtian, even on the whole Northeast China. However, if explored in some specific aspects, the former seems have more direct and durable effects.

Keywords: Korean Independence Movement, Patriotic Movement against Japan, March 1st Movement

It is well known that since 1920 the quantity and quality of the patriotic movements launched by the people in Northeast China against Japan had increasingly developed. For example, in 1920, they protested against the Japanese invasion in Hunchun (Note 1). In 1921 they were against Japanese to forcefully repair the railway from Tianbaoshan to Tumen. In 1923 they recovered Luda (Note 2) and in 1924 took back the AnQian Railway (from Andong to Qiantian) and the education right of the subsidiary property to the South Manchuria Railway. In 1925 they supported the May 30 Movement (Note 3). In 1926, Dalian Fukushima textile workers held a strike against Japan. In 1927, Northeast Chinese people protested against Japan to set up consular branch in Linjiang. On November 9, 1928, they fought against Japanese invaders to construct the Jihui Railway (from Jilin to Huining) (Note 4). And in 1929, they held the first anniversary to memorize the anti-Japanese demonstrations. In 1930, the opium-abolition movement was held in Xiaoheyuan, Shenyang. In 1931, they held a protest against Wanbaoshan Incident made by Japan and the Anti-Chinese Tragedy in Korea, which produced more influences. There are numerous local protests held by the ordinary Chinese people against Japan's unlawful infringements, great many strikes launched by the workers in Japanese-owned factories and mining laborers, and a lot of boycott movements against Japanese goods. The outbreak of anti-Japanese patriotic movements of course has their own internal factors and various complicated external reasons. But if examined carefully, they are found to some degrees to retain the traces of March 1st Movement in Korea. There are some effects brought by the March 1st Movement on the Northeast China in its patriotic anti-Japanese movement. They are at least displayed in the following four aspects.

Firstly, the March 1 Movement had a direct influence on the Northeast region in China, and sowed the seeds of anti-Japanese patriotic movement in this region.

Just after the independence movement in Seoul, in Dongbiandao of the Fengtian Province, the Yanbian region of Jilin Province and Harbin, Ning'an, Tumein and other places, there were independence movement to echo the Korean independence movement by some Korean-Chinese.

Similar independence movement took place in the north and east parts of Manchuria and all over the Northeast China. The March 1 Movement, which aimed at fighting against the Japanese colonial rule, striving for independence and freedom did not only in less than a month swept the Korean peninsula like a storm, but also affected the northeast China. Those Korean patriots exiling in northeast China gave an active respond to their home independence movements. Furthermore, they took the northeast China as their rear base to re-assemble their forces and continue their struggles

after suffering severe repression from Japan and the local authorities of China. At the same time, the patriotic Koreans also actively participated in northeast China's anti-Japanese patriotic movements and became the activists of initiating and participating in such activities.

Secondly, the March 1 Movement makes all sectors of Northeast people in China feel urgent in the national salvation. The Anti-Japanese patriotic movements in the Northeast developed to a higher stage.

Japan implemented the "mainland policy" and the Korean peninsula and northeast China became their first targets. There is the saying that if lips are gone the teeth will be cold. However, some Northerners had lacked the awareness for quite a time. Zhang Zuolin wanted to dominate the Northeast and enter into the central plains even at the expense of selling the sovereignty of the northeast in exchange for Japanese financial and military support. The March 1 Movement completely pierced Japan's lies of coexistence and mutual prosperity. Their vicious heart in treating the suppressed could be found by all people.

In this period, one of the slogans for the Northerners in their anti-Japanese movements was "never be successors to the occupied Korea". For example, the proclamation of recovering Luda movement wrote "Japan took its traditional policy of aggression to North as the aggressive means and wanted our Republic of China to be a second Korea. The results of doing so "would not only hinder the progress of the friendly relations between China and Japan but also ignited the fuse of the world war", showing a remarkable foresight.

In order to wake up Chinese people, in this period a large number of books were published and introduced about the occupied Korean history and the independence movements. On the cover and title page there were eye-catching words like these, "please view the tragedy of the trapped occupied Korea!" "The status quo in China is similar to that of Korea. If measures are not quickly sought for self salvation, China will become successor to Korea", and so forth.

Mr. Du Zhongyuan, when the anti-Japanese movement was made to protest the construction of consulate in Linjiang, also pointed out that, "Everyone should know it is the moment of life and death. The disaster is around the corner. People should wake up from the long dream to seek for self existence."

Due to this understanding and enlightenment, the anti-Japanese movement has developed in content and nature. In terms of the boycott of Japanese goods, there were several times in the early Republic. However, after Luda was recovered in 1923, a general boycott of Japanese products developed into the breaking-off of economic relations with Japan, which led to the first trade surplus in the Sino-Japanese trade in history.

Similar to the March 1st Movement in Korea, a great number of anti-Japanese patriotic groups turned up in the northeast China. And they remained some traces of the March 1st movement. For example, Chinese Engineering Society in Dalian, Chinese Self-determination Committee in Shenyang, 10-people Group Against Japan, Liaoning National Council on Foreign Relations, Liaoning Union against Opium, Liaoning National Association for Arousing the Common Sense of the People, Wake-up Group for Saving China in Harbin and other groups demonstrated the spirits of fighting against the Japanese aggression to safeguard national sovereignty and independence. Although they might adopt different measures to struggle for national independence and prosperity of China, they still had one in common. That is to say, they believed that salvation was the first and foremost event. Some good cases in point are Du Zhongyuan's Industrial Salvation, Che Xiangchen's education for national salvation, Kuomintang's three principles and the Communist Party of China's socialism.

The upsurge of popular patriotic movements also led to the subtle changes in the mentality of the ruling class. Zhang Zuolin sometimes needed to get Japan's aid, but he adopted a perfunctory way to refuse a variety of requirements of interests made by Japan, and was finally killed by the Japanese in Huanggutun. His son, General Zhang Xueliang, had an attitude of standing on the side of the patriotic movement against Japanese in sympathy and gave a secret support.

Thirdly, the March 1st Movement aroused all the people in the northeast China, especially the young generation to devote themselves to the cause of national liberation. Their spirit of struggle and sacrifice promoted the emergence of the pioneers of the patriotic movement and the growth of the team.

The March 1 Movement is an extremely tragic patriotic movement. Hundreds of thousands of Korean patriots struggled against the enemy's army and police in bare hands and never hesitated to give their life for the national independence and the people's freedom and happiness. How noble they were! After failed the bare-handed revolution, Jin Zuozhen, the leader of the Korean independence movement led thousands of soldiers to station in the northeast China and carried out guerrilla warfare along the border of China and Korea. The great victory of Qingshanli left a deep impression to the northeast Chinese. Such heroes as An Chonggen, who killed Shi Yi Tengbo, and Yin Fengji, who bombed general Chuchuan dead, were known by every household in northeast China. They were admired and imitated. The noted Seven Northeast Fighters, Yan Baohang, Du Zhongyuan, Gao Chongmin, Che Xiangchen, Wang Zhuoran, Lu Guangji and Wang Huayi were all enlightened by the Korean heroes and their patriotic experiences.

Fourthly, the March 1st Movement reveals that it is necessary for China and Korea to unite to fight against the mutual

enemy, and enhance the national unity and friendship in the anti-Japanese patriotic movements in the Northeast China.

One of the important reasons that led to the failure of the March 1st Movement is the shortage of the international assistance. In view of this, the Northeast anti-Japanese movements sought for assistance from the international community. Especially the Korean patriots were united to fight shoulder by shoulder.

However, it was not smooth for the two nations of China and Korea to achieve the unity and solidarity in anti-Japanese movement. First, the Japanese imperialists continued its policy to make troubles of disputes or assassinations in China-Korea relations. For example, the Hunchun event, Wanbaoshan event and the Korean anti-Chinese incident were all made by Japan. Second, Fengtian authorities succumbed to pressure from Japan put down and banned the Korean-Chinese independence movements. They together with Japanese Mitsuya Miyamatsu signed Twelve Articles of Ways to Ban Korean Movements, and promised to repress Korean-Chinese independence movement in Yanbian and Dongbiandao. Third, contradictions among the anti-Japanese groups or within one group often occurred. Pioneers of the Northeast anti-Japanese movement learned lessons from the March 1st Movement. They denounced that it was foolish for Zhang's government in Fengtian in suppressing the Korean-Chinese independence movement. It was like destroying the fence or getting rid of the hands or feet of oneself. They gave moral and material supports for the Korean fighters. Many local officials were also aware of the interdependent relations between China and Korea. They did not obey the orders of their superiors or met the Japan's requirements but managed to protect the leaders of the Korean-Chinese independence movement. As for the disputes among the anti-Japanese patriotic movement parties, a policy of "seeking common in differences" approach was taken to resolve contradictions and misunderstandings as far as possible to achieve the unity. From the early of 1920s to the Sep. 18 Incident in 1931, leaders of the Northeast anti-Japanese patriotic movement and such local leaders of the KMT and the CPC as Yan Baohang, Gao Chongmin, Chen Weiren, Liu Shaoqi, Chen Tanqiu, Luo Dengxian and so on all made vital attributions to unite the Korean patriots to fight against the mutual enemy, the Japanese imperialists. Those who showed sympathy for and gave support to the Korean independence movement and formed friendship with the Korean patriots were numerous like stars in night sky. The following are two cases in point.

Wang Tongxuan, from Xinbin of Liaoning province, belonged to Han nationality. He was a headmaster in an elementary school in Wangqingmen and the honorary president of the Huaxing Middle School. Mr. Wang repeatedly funded or protected the Korean fighters and made a profound friendship with Liang Shifeng, the commander of the Korean Revolutionary Army. After Sep. 18 Incident, he organized the volunteer army and together with Mr. Liang fought against the Japanese side by side.

Guan Junyan, from Kaiyuan of Liaoning province, belonged to Xibo nationality. From 1919 to 1921 he served as minister of Maosen Mining Company. He together with tens of his men, the forest policemen, protected Huang Jinlong, Jin Yuting and other Korean independent revolutionists and escorted them out of the danger places. In 1924, the Korean Independence Party of the east Pingandao in Korea met in Gumu Mountain and decided to dispatch 20 people to Seoul to launch movements. But they could not afford the travel. Subsequently they sent someone reliable to seek urgent help from Guan Junyan. On the same day Mr. Guan extracted 300 gold tickets from Chongxin Company and personally rushed to an old man with the family name of Sun in Hepushangou near Gumao Mountain to meet the urgent needs. At that time, the old Mr. Sun claimed a souvenir of a poem. And Mr. Guan presented him.

He wrote, "it was late when we got to Hepu. The bitter tea is what the host can do to treat us. The village girls are busy with the field affairs and what the old talk about is those about corps. The tyranny is harsher than a tiger and the refugees have lost their homes. I am glad to hear that Chinese and Korean have cooperated and I hope to see a bright future soon."

Such stories as Gong Tongxuan and Guan Junyan, who made close friends with Korean patriots to cooperate each other have been spread widely in the Northeast China.

To sum up, the March 1st Independence Movement in 1919 inherited and promoted the upsurge of anti-Japanese patriotic movement in the northeast region of China, while the anti-Japanese movement in northeast China and its development and the launch of the anti-Japanese armed struggles have created the necessary conditions for the foundation of the future Sino-Korean Anti-Japanese United Army, the Northeast Anti-Japanese Forces, the formation of the international anti-fascist united front in the Northeast Asian region, and the final realization of the national independence of the Korean Peninsula.

The March 1st Independence Movement, as the most tragic scene in Korean history took place 90 years ago. Today, the colonial and semi-colonial people's struggle for national independence has won a decisive victory all over the world. This shows that justice will triumph over evil and peace will replace war, as is an irresistible trend of the world. We memorize the March 1st Movement in order not to forget history and the difficulty of the hard-won peace and independence. Especially in the early 21st century, we must always grasp the theme of the times of peaceful development, adhere to peaceful coexistence, and make great efforts to maintain the friendly cooperation among the

nations or states to create a happy future for mankind.

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Notes

Note 1. In October 1920 borrowing the excuse of that the Korean independence party members attacked Hunchuan city and burned the Japanese Consulate, Japan dispatched troops to invade the five counties including Hunchun, as led to the protests and demonstrations of the students and people from other social circles of the northeast China.

Note 2. On March 26, 1923 the leased territory of Lushun and Dalian, which were subleased by Japan from Russia, was due. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the people of Jilin Province requested the return of Luda. But Japan refused. Chinese people were in great anger and held demonstrations.

Note 3. On May 30, 1925 in Shanghai, Japan and the United Kingdom repressed the striking workers to create May 30 Tragedy. Workers in Shanghai held a large-scale protest and demonstration. Students and people from other social circles in Shenyang, Changchun, Dalian, Harbin and other places launched patriotic movement to express their support for the May 30 movement.

Note 4. In October 1929 Fengtian Transportation Conference approved project advanced by Zhao Zhen, the bureau head of Jichang railway and Mudun railway. It was about the mergence of the two railways and the loan from Japan. The Japanese side proposed to extend Ji-Dun railroads to be Ji -Hui railroad as an exchange, which caused a strong opposition from all social circles of China. On November 9, students from Harbin schools held a grand procession and were put down by the police. Some students were wounded. This is the famous Nov. 9 Railway Protection Movement.