

## Aspects of Japanese publication translations in Sinmunkwan's magazines

Tanaka Mika

**S**inmunkwan (新文館) was a publishing company established in Seoul in 1908 by Choe Nam-seon (1890-1957), one of the key intellectuals of modern Korea. It gained prominence as the publishing house of *Sonyeon* (少年) (November 1908 – May 1911), considered to be Korea's first modern magazine, and *Cheongchun* (青春) (October 1914 – September 1918), a comprehensive cultural magazine that was popular in the 1910s. Featured in these two Korean magazines were numerous translations of Japanese publications. An analysis of these translations sheds light on the nature of Sinmunkwan's relationship at the time with the Japanese publishing sector.

In *Sonyeon*, many of the Korean translations of western works were based upon the Japanese translations of the original texts. Key characteristics of the Korean translations featured in *Sonyeon* are the addition of explanatory comments and the tailoring of expressions for the Korean audience. For example, Choe Nam-seon added explanations about historical figures (such as the Macedonian King Alexander, the philosopher Francis Bacon), as well as on western concepts such as 'materialism' and 'the Reverend'. In addition, he paraphrased 'exemplary man' into *yangban* (a term referring to the traditional ruling class or gentry of Korea during the Joseon Dynasty) so that the translation may be understood within the Korean cultural context.



Fig 1: Images from *Chugaku Sekai* (中學世界) Issue 13-1 (published in January 1910) (left) and *Cheongchun* (青春) Issue 1 (published in October 1914) (right). In this case (and other similar cases), the article itself was not translated but the illustrations or layouts of Japanese texts regarding world topics or events were referenced. Images of the original articles scanned by the author.

Another characteristic feature of the translations in *Sonyeon* is the revision of the text so that 'boys' – the magazine's readership (*sonyeon* means 'boy' in Korean) – are addressed directly and the expectations for these 'boys' are clearly expressed. One example would be the addition of the following sentence at the end of the article 'The Youth of Edison, the King of Electricity' [電氣王エディソンの少年時節] to express an expectation for these 'boys': "We wish to know what kinds of trees and eggs of invention are being fostered and hatched in the future in Korea" [新大韓에는 어떠한 發明의 나무가 자라가고 알이 깨여가는가를 알고자하오].

In the case of *Cheongchun*, a magazine in which pieces on 'global knowledge' featured prominently, the material for many of the pieces was obtained by translating numerous Japanese publications, such as *Taiyo* (太陽) and *Chugaku Sekai* (中學世界), published by Hakubunkan (博文館), or *Gakusei* (學生), published by Fuzanbo (富山房). An analysis of the translations that appear in these magazines reveals that attempts were made to situate Korea within the global context substituting 'Korea' for 'Japan'. For example, 'Ueno Zoo in Tokyo' was replaced by 'Changdeokgung Zoo', 'Tokyo' by 'Gyeongseong' and 'Kyoto' by 'Pyeongyang'.

The paraphrasing of expressions to align with Korean culture or the presentation of Korea as the 'subject' through the replacement of terms can also be observed in the children's magazines published by Sinmunkwan in the period between the final publication of *Sonyeon* and the first issue of *Cheongchun*, such as *Bulgung Jeogori* (붉은저고리), *Aideulboi* (아이들보이) and *Saebyeol* (새별). For instance, 太郎さん (*Taro-san*) from the original text is translated as 'friend' and 大名 (*daimyo*) as *yangban*.

Sinmunkwan's magazines for children are also notable for the fact that they were printed mostly in Hangul, the likely reason for this being the preservation of the Korean language at the time of Japanese colonial occupation. Purely Korean expressions were used as much as possible, with great effort being made to avoid the use of Chinese characters. Examples of this include the way in which *naruneun teul* (나르는 틀), an expression meaning 'a flying machine' that uses only Hangul characters, was used instead of *bihanggi* (飛行機), the more generally used term to translate 'airplane', but which is comprised of Chinese characters. Another such case is the use of *jeollo ganeun soore* (절로가는수레), meaning 'wagon that goes on its own' instead of *jadongcha* (自動車) for 'automobile'. Indeed, Choe Nam-seon urges the readers of *Aideulboi* to "make sure to write in Korean" for correspondence. The creation of Korean expressions in the process of translation went hand in hand with his attempts to preserve a pure version of the Korean language that did not depend on Chinese characters.

As the above example of Choe Nam-seon's translation of various Japanese publications and the publication of these translations in the magazines produced by his publication house, Sinmunkwan, illustrates, 'translation' was not merely the act of transferring a text from one language to another, but also involved active attempts to enlighten the people or to preserve culture.

Tanaka Mika, Ph.D. Candidate, Kyushu University [mikatanaka35@gmail.com](mailto:mikatanaka35@gmail.com)

## Across the Korea Strait and the Yellow Sea. Kim Ji Ha in the 1970s

Moon-seok Jang

**K**im Ji Ha was a poet who resisted Park Chung Hee's regime of developmental dictatorship in 1970s Korea. In 1970, he published a poem that criticized the military dictatorship, and the Korean government imprisoned him under the outrageous claim that he had violated the Anticommunist Law. After being released, Kim Ji Ha published another poem that sang of democracy, and soon returned to prison. His life in the 1970s was a cycle of imprisonment, release, escape, and arrest, and he was not able to publish his work in Korea until 1982.

Among the people who reached out to him in solidarity during his imprisonment were Japanese citizens. In the 1970s, around twenty collections of the works of Kim Ji Ha, a resistance poet of Korea, Japan's former colony, were published by the people of Japan, the former colonial empire. Twenty is the number of official publications produced in the 1970s in Japan; this number skyrockets when pamphlets, newsletters, and pirate publications are included. The publication of Kim Ji Ha's works in 1970s Japan was a movement of solidarity between Korea and Japan led by Japanese citizens as a campaign to support Kim Ji Ha. Japanese citizens, religious figures, literary figures, and Koreans in Japan participated in this movement. The Japanese citizens observed the process of Kim Ji Ha's trials in real time while editing and publishing the various manifestos that he drafted, along with the records of his trials. As the oppression of Kim Ji Ha intensified in Korea, the power of solidarity shown by Japanese citizens also strengthened.

When Kim Ji Ha was sentenced to death in 1974, Japanese and Korean-Japanese literati staged a hunger strike, and approximately a thousand Japanese citizens protested in front of the Korean Embassy in Japan. Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Howard Zinn, Edwin Reischauer and others participated in the International Committee to Support Kim Ji Ha, following the suggestion of Oda Makoto and Tsurumi Shunsuke. In June of 1975, Kim Ji Ha was awarded the Lotus Prize for Literature from the Afro-Asian Writers' Association as a writer of a 'free-world' country; this was also due to the help of the Japanese literati. As a result of the solidarity and attention of Japanese citizens, the complete collection of Kim Ji Ha's works was published in Korean and Japanese in 1975 and 1976, respectively. Given that the publication of Kim Ji Ha's works had been prohibited in Korea, their publication in Japan as a result of the solidarity of Japanese citizens became a huge international incident.

Some unexpected problems arose, however, in the process. As Kim Ji Ha – the 'resistance poet' of the former colony – was being helped by the citizens of the former colonial empire, Japan, for over ten years, a 'relationship of aid' became fossilized. While the stereotypes of Korea as an underdeveloped country of dictatorship, and Japan as a country helping the oppressed resistance poet, came to be reproduced, Kim Ji Ha's literary themes of criticizing colonialism were no longer given due attention. Despite the fact that so many of Kim Ji Ha's works had been published in Japan, it was only the sentiment that 'Kim Ji Ha must be helped' which flourished. The self-reflexive question 'Why should I read Kim Ji Ha now?' was omitted.



The Chinese magazine *World Literature* also introduced a translation of Kim Ji Ha's works in June 1979, in this case in association with the novel *El Señor Presidente* by Miguel Ángel Asturias, a Guatemalan writer. Both Kim Ji Ha and Asturias' works shared the themes of dictatorship and resistance, allowing the reader to read the two together in order to grasp the universality and specificity of dictatorship in underdeveloped countries from a new perspective. This Chinese publication of Kim Ji Ha's works illustrates the fact that reading East Asian literature alongside Central American literature can open up the possibility of imagining world literature in a new way. Yet, it should be noted that the Chinese translation utilized not only Kim Ji Ha's original Korean works but also the versions that had been published in Japan. This shows how Japanese, the language of the former colonial empire, continued to play the role as a mediator in the process of East Asian communication, even in the Cold War era.

Kim Ji Ha in the 1970s remained immobile in South Korea due to imprisonment and dictatorship oppression. However, translated into Japanese and Chinese, his works were able to travel. The crossings of borders demonstrated by Kim Ji Ha's works leaves us to ponder upon the task of solidarity of East Asian citizens and the conditions for such solidarity; it also opens the door to imagining world literature in a new way and the possibilities of this endeavor.

Moon-seok Jang, Assistant Professor, Department of Korean Language and Literature, Kyung Hee University [imhwa@chol.com](mailto:imhwa@chol.com)

Above: *Collected Works of Kim Ji Ha* (Vol. 1), published in Japan in 1976. The cover illustration is the work of the Japanese artist Tomiyama Taeko. Image of the original cover scanned by the author.  
Below: Japanese citizens demonstrating in front of the Korean Embassy in Tokyo in July of 1974. Image from *Sanzenri* Feb. 1975, scanned by the author.