THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHILD IN KOREAN CHILDREN’S MAGAZINES, 1908-1950

by

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Abstract

“The Construction of the Child in Korean Children’s Magazines, 1908-1950” examines the child as a site of ideological inscription through the texts and illustrations of children’s magazines from 1908-1950. The analysis, which spans Korea’s colonial and immediate post-liberation/pre-war period, opens with the publication of the first magazine for young readers in 1908, Sonyŏn (1908-1911), continues with an analysis of the colonial period magazines Ŭrini (1923-1934), Pyŏllara (1930-34), Sinsonyŏn (1929-34), and Sonyŏn (1937-40), and closes with the interruption of the publication of Ŭrinnara (1949-50) and Sohaksaeng (1945-50) in 1950 upon the outbreak of the Korean War. This study focuses on magazines, and more specifically children’s magazines, because this medium was a major purveyor of Korea’s burgeoning consumer culture and well reflects the growth in literacy and the development of print and visual culture in modern Korea. Magazines also reflect colonial Korea’s changing engagement with social discourses such as Social Darwinism, colonialism, modernity and nationalism. The turn of the twentieth century brought with it an intense intellectual drive towards enlightenment in Korea, and the most significant target of enlightenment was the Korean child. It was the momentum toward reform and the gaze toward the future that brought the child so acutely to the forefront of social discourse and made the Korean child into a pliable image both textually and visually. By examining a representative range of magazines along the political spectrum, I demonstrate how the child—as a crucial site of ideological inscription—was constructed and manipulated in children’s magazines through negotiations with the discourses of colonial Korea. At the same time, I point to the existence of voices that wove a more complex tapestry and which, by problematizing the more prevalent constructions of the (enlightened/pure and
innocent/rebel, politically conscious/wild, natural) child, challenged the hegemonic
discourses and provided their young readers with images that reflected, in part, the
experience of being a young person during the tumultuous period of colonial and
postcolonial Korea.
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1 Introduction

This thesis examines the child as a site of ideological inscription through the texts and illustrations of children’s magazines from 1908-1950. My analysis—which spans Korea’s colonial and immediate post-liberation/pre-war period—opens with the publication of the first magazine for young readers in 1908, Sonyŏn [Young Child], and closes with the interruption of the publication of Sohaksaeng [Schoolchild] in 1950 upon the outbreak of the Korean War. I chose magazines as the focus of my study because this medium attests to modern Korea’s incipient consumer culture and reflects the growth in literacy and the development of print and visual culture during the period examined. Magazines also reflect colonial Korea’s shifting engagement with social discourses such as Social Darwinism, colonialism, socialism, modernity, and nationalism. More specifically, the turn of the century brought with it an intense intellectual drive toward enlightenment, and the most significant target of enlightenment, I argue, was Korean youth more generally, and the Korean child, in particular. It was the momentum toward reform and the gaze toward the future that brought the image of the child so acutely to the forefront of social discourse and made the Korean child into a pliable image both textually and visually. Early modern Korean children’s magazines, then, stood at the intersection of social discourses and children’s culture, and from that position they filtered, interpreted, and presented ideas to their young readers about colonial and national subjectivity.

Three main research questions drive this study of Sonyŏn (Young Child, 1908-1911), Örini [Small Child] (1923-1934), Pyŏllara [Star Land] (1930-34), Sinsonyŏn [New Child] (1929-34), Sonyŏn [Young Child] (1937-40), Chugan Sohaksaeng (Schoolchild Weekly
First, what were the social, political and economic conditions that enabled, for the first time, the emergence of a print culture for children? Second, what were these magazines telling children to “be” and “do?” How did they construct their child readers? As a part of the second question, I ask more specifically how the different components of the magazines—prose, poetry, essays, advertisements, photographs, illustrations—showed or taught children how to perform their colonial subjectivity and/or national identity. These two questions led me to a larger, third one: What do the inscriptions of colonial subjectivity and/or national identity teach us about the role that the image of the child played during the colonial and immediate postcolonial period, and why is it important for us to understand this? These three questions provide the momentum for the following chapters of this dissertation.

In order to achieve a fuller appreciation of the place of these magazines in the modern history of print culture of Korea, it is necessary first to explain the choice of the focus of this study. Simply asked: Why children? And why magazines? Recognizing that childhood is a modern construct (see discussion below), when did children begin to be “children” in Korea, and what was their perceived role in society? Once children had occupied a new space and their childhood became recognized and acknowledged, what did magazines in general, and individual writers and illustrators in particular, deem important to write for them? Did magazines respond to the prevalent discourses of their time—Social Darwinism, modernity, socialism, nationalism, nationalism,

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1 The dates included here do not necessarily correspond to the dates of publication, but rather to the volumes that I was able to obtain for this project. For the exact dates, please find reference to the magazines in each individual chapter.
2 Although I use the term Korea here, I will generally use the name “Chosŏn” (rather than the Japanese rendition, Chōsen, which was its more common name during the colonial period) to describe pre-division Korea, and will use the terms “North Korea” and “South Korea” after division in 1948.
colonialism—and if so, did they reproduce these discourses or subvert them? This dissertation, then, examines the ways in which children’s magazines constructed their imagined child readers and, by extension, explains why and how that these magazines contribute to our understanding of colonial and post-liberation Korea.

1.1 Why ‘Magazines’?

Scholars have commented widely on the central significance of print culture in the twentieth century. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1983) noted that nothing made the conceptualization of the nation or class solidarity more fruitful than print-capitalism. The new technology of mass media made it possible for a growing number of people to conceptualize their identities and to imagine how they relate to other people, to whom they are connected via print media, in fundamentally new ways. Writing about Taishō era Japan, Nona Carter (2009) posits that the convergence of capitalist competition and print technology created the means for a new form of community, which paved the way for the modern nation and changed the means of both physical and intellectual communication.

In Korea, too, the emergence of literary magazines was part of a developing print culture that included the production of “newspapers, journals and books… and after 1920 the print market expanded rapidly with the revival of daily magazines.” Ch’ŏn (2003), author of a pioneering study of reading practices in early modern Korea, points to the 1920s as the most significant decade in terms of literary production; it was between the years 1920 and 1930 that many of Korea’s ‘classics’—deemed canonical because, among other reasons, they have been

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4 Robinson (2007) 89.
immortalized in Korean school textbooks—were published. Ch’ŏn considers the 1920s to be a significant departure from the past for several reasons: first, the expansion of education and gradual elimination of illiteracy; second, the development of a pastime (ch ’wimi) culture that accompanied the rapid changes brought by industrial development; third, the emergence of an overwhelming interest in and consumption of new literature, newspapers and magazines. These are all optimistic statements—the numbers indicating literacy as published in the statistics of the Governor-General, for example, do not reflect levels that might point to general literacy and education, and one has to question if the livelihoods of Koreans in the 1920s allowed them to enjoy such ‘pastimes’ much at all. Still, the magazines that circulated since the 1920s marked a significant boom in production and consumption of print culture. Toward the end of the 1920s, Korean readers picked up their reading materials for more than one reason. While some read for pleasure, Ch’ŏn claims that many began to read as a part of their engagement with social discourses, as literature came to be regarded as a critical tool through which to enlighten and educate the public. Reading materials included not only Korean materials but also print materials in Japanese, as more and more Korean became fluent and literate in kokugo, the “national language” of the colonial period.

One of the significant novelties of the 1920s that Ch’ŏn discusses is the ‘new vogue’ of youth culture. This ‘new vogue’ followed on the heels of youth movements that were inspired by socialism, which enjoyed great popularity following the failure of the March First Uprising in 1919. But in fact, youth culture can be traced a decade earlier. The first magazine to herald this new trend was Sonyŏn (1908-1911), published (and also penned in great part) by Ch’oe

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5 Kŭndae ŭi ch’aeck ilkki 27.
6 Kŭndae ŭi ch’aeck ilkki 32.
7 For a discussion on the official status of the national Korean script, see King (2007).
Namsŏn. Within a year of its publication, Sonyŏn appeared in print runs of over 2000 copies, and was even used as a textbook in elementary schools throughout the country.\(^8\) In the first volume of Sonyŏn, the editor Ch’oe Namsŏn proposes:

Let us make our great Korea (taehan) into a nation of youth (sonyŏn); in order to realize this goal, let us educate and reform our youth so that they may bear that responsibility.\(^10\)

For Ch’oe Namsŏn, “great Korea,” or taehan, symbolized a revival that was, by its very nature, youthful; his ultimate goal was to link youth with a new image of the nation. Sonyŏn may arguably not have been a ‘children’s magazine’ at all—the poetry and prose, some of which was very dense, was written in kukhanmun, or Sino-Korean mixed orthography: a mix of the vernacular Korean script and Chinese characters which would have been challenging, for example, for elementary school children to read. But its appearance marked a first in what was to become a permanent fixture of print culture in Chosŏn: a literary magazine aimed at a youthful audience. The children’s magazines that followed Sonyŏn were purchased, read, circulated, recited, taught, and censored. Not only did they contribute to Chosŏn’s blossoming print culture, they also collectively generated an image of the child, a construct of an imagined reader that was produced for popular consumption. And it is these children’s magazines that are the subject of the inquiry of this dissertation.

Of course, it is important to recognize that it was not only the children’s magazines examined in this dissertation which contributed to the construction of the child in colonial and postliberation Korea. School textbooks, whether issued by the government or by missionaries,

\(^8\) Kŭndae ŭi ch’aek ilkki 205.  
\(^9\) So Yŏnghyŏn 240.  
\(^10\) 우리大韓으로 하여금 少年的 나라로 하라 그리하라 하면 能히이 責任을 勘當하도록 그를 敎導하여야.
also produced their particular construction of the child, as did other print culture including Japanese magazines that were available in colonial Korea in addition to other Korean children’s magazines not included in this dissertation. School textbooks remain outside this particular study; while they add an admittedly important dimension to the construction of the child, they belong in the domain of the official voice of educational pedagogy. This dissertation attempts to examine those materials that fall under the voice of social pedagogy—materials that were not endorsed by an educational institution per se, but which nonetheless provided children with knowledge deemed important for their social, intellectual, and emotional development. Aside from textbooks, numerous Japanese magazines circulated in colonial Korea, and a study of them would greatly enrich future research on the development of print culture in this period. However, constraints of time and space preclude an examination of these in this dissertation. It should also be noted that there are yet other Korean children’s magazines that did not make it into this dissertation simply because they were unobtainable at the time of writing. It is my hope to be able to collect these rare materials, many of which can be found almost exclusively in the hands of private collectors, and at a later date refer to them so as to capture more precisely the picture of children’s print culture in colonial and postcolonial Korea.

1.2 Why ‘Children’?

Children are as ancient as human history, yet the concept of childhood itself is a modern one. Philippe Ariès first called academic attention to the constructedness of childhood in his 1962 book published in French and translated into English as *Centuries of Childhood*, in which he

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11 Some examples include *Pulg’ūn chyōgori, Aidūlboi, Saeb’yōl, Kūmsōng*, and *Ahūi saenghwal*. 
traced the social and material conditions that enabled the emergence of childhood. A second milestone study came in 1984 with Jacqueline Rose’s book, *The Case of Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children’s Fiction*. Rose argued that adults writing literature for children were more concerned with realizing their imagined ideal of the child than writing with ‘real children’ in mind: “children’s fiction”, she said, “emerges out of a conception of both the child and the world as knowable in a direct and unmediated way.”

Ariès’ identification of childhood as a cultural construct has come to be viewed as common knowledge, and scholars of children’s literature in Asia—for example in Japan (Kawahara 1988) and China (Kinney 2004)—have supported this claim by exploring the social, and economic conditions that led to the emergence of childhood. Studies such as that by Clark and Higonnet show how children’s literature has often contributed to the creation of categories of age and gender that are necessary to preserve the social status quo. Some have responded to the implications of Rose’s ‘knowable child’ either by agreeing with her and by showing how “what might be taken for children’s culture has always been primarily a matter of culture produced for and urged upon children” or by disagreeing with her to the extent that “every literary act… contains [an] imbalance [of writer and imagined audience].” Rose’s supporters agree that children’s literature is particularly vulnerable to adult manipulation, while some of her critics, particularly the Canadian critic Perry Nodelman in an article with the clever title, “The Case of Children’s Fiction: Or, the Impossibility of Jacqueline Rose,” argues that writers and illustrators are far more self-aware of their own motivations, and far more sensitive in their responses to these motivations than Rose.

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12 Zelizer (1985) defines this emergence as part of a shift from seeing children as “objects of utility” to seeing them as “objects of sentiment.”
13 Rose 9.
15 *Children’s Culture Reader* 95.
indicates. Children’s literature today continues to be a site of heated debate, and the search for the real child goes on in contemporary literature and across cultures.

Shavit’s (1986) argument—that the discovery of childhood must precede the birth of children’s culture and literature—may partly explain the seemingly late emergence of children’s culture in Korea, although more research on the history of childhood in Korea is necessary to support this argument. There are indications that the magazine Sonyŏn was created in order to grant young readers a new sense of identity rather than just respond to a youthful identity that already existed. In any case, the creation of print culture for children in Korea was, at least in part, predicated on the recognition that the reading/viewing child existed in the first place; materials were then created and made suitable in terms of content and language. Shavit’s work serves as a gateway to the theoretical positioning of the analysis of the texts in this dissertation, which follows a cultural studies approach to understanding Korean children’s magazines—an approach which, as Guerin notes, includes “fields [of theoretical inquiry] that concentrate on social and cultural forces that either create community or cause division and alienation.”

The cultural studies approach was paved by foundational scholarship such as that of Gramsci, who argues that ideas must be understood within the political and economic structures that maintain them (the Gramscian concept of hegemony); and Althusser, whose concept of interpellation suggests that humans are subjected to the ideologies perpetuated by institutions that ‘interpellate

16 Rudd and Pavlik 223.
17 Guerin 276. Guerin defines the four shared goals of cultural studies as follows: Scrutinizing the cultural phenomenon of a text... and drawing conclusions about the changes in textual phenomena over time; Being politically engaged; Denying distinctions between high and low culture; and analyzing not only the cultural work but also the means of production (277-9).
18 See “State and Civil Society” by Antonio Gramsci.
individuals’ or determine the way they see themselves.\textsuperscript{19} Foucault’s explanation of the ways in which knowledge and power are constructed and perpetuated also contributes to a post-structuralist analysis of texts in general and the constructedness of children in particular.\textsuperscript{20} Post-structuralist approaches illuminate the content and language of children’s literature as careful choices based on a perception of what children need and want at a given time. Their ‘need’ often corresponds to hegemonic social and political discourses, supported by education and socializing functions in society. Their ‘want’ is identified as part of a larger and viable consumer market that needs to be enticed by entertainment. The response to what children need and want continues to change over time with developments in education, child psychology, and entertainment culture. However, as histories of childhood across the print cultures of Europe and Asia show, what children ‘need’ has typically taken precedence over what they ‘want.’

A survey of common Korean pre-colonial reading materials\textsuperscript{21} for children demonstrates that children in Chosŏn Korea – the educated sons of the yangban intellectuals, to be more precise – were trained and socialized with Confucian texts written for their edification, not for their pleasurable reading.\textsuperscript{22} The research of Sin Yangjae\textsuperscript{23} on the daily life of children

\textsuperscript{19} See Althusser’s famous essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.”
\textsuperscript{20} See Foucault’s analysis in \textit{Discipline and Punish} (1977), and for an application of Lacanian analysis in children’s literature, see Coats 2004.
\textsuperscript{21} These would include books such as the \textit{Thousand Character Classic} (千字文; \textit{Ch’ŏnjamun}), a primer with its origins in sixth-century China; \textit{The Precious Mirror for Illuminating the Mind} (明心寶鑑; \textit{Myŏngsim Pogam}), a fourteenth-century compilation of anecdotes illustrating proper behaviour; the fifteenth-century \textit{Samgang Haengsildo} (三綱行實圖), translated as the \textit{Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds}; and the \textit{Tongmong sŏnsūp} (童蒙先習), \textit{Eradicating Youthful Ignorance} and \textit{Kyŏngmong yogyŏl} (擊蒙要訣) or the \textit{Secret to Expelling Ignorance}, both from the sixteenth century. These were “so widely read that there would hardly have been a single literate person, even a beginning reader, who would not have been exposed to them” (Kim Hyang’ŭn 410).
\textsuperscript{22} See Ch’oe Kisuk (2006b).
\textsuperscript{23} Sin Yangjae (2005a) 1-18.
in the late Koryŏ period (918-1392) points to the fact that children participated in family life and helped out with chores: girls with needlework, boys with livestock. These activities prepared them for the economic roles they were to play in society. Children also participated in important ceremonies and social and communal obligations. In this sense, Sin claims there was no great divide between child and adult activities, which made for a smooth transition into adulthood and was advantageous for social and cultural continuity. Paek Hyeri (2004) provides a more detailed sketch of age-based categories, and outlines what children’s responsibilities would have been at each stage. Writing about the Chosŏn period (1392-1910), Kim and Paek (2000) note that the age of seven was a watershed because until this age, children were given few boundaries. After age seven, boys and girls were no longer allowed to be in each other’s company, and at ten boys were treated as adults, participating in mourning rituals and beginning their apprenticeship in a profession.24 Chŏng and Paek (2001), in their examination of late Chosŏn paintings, note that children were seen as an important part of society and family, and were identified in paintings distinctly according to their gender. Boys were often included in paintings of the marketplace and other scenes from public life, showing that even at a young age they were visible participants in society.25

While no precise date can be stamped on the hypothetical ‘birth certificate’26 of the ‘modern’ Korean child, Shavit’s (1986) methodology demands that we assume that the appearance of print culture for the young reader—Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine Sonyŏn—signals that this idea of a young reader had emerged. However, as chapter two shows, it is unclear who the child actually was, since the skills demanded for the reading of texts often densely populated

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26 The common words Korean scholars use in the context of the “discovery of the child” are
with Chinese characters and Sino-Korean holophrases were probably too sophisticated for most young Korean readers of 1910 to handle. Regardless, Ch’oe’s passion for and commitment to his young readers is not in question; nor is the undubitable influence that Japanese youth print culture exerted on him. Korean intellectuals such as Yi Kwangsu (1892-1950), Ch’oe Namsŏn (1890-1957), and Pang Chŏng hwan (1899-1931) travelled to Japan, and met with leading Japanese children’s scholars and folklorists. Deeply inspired, they returned to Korea to start their own publishing houses and position Korean youth (ch’ŏngnyŏn 靑年) as the centerpieces of the discourse of renewal and modernization of the Korean nation. The ch’ŏngnyŏn of Chosŏn were urged to seek a break with the past and to devote themselves to the future. According to modernist logic, which perceived progress along lines of European enlightenment, the success of youth—and by extension, Chosŏn in general—would depend upon the degree of their personal effort. The ch’ŏngnyŏn were the nation, and the nation belonged to the young and to those who could drag the decrepit dynasty out of its dark ages.

Chapter Two begins the inquiry into the rise of print culture for young readers in the kaehwagi, or period of enlightenment (roughly, 1890-1910). In this period, Social Darwinism captured the imagination of most of Korea’s prominent writers. In Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea (2010), Vladimir Tikhonov points to what he calls the “enthusiastic reception” of Social Darwinism by the most prominent thinkers and writers in colonial Korea. Generally speaking, Social Darwinism identified “industrial capitalism with progress,” and the groups that used its logic maintained their “staunch belief in the impracticability of egalitarian
discourse.”

27 Hwang Chŏngyŏn (2005) points out that the “ch’ŏngnyŏn of Korea” referred mainly to Korea’s young men.
28 Tikhonov (2010) 3. According to Tikhonov, Social Darwinism played a much larger role in Korea than it did in either Japan or in China.
solutions.” Tikhonov points out that in Korea, “for many young intellectuals aspiring to understand the basic principles of the new, ‘enlightened’ world, Social Darwinism was synonymous with the discourse of modernity.” Social Darwinism helped modernizers justify their efforts in a broad context and in a “‘scientific’ trajectory of world history.” Tikhonov explains that the subscription of the Korean elite to Social Darwinism is what supplied them some degree of justification on the eve of annexation and in face of Japan’s imperial aggression; for them colonialism, in its stated mission of bringing progress to backward nations, was, in some sense, inevitable.

What Chapter Two seeks to do, then, is to consider the subscription to Social Darwinism among Korea’s leading thinkers and writers and to explore the implications of this social discourse for children’s magazines. Many of the writers who subscribed to Social Darwinism, including Yi Kwangsu and Ch’oe Namsŏn, published essays in Sonyŏn; and in these essays, the influence of Social Darwinism is readily apparent. It can be traced both in text and illustrations; in the celebration and admiration of the great military achievements of Napoleon and Peter the Great; in the flaunting of grandiose monuments erected in commemoration of victorious battles (the descriptions of which are enhanced with photographs); in the call to Chosŏn’s children to “conquer the world” (enhanced by detailed maps of the world that emphasize, for example, the extent of Britain’s colonial conquests); and in a general lack of condemnation of the Japanese colonial project, which was already underway in all but name. It appears that the official system of censorship did not begin until 1910, so that, theoretically at least, Ch’oe could have expressed himself relatively freely in this period. His focus in Sonyŏn

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remains unwaveringly on the current project at hand: saving Korea from the darkness of regression through modern knowledge and (industrial capitalist) progress. What was overlooked completely in this very first period of writing for a child audience was any sense of the child himself.\textsuperscript{33} The magazine reviewed in chapter two reflects nothing of the lived experiences of Korean youth, and there is a complete absence of any literary expression that might address concerns that lie outside their political or social edification.

As Chapter Three shows, the vociferous enthusiasm for the central role that the next generation needed to play was accompanied by a growing concern with children’s welfare and rights in general. Organizations such as the YMCA arrived in Korea in the early twentieth century; and thanks to expanding social activism in the 1920s, more and more attention was turned to youth organizations, particularly in light of the harsh colonial cultural policies following annexation in 1910 and as a reaction to widespread illiteracy. This concern was inspired also by the indigenous religion of Ch’ŏndogyo [The Heavenly Way], itself rooted in the philosophies of Eastern Learning or Tonghak philosophies which went back to the late Chosŏn dynasty. The concern with children’s affairs was also inspired through the exposure to the pedagogical philosophies of Rousseau through Japanese language translations. Pang Chŏnhwan, who was the son-in-law of the religious leader of Ch’ŏndogyo, was deeply committed to the religion’s doctrines—chief among them being \textit{innaech’ŏn} (人乃天), which implied that heaven (the sacred, God, the spirit) is innate and internal, not external. Building on this doctrine, Pang argued that children harbored heaven inside them, were the embodiment of

\textsuperscript{32} See Chŏng Kŭnsik 2005.
\textsuperscript{33} I write ‘himself’ deliberately, as there is almost a complete absence of any acknowledgement of the female gender throughout this period. The Korean language is not gendered to begin with, but the general sense is that the content is geared to young men who were more likely to have received the education necessary for reading in the first place.
purity and innocence, and therefore needed adult protection. Pang took the pen name Sop’a (小波), not accidentally using the same characters as the name of one of the founders of Japanese children’s literature, Iwaya Sazanami (巖谷小波), and established the magazine Ōrini in 1923. But above all, Pang’s work was driven by his belief that at the core of each child was a tongsim (童心), or child-mind. The child-mind required socialization (in the form of national identity, to the degree allowed by censorship), which was to be shaped by the recovery of Chosŏn’s folktales; and also entertaining distraction. But above all, the child-mind demanded respect and protection, and Pang’s magazine in general, and short stories and articles, in particular, demonstrate both his belief in the collective social responsibility to protect the child-mind and his commitment to that cause. Pang’s departure from the modernity discourse is reflected also in the illustrations of the magazine Ōrini which, although not the central focus of the magazine, indicate an awareness and sensitivity to a younger audience.

The construction of the notion of a child-mind, or tongsim (童心), can also be traced in China and Japan, and has social implications similar to those of the myth of childhood innocence in European culture. Ariès notes in his observations of European culture in the 1950s that “the idea of childish innocence resulted in two kinds of attitude and behavior towards childhood: firstly, safeguarding it against pollution by life… and secondly, strengthening it by developing character and reason.”34 James Kincaid, who writes about child innocence and its dire consequences (for example, the sexual abuse of children), notes that “the myth of childhood innocence… ‘empties’ the child of its own political agency, so that it may more perfectly fulfill the symbolic demands we make upon it.”35 Childhood innocence, as Kincaid argues, is not a

34 The Children’s Culture Reader 56.
35 The Children’s Culture Reader 1.
timeless condition but a cultural myth that must be “inculcated and enforced” upon children.\textsuperscript{36} In Korea, the myth of innocence that was promoted in the work of Pang Chǒngghwan was driven by an unquestioning belief in the innocence and purity of the child and in the very urgent need for its nationalization and socialization. The implications and consequences of the construction of childhood innocence will be the focus of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four examines the development of another discourse that grew in popularity starting in the early 1920s. This discourse was critical of the way in which the child had been constructed by both Sonyŏn—the child as the sole hope for the future and for whom the only path toward progress was the negation of the past and quick adoption of modern knowledge—and by Ŭrini—the child as the essence of purity, innocence, and goodness, and a helpless victim of oppressive adults (colonial and otherwise). This discourse was socialism. Starting in 1923, youth groups with leftist leanings began to promote their vision of the child: not as a disenfranchised, exploited victim but as a child who, armed with correct (as opposed to false) class consciousness, was now sufficiently angry to revolt and act upon his or her anger. Writers such as Pak Seyŏng, Im Hwa, Song Yŏng, and Yi Kiyŏng—all writers who played significant roles in the establishment of class-conscious literature in the 1920s and 30s—contributed to the proletarian children’s magazines Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn. They manipulated the concept of tongsim and remodeled it into an active, self-aware, and empowered essence ready to be educated in the workings of politics and society and ready to take action.

The late colonial period magazine Sonyŏn is the subject of Chapter Five. Japan’s increasing militarization and the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) reverberated in the

\textsuperscript{36} The Children’s Culture Reader 2.
Japanese colonies in the form of an intensification of assimilation policies. The children’s magazine Sonyŏn reflects this intensification through the aestheticization of war, an emphasis on self-restraint, hygiene and discipline, and the construction of the child as ‘natural’, all of which are reflected in text and illustrations alike. Like Pang’s tongsim, which also promoted an image of the child as artless and natural, the ‘natural’ child of the late colonial period served the purpose of shaping the Korean child’s colonial subjectivity because it meant that the child was perfectly situated to be reformed and molded. But there was something more to this imaging of the natural child. Writing about nature in a later period in Japan, Julia Thomas (2001) examines the changing perceptions of nature within political modernity. She notes that Japan’s foremost political scientist, Maruyama Masao (1914-96), perceived nature as “anti-modern, deadeningly traditional, and opposed to liberty.” According to Maruyama and other modern leftist and liberal theorists in Japan, “true modernity was premised on the rejection of nature.” According to Maruyama and other modern leftist and liberal theorists in Japan, “true modernity was premised on the rejection of nature.” According to Maruyama and other modern leftist and liberal theorists in Japan, “true modernity was premised on the rejection of nature.”

Janet Poole touches upon the trope of local color (hyangt’osaek) in one context of literary modernity when she alludes to the way in which images of the countryside and rural women and children—“exoticised rurality”—were aestheticized in order “to stabilize the representation of Korea as a part or a region of the greater imperial realm.” I argue that the images of the ‘natural’ child perhaps also unwittingly promoted the construction of an anti-modern child that bolstered colonial discourses.

At the same time, a consideration of late colonial repression and militarization renders the achievement of a few Korean writers and poets from this period all the more remarkable. In particular, the prose of Hyŏn Tŏk stands out as a unique voice that spoke out in the late colonial

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39 “Late Colonial Modernism and the Desire for Renewal.”
years of militarization and gave expression to the complex constructions of Korean children from this period with a sincerity and eloquence that has few equals in children or adult literature.

Chapter Six tells the story of post-liberation children’s magazines, and is guided by the question of whether national liberation brought any shifts or changes to the hegemonic discourses. When liberation finally came in 1945, the burst of excitement and hope for the future, the longing to recover the repressed past, and the bitter resentment toward the Japanese colonizers is palpable on every page of the children’s magazines published soon after liberation. With a certain degree of censorship lifted, at least until 1948, writers and illustrators were free to compose their vision of the child in liberated Korea. From an analysis of the magazines, however, it is clear that even as nationalism rose to the surface, certain discourses remained the same. While vilification of Japan was all the rage, and the need to purify the Korean language of foreign vestiges of Japanese and Chinese was a primary concern, nutrition, physical discipline and sports became even more popular. The prevalence of articles on these topics and illustrations of muscular men/ orderly schoolchildren recalls Todd Henry’s article “Sanitizing Empire” (2005) and his discussion of control over the colonial Korean population through discourses of health and hygiene. Division in 1948 and the establishment of the National Security Law that same year in the Republic of Korea paved the way for the hegemonic anti-Communist discourse that hardened in South Korea after the Korean War and colored the production of children’s literature and criticism there for decades to follow.

1.3 Modernity and Children’s Magazines

Any examination of print culture in Korea from the period of enlightenment (approx.

40 See Pak Kyeri (1996).
1890-1910) through Korea’s colonial experience (1910-1945) cannot but confront the questions of its negotiations with modernity. As misleading and essentializing as they are, the terms “pre-modern” and “modern” are still used today to point to a watershed in Korean literature, a “before” and “after” that are supposed to signify concrete shifts and transformations in both content and language. Barlow (1997) reminds us that modernity can no longer be regarded “as a thing in itself, for that sleight of hand obliterates the context of political economy.” The term colonial modernity is useful, Barlow explains, because,

Colonial modernity can also suggest that historical context is not a matter of positively defined, elemental, or discrete units—nation states, stages of development, or civilizations, for instance—but rather a complex field of relationships or threads of material that connect multiply in space-time and can be surveyed from specific sites.

Barlow indicates that the ‘slipperiness’ of historical context must be considered through new terminology that might create the possibility of greater clarity through a consideration of historical complexity. In the Korean context, too, the term ‘modernity’ (kündae) has been replaced by the more nuanced term ‘colonial modernity’. This term indicates that Korea’s experience of modernity was very much defined, shaped, and mediated by its colonial experience. An exploration of different modes of modernity can still contribute to a useful examination of colonial Korea’s negotiation with this powerful discourse in the early twentieth century.

Janet Poole explains that modernity in its Euro-American model indicates a linear progression that is part of a grander narrative in the global process of modernization. Poole calls attention to three definitions of modernity which might capture the non-Euro-American

41 Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia 1.
42 Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia 6.
experience, such as that of Korea, in a more accurate way: one, a time-space compression, in which new media technologies revolutionize the transmission of information and effectively ‘compress’ past and present, and urban and rural (David Harvey); two, modernity as a eulogy for ancient times and pre-capitalist economic life (Peter Osborne); and three, modernity as brought about by conditions that include emergent technologies, still-powerful remnants of an aristocratic culture to be prolonged or negated, and an imagined proximity of social revolution (Perry Anderson). Evidence of all three of these definitions can be found throughout the children’s magazines of colonial Korea. Harvey’s “time-space compression” is apparent in photographs of the Roman Coliseum and Niagara Falls, advertisements for unfamiliar chocolate and caramels, and published letters from around the globe, all of which transported the geographically and temporally remote ‘out there’ to the immediate ‘here and now’ and effectively compressed city and country, home and away. As for Osborne’s “eulogy of the past,” children’s magazines are invariably—although perhaps to different extents depending on the magazine and decade—concerned with the urgent business of either refuting or recovering the past. What this indicates is not necessarily a conscious effort to come to a complex understanding of the past, although I do not mean to dismiss the intentions of these efforts which must have been wholehearted and sincere. But in effect the refuting/recovering of the past often resulted in a construction of the past, present and future that was more indicative of the need to affirm hegemonic discourses than of anything else. As for Perry Anderson’s definition of modernity, colonial period children’s magazines exhibit all three conditions: emergent technologies in the form of print culture, as well as film and other leisure activities; still powerful remnants of aristocratic culture to be prolonged or negated in the form of a vehement

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43 “Late Colonial Modernism and the Desire for Renewal.”
anti-yangban discourse; and an imagined proximity of social revolution—which was the explicit mission statement laid out for the children of Chosŏn.

To these, however, I would add a fourth conception of modernity offered by Julia Thomas, who explains that,

> [m]odernity is not an achieved state but a historical experience. Instead of defining modernity along the lines of the teleological narrative… as the system of political and social institutions and modes of production that have mastered nature, modernity may be defined as a particular historical experience with several possible outcomes spanning the political spectrum from left to right. What unites these different forms of modernity around the globe is the shared experience of the dissolution of the old “cosmopolis,” the fundamental relationship between nature and society, followed by its conscious reconstruction in a different pattern.⁴⁴

The Korean child at the turn of the twentieth century was constructed as—if nothing else—the embodiment of the dissolution of the old ‘cosmopolis.’ Chapters two through six will detail how adult writers—speaking, in some cases, in voices that were recognized to be the authoritative voices of their age—saw children (and children’s magazines) as ideal sites from which to meditate, pontificate, and lecture about the reconstruction of social and economic foundations. The content of children’s magazines was meant to be at times empowering of children, at times distracting and entertaining; at times, it was also unintentionally demeaning. Taken as a whole, the children’s magazines examined in the following chapters contribute to our general understanding of Korea’s complex negotiations with the rapidly changing reality of the early twentieth century—on behalf of its children.

2 Sonyon and the Modern Child

2.1 Introduction: The Rise of Youth Culture

The child and the notion of childhood are integral to the modern nation-state. The child in the modern nation-state has played a central role in spurring the development of educational and welfare institutions. And, as Sharon Stephens notes, “the creation of a modern state and national culture is integrally related to the creation of new sorts of gendered and age-graded subjects and spaces and the establishment of institutions variously engaged in spreading these constructions throughout society.”45 These constructions also demarcate the line between normative and deviant, ideal and delinquent. The power of childhood is so great that, as Daniel Thomas Cook explains, “children are born not into a ‘society’ per se but into a childhood…childhood thus precedes and frames any specific child, socially and temporally speaking.”46 These configurations, as pointed out by Cook, do much to predetermine the way that children will understand themselves and become self aware of their gender, for example, and of their specific place in the world.

At the same time, constructions of youth, child and childhood are culturally and historically specific. Zelizer (1985), for example, examines the rise of childhood in the United States in a socio-economic context, and asks why the sentimental value of children’s lives increased exactly at the moment when their contributions to the household disappeared; and Katharyn Libal comments on the rise of the discourse of the ‘robust child’ as an index of Turkey’s progress and (Western) civilization.47 While a study of the specific domestic developments that have shaped the emergence of child and childhood are critical, no less

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45 Children and the Politics of Culture 15.
46 Symbolic Childhood 2.
important is the consideration of the extent to which the ideas of youth, child and childhood were circulated and exported through, for example, projects of colonialization and globalization.

The emergence of childhood is not the primary subject of this study; nevertheless it is important to discuss it briefly here because without it print culture for children would never have reason to appear. Childhood may have emerged differently in various geographical locations and socio-political contexts, but literature for children, says Zohar Shavit, “passes through the same stages of development…the same cultural factors and institutions are involved in [its] creation.” She adds:

It was always ideology, linked with a strong educational doctrine, which formed the basis of official children’s literature. The tenet that children needed books in the course of their education constituted the emergence of a new function in the literary system, that is to say, the emergence of a specific system of books designated for children only.  

In Korea, too, the rise of print culture for youth and children also occurred only after certain stages of development had taken place, specifically following educational and social reform. But that was not all; more critical was the timing of the rise of children’s print culture in Korea, because it coincided precisely with Korea’s loss of sovereignty, as it became a protectorate in 1905 was officially colonized by Japan in 1910. The convergence of the doctrines of educational and social reform and the looming colonial experience combined to create Korea’s first youth magazines.

Korean youth were singled out for their immense potential. They occupied a perceived liminal space that was untainted by the past and capable of creating a bright future. Although it was not until the 1920s that children were recognized as a separate category that had specific

47 *Symbolic Childhood* 110.
textual and linguistic needs, the first decade of the 1900s was marked by a growing market of print culture that responded to the demands of developing printing technology and evolving educational institutions that began to produce young, literate subjects.

2.2 The Enlightenment and the Rise of the Political Child

The year 1895 marked Korea’s official independence from the influence of Qing China, and is known today as the beginning of the kaehwagi or period of enlightenment. Lasting until 1910, this period has been characterized by “intellectual experimentation and adaptation, as the leading intellectuals attempted to reconcile the new ideas and models originating from the West, as well as from contemporary Japan and China, with the very powerful equivalents from the Korean-Confucian tradition.”\(^{49}\) Andre Schmid notes that “the fifteen years between 1895 and 1910 were variously described as a time of change, an era of reform, a period of transition, and, most of all, a time of crisis.”\(^{50}\) At the center of debate was the nature of the Korean kukka or nation, and knowledge about the nation was re-produced to suit the repositioning of Korea in the changing world order. Defining the nation and Koreanness was a necessary step toward the evolution of civilization, as Schmid explains: “the nation and civilization were seen as intertwined, inseparable parts of the same reform enterprise, in which the seemingly benign nature of civilized knowledge was to assist in preserving the nation.”\(^{51}\) But the targets of this reformulation of the nation were not only the nation or ‘Koreanness’ (Schmid describes its components as including the national soul (kukhon) and national essence (kuksu)); beyond that was also the construction of the subject of the nation: the citizen, or kungmin. With the declaration of Korea as a Japanese protectorate in 1905 and then full-fledged annexation in

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\(^{48}\) *Aspects and Issues in the History of Children's Literature*, 28.  
\(^{50}\) Schmid (2002) 7.
1910, one group in particular began receiving full attention: the future *kungmin* of Korea, its children.

It is no coincidence, then, that writers, educators, publishers, and other producers of cultural materials in the period of enlightenment in Korea took an intense interest in children. Scholars such as Sŏ Tongsu (2008) and Paek Haeri (2004) note the interest taken in children at this point of heated debate over the future of the Korean state and over the education and reform of its citizens, and document the public concern about education and child-rearing. Korean youth were identified as the future of the Korean nation and had to be transformed into national citizens (*kungmin*); scholars of early childhood education and historical studies of school textbooks emphasize the extent to which education became the focal point, first of nationalists and then, with formal annexation, almost exclusively of the colonial government (Cho Yōnsu et al 2003; Yi Pyŏngdam 2006). It has also been pointed out (Cho Ŭnsuk 2002; 2009) that the growing interest in children’s welfare and issues surrounding children’s rights and education were eclipsed in this period by more abstract questions of loyalty to the nation and children’s ability to carry Korea forward. Most important, however, was the view that the older generations were tainted with primeval customs and old modes of knowledge. The new generation, by contrast, was a clean slate, untainted and fresh, and full of unrealized potential and possibilities. At the same time, however, being young, or more specifically, being a child, also implied being unripe or green, not-fully-formed, and in dire need of edification and protection. Printed forms of cultural production—magazines, books, and school

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textbooks—were to help produce and disseminate new forms of knowledge that were to create the new national citizen.⁵²

2.3 Terms in circulation: Sonyŏn and Ch’ŏngnyŏn

One of the indications of the rise in importance of the child in the enlightenment period is the circulation of signifiers and the shifting of their signified categories. The terms in circulation that signified young people—sonyŏn, ch’ŏngnyŏn, ŏrini, and adong—were not new; some of them, such as sonyŏn, for example, boast of a long history. Still, these terms acquired new meanings: by the first decade of the twentieth century, sonyŏn and ch’ŏngnyŏn became the subjects not only of two innovative magazines but also of Korea’s new youth.

The terms used to signify young people at the turn of the century, sonyŏn, ch’ŏngnyŏn, ŏrini, and adong, were neither new or original. Cho Ünsuk (2009) claims that the Sino-Korean word sonyŏn [Ch. 少年, young in years] goes back to the Silla dynasty (57 BC-935 AD), where it referred to an early period in one’s life;⁵³ the term ch’ŏngnyŏn [Ch. 青年, youthful, ‘unripe’ and green] dates back to the 17th century; the vernacular Korean word ŏrini [youth, from the verb ŏrida, to be young] which is wrongfully believed to have been invented in the 1920s, made several appearances in 17th and 18th century texts (but subsequently gained prominence after the 1920s); and the term adong (Ch. 兒童, child) too, was a term that existed already from the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910). What is unique about their appearance in the twentieth century was their lack of stability and their interchangeability. These terms were, after all, constructions that did not pinpoint particular markers in a child’s life from a scientific or a developmental

⁵² Sŏ Tongsu (2008), 246-7.
The terms stabilized in the 1920s and will be discussed further throughout this chapter; the important point to emphasize here is the very fact that these terms gained currency, and that they were circulated, scrutinized and debated. They illustrate the prominent place that youth and children came to hold at the turn of the century.

The terms *ch'ŏngnyŏn* and *sonyŏn*—terms that signified the subjects of enlightenment charged with building the modern nation and objects in dire need of education and reform—began to circulate thanks in great part to two factors: the YMCA, which was known in Korean as the *Kidokkyo ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe* (the “Young” was translated into Korean as *ch'ŏngnyŏn*), and also to Ch’oe Namsŏn’s publications, particularly his magazine *Sonyŏn*. Yun Yŏngsil (2008) argues that *ch'ŏngnyŏn* was the first of these terms to gain currency, first in 1896 and then after 1905 when it appeared in the magazine *T'aegŭk hakpo*, a magazine published by Koreans studying in Japan. In *T'aegŭk hakpo*, the *ch'ŏngnyŏn*—as symbols of physical prowess and vibrant youthfulness—were expected to overcome the inefficacies of the elderly (*noin*), the frail, the women and the young children of Korea in order to build a new civilization and modern culture. Cho Únsuk (2009) attributes the appearance of the *ch'ŏngnyŏn*—the twentysomething group—to the social visibility of an increasing number of Korean students receiving high school education both at home and in Japan.55 As for the term *sonyŏn*, Yun Yŏngsil (2008) traces its contemporary origins to Liang Qichao’s “Ode To Young China” (Ch. 少年中國說) which appeared in 1900, echoing Li Zhi’s “Ode to the Child-like

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53 In its Chinese origin, *shaonian* or 少年, was a gender neutral term and simply meant ‘young in years’.
Mind” (tongxin shuo, 童心说) of the 16th century. In “Ode To Young China,” Liang turns the tradition of respecting elders on its head by associating old age with decrepitude and conservatism and youth with hope and progression; he points out that “true nation-states had but recently emerged” and traced out the trajectory of Chinese history to emphasize that earlier stages had been slow pre-developmental stages but that now China was on the verge of youth.

When one of late Chosŏn’s most prolific writers, Ch’oe Namsŏn (1890-1957), published his first magazine for a non-adult audience, it was not the term ch’ŏngnyŏn that he opted for. Ch’oe studied in Japan between October 1904 and January 1905, and then again between April 1906 to June 1908. His second visit was particularly significant, since it was then that his exposure to publishing technologies and magazine circulation (including children’s magazines) inspired his decision to pioneer the same technologies in Chosŏn. It is also on his second study trip to Japan that Ch’oe Namsŏn developed his ideas about the role of youth as saviours of the Korean nation in the above-mentioned magazine T’aegŭk hakpo. Upon Ch’oe’s return to Korea in 1908, it was not the group of young people determined by the term ch’ŏngnyŏn that Ch’oe singled out as leaders of Korea in the new world order. He chose another term, sonyŏn, which he used as the title of the magazine that he published between 1908-1911, when Ch’oe himself was only eighteen years old. As Yun Yŏngsil explains, Ch’oe’s choice of the word sonyŏn is meaningful, considering that ch’ŏngnyŏn was the more loaded term that had come to signify Korean youth that could realize their subjectivity; the much younger sonyŏn were

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57 Liang Qichao (1873-1929) was an immensely influential Chinese reformer and Social Darwinist. On his influence in Korea, see Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea: The Beginnings, 1880-1910*.

58 Zarrow 230. Tikhonov notes that this essay was taken up by Confucian reformer Chang Chiyŏn, who published his translations of Liang in 1908 in a collection titled “The Soul of China” (Chungguk hon) in which he showed that Korea, like China, could “play the role of a promising youth” if it were properly reformed (2010) 88.
considered to be passive objects of reform.\textsuperscript{60} Because Ch’oe Namsŏn was the first to publish magazines aimed specifically at a non-adult audience, the essays, translations, and illustrations that delineate his discourse about youth and which he published in his magazines will be examined briefly.

Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine Sonyŏn, the title of which reverberated throughout many of the magazine’s articles, seems, from its orthography, to address itself toward literate children that can easily navigate the mixed Chinese-Korean vernacular kukhanmun script—aged, perhaps, fifteen and over. While some of the early volumes appear to have been written with a younger audience in mind, judging from the relative paucity of Chinese characters, the magazine became increasingly dense in content and complex in orthography. In addition, it is clear from the editor’s notes to his readers in the opening volume that the magazine is not intended for young readers only; their parents and older siblings are addressed as the caretakers of the assumed audience, and are included as accomplices in the project of education and reform of the young readers.\textsuperscript{61}

Ch’oe’s decision to create Sonyŏn was inspired, no doubt, by the publishing industry in Japan and China. By the end of the Meiji period (1868-1912) most Japanese books and newspapers were using moveable type; these new press technologies made it possible to produce print media more efficiently, including, of course, the production of magazines.\textsuperscript{62} In the serial essay titled 少年時言 (Sonyŏn siŏn; On childhood) and subtitled “少年의 既往과

\begin{footnotes}
\item[59] Yun Yŏngsil (2008) 103-8.
\item[61] Other magazines published by Ch’oe with explicit educational materials include Pulgŏn chŏgori (1913.1-1913.7), Aidŭlboi (1913.9-1914.8) and Saebŏl (1913.9-1915.1). All three were published after Sonyŏn had ceased.
\item[62] Kornicki, The Book in Japan, 166.
\end{footnotes}
remarks on how amazed he was to discover a highly developed print culture in Shanghai and particularly the various newspapers in Japan, and that this is what motivated him to develop a publishing culture of equal standing in Korea.

It was not, however, positive experiences alone that inspired Ch’oe Namsŏn. Yun (2008) argues that Ch’oe’s idea to import his newly-acquired print technology know-how and establish the magazine Sonyŏn arose from a humiliating experience at Waseda University. This experience eventually drove him back to Korea and also motivated Ch’oe Namsŏn to disseminate his ideas about the youth of Korea as masters of their subjectivity. In addition, it seems that the creation of Ch’oe’s magazine was inspired by even more than his humiliating experience in Japan, and his exposure to new print technologies there. As Chŏn Sŏnggon notes (2008), the Japanese magazine 國民之友 (Jap. Kokumin no tomo, Friend of the Citizen) launched by Tokutomisōhō (1863-1957) in 1887 played an important role in the conception of the idea for Ch’oe’s magazine. This magazine established a connection between youth and nation in a way that spoke clearly to Ch’oe Namsŏn’s budding nationalism. Of particular note is its editor’s emphasis on the dichotomy of old (Eastern, aging, irrelevant, outdated) versus new (Western, youth, reform). What the magazine argued more broadly was

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63 Sonyŏn 1910 4.6, 12-24.
65 In Japan, creation of a modern canon for children was rooted in the educational reforms and growing capitalism of the late 1800s and early 1900s. See Torigoe (ed.), The Japanese Children’s Literature History we Learn First (Hajimete manabu Nihon jidō bungakushi はじめて学ぶ日本児童文学史), 70-71. Quoted in Carter, A Study of Children’s Magazines, 55.
66 The magazine apparently enjoyed a robust circulation of over 10,000 copies per month (Chŏn Sŏnggon 38).
for the collapse of boundaries between self and nation by insisting on the critical importance of
the individual—the young individual—in the larger workings of politics.\(^67\)

Ch’oe was inspired by magazines that followed the publication of the Japanese
magazine *Kokumin no tomo*, such as *Shôkokumin* (Young Citizens, 少国民), a popular
magazine which sold “an unprecedented 8,000 per issue after the Russo-Japanese War in
1905”\(^68\); *Shônen-en* (Children’s Garden, 少年園), published in 1888; and *Shônen sekai*
(Children’s World, 少年世界), which ran from 1895 to 1933. *Shônen sekai* included
editorials, short stories, historical and legendary pieces, scientific notes, humorous pieces, travel
essays and other kinds of miscellaneous writings and illustrations that were meant to prepare
young people as citizens in their developing nation as a part of the modern world.\(^69\)  *Shônen-en*
promoted itself as educational not only to its youthful readers but also to their parents and
educators;\(^70\) it also recognized “the need to include amusing stories in order to sell in the
consumer-driven market.”\(^71\)

The concept of the child in the Japanese magazine *Shônen-en* (Children’s Garden, 少年
園) was, according to Yun Yongsil, a child outside politics, a child that is a passive receptacle of
education, a “flower of the world”. But it was this formula of a child outside politics that, in

\(^{67}\) Chôn Sŏnggon 37-41.
\(^{69}\) Ōtake Kiyomi, *Kūndae han-il adong munhwa wa munhak kwangyesa (1895-1945)* 39.
\(^{70}\) Chôn Sŏnggon 38.
\(^{71}\) Ikeda, Junya. “Meiji jidai matsuki no jidō bungaku” 18. Quoted in Carter, *A Study of
Children’s Magazines*, 56.
Ch’oe’s mind, could not possibly work in Korea. Ch’oe famously opened the first issue of Sonyŏn with the following pronouncement:

“Let us make our great nation (taehan) into a nation of youth (sonyŏn); in order to realize this goal, let us educate and reform our youth so that they may bear that responsibility.”

The intent of the magazine Sonyŏn, Ch’oe explains to the reader, is to educate (敎導, K. kyodo) the new Korean children (sindae han sonyŏn) so as to turn them into “enlightened people, thinking people, knowledgable people, so that they might be able to carry their heavy burden.”

For Ch’oe, then, Korean youth (sonyŏn) are not to bear the full brunt of the present; they are bestowed with a certain degree of freedom in order to observe, experience, and absorb knowledge. Ch’oe’s approach put an increasing emphasis on self-cultivation and obtaining knowledge through experimentation, an approach that was influenced in no small part by An Ch’angho. But as Yun Yŏngsil points out, the signifier sonyŏn and its signified ‘youth’ were unstable concepts. Ch’oe replaced the word sonyŏn in the title of one of his monthly articles, changing the title from “Hyŏndae sonyŏn sinhohŭp” [New Breathing of the Modern sonyŏn] to “Sinsidae ch’ŏngnyŏn ŭi sinhohŭp” [New Breathing of our New Generation of ch’ŏngnyŏn]. And indeed, Sonyŏn catered increasingly to an older young adult (ch’ŏngnyŏn) group through complex essays written in more dense orthography. The youth group that Ch’oe

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72 Yun Yŏngsil, 113-4.
73 우리 大韓으로 하여곱 少年의 나라로 하라 그리하라 하면 能히이 責任을 勘當

74 (1910 4.6) 18.
75 An (1878-1938) was a nationalist and an educator who took a leading role in Korea’s struggle for independence. He played an important role in the immigrant community in the United States, and was also a key member of the Provincial Government in Shanghai in 1919.
76 1909 2.2
was committed to, the *ch’ŏngnyŏnghoe* (again, note the term “young adult” rather than “child”), adopted the magazine *Sonyŏn* as its voice; and as the imagined readership of *Sonyŏn* became older and more abstract, so did the term *sonyŏn* transform from indicating less a particular age than a more general symbol of progress. 78

2.4 *Sonyŏn* and Nationalism

Each issue of *Sonyŏn* opened with Ch’oe’s aforementioned famous quote, “Let us make our great nation (*taehan*) into a nation of youth (*sonyŏn*); in order to realize this goal, let us educate and reform our youth so that they may bear that responsibility”. 79 One of the last issues of *Sonyŏn*, number 17 (1910 4.5), published four months before the official annexation, opens with a list of the ten virtues of the citizens of the New Great Korea:

![Figure 1: Ten Virtues](image)

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77 *Sonyŏn* 1909 2.3.
78 Yun Yŏngsil, 119
79 The quote appears in issues 1-7, 12, 14-16 and in the last one, issue 20.
80 *Sonyŏn* (1910 4.5).
Figure 1 (from top to bottom, right to left) reads: Purity, Brightness, Sturdiness, Harmony, Truthfulness, Loyalty, Diligence, Justice, Beauty, and Tidiness. These categories might be translations of similar categories in Japanese; in any case they are not so much Confucian as they are “modern”: “Brightness” refers to Ch’oe’s own theory known later as paksasang or Theory of Brightness, in which he elaborated on the inherent potential of Korea to serve as a beacon of light in the darkness of the transition into modernity\(^81\); Elements such as “Sturdiness” or “Tidiness” indicate a kind of physicality that is achieved through a contemporary attention to details. The title Sonyŏn appears in large font, front and center on the same page, but the term child (sonyŏn) is missing from the subtitle on the right, which reads sindaehan kungmin (new Great Korean citizen) rather than sindaehan sonyŏn (new great Korean child). This might indicate that there is a distinction being made between the expectations of the new Korean citizen and the sonyŏn child. By association, then, the reader can connect these ten virtues to be virtues expected of sonyŏn—the most important citizens.

The sonyŏn of Korea were addressed either (as in the quote) as the sonyŏn of taehan (great Korea) or, alternatively, as sindaehan sonyŏn (the sonyŏn of new and great Korea). These sonyŏn were not to be celebrated so much as individuals but rather were encouraged to see themselves as crucial segments of society and their nation; a nation whose development and success, in turn, depended wholly on their individual efforts. In his magazine Sonyŏn, then, Ch’oe constructed the term sonyŏn to imply not only youth in terms of age; more broadly, sonyŏn represented Korea’s rejuvenation and innate potential for growth, reform, enlightenment, and politicization. Underlying these constructions was Ch’oe’s belief in the force of progress.

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Indeed, the dissemination of national identity within a Social Darwinist frame played a central role in both the foreground and the background of the definition and construction of the sonyŏn. The construction of the national identity of youth as Korean in the specific context of early twentieth-century regional (China and Japan) politics was the driving force behind the magazine.

2.4.1 Rejuvenation and Growth

Nothing illustrates the idea of rejuvenation and the potential for growth better than Ch’oe’s oft-quoted poem, “hae egesŏ sonyŏn ege” (From the Sea to the Boy),\(^\text{82}\) considered by some to be the watershed that separates premodern and modern literature in Korea.\(^\text{83}\) The poem is written in mixed script, i.e. both with the vernacular script (hangŭl) and Chinese characters (hanja), but with a much more frequent use of the vernacular.\(^\text{84}\) The narrating voice is that of the sea, which boasts of its infinite power and ability to shatter anything that stands in its way. The sea brags about its conquest of the natural world (mountains and boulders); of heros from Chinese and Western history (Emperor Qin Shi Huang and Napoleon); and of its allegiance to the sky. It hates all people except for one kind: it loves the group called sonyŏn, who are brave and of pure emotions, precious and lovely, so much so that the sea wants to kiss them. The

\(^{82}\) “海에게서 少年에게” SONYŏN 1, 2-4.

\(^{83}\) Peter Lee notes that “The ‘new poetry’ movement began with the publication of [Ch’oe’s poem]… the poem’s inventions include the copious use of punctuation marks (a convention borrowed from the West), stanzas of unequal length, a string of onomatopoeia in the first and seventh line of each stanza, and the dominant images of the sea and children, which had been little mentioned in classical Korean poetry.” (Peter Lee, Modern Korean Literature: An Anthology, xvi-xvii) Ch’oe himself notes that his attempts at poetry were experiments with new poetry in Korea (SONYŏN 1909.4, 2).

\(^{84}\) The balance between vernacular script and Chinese characters changes from piece to piece and particularly from issue to issue, with the later volumes being filled more with Chinese characters, in much smaller letters and with fewer spaces between the lines. This can indicate
sonyŏn implied in Ch’oe’s poem seem to be children of a younger age rather than the older, more politically active youth that are the target audience of Ch’oe’s writing in later issues.

The critical significance of the sea and its presence throughout the magazine has been pointed out by Kwŏn Podūrae (2005). Ch’oe was a prolific translator, and Sonyŏn contains his translations (from the Japanese original) of Tolstoy’s short stories, excerpts from Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels and Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, and poems by Lord Byron. The aforementioned poem, “From the Sea to the Boy,” was likely inspired by Byron’s narrative poem, “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage,” published between 1812 and 1818.85 Byron’s poem was published in Sonyŏn in 1910.86 The sea appears throughout the magazine in poems such as this famous one; through essays with titles such as “Haesang taehansa” (海上大韓史, Nautical History of Korea) that ran for multiple issues; in a series of musings about the sea such as “Pada ran kŏsŭn irŏhan kŏsio” 87 [On the significance of the sea]88; and poems such as “Sammyŏn

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85 Theresa Hyun (1997) points to the symmetry between Ch’oe’s poem and Byron; she also explains that Ch’oe’s choice to translate this particular work has been pointed out to be in direct connection with its appearance in translation in Japan in 1908.

86 For example, Canto the Fourth, Verse 179 (published in Sonyŏn in its original English as verse (Roman numeral) I) begins like this: “Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!/Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain’/Man marks the earth with ruin—his control/ Stops with the shore;—upon the watery plain/ The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain/ A shadow of man’s ravage, save his own/ When, for a moment, like a drop of rain.’ He sinks into thy depths, with bubbling groan./ Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.” (Sonyŏn 4.6, 10; punctuation in the original.)

87 Sonyŏn 1 (1908 1.1, 37).

88 One quote, apparently written by Ch’oe Namsŏn himself, reads: "로빈슨 크루소"는海事에 閘한 한小傳奇라 그러나 世界의 海王이라는 英国の 海軍은 此로 因하야 成就하였지니나니 貞人은 此에 慶感하야 興起터 아니쳐 못라리로다.” ["Robinson Crusoe may be a minor and fantastic tale, but the fact is that England has become master of the seas because of its naval forces; I have witnessed this and cannot possibly remain unmoved."]
hwanhaeguk” (三面環海國; Surrounded on three sides by the Sea), a three-stanza poem that describes the vibrancy of people hard at work under the energizing sun, and in which each stanza ends with the phrase “Yes it’s true, our nation also has a sea in the East/South/West.”

These essays encourage children to think about the sea as a metaphor for greater adventure and motivate them to push the frontiers of their imaginations and think of the wider world as the domain of their play.

Some of Ch’oe’s pieces are more explicitly didactic than others. Take for example, this section from Ch’oe’s translation of *Robinson Crusoe*. At the end of the translation, the narrator suddenly turns to the readers and informs them that they might find the story lengthy and wordy, but adds this personal note:

If there is one thing I want, it is that our Sindae han sonyŏn [new children of great Korea], who have a bright and glorious road ahead of them, will not think strangely of exploring the sea—which is a pocket of fun, a warehouse of treasure—that surrounds their country on three sides. I wish that you will also make the sea your friend, make the sea your teacher, make the sea your playground, make the sea into your workplace; master the sea, and make an effort to humor it, as well… and if I may say one thing more, it is this: do not think of using the sea for any personal fancy; rather, make time for its study and research, for its enriching development, and do so with a true heart and

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89 Sonyŏn 10 (1909 1.8, 2-4).
90 See, for example, the ending of the first stanza: 그러나 우리나라라는 동도 바다이나라. Sonyŏn 10 (1909 2.8, 2).
91 Samuel Baker (2010) notes that Britain’s command of the sea had taken on heightened significance during the war with Napoleon, and that “the maritime dynamic of expansion and insularity informed the idea of British nationhood… Romantic-period writers [like Lord Byron] shared and were understood to share a renewed appreciation of the ocean as a geopolitical domain ruled by British naval heroism.” (1) In his book, Baker argues that the Romantic idea of culture was formed within an imagined space which was shaped by Britain’s maritime-imperial aspirations.
clear intentions for larger, higher aspirations, for the good of culture and for the benefit of the country.\textsuperscript{92}

However, Kwŏn Podūrae argues that by turning his focus toward the empty spaces of the sea, Ch’oe is essentially shying away from providing a more confrontational, explicitly nationalistic rhetoric. She supports her argument by providing examples from Ch’oe’s translations of Tolstoy, published in Sonyŏn, in which he deliberately eliminated the more anarchist and anti-nationalist elements claiming that “the children of Korea do not need this right now.”\textsuperscript{93} Ch’oe wrote (see Figure 2), “The love felt by our sonyŏn is not one that pushes toward conquest of the West nor of Japan. It is only this: self-encouragement, self-progress, self-fulfillment, self-protection”\textsuperscript{94}; note also the printed circles included along the text for emphasis, indicating how important Ch’oe thought this was.

\textsuperscript{92} 그러나 한가지 願하는것은 가장 光明스럽고 榮譽있슬 여러분의 나라형편이 三面으로 滋味의 주머니오 보배의 庫실같인 바다에 둘러싼것을 尋常한 일노 알지말어... 恆常 그을 벗하고 그을 스승하고 또 거기로 노리려로말고 그을 스승하고 또 거기로 부리고 그의 脾胃를 마초기에 마음 두시기를 바라봄나니 엇집지아니한말씀이오나 급치 드러주시오 그런데 한마의 부처 말함것은 우리모양으로 私利착한으로 바다를 쓰설 생각말고 좀 크게 높게 人文을 爲하야 國益을 爲하야 嫁許한 마음과 精誠스러운 뜻으로學理研究, 富源開發等 조혼 消遣을 잡으시기를 바람이 와다. Sonyŏn 10 (1909 2.8) 43-4.

\textsuperscript{93} See Kwŏn Podūrae (2005), 64.

\textsuperscript{94} Sonyŏn 5 (1909 2.3) 53.
2.4.2 Reform, Enlightenment, and Politicization

How explicit was the nationalist rhetoric espoused by Ch’oe? While the above section promotes a love-of-country (aeguk) that is somewhat introspective and even religious,\(^95\) other examples throughout the magazine provide practical knowledge that may contribute to a nationalist sentiment. Continuing with the sea metaphor, which appears throughout his work, Ch’oe opens a series of essays titled “Haesang taehansa” (海上大韓史, Nautical History of Korea), intended for the kungmin (國民), or the nation’s citizens\(^96\), with the question/subtitle, “Why have we repressed our sense of adventure toward the open seas?”\(^97\) In order to achieve their full potential as citizens and creators of a new civilization, Ch’oe explains that children require enlightenment in the form of both technical knowledge and literary knowledge of the aesthetics.

\(^{95}\) The connotations of 自勵自進自成自守 (self-encouragement, self-progress, self-fulfillment, self-protection) can be said to reverberate with Confucian rhetoric which emphasizes that change must first occur within the individual in order to take effect externally.

\(^{96}\) Sonyŏn 1908.1.1, 31.
of the sea and how it has been celebrated. While this particular section does not overstep its educational boundaries into nationalist rhetoric—intimating that, at least at this point in time, ‘modern’ education and knowledge of the world is a goal unto itself—other essays and poems are more explicitly nationalistic.

Ch’oe constantly addressed the immanent potential that he saw in the sonyŏn. The purpose of this knowledge was not only for personal self-fulfillment, as Ch’oe notes in the opening pages of his inaugural issue of Sonyŏn. In the first of a series of essays titled “Sonyŏn siŏn” [少年時言, On Childhood] and subtitled “Yŏrŏbun ŭn ttŭsŭl ŏtŏk’ŏ seasiryo?” [How are you intending to fulfill your destiny?], Ch’oe compares sonyŏn to flour or rice dough that may be formed easily, but that can be deformed and spoil just as easily. Sonyŏn must prepare for their lives as if they are preparing for a long journey, and, most importantly, Ch’oe reminds them that the destiny of a nation depends without question on its people. Children must therefore be aware that the degree to which each individual fulfills his own destiny will affect the destiny of the entire nation.98

A more powerful message is contained in the poem Pada wie yong sonyŏn (Brave Boys of the Sea; See Appendix). The poem opens with a full one-page illustration of three boys in a boat being tossed about by violent waves (Figure 3); the dramatic contrast is accentuated by the lines of the waves and the dark rock, and by the sharp angle of the boat in comparison with the rock which is dangerously close.

97 Sonyŏn 1908.1.1, 31.
98 Sonyŏn 1908 volume 1, 5-10.
The poem opens: “Three boys of the Sea/ are the grandest, most splendid children/ of all those multitudes on the Korean peninsula.” The boys are faced with a violent storm that threatens to topple their little boat, but they stand up to the storm with great bravery. They sing a song that can be heard by all; in this song they praise their land, and evoke the maker, *hananim*. This maker, (also rendered with the Chinese character for master, 主, and vernacularized as skūisŏ, or “His Eminence”) has created their country for a reason, and asks them to be strong in the face of upcoming great calamities. The boys then swear to fulfill their ultimate goal:

Valiant children, brave hearts!
You will prevail and be victorious.
The Dragon Fortress will be ours

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100 See Don Baker’s article on the construction of terminology for Korean monotheism (2002).
And we will preside over
the Temple of Jerusalem.
Once we are the proud Kings of the World,
We will build a road in the Rock of Truth and pave it with love,
and fulfill our dream of founding the Land of Heaven here;
from start to finish, the future will be impeccable.\(^{101}\)

The explicit intention of the boys in their journey is to become “Kings of the World” (onsegye ūi taeju)—from the mythological Dragon Palace in the depths of the sea to the sacred temple in Jerusalem—and to build a utopia on earth. As Kwŏn Podūrae states, however, the suggestion to replace reality with a utopia is expressed in abstract terms—“hidden” in poetry and decorated with hypothetical and fantastical symbolism—that what can be mistaken for nationalistic ambitions is diverted, as she claims, toward “unpopulated” and unthreatening spaces.\(^{102}\)

2.5 Sonyŏn and Social Darwinism

Ch’oe’s articulation of nationalism might have been somewhat understated and abstract in the examples above, but from the March issue of 1910 until the magazine’s cessation in 1911, Sonyŏn contained essays and poems that expressed more explicit nationalist rhetoric. The March 1910 issue is a volume of poetry dedicated to Tosan An Ch’angho that celebrates Mt. T’aebaek—a mountain that has been celebrated in Korea as symbol of strength and pride, and is the birthplace of Tan’gun, the mythical progenitor of the Korean race. The poem T’aebaek sanbu [太白山賦, Ode to Mt. T’aebaek] reads:

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\(^{101}\) 한갈잡힌 우리정정 우리용猛이/ 마조막의 큰봉짓을 엮게 만들어/ 바다엔 龍주

\(^{102}\) Kwŏn Podūrae (2005), 72.
The sky is round and the earth beneath is flat, but our beloved Mount T’aebaek comes shooting up!
It stands alone—it stands on its own—it stands out.
Is it a poker? A fire tong? A calligraphy brush?
It is a surging tower of glorious light!
Is it a lightening rod? A flag pole? An electric pole?
It is the bulging, beautifully courageous forearm of the boys of Chosôn!  

Kwŏn (2005) points out that the force of this rhetoric—which mobilizes the metaphoric power of Mount T’aebaek—in fact replaces the sea imagery that was so prominent in earlier volumes. Ch’oe’s use of sea imagery, which Kwŏn characterizes as a “horizontal imagination,” is taken over by a “vertical imagination” of mountains. This metaphorical move, then, can be also interpreted as a rhetorical move from an abstract vision of national identity to a more concrete (or Freudian) articulation of identity.

Perhaps one of the examples that best demonstrates the strands of social Darwinist rhetoric that inspired Ch’oe’s writing is the piece titled “kukka ŭi kyŏngjaengnyŏkk” (國家의競爭力, The Competitiveness of a Nation]. In this piece, Ch’oe elaborates on the correspondences between the animal kingdom and the political and social world of humans. In this analogy, the survival of a nation depends on its ability to develop its strength and competitiveness. This section is, in fact, a translation of a section out of a book on anthropology.

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103 하날 성面은 휘둥그릿코 망 사바단은 평퍼짐한데, 우리님--太白이는 웃득
        獨立--自立--特立.
        송곳?火箸? 筆筒의 笏?
        榮光의 尖塔!
        避雷針? 旗대? 電杆木?
        은가 아름다운 勇이 한데로 몽죄여 된 朝鮮男兒의 至精大醇의 큰 괴톡!
104 Kwŏn Podûrae (2005) 78.  
and geography (地人論; Theory of Place and Man) written by the Japanese Christian scholar and theologian Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930). In this work, Uchimura argues both for the necessity of developing a deeper understanding of the connection between culture and geography, and at the same time for the necessity of looking beyond one’s country to the culture of the wider world. In general, however, the driving force behind Sonyŏn was a combination of three things: the Social Darwinist rhetoric that called for the renewal and reform of the nation in order to secure its survival, a nationalist rhetoric that emphasized the relationship between the individual and nation, and a rhetoric that emphasized the acquisition of modern knowledge, which would facilitate progress that was at once individual and collective, spiritual and material.

The intersection of child and nation can be explored through the physical space of the nation on the pages of Sonyŏn. As mentioned above, Ch’oe’s vision of the nation in its physical manifestation was deeply influenced by contemporary Japanese writers such as Uchimura Kanzō, whose work 地人論 [Theory of Place and Man] Ch’oe translated and included in Sonyŏn. Ch’oe urged his young readers to take Japan as a model of progress, and which contrasted very clearly with defeated China. In particular, Ch’oe developed a theory he called the “Peninsular Culture Theory” (半島文化論, Pando munhwaron), upon which he expounded in Sonyŏn. According to this theory, because of Chosŏn’s peninsular geography, it has been, like many other peninsulas, home to many heros. Chosŏn’s great potential stems from its geographical perimeters — being surrounded by the sea on three sides and by land on

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106 Sonyŏn 1909 2.10, 90-5.  
107 Chŏn Sŏnggon 60.  
108 Chŏn Sŏnggon 62.
one, it synthesizes the culture of land and sea. Due to its geographical perimeters, then, Chosŏn was always open to the culture of the world, and was therefore a gatekeeper of world unification. But the responsibility for carrying this burden, Ch’oe insists, lies with Chosŏn’s children. “Brave Boys of the Sea” ends:

Korean peninsula—body hidden by the sea
Korean peninsula—blessed with such brave children
Korean peninsula—endowed with such good fortune!
I know that you are the youngest child of the King of the World.
May you embrace your complete and pure happiness
and become the Shimmering Light, under Heaven, on Earth.

In this poem, Ch’oe’s brings together his vision for both Korea the nation and Korean youth. The Korean peninsula enjoys a propitious position as the link between land and sea, and it is filled with privileged children who are the beacon of light that will shine the way for Korea as it moves out of its dark past and into its brilliant future.

2.6 Sonyŏn and Modernity

Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine Sonyŏn marked a turning point in the evolution of print culture in Korea. It did so by drawing its readers’ attention to both external and internal content that was different from anything that had come before it. The magazine’s layout made use of color, design, photographs, and illustrations that were meant either to supplement the printed words on the page or to make it more catchy and attractive. It also used visual conventions to relay meaning about the world that would provide children with the necessary information and

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109 Sonyŏn (1909) 2.6, 22-25.
110 Sonyŏn (1909) 2.10, 38-43.
inspiration—primarily through modern knowledge and understanding of the world—to break away from the past and create a new Korea. It is with these innovations in mind that we turn to examine the role of visual culture in Sonyŏn, and to consider the way in which the visual culture participated in the construction of the imagined child reader.

2.6.1 Visual Culture in Sonyŏn

Ch’oe Namsŏn’s encounter with youth and adult magazines during his sojourn in Japan, including the Korean magazine for overseas students, the T’aegŭk hakpo (J. Taikyoku gakuho) were hugely influential on him both as a writer and as a producer of books. Ch’oe received firsthand training during the period in which he worked at a Japanese publishing house, the Naikoku kangyo hakurankai (內國勸業博覽會). Equipped with this new technological knowledge, Ch’oe return to Korea and set up his own publishing house called the Sinmungwan (新文館). And in 1908 the first issue of Sonyŏn was published.

As Yun Sejin points out, Ch’oe Namsŏn established his magazine as a platform from which to disseminate modern knowledge about the world as a part of the larger project of constructing the new (and modern) Korean sonyŏn. Without modern knowledge, Ch’oe believed it would be impossible to lead the new nation and civilization. One of the aspects of Japanese magazines that most impressed Ch’oe was the presence of a wide range of visual and textual content. The publication of Sonyŏn corresponded to the period in which visual arts began to gain recognition in Korea as a field of study, and more and more printed materials in Korea carried
visual images.\footnote{Yun Sejin 24-6.} What distinguished Sonyŏn from those magazines that came before it was precisely its visual component: no longer was the magazine reading experience solely a ‘reading’ one, but now it became a viewing one, too.\footnote{Yun Sejin 31; Yun also notes that the cover of the first volume of Ch’ŏngch’un (1914), for example, was done by Korea’s very first painter who had mastered western techniques, Ko Hŭidong (1886-1965); the cover carries a portrait of a tiger (the symbol of Korea) flanked/tamed by a Korean male dressed in a Greek (i.e. Western)-style white cloth. Incidentally. Yun points out that magazines such as Ch’ŏngch’un provided the space for up-and-coming artists to display their work at a time when such exposure was limited (41).} The act of seeing became an act of owning knowledge—not abstract knowledge, but concrete knowledge represented by visual images that could not be dismissed or negated.

The visual aspects of Sonyŏn were most novel, particularly in the use of design (experimentation with font, color, and text layout), and in their insertion of decorative illustrations, repetitive icons, maps and photographs. The use of color in the opening page of the magazine served, no doubt, as a ‘hook’ to lure readers and whet their interest in taking up the magazine. And the use of decorative, graphic designs functioned not only as striking visuals that supported the text through repetitive reproductions of certain icons and images, but also served the purpose of providing welcome variety to long pages of text. Besides color, font size was also used to call attention to certain parts of the text. Figures 6-9 are examples of the way font size was blown up to emphasize certain sentences or section titles (figure 4); to provide the title with some flourish; and some designs were added to provide emphasis in the text, as in figure 2, in which the importance of the words on the page is emphasized with the help of small circles along the text:
Text layout was also experimented with, particularly with poetry. Compare the layout of these two poems: Figure 6 reads as usual from right to left, top to bottom; Figure 7, titled “Sŏngjin” [stars] is laid out in a diagonal variation, with a decorative star placed at the top of each stanza:

Illustrations played several roles in the magazine Sonyŏn. They supported the text (by providing supplemental visual information); appeared as recurring icons to remind the reader of the connection between sections of different issues; functioned as emphatic conventions; or
simply served as pleasant diversions that accompanied lengthy texts. As supplementary illustrations, they helped readers visualize certain aspects of the texts. For example, figure 8 accompanying an essay about European ocean culture, or figure 9 about the history of flying machines:

![Figure 8 Boats](image1)

![Figure 9 Flying Machines](image2)

Certain icons recurred in several issues alongside certain essays, to help signal to the reader that the essays were part of a longer series. Figure 10 appears in each article in the series titled “The Nautical History of Korea.” The section about Napoleon was accompanied by an illustration of his head (figure 11). Other icons (figure 12) recurred throughout the magazine; they did not add anything to the text but appeared as random decorative objects:
Illustrations were also centerpieces of essays about geography. The magazine was most concerned with passing knowledge about the world on to its young readers. And a crucial element of this didactic concern with world politics affairs was an education about maps. See, for example, the section about geography in the first issue of Sonyŏn. Here, children are encouraged to visualize countries in terms of animals or familiar objects. Contrary to those that argued that Korea looks like a rabbit (figure 14), Korea, the narrator explains, looks much more like a tiger (figure 15), and the tiger image recurs in later issues, as well. The Sea of Japan, by contrast, is visualized as a rabbit (figure 16), which is, of course, inferior to the Korean tiger: the animals symbolize content and not just form. Figure 17 is supposed to be a bear and one of Korea’s provinces; readers are urged to guess which province it is and to send their guesses directly to the magazine editors.

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114 On the contribution of maps to the formation of national identity, see Siam Mapped: a History of the Geo-Body of a Nation. For a discussion of maps as cultural objects and mapping as a social and cultural activity, see Pickles (2004) and Cosgrove (2005). Cosgrove notes that “to achieve immutability (for example, by means of a scientific map), the information contained undergoes transformation, a process which, in principle, is not different from that of artistic production of spatial images.” (37)
Korea had to be defined in both its physical constitution (geography) and with its own unified, imagined past (history). The first part of this process was the clear delineation of Korea’s borders. One of the ways in which to capture the nation’s borders was through pictographic representations like those above, and these images served as tools in the imagination and strengthening of national identity. Other maps of the world (e.g. figure 17, figure 18) also appeared frequently in the magazine. Figure 18, for example, illustrated Ch’oe’s essay on the military might and influence on the British Empire and an analysis of its success. It shows the extent of the British Empire by blackening its colonies; in this map, Korea is negligible to say the least:

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115 Kwŏn, Yongsŏn 95.
Sŏ Tongsu argues that Sonyŏn was intended to convince its readers of the connection between geographical expansion and modernity; the magazine conveyed the sense of power and importance of the world’s nations by drawing these and other small maps of the world, for easy consumption. Once the magazine laid out the geographical discourse of modernity by pitting strong, developed (imperialist and colonizing) nations against the smaller, weaker ones, the stage was then set to enlighten the readers as to what constituted the essence of being a modern subject.¹¹⁶

Photographs in the magazine played an important role in exposing their viewers to a range of experiences, thereby emphasizing and spreading a certain “fluency” of modern images and ideas.¹¹⁷ By displaying photographs of faraway places or famous foreigners, the magazine eliminated the distance in time and space to allow for quick consumption of indisputable, knowable images. In every volume of Sonyŏn, the opening page and table of contents were followed by a page that showcased up to four photographs. The photographs are themed—they might capture a beautiful landscape, a famous monument, or the faces of famous figures; these “genres” are never mixed. Almost all the photographs represent positive examples: either grand

¹¹⁶ “Adong ŭi palgyŏn” 250-251.
¹¹⁷ Kwŏn Yongsŏn 85.
monuments or European cities, or heroic figures to be emulated. The photographs are never
decorations; rather, they take up their own space on the page in order to draw the undivided
attention of the viewer. There is no implicit criticism of these images: they take a central
position in the magazine by standing on their own, with a small caption, as ‘previews’ to the rest
of the magazine. Landscapes include Niagara Falls and images from the North Pole;
monuments included the Statue of Liberty (figure 19), the Arc du Triomphe in Paris, the Palace
of Versailles and the Coliseum in Rome:

![Statue of Liberty](image)

Figure 19  Statue of Liberty

Portraits included Edward the Seventh, and illustrations of Peter the Great, the Marquis de la
Fayette, Benjamin Franklin, and Napoleon (figure 20). These men’s portraits were chosen for
their symbolic representations of nationalist heroism.
Other photographs were ethnographic, such as figure 21 of aboriginal people from the equator. Figure 22, titled “Japanese children in practice of martial arts and dance,” also contributed to the seeming compression of space and time, bringing faraway cultures and peoples to the fingertips of the readers.
Most famous among these photographs is the photograph in the very first issue of *Sonyŏn* (figure 23), which shows the rather small and stiff Korean crown prince Yi Ŭn standing shoulder to elbow with the tall, distinguished-looking Resident-General of Korea Ito Hirobumi whose chest is decorated with medals and who enjoys a much more commanding presence by virtue of his height and the dominating darkness of his overcoat:
By the later issues of 1910 and on the eve of official annexation, Ch’oe Namsŏn began to focus his interest on a new construct that would replace the sonyŏn, the children of Korea. He referred to them as ch’ŏngnyŏn (青年, literally “ripe in years”) and dedicated a new magazine, ch’ŏngch’un, to their readership. The group of young people signified by the term ch’ŏngnyŏn was older than his imagined readers of the magazine Sonyŏn, more politically mature, more sophisticated and deemed much better prepared to react to the world around him. Ch’oe left the work he was doing for the magazine Sonyŏn in order to address a readership that he deemed, it seems, better prepared to tackle the task of modernization.
2.7 Conclusion

Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine *Sonyŏn* has been noted in scholarship for its hybridity: it was a milestone publication with a wide, unprecedented repertoire of text and images. *Sonyŏn* was the very first magazine of its kind to introduce to its readers literature—poetry, folk tales, travel essays, translated fiction, and essays on science and history. All these were accompanied by engaging illustrations, photographs, and other design conventions scattered throughout the magazine. Kwŏn Podūrae (2007) argues that the visual and textual richness of the magazine attests to its aspiration to be more entertaining and less didactic. However, from an examination of its content, and taking into consideration that it appeared in 1908, years before many of Chosŏn Korea’s children would have had access to education (and certainly not many girls), it appears that *Sonyŏn* did not simply respond to the demand of its young readers. Readers, as literacy numbers show, were slow to appear. What the children’s magazine *Sonyŏn* set out to do, through its inventive layout and engaging content, was to construct, for the first time, a new kind of reader. This reader was youthful, but his youth was not only determined by his age and gender; he was defined by the content that was deemed appropriate and necessary to carry Chosŏn Korea out of its dark and stagnant past into a glorious, politically viable future. It was the responsibility of *Sonyŏn* to supply the modern knowledge that was going to be necessary to achieve this goal. *Sonyŏn* (the magazine) was to guide *sonyŏn* (the children) into political maturity with the ultimate goal of creating the national citizen (*kungmin*) of the New Great Korea (*sindaehan*). As Ch’oe notes:

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I hope that the sonyŏn will always have a sturdy and overwhelming spirit and that a powerful wind and energy will shake them, so that more and more this new and great Han will belong to our sonyŏn; it is up to the sonyŏn to excite this nation, but it is in their power also to ruin it; it is up to the sonyŏn to retrieve what has been lost, and it is up to the sonyŏn to protect what is left. I wish to drive this into everyone’s minds and make it an inseparable part of us. Only in this way will we be able to find true relief for our sad hearts and negative aspirations.  

The momentum away from the past and toward the youthful present was driven by the subscription of Ch’oe and his peers to the theories of Social Darwinism. Part of the narrative of natural progress as suggested at the end of the nineteenth century by one of Japan’s leading ideologists, Katō Hiroyuki, was the belief that “in ‘civilized societies,’ natural selection favored those possessing superior ‘mental strength’—that is, superior knowledge and skills.” This belief justified the appropriation of lands of ‘inferior people’ by ‘superior people’ who had the ability, through their knowledge of science, to better use the resources and land. Besides the implications of the Social Darwinist rhetoric on education, it was only a matter of time before the child became the focus of national discourse as the most critical site of investment for advancement toward progress. For any society to succeed and prosper, education and cultivation had to begin with the child.

Scholarship on “formal” education in the period between 1906-1910 (Cho Yŏnsun et al.) indicates that while child-centered education had not yet been achieved, there was indeed a lively discussion in the print media about educational philosophies and the purpose of

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120 이는 곳 우리少年 사이에 恒常 剛健한 思潮가 漸落하고 豪壮한 氣風이 吹動

121 See Tikhonov 139.

education. Both public (pro-Japanese) and private (nationalist) schools taught subjects that were featured in Sonyŏn including geography, history, and classical Chinese (hanmun). Both school curricula were apparently committed to teaching “practical” skills including technical, agricultural and industrial knowledge. But while public schools focused on physical, moral and general education that was needed in ‘daily life’, private education before 1910 was committed to breeding anti-Japanese sentiment and independence through empowerment.¹²⁴ Needless to say, private schools were soon shut down by the Japanese, but it seems that Ch’oe Namsŏn was driven to write passionately in his magazine because formal education was still slow to spread. He apparently felt that state education did not satisfactorily convey the knowledge necessary to become a modern citizen. Sonyŏn devoted itself to inspiring curiosity about geography (both of Korea and the rest of the world) and history (overcoming the dark, immediate past and recalling the bright and glorious distant past), and it provided lessons on work ethics and morality that befitted the new, modern citizen. With regard to geography, Sonyŏn sparked the magazine’s readers’ interest by providing a range of maps and photographs, which provided the illusion of proximity and accessibility. It also ignited its readers’ sense of adventure and encouraged them to explore the world around them. Ch’oe Namsŏn also developed his “peninsula” theory in the magazine, in which he expounded on Chosŏn’s inherent ability—granted to it by virtue of its geographical position—and called to its readers to fulfill their duty to connect the cultures of land and sea.

The transmission of knowledge is a central project of modernity, and it was modernity that was embraced in Sonyŏn. The knowledge produced in Sonyŏn, deemed essential to the process of becoming a new citizen in the Great New Korea (sindaehan), supports the definitions

¹²³ Honda Masuko 18.
of modernity as they are delineated by Janet Poole.\textsuperscript{125} Modern knowledge of the world was communicated through photographs and maps that collapsed the distance between ‘here’ and ‘there’, and through educational articles with titles such as “Ponggil’s Geography Hour” (\textit{ponggiiri chiri kongbu}), “Natural Sciences” (理科教室), “English Classroom” (英語教室) and “Classical Chinese” (漢文教室). Essays such as “Classical Chinese” were geared more toward the acquisition of practical Chinese vocabulary than the kind of classical Chinese education intended for the reading of classical Chinese texts.\textsuperscript{126} Ch’oe Namsŏn also encouraged a dialogue with his readers by urging them to observe their surroundings—the language and customs they saw around them—and write back to the editor of the magazine so that their observations would be published in the section “Communications” (小年通信). Knowledge about the world was also communicated through Ch’oe Namsŏn’s translations of \textit{Robinson Crusoe}, \textit{Gulliver’s Travels} and \textit{Les Misérables} which were published in the magazine. Moral or ethical education was conveyed through sections like “Didactic Lessons” (小年訓) and Aesop’s Fables (not to mention the biographies of Napoleon, Peter the Great and George Washington, chosen for the political roles they played in the formation of their respective countries).

Ch’oe looked upon the immediate past with extreme distaste, and in his writing he eulogized ancient times and pre-capitalist economic life.\textsuperscript{127} Ch’oe lamented the absence in the immediate past of great Korean writers and scientists to equal Byron and Darwin; instead, he

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{124} Cho Yŏnsun (2003) 1-39.
  \item \textsuperscript{126} Ch’oe Kisuk (2006) 228.
  \item \textsuperscript{127} This, according to Osborne, is one definition of the experience of modernity. (Poole, unpublished article)
\end{itemize}
harked back to the much more distant yet glorious past (the intellectual Yi Yulgok [1536-1584] was a particular favorite of his); although, as Ch’oe Kisuk points out, a poem that Ch’oe Namsŏn attributes to Yulgok as an example of the excellence of the past was not written by Yi but by a Chosŏn dynasty poet by the name of Yang Saŏn (楊士彦, 1517- 1584). Yi Kwangsu voiced a similar opinion: in an essay in Sonyŏn, Yi deplored the fact that today’s sonyŏn have no leaders, no teachers and no schools and must therefore lead and educate themselves. Two Korean scholars that have written about Sonyŏn (Ch’oe Kisuk 2006; Kwŏn Podūrae 2007) both argue that the magazine was not politically explicit. They claim that it intended, rather, to influence its readers’ moral or ethical interior subjectivity in order to effect a change in their identity (Ch’oe Kisuk); or that the magazine made a concerted effort to be entertaining (Kwŏn Podūrae 2007). However, the photo of Itō Hirobumi and the Korean Crown Prince that appear on the very first page of the magazine speaks a message that goes beyond inspiring “modernity” or creating a culture of pastime and play. The young prince in the photograph stands in a pose that mimics that of Itō Hirobumi (figure 23). This photo demonstrates an unequivocal message of encouragement to Korea’s youth to follow in Japan’s footsteps toward modernity and sophistication. The young man in the photograph, while embodying the essence of the modern citizen through his clothes and pose, is also undeniably a colonial subject. Other random icons such as figure 24, which appeared throughout Sonyŏn without any connection to any text in particular, bear witness to the relevance of the term “colonial modernity” indicated by the photograph in figure 23. Figure 24 shows what appears to

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128 See the footnote in Ch’oe Kisuk (2006) 222.
129 (1910) 3.6, 27-28.
130 For a discussion of modernity and the shift in fashion, see Susie Kim, “What (not) to Wear” (2007).
be a Japanese soldier, his whipping hand held high; the soldier’s commanding pose is enhanced by the tightly reigned-in image of the large but controlled horse. This icon reminds the viewer, almost subconsciously because of its random appearance throughout the magazine, of the political context in which “modernity” in Korea had taken place.

Figure 24 Horse and Rider

The term colonial modernity is useful in connection with this photograph because it reminds us, first of all, of the complex conditions under which modernity was constructed in Korea; namely processes “that developed in tandem with outside and political influence, and ultimately evolved in a context of colonial domination.”  

What needs to be emphasized is the degree to which Koreans “participated directly and indirectly in the construction of a unique colonial modernity” which “cannot be broken into discrete Japanese, Western, or Korean parts.” Sonyŏn was a useful tool for those colonial authorities and colonial subjects who were intent on disseminating ideas that “served to normalize the colonial status quo” by indirectly legitimizing “the colonial rule by associating colonial social and political relations with participation in the modern world.” At the same time, Sonyŏn helped to produce counter-hegemonic discourses through a recovery of history and explorations of a unique literary poetic voice. As Sonyŏn and the children’s magazines that followed in its wake demonstrate, “modernity can both assist and

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131 Colonial Modernity in Korea, 10.
132 Colonial Modernity in Korea, 11-12.
133 Colonial Modernity in Korea, 12.
endanger a prevailing hegemony." The very first magazine purportedly addressed to young readers, Sonyŏn responded in its content to a perceived need in the youth of Korea. Through text, photography and illustrations, Sonyŏn sought to enlighten youth and inspire them to imagine their crucial role in guiding Chosŏn Korea into a modern age. What the magazine did not provide was any insights into the interiority of young readers, or any indication that these readers might be a diverse group, defined along the lines of socio-economic class or gender. Some of these insights would have to wait until the next decade, for the influence of the youth movements inspired by Ch’ŏndogyo and by the work of Pang Chŏnghwan and his magazine Ŭrini in starting in 1923.

134 Colonial Modernity in Korea, 12.
3.1 Education and Colonial Policies

Formal annexation of the Korean peninsula brought its social institutions under the control of its Japanese colonizers. Education, print culture, broadcasting, and an array of public and private institutions became the targets of Japanese censorship to varying degrees as the colonial government struggled with ways in which to define its colony and position it within the Japanese empire. The struggle took place not only amongst the Japanese, of course. Mark Caprio explains that, while the Korean patriotic resistance was substantial, there were groups that included “Japan’s Korean supporters and Koreans who favored gradual self-strengthening reforms”. These groups believed Korea was unprepared to accept national sovereignty, and many believed that Japan’s modernizing experiences could prove useful.135

At the outset, Japan deliberated over the speed with which to implement its assimilation policies which would develop Korean potential toward the ultimate goal of raising it to a position of equality with Japan. Until the March First Uprising of 1919, in which Koreans demonstrated over a period of a few months against discriminatory policies, the Japanese assimilation policies were guided by a cautious warning that assimilation need not be rushed because Korea was, in many ways, not yet ready.136 The images that circulated in Japan reinforced the rhetoric of Korea as antiquated and trapped in the past. The way to bridge this gap was going to be through education.137

135 Caprio 18.
136 Caprio notes that Koreans “would first have to demonstrate their ability to rise to Japanese standards before they could be accepted into their inner circle” (85).
137 Caprio, 81-92.
Japan’s own path toward institutionalizing education began most notably in the mid-nineteenth century; by the mid to late Meiji period (1868-1912) the Japanese state was deeply invested in the schooling of its children because it recognized their national potential. Schooling came to be conceived of as a technique of social management. Platt notes that, the modern state’s interest in childhood derived in part from its need to mobilize individuals to participate actively in the life of the nation, which led to an interest in schooling—and, in turn, to a careful consideration of the abilities and inclinations of children who attended schools.138

Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909), the chief framer of Japan’s 1889 constitution and Korea’s first Governor-General, explained the importance of education in Japan in 1869, saying that “Now is our millennial opportunity to reform the bad old habits that have been followed in our Imperial Land for centuries, and to open up the eyes and ears of the people of our realm.”139 And Kathleen Uno (1999) explains that

the rise of day-care centers as well as the reconstruction of womanhood and childhood in modern Japan were linked to a long-term, deep-seated, and at times almost desperate drive for national progress… national salvation depended on socialization of ordinary Japanese children and the re-socialization of ordinary Japanese adults to a new national orientation.140

It is clear, then, that the model that the Japanese had built for themselves was going to influence the model carried over into their Korean colony.141

Japan’s educational policies were carried over to Korea as early as 1905, since Japanese educational policies began to be enforced in the peninsula from at least the beginning of the protectorate in 1905. By then “a country-wide movement of ‘education for the nation’ was

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138 Platt 969.
139 Quoted in Platt 972.
140 Passages to Modernity 8.
141 On the assimilation of the Taiwanese colony, see Leo Ching (2001).
underway”, this movement was also exploited by the private Korean educational institutions that took advantage of schooling to disseminate nationalistic rhetoric. In any case, arguments in support of education in Korea insisted, for example, on the critical importance of educating women so that they, in turn, would educate their children properly. As Caprio notes, an editorial from the Maeil Sinbo newspaper from 22 September 1910, stressed the critical importance of education in the formation of fundamental morality, but added that this education must begin at home: “if the mother is educated, she can pass on correct knowledge to her children; if she is uneducated, she will recycle to them superstitions of the past.” As in Japan, educational institutions were to eradicate outdated knowledge and superstition.

In practice, however, Caprio notes that the curriculum of the colonial education system in Korea, as it emerged in 1911 with the First Education Ordinance, focused first on moral education and only later on practical education, reflecting its emphasis on “the creation of the loyal subject before the prolific student.” Included in the elementary school curriculum were, for example, one hour a week of ethics (which, in effect, stressed thriftiness and positive attitude for the purpose of promoting the Japanese spirit). Caprio concludes that the establishment of education in the early period of colonization was marked by an absence of the ‘no child left behind’ urgency that came only in the late 1930s. It was then that literacy and education were emphasized for the purpose of expediting the militarization of Korean youth in the Japanese army.

142 Caprio 294-6.
143 Caprio 97.
144 Caprio 98.
145 Caprio 100.
The March First Uprising in 1919 alerted the Japanese to the fact that their attitude of complacency had failed, and that more was needed in order to make their assimilation policies a success.\textsuperscript{146} As Caprio points out, the most profound change that followed the March First demonstrations was the change of attitude: “the idea that over time the Korean people would naturally assimilate was replaced by the idea that the Japanese had to work to guide Koreans to this goal” and that “exposing them to culture—even their own—would develop within them the sophistication required to evaluate their culture against that of the Japanese.”\textsuperscript{147} The changes in assimilation policy which were then reflected in education are attributed, according to Caprio, in a great part to Hara Takeshi, the prime minister of Japan from 1918-1921. Hara supported assimilation, and was also critical of the discriminatory policies that had prevented Korea from assimilating fully. He cautioned that “assimilation would succeed only if the Japanese afforded the Koreans equal education opportunities,”\textsuperscript{148} and attacked the specific practices that had worked to maintain Koreans’ inferior education. Hara placed Saitō Makoto in the seat of Governor-General, and Saitō, in return, circulated a new cultural policy that included the spread of education in five fundamental goals, which were seen as prerequisites for the integration of Koreans into Japan as equals.\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{146} Tsurumi notes that “as the best scholarship on Japanese rule has repeatedly pointed out, Japanese efforts at assimilation through education in Korea played a central role in the formation of a modern Korean nationalist consciousness which was bitterly anti-Japanese.” (302)

\textsuperscript{147} Caprio 112. Tsurumi writes that while the earlier educational policy had attempted to prevent Koreans from studying their own past because of the potential outcomes from heightened nationalism, the new attitude supported their learning since “not being allowed to find out the truth, Koreans had erroneously come to suppose that their country possessed a great and glorious past.” (303).

\textsuperscript{148} Caprio 124.

\textsuperscript{149} Caprio 125-6.
Above all, Koreans’ "cultural advancement" became the central goal of the Japanese ruling administration, and this advancement was to be achieved through a number of channels, including the improvement of transportation networks and the permission to publish several newspapers.\textsuperscript{150} The number of elementary schools and student numbers increased, and the Japanese Government-General also made promises to improve education across the board.\textsuperscript{151} Yet even though a concerted effort was made to increase the numbers of students and schools, in reality the "integrated" education model fell short of the ideal. History textbooks distorted Korean history and glorified children’s sacrifices for the Japanese Emperor.\textsuperscript{152} While textbooks were supposed to include more Korean cultural content, what they did was perpetuate negative images that separated Koreans from Japanese.\textsuperscript{153} And, generally speaking, the educational system sought mainly to inculcate "moral character and general knowledge" in the young generation and to cultivate national spirit to make Koreans loyal subjects of imperial Japan.\textsuperscript{154}

While educational content in the public schools was presumably directed by strict guidelines toward the cultivation of colonial subjects, commercial publications and literary activity, including writing for children, were supervised by strict Japanese censorship. Magazines for children were published throughout the colonial period; how much freedom the contributing writers and illustrators had, and in what way the content of their writing differed from the "educational" content taught in schools, are questions that will be dealt with in the next section. In order to explore these questions, it is necessary to consider briefly the Japanese

\textsuperscript{150} Caprio 127. Among these were the \textit{Chosón Ilbo} and the \textit{Tonga Ilbo.}
\textsuperscript{151} Caprio 128-30.
\textsuperscript{152} Yi Pyŏngdam (2005) 409.
\textsuperscript{153} Caprio 130-134. See also Yi Pyŏngdam (2006) 446.
\textsuperscript{154} Theodor Yoo 61.
censorship institution, and then to examine the popularity of magazines within the larger context of the growth of print culture in colonial Korea.

3.1.1 Censorship

One of the ways to contextualize the significance of children’s magazines is through a consideration of censorship in the colonial period. Rachael Hutchinson defines censorship as “an act of suppression, deletion, omission or revision, performed upon an artistic work or medium by the artist or an external body, that limits the work’s publication or dissemination to some extent.”

Recent studies on the Japanese censorship in Korea show that one cannot think of the censorship apparatus as monolithic, nor as airtight and absolute; the system itself was deeply nuanced by shifts in political realities and by the informal networks of Japanese and Korean censors and writers. In any case, the children’s magazines published during the colonial period—including Ŭrini, Pyŏllara, Sonyŏn and Sinsonyŏn—were published and circulated between the years 1923 and 1940 under Japanese colonial control.

Michael Robinson argues that “control of the written word... was used to limit the spread of radical ideas within the empire and to curb criticism of Japanese colonial administration.” Robinson defines Japanese censorship of publications as “flexible,” particularly after the March First Uprising and under Governor-General Saito. As part of the effort to use manipulation techniques rather than brute force, the Japanese censorship allowed for more moderate voices while repressing (censoring) the radically anti-Japanese elements in publications. Robinson explains that one of the reasons that children’s magazines (and by this, one presumes that he is

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155 “Censorship in the Japanese Arts” 269.
talking about Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazines for school children) flourished between 1910 and 1919 is because the Japanese were more lenient with magazines in general (perceiving them to deal “with more specialized matters” and to be of limited circulation), and with youth magazines in particular (which, as Robinson points out, rarely limited their content to their “specialties”).\textsuperscript{158} Nona Carter writes that,

To a large extent, the top-heavy, state controlled interpretation is appropriate to the study of children in any historical time period. In the study of juvenile literature we can see this clearly by the fact that it is always written by adults, and it is subject to the politics of the times in a much more subtle, and arguably more manipulative, way than is adult literature.\textsuperscript{159}

Censorship in Korea existed not only in the form of external pressure that shaped the content of children’s magazines but also internally, by the very virtue of the fact that adults writing for children were making both conscious and unconscious decisions about what to omit. Their decisions were shaped not only by external pressures (which curbed, for example, passionate anti-Japanese or nationalistic expressions), but also internal ones that forced writers to edit themselves even before their work arrived at the censor’s desk.

3.1.2 Print Culture

Despite the limitations on publication by censorship imposed both externally and internally, the 1920s brought a transformation in the production and reception of literature. The March First Uprising of 1919, in which an estimated two million Koreans took to the streets to demonstrate against repressive colonial policies for a period of several months, resulted in an official count

\textsuperscript{157} Robinson 312. Hutchinson notes that Japan itself has a history of censorship, and that “despite the many changes in rule… it is clear from a brief chronological overview that top-down censorship regulations are continuously balanced by systems of negotiation.” (271)

\textsuperscript{158} Robinson 312-7.

\textsuperscript{159} Carter 21.
of 7,509 dead, 15,961 wounded and 46,948 jailed\textsuperscript{160}; but this event also signaled the substantial emergence of national solidarity and a wide recognition of the power of the masses (\textit{taejung}). It was following this event in the decade of the 1920s that young people—mostly educated in Japan—took up reading and writing as a way of participating in the new culture of books, magazines, radio broadcasting and film. Youth (\textit{ch’öngnyön}) and students took reading out of the hands of the elite and became the principle agents of reception and production of popular culture. And as more books were being produced starting in 1920, readers were faced with more choices.\textsuperscript{161} According to Ch’ён Ч’онгван, records published by the Japanese Governor-General indicate that in the 1920s, children’s reading materials—including magazines, songs (\textit{tongyo}), stories and fairy tales (\textit{tonghwae}) and general reading material (\textit{adong tongmul})—were equal to the numbers of new fiction publications (\textit{sinsosöl}). Newspapers of this period also remark on this exponential growth in children’s materials (\textit{Chosŏn ilbo} 1928.10.9-10; 1933.09.12).\textsuperscript{162} And none demonstrates the popularity of children’s publication better than Pang Ч’онгван’s acclaimed and best-selling translated folk tale collection, \textit{Sarang ūi sŏnmul} [Gift of Love], which was published in 1922 and sold almost 20,000 copies.\textsuperscript{163}

The explosion of reading materials for young people was a result of several factors. First, as shown in the previous chapter, young people had already been singled out starting in 1908 by Ch’oe Namsён for the critical role they needed to play in creating \textit{sindaehan}, the New and Great Korea. The spotlight on this young generation grew brighter as students came back

\textsuperscript{160} Ч’ён Ч’онгван (2004) 46.
\textsuperscript{161} Ч’ён (2003) also claims that the proliferation of reading materials also resulted in a great many choices which also led to a general devaluation of the written word (296-8).
\textsuperscript{162} Ч’ён Ч’онгван (2003) 303.
\textsuperscript{163} Ч’ён Ч’онгван (2003) 306.
from Japan, their return bringing with them also an increase in literacy rates (rates which were also growing slowly with wider establishment of schools). Simultaneously, this momentum created by Ch’oe Namsŏn was supported by perhaps the most famous advocate of literature in the 1920s: Yi Kwangsu. Yi’s immensely popular novel Muyŏng [The Heartless] was published in 1917-1918; Yi became one of the mentors of the upcoming literary generation born in the 1900s and grew to become the iconic literary figure of the colonial period.¹⁶⁴ In September of 1918, riding on a wave of popularity, Yi published “On Child-Centralism” 子女中心論 in Ch’oe Namsŏn’s youth magazine Ch’ongch’un.¹⁶⁵ In this essay, Yi explains that reverence for parents and ancestors (in the form of complex rituals and filial piety) is the source of both material and spiritual decline, and has gotten in the way of true individual freedom. It is parents’ duty, he says, to raise their children to be independent (he objects the bequeathing of inheritance, for example). Children must be educated not according to parents’ whims and for parents’ personal benefit, but in a way that will allow children to fulfill themselves. Parents must sacrifice themselves for their children and for the future generations, and not the other way around, as had been the custom from times past. If needed, they must be ready to boil their own bones to feed their children. Youth, he insists, should see themselves as being “without ancestors and without parents; as such we should identify ourselves, at this very day and hour, on heaven and on this earth, as the descendants of a new species.”¹⁶⁶ Yi sought to guide the new

¹⁶⁵ The magazine was published by Ch’oe Namsŏn between 1914-1918, and was aimed at young adults and students (as evidenced by its discussion of the examinations and other academic concerns). Kwŏn Podûrae notes that its appearance at a time of more intense censorship was almost miraculous, particularly for the critical stance it took on current events (2007, 14).
¹⁶⁶ “우리는 先祖도 업는 사람, 父母도 업는 사람(엇던 意味로는)으로 今日今時에 天上으로서 五土에 降臨한 新種族으로 自處하여야한다. Ch’ongch’un 1918.9 (Vol 15)
generation—one which looked down with disdain upon the past in its restrictions and outdated practices—into a new literary group, the literary youth (*munhak ch’öngnyōn*).\(^{167}\)

Yi Kwangsu’s work—both his critical essays published in magazines such as *Ch’öngch’un* and his short stories published in *Ŏrini* and the newspaper *Tonga Ilbo*—attest to his obsession with the parental role and the struggle that he believed youth faced in escaping the entrenched roles dictated by old customs. As Kim Sŏng’yŏn explains, however, Yi’s insistence on the absolute power of parents and the need for children to escape these bonds does, in a sense, create the sense that there are no grey areas and no possibilities for compromise.\(^{168}\) Kim claims that in his fiction, Yi’s child characters are mostly props that are overwhelmed by their domineering parents.\(^{169}\) While these fictional caricatures support Yi Kwangsu’s argument that Koreans must reject their “fathers” and adopt new role models, their two-dimensionality raises question about whether Yi Kwangsu’s credit for pioneering of modern fiction through the “discovery” of interiority is well deserved.\(^{170}\)

Wŏn (2008) argues that Ch’oe Namsŏn and his various magazines must not be considered as the starting point of literature for children. Ch’oe’s works for children demonstrate that he did not, in fact, differentiate between adult or child readers, and that he was interested more in imparting information relating to ‘modern knowledge’ than in addressing a new kind of child audience. Wŏn claims that when the words *tonghwa* (children’s stories) and *tong’yŏ* (children’s

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9-17. Yi expressed similar views in other essays in *Ch’öngch’un* such as in the essays “Sonyŏn ūi piae” [The Grief of children] (1917.5), “Ŏrin pŏt ege” [To our young friends] (1917.5-1917.11), and “Ch’ŏnjae” [Genius] *Sonyŏn* 1910.6.

167 Ch’ŏn Chŏhwan (2004) 44.

168 Kim Sŏng’yŏn 4.

169 Kim Sŏng’yŏn 13.

songs) appear for the first time in Ch’oe’s work, they did not indicate the same kind of literature that is considered children’s literature today. Wŏn acknowledges that Ch’oe’s magazines included an element of entertainment, something which was a significant departure from the purely didactic works for young readers and which was crucial to the development of children’s literature in the contemporary sense. Ch’oe’s magazine was also aimed at a broader group of readers that included both pre-adolescents (yusonyŏn) and young adults (ch’ŏngnyŏn). However, Wŏn ultimately concludes that the decisive reason that Ch’oe’s oeuvre cannot be considered children’s literature in the contemporary sense is that it was not supported by social movements supporting children’s rights. During Ch’oe’s time, says Wŏn, younger children hardly attended school, and literacy rates were extremely low. Wŏn credits Ch’oe Namsŏn’s explorations of language (for example through his poem “From the Sea to the Boy”), and he credits Yi Kwangsu’s interest and involvement in writing for young readers for raising the bar with regard to writing for children. But Wŏn concludes that the magazines in the 1910s championed (and almost exclusively written) by Ch’oe Namsŏn and Yi Kwangsu were merely sites for the two men to experiment with their modern techniques of fiction and poetry, and were not places where the writers developed literature for children. While this is true, I don’t believe these are grounds for excluding a discussion of Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine Sonyŏn from a discussion about the trajectory of children’s literature in general. Regardless of what Ch’oe actually achieved—that a real “child” was missing from the kind of child that he constructed—the significance of the role that this magazine played in mapping out a space for a young child reader cannot be underestimated.

171 Wŏn Chongch’an, “Han’guk adong munhak hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng yŏn’gu” (79-80).
Judging from the proliferation of magazines and popular culture after the March First Uprising of 1919, it seems appropriate to say that youth culture thrived in the 1920s during what Ch’ón Chŏnghwan called the “decade of youth” (ch’ŏngnyŏn ūi sidae). But what stood behind the thriving youth culture lies beyond the territory staked out by two literary giants, Ch’oe Namsŏn and Yi Kwangsu. Youth culture thrived not only thanks to Ch’oe’s cultivation of young readers’ literacy, and Yi’s insistence that the new generation turn its back on the past. Just as significant in the 1920s was the influence of the indigenous religion of Ch’ŏndogyo and its associated youth movements (ch’ŏngnyŏn undonghoe). By the mid-20s, the rise of socialism and proletarian culture also played a critical role in the flourishing of youth culture. In the early 1920s, a different child was being constructed: the ŏrini, whose perceived physical and spiritual constitution and role in society demanded a very different kind of writing.

3.2 Watershed (?)

Scholars in the field of children’s and youth culture (Wŏn Chongch’an 2008; Cho ŭnsuk 2009; Yi Kihun 2002) point to the 1920s as the watershed year that marked the birth of literature for children in Korea. And in the early 1920s, the epithet ŏrini (child) began to circulate widely, both in the press and in magazines, and replaced, or at least, for a time, competed with, the term sonyŏn that had been established by Ch’oe Namsŏn and Yi Kwangsu. While the sonyŏn of the pre-1920s were “unrelenting fighters with hands like spears who move like steamships”, the ŏrini of the 1920s were easily manipulated and incorporated into colonial society by another

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173 Ch’ón Chŏnghwan (2004) 44.
literary writer and publisher that became central to the formation of children’s literature: Pang Chŏnghwan (1899-1931). Under Pang’s orchestration, the spears and steamships associated with the modern sonyŏn were replaced by flowers and birds. And until the rise of socialism and competing visions of the working or dispossessed child, the constructed ŏrini-child enjoyed a relatively stable existence as the epitome of purity, the symbol of progress, and the ideal archetype of humanity. Like the sonyŏn, the ŏrini were privileged because of their potential to move the country forward. As Cho Chaeho states in the essay “Ŏrinide-sŏnmul” [A gift for Children’s Day], ŏrini are “the main actors” of the world who, with their sturdy spirits, beautiful souls, and cheerful, hardworking minds are always ‘new’ and therefore must rise above their mothers, fathers or teachers.176

When the term ŏrini first arose, it was itself not commonly used.177 To be sure, literacy rates were still extremely low (numbers climbed from 4.4% in 1920 to 17.4% in 1929),178 not to mention that most children who lived in the countryside could not dream of an education, much less hope to receive any “privileged” treatment.179 The term itself was unstable in the sense that it did not represent a clearly defined group. From 1925 (3.3), the magazine ŏrini solicited and included photos of readers to the magazine; but as the photos show, the readers are mostly in their late teens, averaging around 17 years of age. In one famous incident, Pang, the founder and

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176 어린이라고 하는말은 그뜻이 이세계의장래 주인공이라는말이다—그럼으로 우리가 어린이들은 씩씩한 기상과 고-혼 격정과 폐활하고도 부드러한마음을 향상 새롭게하다 이세계의지금 현재 주인공이신 아버님 어머님 혼자님보담 더 나은 사람들 이되어야겠다.” ŏrini 3.5 2-3.
178 O Sŏngch’ŏl 133-150.
179 In “普通學校を満ちて 須要を 発げか?” Kim Namju addresses the issue of children working on farmland in the countryside and not being able to take advantage of schooling. ŏrini 5.4, 10-14.
editor of Ŭrini, greeted a reader with affectionate and somewhat patronizing language only to discover that the reader was, in fact, a teenager and much older than Pang expected. Nonetheless, the term Ŭrini began to circulate thanks to several developments: the slow but steady rise in literacy; the frequency of appearance of the word in newspapers alongside reports on child-related activities, organizations, and even creative pieces; the activities of the youth groups; the initiation of Children’s Day, or Ŭrininal; and the steady marketing of children’s magazines.

Of all these, however, the factor that played the most decisive role in the rise of the term Ŭrini and its establishment was the role played by the social groups affiliated with the indigenous religion of Ch’ŏndogyo. Previously known as Tonghak, this organization stopped calling itself a ‘learning’ and became a ‘teaching’ or ‘religion’ (kyo) in the first decade of the twentieth century. Education was one of the legitimate enterprises a religion was sanctioned to pursue under the colonial authorities, and it is thanks to its effect on reforming the minds as well as the physical habits of the people that Ch’ŏndogyo was able to attain prominence in colonial Korean society. Pang Chŏnghwan, who was the son-in-law of Son Pyŏnghŭi, leader of Ch’ŏndogyo and an important figure in the Korean independence movement, also established Children’s Day in Korea in 1923, and edited the magazines Ŭrini, Sin yŏsŏng and Kaeb’yŏk. Other contributors to the magazine Ŭrini included Kim Kich’ŏn (1894-?), the ideologue and one of the leading figures of Ch’ŏndogyo. The youth movements of Ch’ŏndogyo not only created the physical space in which children (now called Ŭrini) could meet and share ideas, but they also

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182 I am indebted to Kenneth Koo for supplying me with this explanation.
gave storytelling and story/folk tale tonghwa writing a position of central importance as the embodiment of joy and happiness that was at the core of every ŏrini’s heart.\textsuperscript{183}

3.3 Youth Groups and Magazines

Youth groups did not, in fact, emerge in the 1920s but a decade earlier. YMCA groups were first established in Japan in 1880, and then in China and Korea in 1903. In Korea, the term ch’ŏngnyŏn was first used in 1897, and the term (and groups) quickly spread after 1907 as a part of the momentum of the discourse of enlightenment.\textsuperscript{184} In this period, youth groups—including such groups as the sonyŏn undonghoe, ch’ŏngnyŏnhoe and chosŏn sonyŏn yŏnhaphoe—were of central importance not only because they provided the opportunity for children to gather and play, but also because they took an active interest in the fiction and poetry that was being written for children. Yi Kihun (2004b) draws our attention to the driving force behind many of the youth groups, which grew exponentially from 1920 to 1922.\textsuperscript{185} Many of the leaders behind this group had studied in Japan, where they had begun to come to terms with the formation of a “youth” identity (seinen in Japan, ch’ŏngnyŏn in Korea). While in Japan the seinen were mobilized as rational, practical and stable elements in society, however, the Korean ch’ŏngnyŏn were devoted to politicizing culture and creating change.\textsuperscript{186}

The youth group organizations in the 1920s had a deep connection with the material that was being printed for children in the various magazines in this period. Poetry published in Ŭrini was often recited at such meetings; accompaniment was written for the songs, stories were turned into plays, and members of the youth groups engaged with the content of the fiction and

\textsuperscript{183} Yi Kihun (2002) 30.
\textsuperscript{184} Yi Kihun (2004a) 289.
\textsuperscript{185} Yi Kihun (2004b) 217-8. Yi notes that by 1922 there were over two thousand registered youth groups.
poetry found in the pages of Ōrini as a part of the debate regarding youth culture.\textsuperscript{187} The readers of Ōrini were both active participants in the youth organizations and loyal viewers of the plays and performances put on by the magazines. The organizations and their branches, spread throughout the country, served both as wide distributors of children’s magazines and also helped organize Children’s Day celebrations. It was the enthusiastic support of the youth organizations and the cooperation between them and the children’s magazines that provided the impetus for growth and development of reading materials for children in the 1920s in a way that had been impossible a decade earlier.\textsuperscript{188}

The magazines of the 1920s also provided a shared space for children who, for the first time in Korean history, could read the same materials as other children from all over the country. The children’s magazines from the 1920s such as Ōrini actively drew out their readers by encouraging ‘fan meetings.’ For example, Ōrini encouraged its readers to send in photos, and within two years of the first publication of Ōrini, the magazine’s popularity was reflected in the number of photographs submitted and published.\textsuperscript{189} In addition, the magazine urged its young readers to send in their own creative writing pieces, and started featuring works

\textsuperscript{186} Yi Kihun (2004b) 221.  
\textsuperscript{187} Cho ŭnsuk 168-9.  
\textsuperscript{188} Cho ŭnsuk 174-8. Kim Hwasŏn notes that the number of books published for children in the 1920s competed with the number of sinsŏl [new fiction] (2007a, 334). Cho ŭnsuk says that in the 1920s, 40 new publications were introduced into the market, as opposed to only five publications in the 1910s. This reflects not only abundant activity in the publishing industry but the fact that society was now increasingly interested in consuming children’s print culture. (162)  
\textsuperscript{189} It is unlikely that families owned cameras in the 1920s, and therefore one assumes that these photographs were taken in studios and sent in to the magazine. Thanks to Sharalyn Orbaugh for pointing out that this practice was not common in Japanese magazines of the same genre.
by children. Thus, Ŭrini professed to provide the “poor boys and girl of Chosŏn” an opportunity to connect, and a space in which sympathy (tongjŏng) could be explored.\(^{190}\)

Another interesting role that this magazine played in the process of the facilitation of communication between readers was the consolidation between children of similar age groups across the peninsula and abroad. Cho gives an example of one reader, a high-school Korean boy studying in Japan who, soon after he made an appearance in Ŭrini, was trapped in Tokyo during the great earthquake of 1923. Until he resurfaced his plight was of central concern among young readers who expressed their deeply sympathetic feelings for the boy.\(^{191}\) Another child, a Korean boy born and raised in the Chinese province of Jilin on the border with northern Korea, caught readers’ attention and elicited their sympathies in 1924 for never having set foot in his homeland. His plight was responded to in “letters to the editor” that reflected the degree to which children found Ŭrini to be an empowering space in which children could participate and voice their concerns:

The news published in volume five that Yi Sŏngt’ae is crying in Jilim brought me to tears. I will pray in earnest to Hanullim\(^{192}\) so that he will recover from his illness quickly and

\(^{190}\) Cho Ŭnsuk 186-9. Cho notes that the term tongjŏng, or sympathy, gained currency as a part of the discourse on modernity in Korean literature. Yi Kwangsu published an essay titled “Tongjŏng” [sympathy] in Ch’ŏngch’un; there, he elaborated on the significance of this emotion in literature. Tongjŏng was not only meant to be a feeling of pity that moves us to help others, but a deep understanding of the hardships that people experience, and the ability to extend forgiveness as well. It was something that was not only inherently human, but was a yardstick against which the extent of the development of a society’s culture and education could be measured. Yi suggested that there needed to be a kind of alliance (tongmaeng) of youth (sonyŏn suyang) in which individuals would be cultivated such that their national identity would be reshaped (kaejo) and revived (puhŭng); the development of the emotion sympathy was to play a central role in the overall cultivation of the individual/society. (Ch’ŏngch’un 3, 57-64)

\(^{191}\) Cho Ŭnsuk 189-91.

\(^{192}\) Here “hanullim” signifies God; Baker (2002) claims that Koreans had no indigenous term for God until Protestant Christians began using terms like “Hananim” near the end of the 19th century.
come back to Korea...Oh, ye magazines, more precious to us than our lives! If not for you who, what would become of our pathetic selves? Magazines are our lives, our light, and we should advertise your presence far and wide. Let’s pave the way into the future!^{193}

Pang intended for Ŭrini to be widely different from what had been published for children in the previous decade. He sets a completely different tone from Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine Sonyŏn.

In the opening page in the inaugural volume of Ŭrini, Pang wrote:

Like a bird, like a flower, [the child] sings artlessly through young cherry lips, a song that is the sound of nature, is the essence of the sky.

Like a pigeon, like a rabbit, [the child] runs, soft hair tousled by the wind, is the embodiment of nature, is the shadow of the sky. Absent is the greed of adults, lacking are scheming desires.

Oh, faultless, candid, peaceful and free Land of Hanul^{194}! This is the Land of our Children.

We must never, ever pollute this Land of the Sky, and in order for all people of the world to live in this clean Land, we must expand our Land.

Ŵrini is composed of all the clean deeds that spring from these two wishes.

We believe that when Ŭrini, the product of our earnest passion, will be embraced, there will sprout the seeds of the pristine spirit.^{195}

And in the section titled “Namŭn ink’ŭ” [Leftover ink] published in the first issue of Ŭrini, Pang addresses his readers directly and writes:

[Children hear] didactic and self-cultivation pieces in school, so [in Ŭrini] I want us to read fun and playful pieces, and while doing so let us become purer and more kind! It is with these thoughts that I embellish this book.^{196}

The children who actually circulated and read the magazine may have been much older than the group of children Pang envisioned as Ŭrini, but the magazine was written in the Korean vernacular script which could be read by anyone with basic literacy skills. The magazine also

^{193} Ŭrini (1924 2.7), 40.
^{194} See Baker 2002.
^{195} Ŭrini (1923) 1, 1.
^{196} Ŭrini (1923) 1, 12.
frequently addressed its young female readers, exhibiting at least a conscious awareness that the
magazine was read by both boys and girls. There are even references to use of denigration of
females; in the article “少年倶 iyagi” [on the sonyŏnhoel], the instructor/guide gives the
inquiring child examples of exploitation, as when adults use derogatory language with children
and men use derogatory language with women. But in general, the pieces published in the
magazine Ŭrini, unlike those published in Ch’oe Namsŏn’s Sonyŏn or Ch’ŏngch’un, did not
aspire to be overtly educational. Nor, was the magazine a site for resistance or alternative
education; rather, it encouraged a greater understanding of the world and fostered some critical
thinking about the social organization of the readers while keeping readers engaged and
entertained. Note, for example figure 25, a cartoon strip printed in the volume three from 1925.
In it, a young boy behaves disrespectfully toward his grandfather. This piece received negative
reviews, but the magazine’s editors defended their choice by insisting that this kind of portrayal
was an integral part of literature.

197 “이 세상을 가만히 두고 생각해보시오 성의차별 (性의差別)로는 사내자식들이
녀자사람을 펭귄들이라고 내리누고 빈부의차별 (貧富的差別)로는 돈가진자들
이 얇는사람을 가난뱅이년식들이라고 맘대로 부러워하고 있습니다. 이와폭가티 년령
의차별 (年齢的差別)로는 어른이란것들이 또한 어린사람을 ‘요조고만한어린아희
놀들에게요’ 하고 자격재가 가진함으로 약한어린이들의 늘_ENC85200;히 자라갈을 맘대로 쥐락
펴락하고 있습니다. Yi Sŏnghwan, “少年倶 iyagi” Ŭrini (1925 3.5) 8-11.
198 Yi Kihun 32. Also Cho Ŭnsuk 165-6.
199 Cho Ŭnsuk 166-7.
One of the characteristics that marked contemporary children’s literature and differentiated it from the didactic edicts and conduct literature of the past was the degree to which it allowed itself to be entertaining and not just educational. Magazines such as Sonyŏn that appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century emphasized informational content that was meant to enlighten more than to distract. ‘Fun’ (chaemi) was introduced slowly in 1910, and was legitimized as a process of training readers to develop a finer ‘taste.’ Printed matter, such as books and magazines, was responsible for improving readers’ reading skills and refining their sensibilities toward modern hobbies and pastimes.200

As the rest of the chapter will explain, Pang Chŏng'hwan’s magazine Ōrini marked a departure from Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine in language and content. In addition, however, as the
illustration above (figure 25) indicates, the magazine also reflects an awareness of its young audience, and the way it imagined the needs of this audience, in its illustrations. While there is certainly a continuity in certain aspects of the illustrations—e.g. stern profiles of serious educators, random and formulaic icons—one can find in this magazine, for the first time, a new kind of illustration that indicates the illustrators’ and editors’ awareness of and willingness to respond to a young readership.

Many aspects of Ŭrini’s layout are certainly indebted to the innovations that Ch’oe Namsŏn instituted in his magazine, Sonyŏn. The use of visual representations above the title of a story was a convention used already in Sonyŏn (see figure 10 and figure 11). Ŭrini, too, continued with this convention, with the visual representations serving as extra information: for example, figures 26 and 27 are story headings that convey different information:

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200 See the work of Ch’ŏn Chŏnghwan et al. 2006.
Figure 26 carries the stern profile of presumably the author, Yi Yongsun, in a didactic piece titled “Become sturdy and diligent children!” Yi Yongsun’s eyes do not meet their readers’; instead, his gaze is focused somewhere on a distant horizon, and contributes to the seriousness of the article by indicating that the content is in no way frivolous. In contrast, figure 27 is a heading to a folk tale penned by Pang Chŏngwhan (here using one of his many pseudonyms, Mong Kyŏnch’o). The story is about a cuckoo bird, and it sports an illustration of two innocuous birds which helps set the tone of the story and begs the readers’ suspense of belief. Another heading from the same magazine also plays with fonts (an earlier example of this can also be found in Sonyŏn (figure 5)): 
This heading exhibits an experimentation with fonts, but to a greater degree than figure 5: in figure 28, Pang (again using one of his pseudonyms, Puk Kūksŏng) enhances the story—in this case, a detective story—with an illustration that is slightly off kilter: the two faces on the top of the illustration are looking eagerly in the direction of the text, and the illustrator’s use of fonts and unconventional designs helps pique the readers’ curiosity. Pang’s magazine built on Ch’oe’s innovative use of illustrations and icons to enhance the text and ‘hook’ the readers.

What marks the difference between Pang’s Ŭrini and the magazines that came before it, however, is that its illustrators reflect an awareness of their audience and respond to them with drawings that cannot be found in Ch’oe’s Sonyŏn. Take, for example, figure 29:
This small icon appeared at the end of each issue of Ŭrini in a section titled “Namŭn ink’ŭ” [Leftover ink], which was a letter from the editor: Pang’s place to address different issues, readers’ letters, etc. The illustration, which features a miniature baby, standing on one leg and on tiptoe while holding an enormous pen, is indicative of a new kind of illustration that younger children might find more enticing (though, ironically, this particular section of each issue was not meant to be read by children, but rather their parents). Other illustrations exhibit a similar awareness of their audience’s tastes:
Figure 30 is an illustration accompanying a folk tale about a foolish man. The caricature of the fool demonstrates that the illustrator is aware that his audience is, in fact, quite willing and eager to suspend their belief. The fact that the majority of the illustrations are similar to figure 30 seems to indicate a positive response from its readers. Figure 31, a heading of a letter from Ŭrini’s editor to its “young readers,” demonstrates that these young readers are imagined, as the illustrations would indicate, to be young. The illustrations of Ŭrini clearly reflect an awareness of this young new audience, and the magazine’s language and narrative responded to this awareness as well.

3.4 Language and Narrative

The magazines of the 1920s were an important part of the new consumption and circulation of print culture. Writers and publishers of children’s magazines in the 1920s recognized and embraced the degree to which their magazines could simultaneously be entertaining and yet could also contribute to the discourse on education, language and national identity in the colonial period. As noted in chapter one, in the previous decade Ch’oe Namsŏn used his magazine as a stage from which to inspire the youth of Korea to turn their backs on the past and assume leading roles in steering Korea toward a new era. But as literacy levels slowly started to rise, children’s magazines also began to experiment with language and form, addressing, for example, questions of narrative technique and content, particularly with regard to the documentation and collection of folk stories with an eye toward resistance to Japanese cultural hegemony.201

201 The 1920s witnessed a general surge of interest in things “Chosŏn” and in the search for Chosŏn-ness. See Ku Chaejin et al. 2007.
Children’s magazines engaged in the question of language reform, which had been a concern since the turn of the century, in particular with regard to reforming the written language in order to eliminate Chinese characters and strengthen the indigenous Korean alphabet. Research on magazines published in the decade of the 1910s—on Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazines such as Aidŭlboi, Pulgŭn chŏgori and Ch’ŏngh’un—reflects the editor’s efforts to incorporate the Korean alphabet. Cho explains that magazines experimented with native Korean script and replaced the more commonly used Chinese-character based expressions with an invented Korean lexicon. Cho Ŭnsuk judges these efforts harshly, however, claiming that, rather than create a lexicon that was indeed accessible without the need for knowledge of Chinese, the resulting obscurity of expressions created an unnecessary semantic complexity that perpetuated the need for Chinese characters. At the same time, she claims that the editor was not unaware of the complexity and that, on the contrary, the complexity of using Korean vernacular

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202 The call for a unity of speech and writing (J. Genbun itchi, K. Ŭnmun ilch’e) had begun in Japan already in the Meiji period, and was addressed by literature scholars in Korea such as Yi Kwangsu. Piel (2010) provides an interesting example of how questions of the unity of speech and writing came into children’s literature in the 1890s in Japan (Piel 216-8). See also Tomasi (1999) and Pak Chinsu (2003).

203 Ross King (1998) contextualizes the debates on language reform in his article, “Nationalism and Language Reform in Korea.” There, King notes that “by default, [the mixed Chinese-Korean kukhanmun script] had always been marginal at best…[it] emerged as the writing style for Korean in the Seoul dialect” (36); and that the discussion over the exclusive use of kungmun in elementary textbooks goes back to 1908, where its use was urged because of its ability to foster national spirit, even though the vernacular orthography wasn’t promulgated until 1933 (38). Elsewhere, King writes that the 1920s and 1930s “witnessed a relative flourishing of research and publication activities in connection with Korean language and writing,” and the first standard orthography was put into place by the Japanese colonial authorities in 1912, and then revised in 1921 and 1930. King (2007) 207.

204 The magazines Aidŭlboi and Pulgŭn chŏgori were not obtainable at the time of writing this dissertation; for this reason, I rely on this section on secondary sources. Ch’ŏngch’un was deemed to be aimed at an audience that could not possibly fall under the “child” category, and was omitted, generally speaking, from this research.
instead of the more familiar Chinese-character based expressions was one way of constructing Chosŏn-ness. By the 1920s and with the magazine Ŏrini, the struggles that Cho Ŭnsuk finds in the previous decades’ magazines is no longer to be found. Pang commented on orthography in the first volume of Ŏrini, saying:

In this third issue, I have used the vernacular script (ŏnmun) more than Chinese (hanmun). I did so with the hopes that there will not be anyone who cannot read this; know, readers, that I will only use the vernacular script, so please suggest this magazine as reading to anyone you like.

As Cho notes, Pang’s intention is less a passionate commitment to the establishment of vernacular Korean and a means of replacing Chinese characters, than a practical tool: vernacular Korean in Ŏrini, she claims, was simply a means of reaching out to as many readers as possible.

The stories and essays included in Ŏrini attest to an experimentation also with narrative techniques. While Ch’oe Namsŏn’s prose pieces consisted mostly of informative essays, the songs and short stories published in the magazine Ŏrini were meant to be experienced not only through the eyes but through the ears as well. Both children’s songs (tongyo) and fiction (tonghwa), were expected to be performed or recited. One letter to the editor in Ŏrini from 1923 expresses the great joy and privilege the writer feels at being part of a group reading of the magazine. Recitation of stories would have been particularly meaningful in this period, during which literacy was still low. Pang addresses this issue in the first issue of Ŏrini in which

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205 Cho Ŭnsuk (2009) 202. Cho gives the example of the term tangi (檀紀) to indicate a period of time, which was, in these magazines, replaced with the vernacular word seum. Other words that got replaced include nallaem instead of yonggi (勇氣)


207 Ŏrini 1923.3, 12

208 Cho Ŭnsuk (2009) 213. In the section titled “Ŏrini hoeŭi pam” [Meeting night], it is noted that there will be song and fiction recitations. Ŏrini (1924) 1.2, 3.
he urges all his readers to read out loud to the family members so that they can all enjoy it together.\footnote{209}{“Tokcha tamhwasil”, Ŭrini (1923) 2.10, 46.}  

Narrators in children’s texts of the 1920s were not disengaged or omniscient like the narratives that mark contemporary literature.\footnote{210}{“Namūn ink’ʉ”, Ŭrini 1.1 12.} The voice of the narrator often addressed the listeners in an intimate or familiar style or, as in this excerpt, inserted a cough to bring attention to his presence: “A-hem!… I am about to tell you a long story that has no end. Will it end?… Will it not?… Be quiet and pay attention. A-hem!”\footnote{211}{Hwang Chonghyŏn 2001.}  
\footnote{212}{“Skūdŏnmun iyagi” [Never-ending Story] Ŭrini 2.1, 23-26.}  
\footnote{213}{Ŭrini 2.2, 2-5.}  
\footnote{214}{Cho Ŭnsuk (2009) 219.} In the tale “Sŏnmul anin sŏnmul,”\footnote{215}{Writing about Japan, Wakabayashi (2008) notes that “children’s literature was ahead of other genres in adopting… the new style of writing that attempted to emulate spoken language more closely (and which was therefore more suitable for reading stories aloud to} [The gift that was no gift] the king gives rich man “An” a riddle and challenges him to solve it or be killed; the narrator then tells the reader that his thirteen-year-old daughter managed to solve it, but urges the reader not to rush forward and read the solution, but to “close the book and try and come up with the solution first.” Such narrative techniques conveyed an audial quality that even in reading provides a “listening” experience. But as Cho Ŭnsuk notes, this oral/aural quality (kusulsŏng) was something to be overcome: when “calls for folk tales” were put out in the early 1920s in the (adult) literary journal Kaebyŏk, for example, the editing committee emphasized that it would take care of the ‘copy editing’ as far as the standardization of orthography was concerned as long as the stories were authentic.\footnote{216}{Writing about Japan, Wakabayashi (2008) notes that “children’s literature was ahead of other genres in adopting… the new style of writing that attempted to emulate spoken language more closely (and which was therefore more suitable for reading stories aloud to.}
What the stories in the early 1920s exhibit, however, is not so much an effort to capture the oral quality of storytelling as a concerted effort to establish standardized sentence structures. The structure that was chosen for all works for children, from folk tales to short stories to longer pieces, was a polite grammatical ending (-ŭmnida) that Cho argues, would have stood out in the 1920s for its formal politeness. The polite verb endings in fact reflect the discussions in newspaper media about the use of polite terms with children. According to Cho, however, the purpose of this new, standardized and remarkably polite form used in children’s literature was to create a communal experience for young readers that ultimately contributed to the construction of their subjectivity as modern readers. It was also a site in which Koreans could engage in active resistance to Japanese, which had been instated as the national language (kokugo) in Korea. It was a site in which linguistic nationalism was constructed, and played a key role in the constructing of the nation.

3.5 Folk Tales and National Identity

Folk tales are central to the discussion of the appearance of children’s literature and the construction of the child in Korea. Korean folk tales were perceived as emblems of national

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The interest in the educational value of polite language on children is reflected in the public discourse of the time. For example, in the newspaper The Tonga Ilbo, in an article from September 25, 1921, a writer argues that parents must use polite language with their children so that they can internalize the speech patterns. The use of impolite speech with children has the adverse affect of mistreating children, and also perpetuates the situation in which children then go on to mistreat others.

identity, and a renewed interest in folk tales was spurred by the sense of urgency for the need to protect and preserve national identity at a time of national crisis. Ch’oe Namsŏn and Pang Chŏnghwan, who, as we have seen, were the two men who stimulated interest in children’s issues through the publication of literary magazines, expanded the repertoire of children’s reading materials through their translations and adaptations of foreign folk tales such as those of Anderson and the Brothers Grimm into Korean. The translation of these folk tales demanded considerations of narrative techniques and language that then spilled over into original writing as well. As Seth Lerer notes,

Fables rely on figurative language. They take parts for wholes, draw on particulars for generalizations, make mute creatures speak. Their status in the nursery or in the classroom rests not simply on their moral or didactic goals, but on their metaphorical enchantment. They are, quite simply, literature at its most simple and direct, and instruction in the fable is a lesson in the arts of the literary imagination.

Korean scholars also argue that western folk tales played a crucial role in the formation of children’s print culture in Korea. Aesop’s fables were the first to be introduced and circulated to Korean readers at the end of the nineteenth century in a textbook called the Sinjong simsang sohak (新訂尋常小學, 1896). The next translation available of the Aesop fables was a piece titled “Isopsŭ uhwa ch’oyŏk” [오 습스 翻譯抄讀, Draft Translation of Aesop’s Fables] which was included in a 1907 issue of the Taehan yuhaksaeng hakpo. In 1908, Ch’oe Namsŏn included three translated fables in Sonyŏn; Aesop’s fables were published in their own

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221 Interestingly and in comparison, Wakabayashi (2008) claims that translations of foreign children’s literature were also the catalyst for children’s literature in Japan. She notes that while the early translations had distinctly didactic purposes, the “translators domesticated these unfamiliar imports in an attempt to make accommodations for readers’ perceived understanding, rather than as a form of resistance to foreign culture” (227-34).

222 In Japan, too, “translations opened up new vistas in terms of content, language and presentation in a process that continued long after the appearance of the first original works fitting the definition of modern children’s literature.” Wakabayashi 245.
publication by Song Sonsŏk and titled Isobo ŭi 空前 格言 [The unprecedented wisdom of Aesop] in 1911; and from 1913-1914 a fable appeared each month in the magazine Sinmungye 新文界). 224 In fact, until the Grimm tales appeared in translation in 1922, Aesop’s fables were the only folk tales that were available to young readers besides three Russian tales by Ivan Krylov that were translated and published in Sonyŏn in 1910. 225 Although Ch’oe Namsŏn included some tales in his young readers’ magazines from 1912-4, the real interest in folk tales began in the 1920s with Pang Chŏnhwan. 226

Pang Chŏnhwan put out a “call for folk tales” on the very last page of issue 26 of Kaebŏk in 1922. 227 In this advertisement, Pang urged readers to consider the critical importance of folk tales at this time. He argued that folk tales contained a people’s true spirit, 228 and were a great source of strength: countries such as Germany, England and France had indigenous stories and songs that were unshakable foundations of national identity. Korea, he laments, lacks tales that are on par with the Grimm tales; for too long, Korean children have

224 Pak Hyesuk (2005) 177-80.
225 Sonyŏn 4.2 61-64.
226 No doubt Pang was inspired by leading Japanese children’s folktale scholar, Iwaya Sazanami, whose name he adopted for himself. See section 2.5.
227 Kim Ŭnch’ŏn notes that this advertisement was also published in the magazine Puin (17).
228 Scholarship on western folk tales also explores the way in which folk tales are thought to reflect culture and tradition in a manner that transcends their time. Haase notes that fairy tales are “often thought to reach back like sacred works to times past,’ to some ancient, pristine age in which their original tellers spoke mythic words of revelation,” and that “folk tales and fairy tales are endowed by many readers with unassailable moral and even spiritual authenticity.” (353) Maria Tatar also notes that “the reverence brought by some readers to fairy tales mystifies these stories, making them appear to be a source of transcendent spiritual truth and authority.” (Off With Their Heads xiii) However, as Jack Zipes observes at the end of his introduction to Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion, “the fairy tales we have come to revere as classical are not ageless, universal, and beautiful in and of themselves, and they are not the best therapy in the world for children. They are historical prescriptions, internalized,
only been familiar with Japanese folk tales, he writes. If this situation were to continue, Korea—and Korean children—would have no future. Pang called on his readers to reach out to each region in Korea and collect those stories passed down from the Chosón dynasty.229

The response to this ‘call for folk tales’ came in the form of 150 stories from all over Korea, and even from China and Japan.230 Four months later, Pang published an article titled “Saero kaech’ŏktoenŭn tonghwa e kwanhayŏ” [On Developing new Folk Tales]. In it, Pang bemoaned the fact that there are so few originally Korean folk tale collections, in contrast with translated foreign folk tales that could be found. While this was regrettable, Pang said, it was not unfortunate because all literatures endure a period of “importation”, and also because translations actually help expand a nation’s repertoire. But Pang argued that the most important and urgent task was that of unearthing Korea’s old folk tales. Pang thanks his readers for their submissions, and turns particularly to the young people in Korea (ch’ŏngnyŏn), and stresses the importance of collecting stories from all over the country and submitting them to the newspaper for publication. Finally, Pang notes that famous stories that Japan has presented as originally Japanese but translated into European languages are, in fact, originally from Korea (or, as Pang says, perhaps Indian in origin). Other stories, too, seem to exist in variations in Europe and Japan, but—Pang asserts—their origins are most definitely Korean.231 Pang’s opinion of the ideological potential was reflected in folk tales published in his magazine; for example, in one folk tale, the narrative voice turns directly to the reader to insist that Korean stories have much more to offer than the popular translated ones:

potent, explosive, and we acknowledge the power they hold over our lives by mystifying them.” (11)

229 “Chosŏn ŭi korae tonghwa sujip” Kaebyŏk 26 (1922) 8.1.
231 Kaebyŏk 31 (1.1) of 1923, 18-25.
Now children, who kind of stories do you like? Do you like foreign stories or Korean ones? It appears as if you prefer foreign ones, to be honest…this is not a bad thing, but you should know that our own stories are much more fantastic and amusing. If you read them you’ll find out that the stories of old Chosŏn are so compelling that you won’t be able to eat, pee, or swallow; you’ll be dancing around light footed like a little bird.\(^{232}\)

3.5.1 School textbooks and the *Chŏsen dōwashū*, 1924

Despite Pang Chŏnhwan’s impassioned appeal, and despite the popularity of his first collection of translated folk tales, *Sarang ūi sŏnmul* [Gift of Love, 1922], Korean scholars regret that the very first publication of Korean folk tales came not from Korea but from Japan. The *Chŏsen dōwashū* [Collection of Chosŏn Folktales] was published by the Japanese colonial government in 1924.\(^{233}\) The collection includes 25 folktales that were translated from Korean into Japanese.\(^{234}\) There was no introduction, no afterword and no mention of any translator.\(^{235}\) The collection, which was a part of a series on Korean culture published in Japanese,\(^{236}\) was preceded by two other works of a similar nature: the 朝鮮の謎  [The Mysteries of Chosŏn], and

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\(^{232}\) Pak Talsŏng Ōrini (1924.6) 27.

\(^{233}\) The other significant Korean collections published in the colonial period were *Chosŏn tonghwa taejip* [Grand collection of Chosŏn tales] written by Sim Ŭirin (沈宜麟) and published by Hansŏng Tosŏ in 1926, *Uri Tongmu* [Our friend] published by Yuhyang Sŏok and edited by Han Ch’ung in 1927; and *Chosŏn chŏllae tonghwajip* [Chosŏn Folk Tale collection] by Pak Yŏngman (朴英晧) and published by Hagyesa in 1940.


\(^{235}\) Kwŏn Hyŏngnae (2009) concludes that the main editor of the volume must have been Ota Shōgo (小田 省吾), who played a significant role in the publication of textbooks in colonial Korea. (156-7).

Both were compiled for the purpose of expanding Japanese knowledge of Korean folk traditions in order to extend Japan’s colonial control.\textsuperscript{237} In particular, Kwŏn Hyŏngnae finds the second collection, 傳說の朝鮮 [Legendary Chosŏn], to have eight stories that overlap with the Chōsen dōwashū [Collection of Chosŏn Folktales] from 1924.\textsuperscript{238} Sŏ Tongsu, who examines folk tales as a site of contestation of national identity in the early 1920s, argues that the collection was a conduit through which to disseminate colonial identity in Korean children;\textsuperscript{239} he notes that by the mid-1920s, many Korean children were quite fluent in Japanese. It is for this reason that the Japanese-published collection of folk tales was marketed in Japanese: in the 1920s, Sŏ asserts, Koreans were more likely to buy books in Japanese or those written by Japanese authors. Sŏ explains that there was an explosion of publications for children supported by the colonial government, so much so that almost as many children’s books/magazines were published as those for adults.\textsuperscript{240}

Kwŏn characterizes the twenty-five stories as follows: they give no reference to their origins, but seem to have been collected in Korea; except for a few places where the expressions are clearly of Japanese origin, generally the language appears to be “translationese” from Korean; the conflicts in the stories occur between good and evil, with the older characters in general representing evil and the younger ones being good; and the tales are highly didactic. Kwŏn points out that some of the values, such as obedience (yusun) and courteousness (ch’ınjŏl) were not traditionally celebrated values, and cannot be found easily in oral literature or in the

\textsuperscript{238} Kwŏn Hyŏngnae (2009) 159.  
\textsuperscript{239} Sŏ Tongsu (2008) 255.  
\textsuperscript{240} Sŏ Tongsu (2008) 258.
vernacular fiction (kososŏl) of Korea; he concludes that these are “Japanese” values that are injected into Korean folk tales. The folktales in this collection have enhanced elements of fantasy and preserve an element of humor. And lastly, the stories are marked by the presence of a narrator who asserts his voice conspicuously.241

Some of the stories, Kwŏn states, attest to the effort made on the part of the Japanese editor to make a statement through the Korean folk tales. Kwŏn points particularly to the tale “Ŏmŏni rŭl pŏrin namja” [The Man who Discarded his Mother]. The story tells of an evil and petty man who hauls his aging mother on an A-frame carrier on his back in order to discard her, because the man blames her for his poverty. Upon his return, the man’s son refuses to get rid of the decrepit A-frame; when the father demands to know the reason, the son responds that he needs to save it in order to one day discard his own father. This causes the man to reconsider his ways and retrieve his mother. Kwŏn acknowledges that the story was widely known—it can be found, in fact, in the Samgang haengsilto [Illustrated Exemplars of the Three Bonds] from 1432—and the 1924 Japanese volume of Chosŏn folktales was its third occasion for publication in the colonial period. But while the story circulated in Korea from the fifteenth century, the heavy hand of the editor is felt in this publication in one aspect: the story is told, according to Kwŏn Hyŏngnae, in a manner which places the blame for this incident on the misguided Korean society rather than on an individual.242

Kwŏn’s argument—that the Japanese editors communicated messages of the fundamental inferiority of Korean society and culture—is also supported with evidence from school textbooks at the time, in particular the six-volume Pot’ong hakkyo chosŏnō tokpon [Elementary school Korean Reader 1923-4]. The textbook was a reader for beginning learners of Korean, and

it contains many folk tales, both Korean and those of Aesop. But the texts and illustrations were manipulated in order to disseminate ideologies of loyalty to the state and emperor, often replacing Korean images with Japanese ones. For example, Sŏ demonstrates how the illustrations (using techniques of perspective, for example), depict a clear hierarchy between the Japanese colonizers and Korean children, and clearly demand that children should aspire to follow in their colonizers’ footsteps. In conclusion, Sŏ claims that literature and other printed materials for children tried, on the one hand, to encourage readers to adopt feelings of national pride and independence; on the other hand, however, texts from the colonial period reproduced ideologies guided by colonial policies.

3.5.2 Folk Tales and Nationalism

Folk Tale translations by Pang Chŏnghwan and Ch’oe Namsŏn began to appear more frequently following Pang’s “call for translations” (mentioned above in 3.5). Ch’oe’s translations appeared in the magazine Tongmyŏng [Eastern Light, 東明] in 1923; and Pang’s translations of the Grimm Tales appeared first in Kaebỳŏk in 1922, and then in Ŭrini in 1923. Most notable, however, was Pang Chŏnghwan’s translations (from the Japanese) of ten European folk tales that were published in the acclaimed collection Sarang ŭi sŏnmul [Gift of Love]. Published in 1922, the collection sold an astonishing number of copies—roughly 16,000—at the time. Its impact on the popularization of folk tales has been noted widely in recent scholarship (Yŏm

245 Kim Hwasŏn (2007) raises the question of the power imbalance that the act of translation embodied in the process of translating from the colonial language of Japanese into Korean. This aspect of the translated folk tales by Pang frames the reception of his translation and makes it more complex, since, as Kim Hwasŏn points out, foreign children’s literature
Hŭigyŏng 2007; Pak Hyesuk 2005; Kim and An 2007). Yŏm Hŭigyŏng (2007) notes that while there were a few collections of translated folk tales published in Korea by Koreans both before and after Pang’s Sarang ŭi sŏnmul, they were heavily inundated with Christian messages. In contrast, Pang’s translation approach was inspired by Ch’ŏndogyo philosophy and nationalism (see discussion in section 2.5), and his philosophical and nationalistic approach colored both the content and the language of his translations.

Pang’s interest in folk tales—as publicized in his ‘call for folk tales’ that was discussed above, and which he exhibited through his best-selling translated collection Sarang ŭi sŏnmul—also spilled over into his children’s magazine Ŏrini. The decade following the March First Uprising of 1919 was followed, as has been noted above, by roughly another decade of relatively lenient cultural and publication policies. Traces of the relative freedom of expression can be found both in the illustrations of Ŏrini and in the folk tales in the magazine. An example of the celebration of national symbols appears in figure 32, which is an image from issue 3 of 1929. This issue was subtitled the “Chosŏn pride volume” (Chosŏn charanaho), and contained such pieces as the opening poem “Chosŏn charang ka,” complete with the iconic tiger.

contains within it a combination of foreign language and literariness and a modern (Western) view of children. (331-2)

246 Kŭm pangul [Goldern Bell] by O Ch’ŏnsŏk and published by Kwangik Sŏgwan in 1921; T’ŭksŏn segye tonghwajip [Selected world tales] published by Pogŭmsa in 1935; and Ch’oe Inhwa’s Kidokkyo tonghwajip [Collected Christian Tales] published by Chuil Hakkyo Kyojaesa in 1940.

As Kim Ünch’ŏn (2002) remarks, folk tales make up a large portion of the stories included in Ĭrini. She divides Ĭrini tales into two categories: those that convey didactic messages that portray children engaging in acts of wisdom and bravery, and those that portray children in more deplorable states and that illicit pity and evoke an emotional reaction in their readers. 248 Both can be read, within the colonial context, as either an attempt to empower children, or to acknowledge the inequalities of colonial society and their adverse effects on young people.

248 Kim Ünch’ŏn 31-41.
“Ŏrini ūkkoe”249 [The child’s trick], for example, is a tale about a king who is visited one day by a foreign messenger. When the messenger arrives in the king’s court he sits down in the center of his court and, without another word, draws a circle around himself. The meaning behind this escapes the king completely, and he orders one of his ministers to solve the mystery or lose his head. At a loss, this minister falls into despair until his son assures him that he has the answer. On the advice of his son, the minister approaches the foreign messenger with a hen and two bones. He places the bones in front of the messenger; the messenger, surprised, tosses a handful of sweet rice, which the hen then proceeds to eat. The messenger leaves without a word. When asked about the meaning behind this amazing exchange, the minister recites what his son has told him to say: “When the messenger drew the circle around himself, he meant to say ‘if we attack you, will you surrender?’; and the bones were thrown so mean, ‘Your country means no more than a child’s bones to us.’ Upon this, the messenger sprinkled the sweet rice to mean, ‘Even if our army is this large?’ and in response, the hen ate all the rice, to mean ‘your army is to us like the rice is to this hen.’ And that is why he left.” This story celebrates not only children’s intelligence by making the child the hero of the story—his heroism heightened by the fact that only the child (reader) knows who is behind the solving of this mystery. Another tale, “Sŏnnaengnim k’o”250 [Teacher’s nose] is a story about the compassion that a rich child, Sudongi, feels for his much poorer teacher. In order to treat his teacher to a warm meal, he steals a family heirloom and hides it in the roof; he then tells his father that his teacher has an uncanny power to “smell metal” and will be able to find the lost golden frog his father so desperately wants to find. The teacher follows Sudongi’s instructions and retrieves the piece, but word gets out to the emperor of China, who has also lost something valuable. The teacher is then taken to

249 Ōrini 1.10, 10-11.
China and is saved only by Sudongi’s cunning. This story both celebrates children’s wisdom and satirizes the gullible adults. And in another story, “Sŏnmul anin sŏnmul”251 [The gift that was no gift], a king wishes to take over the properties of kindly but wealthy Mr. An. The King tells Mr. An that if he does not solve a riddle in three days, he will be killed. Mr. An’s thirteen year-old daughter solves the riddle on his behalf and saves his life; she is rewarded with a royal wedding. Here, too, the cleverness of children acts as salvation, but within particular rules of conduct in which rulers (the king, in this instance) have absolute authority over the lives of their subjects.

The folk tales mentioned above that were published in Ŭrini conveyed often didactic messages about loyalty, national pride, and empowering messages of young people’s wisdom. However, as mentioned earlier, there is a second category of stories: sentimental tales that describe moments of resilience in the face of humiliation. In the tale “Kaegŭm ŭi tŏk”252 [The virtue of honesty], for example, a young blind brother is abused terribly by his older brother and sister-in-law; but he pays the abuse no heed, and even when he gets slapped in the face with the rice spoon after asking his sister-in-law for dinner, he tells his mother that he was fed very well. In “Pŏridŏgi ŭi kong”253 [Pŏridŏgi’s meritorious deed] one tragedy after another occurs until young Pŏridŏgi manages to save her mother’s life; and in “Tukkŏbi wa chine”254 [The toad and the centipede], a brave toad stays loyal to his young mistress and sacrifices his life to save her from a smoke-breathing, larger-than-life centipede. While the stories that focus on particularly

250 Ŭrini 4.12, 56-9.
251 Ŭrini 2.2, 2-5.
252 “Kaegŭm ŭi tŏk” Ŭrini 1.8 30-35.
253 Ŭrini 1926 4.12, 42-45.
254 Ŭrini (1925) 3.3, 6-10.
meritorious or self-sacrificing children also convey typical socializing messages, the function of these stories can also be understood within the larger context: specifically, how the indigenous religion of Ch’ŏndogyo shaped Pang Chŏngwhan and his constructed vision of the child.

3.6 Ch’ŏndogyo and Pang Chŏngwhan

The influence of Ch’ŏndogyo extended beyond the organization of popular activism. There seems to have been a general sense that schools were sites of exploitation in which children were being indoctrinated by manipulating and distorted adult visions of children. In response to these manipulative public spaces, youth groups began to multiply, and created gathering spaces for youth to interact and develop their own youth culture. The social youth organizations of Ch’ŏndogyo known as the ch’ŏndogyo ch’ŏngnyŏnhoe, set out to implement social reform or “remodeling” (kaejo). This reform would then establish a national identity that would facilitate the cultivation of modern consciousness (kūndaejŏk ŭisik) and enlightenment, with the ultimate goal of creating a new culture.

Ch’ŏndogyo had a specific vision of humanity represented by the concept of innaech ‘ŏn, meaning that heaven (the sacred, God, the spirit) is innate in all humans. It was this

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255 For example, the young lady in “Tukkŏbi wa chine” was one of a long line of young women that had to be sacrificed to the centipede, and the narrator notes that the people mourned the young girl’s passing in particular because they never had a chance to be married, a message that itself conveys the expectation of marriage as an integral part of the rite of passage into adulthood.
256 On the religion’s role in social activism, see O Munhwan (2007).
257 In “Sonyŏnhoe iyagi” [About youth groups, Ōrini (1925) 3.5 8-11] a child (一少年) and a guide (指導者) have a conversation about youth organizations. The child wonders about the purpose of youth organizations and gets a lecture about how children are exploited by adults.
vision of humanity that Pang drew upon when he constructed the vision of the ŏrini child in his own writings, which he published in the magazines Sin yŏsŏng, ŏrini, and Kaepyŏk, as well as in his writings in the newspaper The Chosŏn Ilbo. The driving force behind the magazine ŏrini, in particular, was to save children from the oppression that victimized them. In 1923, the first “Children’s Day” was announced, and its credo was described as follows:

1. To liberate children from ethical repressions and to treat them with absolute human behavior.
2. To liberate children from financial oppression and abolish child labor under the age of fourteen.
3. To create family and social institutions that will allow children both to learn quietly and play joyfully.

Pang Chŏnhwan was committed to these tenets, and his philosophy regarding children is best captured by the essay “In praise of the child” published in 1924 in the women’s magazine Sin yŏsŏng. Pang starts his meditative exposition by observing a sleeping child, and extols the peace and quiet that he finds in the child’s sleeping face; he then goes on to compare the child to the face of Han’unim (the innate God or spirit), and declares:

This ŏrini is now sleeping at my knees. He is the embodiment of absolute purity, absolute kindness, absolute beauty, and moreover he is blessed with a tremendous force of creativity, this ŏrin-han’unim who sleeps now in such peace and quiet. Anyone observing [this child] will not have the space to stray into encumbering meditations; the mind of the observer is purified, making possible only the most noble of thoughts.

Pang insisted that children were incapable of duplicity; they were transparent, felt their emotions deeply and displayed them without inhibitions. As the tenet of innaech ’ôn indicates,

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259 Chŏng Insŏp Saektonghoe ŏrini undongsa (1975), quoted in Kim Ŭnch’ŏn (27).
260 Their organization, Saektonghoe, set up by Pang and his peers in Japan in 1920, exists until today: <http://www.saekdong.or.kr/> (accessed on 22 Nov 2010).
children harbored heaven inside themselves, and were therefore in need of protection by adults. Only once children were properly protected would the ultimate goal of Ch’ŏndogyo be achieved: the building of an earthly paradise. Pang’s writings reflected his beliefs in the innocence and beauty of children, in their artlessness and closeness to nature and therefore to a purer, truer version of humans. Pang explains that ŏrini, which he liked to call “pure lumps of luck,” are so in tune with nature that they are the first to respond to spring. They sing with the birds and dance with the butterflies; they are happy with rain, with snow, and with the sun. “Everything around them is, to ŏrini, happiness, love, and friendship.” And as such, ŏrini are the incarnation both of God’s intention and of his revelations. Therefore, anyone who is able to live in close proximity to ŏrini and to learn from ŏrini will be happy. The ŏrini, says Pang “knows no sadness. He knows no anxiety.” Aside from children’s intuitive connection with nature, Pang notes that ŏrini are inherently artistic and that their world is composed of three parts: storytelling, song, and drawing. ŏrini transform the mundane into beauty, and they experience life through the stories they are told. ŏrini are also “natural poets;” when they sing—even songs that were written by adults—their yearning for the independence of their country comes gushing out. Finally, Pang describes children’s innate artistic talent, which he declares to be free of artifice and other learned mannerisms. They produce candid and true portraits that

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261 Sin yŏsŏng (1924) 6, 67.
262 Yi Kihun (2002) 29. The three main tenets of Ch’ŏndogyo being 布德天下 (P’odŏk ch’ŏnha, spreading truth around the world; 廣濟蒼生 (Kwangje ch’angsaeng, delivering people from suffering) and 保國安民 (Pogŭk anmin, supporting the nation and comforting the people.) See http://www.chondogyo.or.kr/new/celist.htm (accessed on 18 Nov 2010).
263 “Ŏrini ch’anmi” Sin yŏsŏng (1924) 6, 67.
264 “Ŏrini ch’anmi” Sin yŏsŏng (1924) 6, 68.
265 “Ŏrini ch’anmi” Sin yŏsŏng (1924) 6, 69.
266 “Ŏrini ch’anmi” Sin yŏsŏng (1924) 6, 69-70.
originate from their intuitive ability to see true forms around them.\textsuperscript{267} In a national context, the children are endowed not only with the gift of cleansing and purifying those around them; they are bestowed with transcendental significance as the only beings capable of saving their world. Children’s essence—their *tongsim*, or child-mind—is entrusted with the crucial role of transforming the world into a better place.

3.7 *Tongsimjuŭi*

Considering the fact that Pang Chŏnghwăn was the son-in-law of the spiritual leader of Ch’ŏndogyo, there is no reason to doubt the influence that this religion exerted on Pang’s construction of ŏrini. What must be considered, however, is the influence of Japanese children’s magazines on Pang during the time he spent in Japan. Pang studied children’s literature and psychology at Tōyō University in 1919; it is no coincidence that Pang chose for his pen name ‘Sop’a,’ written with the characters “小波,” a name that shares characters with the Japanese writer Iwaya Sazanami (巖谷小波). Iwaya (1870-1933) is “considered by many to be the true pioneer of [Japanese] children’s literature as a field… [who] turned to children’s literature in order to contribute to the building of a rich country and strong army (*fukoku kyōhei*)”.\textsuperscript{268} Pang was also inspired by Japanese children’s writer Ogawa Mimei (小川未明, 1882-1961),\textsuperscript{269} and by the debut of Suzuki Miekichi’s\textsuperscript{270} magazine *Akai Tori* [Red Bird, 赤い鳥] in 1918. With

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{267} ŏrini ch’anmi” *Sin yŏsŏng* (1924) 6, 70-1
\item \textsuperscript{268} See Nona Carter, 34-5.
\item \textsuperscript{269} Nona Carter notes that “the first work over which there is no doubt or contention is Ogawa Mimei’s 小川未明 *Akai fune* [Red Ship 赤い船] in 1911. All scholars agree that it is a modern children’s publication, though few claim it to be the first” (51).
\item \textsuperscript{270} 鈴木三重吉, 1882-1936.
\end{itemize}
Red Bird, Japanese children’s literature “took a drastic turn”;\(^{271}\) it is credited with kicking off the period of artistic literature for children for which the Taishō era (1912-1926) is famous, particularly for the phenomenon most indicative of these changing notions of childhood, the child-mind (K. tongsimjuŭi, J. dōshin shugi 童心主義) movement.\(^{272}\) Carter notes that

The founders [of Akai Tori] considered their endeavor to be not just the publication of a new magazine, but a social movement, stressing creative freedom and liberal education. In particular, the Red Bird group espoused the child-mind principle, a philosophy that upheld the belief in children’s innocence. The two components of child-mind literature are that the child is at the center, and the child’s psychology is of the utmost importance.\(^{273}\)

Carter also notes that in Japan, “the child-mind became so wrapped up in nostalgia during the Taishō period, that the word ‘child’ became almost synonymous with ‘nostalgia.’ Nostalgia was used as a literary device in folktales as well as all other stories for or about children.” But as seen above in section 3.6, it seems that what came across as nostalgia in Japan was transformed in Korea and specifically by Ch’ŏndogyo as a portrayal of purity for the purpose of inspiring change and eliciting sympathy for the suffering of children at the hands of adults (implying also exploitation by the colonial authorities).

Pang was inspired by the works that appeared in Akai Tori,\(^{274}\) and was then responsible for circulating the term tongsim in Korea upon his return in 1920. As noted above, Pang visited Japan at a moment in Japanese literary history when tongsim was at the center of literary discourse. Writing about Japan, Kawahara Kazue explains that Japan’s dōshin concept was a

\(^{271}\) Carter 76.
\(^{272}\) Nona Carter, 76-7; Norma Field notes that “writing for children failed to yield anything comparable to the Western “cult of the child” until the Taishō period.” See Children and the Politics of Culture, 69.
\(^{273}\) Carter 77.
\(^{274}\) Wŏn 2008, 91
construction that was heavily influenced by western culture, starting around 1868 at the
beginning of the Meiji Restoration. Up until then, children were part of the feudal system, and
were therefore acknowledged only in relation to their social position.\textsuperscript{275} This began to change
with reforms to the education system in 1872, when children were brought together regardless
of class with the purpose of transforming them into loyal Imperial citizens. The
aforementioned magazine \textit{Akai Tori} [Red Bird], which exerted a significant influence on Pang,
was established in 1918 to promote children’s literature of artistic value. Its contributors were
previously unconnected to children’s literature, and the magazine did well commercially. The
advent and success of this magazine marked the beginning of the “springtime of children’s
magazines” in Japan. Kawahara explains that \textit{Akai Tori} catered to the purchasing parents and
the new middle class in Japan.\textsuperscript{276} Carter notes that many contributors to \textit{Akai Tori} were social
activists who fought for children’s rights; they were opposed to Japan’s stratified social order
and encouraged children to be free and creative. The goal of the child-mind principle was “to
attribute humanity to children, to recognize [childrens’] unique psychology, and to strive for an
education that foster[ed] free and creative thinking. It [was] the antithesis of the old feudal
education system.”\textsuperscript{277} In her analysis of stories from the first decade of \textit{Akai Tori}, the period
during which it exerted the most influence on Pang Chŏngwan, Kawahara finds that the child
was constructed as simultaneously having a sweet temperament (sweet, filial, hardworking,
reflective; a child who aligns him/herself with the social/ethical rules); weak (soft-hearted, poor,
sickly and abused); and innocent.\textsuperscript{278} Kawahara quotes several of the prominent writers for

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{276} Kawahara 73-92.
\textsuperscript{277} Kan Tadamichi (管忠道), quoted in Carter 78.
\textsuperscript{278} Kawahara 105-6.
\end{footnotesize}
children in 1921 Japan, and argues that for a time they wrote not for ‘real’ children, but for an ideal, abstract idea of the child.

It is easy to see how this model of innocence suited Pang’s Ch’ŏndogyo-inspired understanding of innaech’ŏn perfectly. Both tongsim (童心) and ŏrini were particularly amenable concepts because they aestheticized childhood and constructed the child as pure, innocent, and worthy of respect—all characteristics that were amenable to the production of literature for children (because their innocence meant that children had to be protected from their often harsh reality). Literature, in turn, perpetuated and enforced this construct. Tongsim was the most intuitive, natural state of being, and by extension it was deeply connected to nature and the environment. The importance of tongsim has been pointed out by virtually every scholar of children’s literature in Korea (Kim Chonghŏn 2008a; Cho Ŭnsuk 2009), and has served as a point of reference for all writers of children’s literature since its inception. While it was condemned from the mid-20s into the 1930s by the socialist and proletarian writers, the position of tongsim as the driving force of literature for children in the 1920s and, indeed, the very validity of the concept, has never been questioned to the present day.

The tongsim concept was not invented in twentieth-century Japan, of course. It was a concept that circulated in Chinese philosophy since the time of Mencius and Laozi, and was taken up again in the fifteenth century by the founder of the Wang school of thought, Wang Shouren (1472-1529), better known as Wang Yangming. Wu Pei-Yi (1995) notes that under the Wang school, “the innocence of children was strongly reaffirmed, and the preservation of this quality became more important than the mere acquisition of knowledge.”

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innate knowledge demanded that children be elevated in the Confucian hierarchy. Li Zhi (李贽 1527-1602), who was influenced by Wang Yangming, penned the essay *Tongxin shuo* (童心說 [On the Child-like Mind]). In it, he wrote that “the heart of the child is absolutely not false put pure and true… If one loses the heart of the child then he loses his true heart”; and that “All great literature comes from the child-like mind…”. Li Zhi’s disciple Yuan Hongdao (袁宏道 1568-1610), too, elaborated on the relationship between child, nature and truth and equated the innocence of the child with perfection. Yuan Hongdao’s work on *qu* (Ch. 趣; Kor. *ch’wi*), meaning ‘taste’ or ‘understanding,’ accords the child a privileged status:

> *Qu* is more a matter of nature than of learning. When one is a child, one does not know that one has *qu*, but whatever a child does always has to do with *qu*. A child has no fixed expression in the face, no fixed gaze in the eyes. He babbles in trying to speak while his feet jump up and down without stopping. This is the time when the joy of life is unsurpassed. This is what is meant by Mencius when he speaks of “not losing [the heart of] the newborn infant” or by Laozi when he speaks of “the power of the babe.” This is the highest level of *qu*, the superior understanding, and the supreme enlightenment.

The above quote demonstrates that *tongsim* evokes ideologies regarding childhood dating back to ancient Chinese philosophy which, as Kinney notes, exhibited a sensitivity to children’s “natural proclivities” and brought about an “increase in literary works recounting the lives of deceased children” in China.

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280 Wu 146.
281 Quoted in Wu 147.
283 Wu 147.
284 Quoted in Wu 147.
Besides tongsim, the term adongsŏng 兒童性 [child-ness] also entered the discourse about children in early 1920s Korea. In an essay published in Kaebŏk in January of 1923, Pang says that he is compelled to raise some important points about folk tales (tonghwa) in the face of growing publication for children, and because of the public’s ignorance about folk tales in general. Tonghwa are crucial to the development of children, he insists; their benefits include the development of emotional maturity, good sense, compassion, and even a good foundation for religious belief. Children’s need for stories is innate and natural just as is their need for mothers’ milk, he says. Tonghwa are not just for children, however, but for adults, too. As such, tonghwa are a genre that never loses its eternal adongsŏng [child-ness] and must reflect and communicate universal truths. There is no one that does not have “adongsŏng,” and it must therefore be protected at all costs and continuously refined. We must never give up the struggle to return to the homeland—the clean, beautiful and pure child-heart, he writes.

However, the more Pang idealized the child the more remote it became. Section 2.4 discusses his depictions of children in folk tales as wise and brave; in some of his creative prose, Pang highlights children’s transcendent goodness. For example, note one of Pang’s most famous stories which gets anthologized in contemporary collections of children’s stories, “Mannyŏn syassŭ” [A Shirt to last ten-thousand years; see Appendix 1.1). Ch’angnami is a high-spirited

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286 The term adongsŏng carries much of the same meanings as tongsim; tongsim became the more frequently used term in the late 1920s (Cho 130).
287 “새로 개발되는 ‘童話’에 관하여 in: Kaebŏk (1923) 4.1, 18-25.
288 Yi Kihun (2002) argues that Pang borrowed the idea that children’s literature must never lose its child-ness and be accessible to all people from the Japanese writer for children, Ogawa Mimei (26).
289 우리는 누구나 가지고있는 "永遠한児童性"을 이 兒童의 世界에서 保持해가지 안호면안될것이요 또나아가 洗鍊해가지아니하면 아니된다. 우리는 자조 그까짓한
grade school boy, whose positive attitude masks his terrible poverty. When the school year starts in the dead of winter, he has almost no clothes to wear to protect him from the cold. When his gym teacher confronts him, the child reluctantly reveals the extreme of his poverty, leaving not a single dry eye in the school. The boy’s superhuman ability to withstand the winter cold with bare feet and a naked back is met with a deluge of tears by his teacher and fellow students.

While the narrator provides the reader with the boy’s voice, the melodramatic elements of this story—in which the angelic child maintains high spirits while he gives away everything he owns, including, quite literally, the shirt off his back in the dead of winter—ultimately detract from its effectiveness. What is missing from this story is any sense that the child is complex, conflicted, or otherwise human in any way. In other words, it lacks the agency of the child and a real child’s voice.

Pang’s work is the subject of a great deal of criticism, both positive and negative. Some scholars (Wŏn 2008) insist on the significance of his work in the 1920s, particularly for its contribution to the repertoire of children’s literature in general and realism in children’s literature in particular. Kim Chonghŏn (2008a) also defends Pang’s approach to writing literature, remarking that Pang’s contributions carved out a space for children in society that was not bound by parental rights and gave them a voice to resist the status quo and incite change. Pang argued that children’s movements had been unsuccessful before the 1920s because children had continuously been encouraged to obey their parents, elders, and the colonial authority. His construction of the child was guided by his passion to encourage children to resist the feudal social structure and Japanese imperialism.° However, Pang has a fair share of

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Kaebyŏk (1923) 4.1, 21.

critics as well. Yi Chaebok (1995) accuses Pang of being oblivious to children’s plight during the colonial period and of creating a rupture between literature and reality; and of sowing the seeds of sentimentalism in literature for children. Pak Chiyŏng (2005) also concludes that Pang’s tongsimjuŭi resulted in another form of confinement of the child rather than in the child’s liberation.

Actually, Pang’s construction of the child made children’s literature a space in which adults could return or reconnect with an imagined, utopian space of childhood. The preservation and reproduction of child-ness (adongsŏng) or the child-mind (tongsim) seems to be a critical—if not entirely desirable—condition for the creation of a literature for children in the first place. For without an imposed category or social construction of the child, and without an emotional attachment to this construction, it seems difficult for children’s literature to appear in the first place. The kind of literature that Pang was advocating, the kind he deemed appropriate for children, was literature that emphasized honesty, spontaneity and simplicity of language versus overly complex and artificial content. His works reflect the idea that the way to access the child-essence was not through the intellect or but through a direct appeal to the emotions.

In summary, adongsŏng and tongsim were terms that marked a shift in the construction of the child in print culture that had begun with Ch’oe Namsŏn’s ground-breaking magazine Sonyŏn. The purpose of Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine was to mobilize the youth of Korea—the “bright and sturdy suns” of early twentieth-century Korean youth—as the pioneers of a new, modern society and nation on the brink of transformation and change. But in the 1920s, the

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292 Pak Chiyŏng 177.
magazine Ŭrini in the hands of Pang Chŏngghan created a new Korean child: one represented by the terms adongsŏng and tongsim, and one who was charged with the preservation of human goodness and one’s eternal child-ness (the “yŏngwŏnhan adongsŏng” in Kaebŏk 4.1). And despite the criticism that Pang endured at the hands of the proletarian writers starting in the mid-1920s—who accused him of essentializing and over-romanticizing children to the extent that it made children’s literature irrelevant and indeed played into the hands of colonial authority—these key terms and concepts played an undeniable role in creating a space in which literature for children could be created.

3.8 Conclusion

As illustrated in the first chapter, the concept of the Korean youth was first thrown into relief around the turn of the twentieth-century. A Youngman himself, 18-year-old Ch’oe Namson inaugurated two important literary magazines: Sonyŏn and Ch’ŏngch’un. In particular, Sonyŏn was deliberately designed as reading material for younger readers, and as such conveyed what Ch’oe and his contemporaries considered to be crucial knowledge that would carry Chosŏn Korea successfully into the future as a modern and strong nation. Increasingly, Ch’oe Namson’s conception of youth shifted from the more ambiguous and general term sonyŏn to the older, more politically engaged ch’ŏngnyŏn. Eventually it was the older youth, the ch’ŏngnyŏn, who were to embody the future image of Chosŏn.

The colonial control that began in 1905 continued with official annexation in 1910, and the next decade witnessed stringent colonial policies as Japan deployed its own foreign and cultural policies in its colony. At the same time, Korean writers studied and worked in Japan,
and there they absorbed both Japanese culture and European culture through Japanese translations, and continued to grapple with the significance of their identities both as consumers of modernity and as colonial subjects. All along, “youth” became a hallmark of their efforts as they hoped to instill both national pride and modern sensibilities in the next generation.

It was during this period, however, that Pang Chŏng hw an (1899-1931) established his own magazine that was to run from 1923 until 1936. Pang—motivated by his experience in Japan in 1919 and his meeting with Iwaya Sazanami, as well as being inspired by his own personal connection to the Ch’ŏndogyo leader (and his father-in-law) Son Pyŏnghŭi—set out to create not only a new medium that would cater to younger children (for example through easier orthography and lighter, more entertaining content) but also to construct a new kind of child. If Ch’oe Namsŏn’s sonyŏn and ch’ŏngnyŏn constructs were Chosŏn’s future, and who necessarily had to turn their back resentfully on their past, then Pang’s ŏrini occupied a timeless space of imagined innocence. Pang’s ŏrini were grounded in the immediate present in the sense that they were victims of both colonial exploitation (for example, they were too poor to go to school) and of parental neglect (they were viewed as possessions rather than as individuals). At the same time, they were also put on a pedestal and granted the ability to withstand abuse and humiliation without complaint.

Resistance to Pang’s construction of the child, both in the form of social activism and in text, was quick to emerge. The growing presence and influence of socialism began to create fissures in the solidarity of the youth movements. Socialism brought into relief the pressing need for real-time solutions to issues of poverty, children’s disenfranchisement, social class inequality, and a general dissatisfaction with the way that the enlightenment had been taken over and was being controlled and reproduced by the bourgeois. The socialists and their youth
organizations now sought to create a new image of the Korean youth: an image which no longer represented merely the romantically suffering youth of Chosŏn. The new image of youth that the proletarians sought to create was one that would be much more representational of the margins, of real children with real problems. A new vision of the child, distributed by a new set of magazines, was born.
4  Pyŏllara, Sinsonyŏn and the Rebel

4.1 Introduction

The annexation of Korea as a Japanese colony in 1910 and the onslaught of discourses about enlightenment and modernity placed the child, for the first time, at the centre of the now-colonized nation’s collective attention. The driving forces behind the emergence of the construction of the child were mainly, as shown in chapters one and two, Ch’oe Namsŏn and Pang Chŏngghwan. These men were inspired by their travels to Japan and their exposure to a vibrant children’s culture there; and also by the introduction of compulsory education (at least officially) and the emerging discourses, both in theory and practice, about children’s rights driven by Ch’ŏndogyo and related youth movements. These two men played the founding role in the establishment of literature for children because, upon their return to Korea, they set up publishing houses and provided the knowhow and expertise to start Korea’s own children’s magazines. Pang Chŏngghwan and the other contributors to the magazines Ŭrini were particularly motivated by the momentum created by child and youth groups and organizations that actively promoted children’s rights, and were also inspired ideologically by the principles of enlightenment. The ‘child’—broadly encompassing youth of all ages—was widely acknowledged as the future of Korea. Being vulnerable, the child needed protection and guidance; but the child’s pristine mind was untainted by the corruption of the adults who had led Korea to its unfortunate present predicament. The child’s flawlessness and purity primed him to be inscribed with new meaning and positioned the child best to receive the knowledge that was deemed necessary to carry Chosŏn forward.  Sonyŏn294 and Ŭrini were the two main

294  As noted in chapter one, Ch’oe Namsŏn also published other magazines such as Ch’ŏngch’un and Aidŏl boi. But these magazines from the start were aimed at children who could, for example, read mixed Sino-Korean script.
magazines that appeared in the first (1908) and third (1923) decade of the twentieth century, and reproduced their own particular constructions of the child in the new nation. Their constructions of the child—as the future of Korea, as a consumer of modernity, as vulnerable and flawlessly good—were reinforced in other magazines in which Pang Chŏngwhan was specifically involved, such as *Kaebŏk* and *Sin Yŏsong*.

However, in the early 1920s, another discourse regarding youth started to emerge. Although the subject of this discourse was youth (*ch’ŏngnyŏn*) and not Pang Chŏngwhan’s preferred ŏrini, the influence of this discourse expanded and added a new construction of the child. It challenged both the image of the child created by Ch’oe (of child as consumer of modernity) and that created by Pang (of the innocent child/victim). It branded Pang’s construction of the child negatively, and argued that Pang’s tongsimjuŭi robbed the child of his agency. This discourse was Socialism.

Yi Kihun (2004a) examines the evolution of socialism through one of its main targets: youth groups. As noted in chapter two, youth groups began to grow even before annexation, and quickly became a site for the dissemination of various discourses of modernity and enlightenment. The groups soon served as spaces to encourage youth to turn their backs on the past and the older generations’ decrepit and outmoded ways (à la Yi Kwangsu) in order to move into the future, and to further support the construction of youth as the symbol of the ideal archetype: ethical and rational, civilized and modern, all to be achieved through “cultivation.”

These, however, were not the only ideas being propagated. As Yi Kihun points out, there were very few young people that could fulfill these lofty expectations. Few young people in the

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295 See Yi Kihun (2004a) 290.
296 Yi Kihun (2004a) 290-1.
1920s had the wherewithal to be able to pursue cultivation. In fact, the term for youth, *ch’ŏngnyŏn*, was fluid and loosely used, with youth group members often being “young at heart” and found to be in their 40s or 50s. And in the early 1920s, youth groups became fertile targets for contestation over the role of youth in society. It was at this time that socialists in Chosŏn began to vocalize their positions and challenge the hegemonic control held by discourses of modernity and enlightenment. Publishing in magazines such as *Sin Saenghwal* [新生活 New Life], advocates of socialism demanded that the term *ch’ŏngnyŏn* be applied more practically. In 1923, the first socialist youth group was formed, the *musan ch’ŏngnyŏnhoe* or “disenfranchised youth group,” in which socialists began to formulate a mission statement corresponding to Marxist-Leninism. Works such as “An Appeal to the Youth” by the likes of the anarcho-communist Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) were widely read in translation, and socialists began to debate the question of how to wrestle the term *ch’ŏngnyŏn* away from the dominant discourse of rational enlightenment and toward a discourse of revolution, struggle and liberty. At the same time, the particular colonial context made the insistence on class struggle as a basis of affinity and union problematic. Eventually, the socialists settled on the centrality of class struggle as a defining concept in their self-awareness, and an awareness of their responsibility to engage in active struggle for liberation. The age of youth became much more clearly defined by biology and science, to include mostly young people under the age of 30, with the group of under 20s growing tremendously by 1930.

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297 Yi Kihun (2004a) 291.
298 Yi Kihun (2004a) 292.
301 Yi Kihun (2004a) 199-309.
The discourse produced by the socialist youth groups was supported in print in the form of children’s magazines. *Pyŏllara* and *Sinonyŏn* were the main hubs for these voices; their contributors—including prominent intellectuals such as Pak Seyŏng, Im Hwa, Song Yŏng, and Yi Kiyŏng, to mention but a few—wrote poetry and fiction that celebrated children’s awakened awareness and sense of entitlement, and dramatized the revolutionary, explosive anger that children harbored over their parents’ (and by extension, their nation’s) deluded conduct. These contributors also wrote political essays for their child readers that lauded the virtues of the socialist system, and expounded on the exploitative workings of the capitalist system and the inherent evil of those enjoying the privileges of that system. Together, *Pyŏllara* and *Sinonyŏn* manipulated the term *tongsim*, remodeling it into an active, self-aware, and empowered essence ready to be educated to the workings of politics and society and to take action. This child was bred for “realism”; he and she were now equally ready to confront the hardships facing Korean children in school and in the factories. Children were ready for action.  

4.2 *Tongsim* under attack

The role played by Pang Chŏnghwan (pen name Sop’a 小波) was discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Besides his many works and translations, and the role that he played in initiating “Children’s day” (*Ŏrini nal*), Pang’s significant contribution to the development of print culture for children include his magazine *Ŏrini*; his incessant collection of Korean folk tales and translation of foreign folktales, both in children’s and in adult magazines. His translated collection of foreign folk tales, *Sarang ūi sŏnmul*, played a seminal role in the

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302 The 1930s proletarian magazines discussed in this chapter did include the magazines’ formatting a certain amount of design and icons. However, these magazines are much barer
popularization of folk tales in general. Pang had created a space for children’s culture that was there to stay.

Pang’s work, significant as it was, came under harsh criticism in the mid-1920s and 1930s with the growth of socialism and proletarian consciousness both at home and abroad. His contributions became synonymous with tongsimjuŭi: exaggerated sentimentalism and a romanticized portrayal of the child which robbed the child of its agency and of any recognizable human emotions. Pang’s romanticization of the child was not, however, his own creation, nor was it formed in a vacuum. While their construction of the child was not romanticized per se, the work of Ch’oe Namsŏn and Yi Kwangsu imposed an image of enlightenment and education upon a child that was seemingly an empty vessel ready to absorb knowledge and to be transformed.

But more importantly, like Ch’oe and Yi, Pang too travelled to Japan (in 1919) and there was exposed to and inspired by Japanese children’s culture and magazines. Nona Carter notes that the rise of the proletariat movement in Japan brought about significant innovations in literature, and exerted influence on writers writing for children, as well:

The purpose of proletarian children’s literature was to raise class awareness within children’s literature and write for the working class children. The movement was based on the impetus to counter bourgeois and religious thought, and to focus on the international proletariat movement.  

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in terms of visual culture in comparison with magazines of the 1920s and late 1930s, and for this reason a discussion of visual culture has not been included in chapter four.  

Carter 86.
Carter notes that despite the loss of momentum of this movement in 1931, “the influence the proletariat writers had on their times and on latter works was immense.” Samuel Perry also notes the criticism that the proletariat writers aimed at those perpetuating the ‘innocence myth’:

The Japanese world of letters had itself made no small contribution to a wide-spread idealization of childhood innocence in its nostalgic invocations of happy boyhood, untroubled by the world of adult affairs. Essentially a romantic response to an earlier Meiji didacticism, this imaginary experience of childhood was encapsulated by the Japanese term dōshin [K. tongsim].

According to Carter, the criticism of the romanticized, didactic literature for children gave impetus to realism, which in turn played an important role in the development of a Japanese nationalist literature in the 1930s and 40s.

Yokosuka Kaoru (2004) points out that the Japanese term dōshinshugi indicates literature that appeared in the Taishō era in Japan (1912-1926). It was coined officially in 1935 by the proletarian writer Makimoto Kusurō (1898-1956), an active writer of children’s fiction and poetry who published the very first proletarian book for children. Sam Perry says that Makimone Kusurō himself decried, the evocation of childhood in Japanese literature as the “elevation of children to a supra-class existence of angels, artlessness and innocence.” By embracing a realist epistemology and class as a mode of social analysis, the proletarian children’s movement, insofar as children’s literature was concerned, helped to shift the subject of Japanese children’s literature from a romantic idealization of an earlier stage of development onto the present day experience of living children.

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304 Carter 87.
305 Perry (2007) 144.
306 Carter 87.
307 Kusurō’s first proletarian collection for children displayed Korean vernacular letters on its cover: the words Pūoret’aria and tongojip (see replica in Ōtake 145)
Yokosuka notes that the proletarian writers in Japan such as Makimoto Kusurō initiated the most virulent attacks against the concept of dōshin in Japan. They argued that this term had essentialized the child under an umbrella term which in fact signified only the privileged, bourgeois child. In an article published in 1928, Makimoto Kusurō accused children’s poetry of ignoring crucial issues of class:

[Children’s poets] are not looking at real, present children. They have no eyes for those children, scattered in every corner of our society. And even if they do see them, they are only looking at one specific class: those “loveable” children. They don’t look at any other children besides those of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois, who are the children that can fulfill their ideological expectations; [these poets] simply impose their image of children upon everyone else, as if they somehow represent children.309

But it was not only the proletarian writers who spoke against dōshinshugi (K. tongsimjuŭi) in their writing. Educators in Japan also took issue with the romanticized portrayal of children. Some actively published their criticism of dōshinshugi in the creative writing magazine Kōtei [process];310 others, say Yokosuka, were less direct in their accusations, preferring to label the object of their criticism as “Akai Tori-style writing” rather than explicitly labeling them dōshinshugi.311 The concept of dōshinshugi was attacked by both sides of the political spectrum in Japan: both the proletarians, who saw this vision of the child as detrimental to building children with real social consciousness, and right-winged nationalists such as Hatano Kanji, who, as Yokosuka mentioned, argued that the dōshinshugi model was an obstacle toward building a strong Japanese empire.312

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309 Quoted in Yokosuka 184. My own translation.
310 Yokosuka 185.
311 Yokosuka 185.
312 Yokosuka 186.
4.3 Proletarian Magazines in Japan: *Shōnen senki*

The proletarian magazine *Youth Battle Flag* (*Shōnen senki  少年戦旗*), founded in 1929 by Ino Yoshimitsu (猪野省三), was the only children’s magazine in Japan that reached out to the social organizations of children and recognized the subjectivity of children in Korea. This magazine connected Koreans living in Korea and those living in Japan. It marked, for example, ōrini nal, Korea’s Children’s Day (which took place on the first of May until 1961, when it began to be celebrated on the 5th of May) with particular relish: an editorial from 1930 notes how, on this day, the children of Korea come out holding red flags and “threaten the arrogant bourgeois.” From other editorials, it seems that the magazine served as a platform from which members were able to connect to workers regardless of their nationality; another editorial from 1930 speaks of the need to “hold hands with our brothers from Chosŏn and China.” A published letter from a Korean reader claimed that “the only way to bring Chosŏn back to its feet is to grasp the hands of Japanese workers and farmers and struggle together.” The editorials, letters, and poetry in this magazine are strikingly similar to the content of the proletarian children’s magazines in Korea. Take this example from *Shōnen senki* in June of 1930:

> For Children’s Day, let us all shout out these words and demonstrate against the capitalist landowners:
> The future is ours.
> Do not exploit children.
> Do not charge elementary school tuition.
> Give out school supplies for free.
> Do not charge children with dangerous activities.
> Stop all night shift work.

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313 Ōtake 139.
314 Ōtake 140.
315 Ōtake 143.
316 Ōtake 144.
Worker children of the world, weak children of the world — unite!317

Not surprisingly, this magazine made an impression on major intellectuals and activists in Korea, who were then inspired to write similar material in Korea. One example is that of Im Hwa (1908-1953), a frequent contributor to the leftist magazine Pyŏllara. Im Hwa, who studied in Japan for roughly a year in 1931, contributed to Makimoto Kusurō’s very first proletarian collection of fiction and poetry for children, Akai Hata [The Red Flag] with his Korean translations of one of Makimoto Kusurō’s poems. Makimoto Kusurō endorsed Im’s translation, noting that the “fine translation” by “the colonial poet Im Hwa.”318 This magazine illustrates the intimate connection between social movements in Japan and Korea, reflected both in the shared terminology of dōshinshugi/tongsimjuŭi and in the content of proletarian magazines, which took center stage in the space of cultural production for children in colonial Korea from 1929 until 1934.

The Korea Artista Proletaria Federato (KAPF) was created in Korea in 1925 and disbanded by the colonial authorities in 1935. Its literary activities posed a serious challenge to the two mainstream literary trends: the cultural nationalist trend, and the art-for-art’s-sake trend. Kim Yunsik (Kim and Yoon 2006) attributes the forceful impact of KAPF on literary production in Korea to two factors: the movement’s internationalism (its ties to equivalent literary bodies in the USSR and Japan);319 and its great popularity among and support of the socialist movement in Korea.320 According to Kim, the long-lasting legacy of the KAPF literary trend, which openly celebrated its political and social agenda, was the commitment to

317 Translated from the Korean translation of the original Japanese by Ōtake (143).
318 Ōtake 146.
319 In this context, see Sam Perry’s discussion (2006) of internationalism in the Japanese Communist movement.
realism.\textsuperscript{321} KAPF writers turned to realism “as a way to reconcile the concrete representation of real life in literature with a scientific worldview;”\textsuperscript{322} their work gave prominence to social conflict and the suffering of the landless peasants/working class with the purpose of instigating social reform.\textsuperscript{323} As Perry puts it, “both the Korean and Japanese intelligentsia were, under an increasingly fascist regime and desperate economic times, looking for works of art that exposed to the dominant social class the human suffering that imperialism was irrefutably causing.”\textsuperscript{324} Writing about KAPF literature in the context of children’s literature, Kim Sŏngjin (2004) argues that what differentiated the work of KAPF writers from others (e.g. Pang Chŏnghwan) was its appeal not to tears and sentimentality but to anger; and in this, KAPF writers had more affinity it their approach to the $Sin \, kyŏnghyangp’ a$ [new tendency] trend.\textsuperscript{325}

The relative freedom granted to writers in the aftermath of the March First Movement of 1919 created a space for writers to express indignation and frustration at the inequalities they witnessed around them. Politically and non-politically affiliated writers alike viewed literature as an important tool in the edification of readers for the purpose of shaping the public’s awareness of the inequalities inherent in the social and political system. In children’s literature, this political awareness and intense engagement with reality meant a strong aversion to what

\textsuperscript{320} Kim and Yoon 408.  
\textsuperscript{321} Kim and Yoon 409. For more on the position of realism in Korean literature, see Park Sunyoung (2006).  
\textsuperscript{322} Kim and Yoon 412.  
\textsuperscript{323} “KAPF literature was much more attentive to the task of describing the suffering that resulted from historical and social conditions than it was to pursuing artistic perfection or examining existential issues” (Kim and Yoon 422).  
\textsuperscript{324} Perry (2006) 286.  
\textsuperscript{325} Perry (2006) explains that the earliest encounters between Marxism and modern fiction in Korea found expression in a literary trend known as $Sin \, kyŏnghyangp’ a$ [new tendency] literature, which became distinctive in the mid-20s. Literature of this trend commonly polarized “the lives of the haves and have-nots and often found resolution in arson or in the deaths of women and children.” (295)
was seen to be a prevalent and destructive idealization and romanticization of the child. And as in Japan, proletarian writers for children in Korea played an important role in the development of ‘realistic’ writing that proposed to be more faithful to the plight of children under Japanese rule.\footnote{Brian Myers (1994), Jin-kyung Lee (2006) and Sam Perry (2007) write about leftist literature in the 1920s and 30s, but reach different conclusions. Myers’ opinion of KAPF writing in the 1920s and 30s is generally low, because he says it was not supported by a sincere political consciousness: “Most of what was written in these years was marked by the same ethnocentric pastoralism and anti-industrialism as contemporary Korean ‘bourgeois’ naturalism.” (17) Perry, however, lauds the efforts of the proletarian writers in Japan because, at the hand of proletarian writers, “children were becoming a new means by which progressive thinkers of all political persuasions were holding capitalist modernity up to condemnation in the mid 1920s” and because proletarian writers were more likely to arrive at “an understanding of the multiplicity of modern childhood experience.” (142) Jin-kyung Lee (2006) nuances the discussion of leftist writing in the 1930s by providing an analysis of the ways in which writers used universalist and intentional Marxist frameworks to provided a counterpoint to cultural nationalist construction of essentialized ethnicity.}

4.4 Proletarian Magazines in Korea: Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn

The growth of children’s magazines beginning in the 1920s cannot be understood without a consideration of the publication policy and censorship regime of the colonial government.\footnote{See also the discussion of censorship in section 2.0.1.} The growth of the commercial press after the March First Movement of 1919 was in fact, as noted by Michael Robinson (1984), a product of Japanese oppression that “provided a financial incentive for cooperation” as opposed to “suspension, seizure, or prison for publishers who attempted to continue the nationalist struggle.”\footnote{Michael Robinson (1984) 338.} After 1930 Robinson notes a “drop in censorship action” which he attributes to a “more pliable Korean stance toward Japanese
rule.” The Japanese censorship mechanism developed what Robinson calls a “dual standard” which “affected the development of nationalist ideology by totally suppressing radical and social revolutionary thought, yet tolerating, to a point, more moderate nationalist writing.” Robinson notes that in the mid-1920s, “the suppression of radical thought removed the discussion of socialism and other radical ideas from the Korean press… [and] removed [leftists] from public view in the ongoing ideological debate over the form and future of the Korean nation.” However, this fails to explain the publication of leftist children’s magazines with socialist content associated both directly and indirectly with corresponding socialist organizations.

Two examples of leftist magazines are *Sinsonyŏn* and *Pyŏllara*. *Sinsonyŏn* (新少年) was published between 1923 and 1934. Roughly 67 issues were published in that interim, and the magazine was subject to occasional closure due to censorship violations. And while *Pyŏllara* was not associated directly with the KAPF movement, the magazine was edited by prominent leftist writers such as Im Hwa and Pak Seyŏng and featured writings by dozens of prominent leftist writers. Published first in June of 1926, and running for roughly ten years (with interruptions due to censorship), *Pyŏllara* focused on enlightenment and education, but

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330 Robinson 340.
331 Robinson 341.
333 Im Hwa (1908-1953) appeared on the literary stage in 1927 as a poet and critic of proletarian sensibilities. He went to North Korea in 1947 where he was executed in 1953.
334 Pak Seyŏng (1902-1989) was a poet born in Kyŏnggi Province. He studied in Shanghai, and became a famous leftist writer. He served as *Pyŏllara’s* editor; later, he was responsible for writing the national anthem of North Korea.
336 The findings discussed here are based on my examination of volumes 1930-4. The photocopies were generously given to me by Wŏn Chongch’an of Inha University in Korea,
its angle was ideologically leftist. Its mission statement was to “approach our poor friends (tongmu) with an affordably priced magazine”;\(^{337}\) in other words, it targeted the disenfranchised and economically disadvantaged colonized children of Korea. The cost of the magazine was a self-proclaimed “five chŏn, as opposed to the 10 chŏn that Ŭrini cost and the 15 of Sinsonyŏn,” and was, as such, a magazine dedicated to the propertyless children of Chosŏn.”\(^{338}\) With this, the contributors of Pyŏlla•ra were addressing the failure of magazines such as Ŭrini to respond to the economic and social strife that children suffered under Japanese colonial rule. The contributors to Pyŏlla•ra offered an alternative to the romanticized and idealized tongsim ideology that had ‘plagued’ the pages of Ŭrini and the ‘innocence myth’ that it propagated. The child construction (weak, vulnerable, sentimental) of Pang Chŏnghwan was seen to be complicit with the ideologies of colonial subjectivity propagated by the Japanese for the purpose of colonial control. And in 1930, when proletarian ideology had entered children’s culture and discourse (reflected in articles from the nation’s largest newspapers at the time), Pyŏlla•ra’s ideological bent became most apparent.\(^{339}\) The degree of Pyŏlla•ra’s activism is evident from the frequency of censorship of the later volumes; Ryu Tŏkche claims that the 1932 January volume had over 10,000 readers, including readers in Manchuria, Japan, the United States, and Cuba.\(^{340}\) Pyŏlla•ra advocated an organization that went beyond children’s meetings or youth group activities: it supported the formation of an “international Marxist”\(^{341}\) children’s union,

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\(^{337}\) Quoted in Ryu Tŏkche 308.

\(^{338}\) Ryu Tŏkche 308.

\(^{339}\) Ryu Tŏkche 315.

\(^{340}\) Ryu Tŏkche 326.

\(^{341}\) Jin-kyung Lee (2006) explains that the international Marxists imagined a “utopian space where ethno-national boundaries will already have been dissolved,” but was a framework in
and pronounced its intention to provide moral support to the workers in the factories and in the
fields. The editors actively encouraged children to take an interest in and a political stance on
the situation of exploited workers. The goal of this magazine was to provide children with the
awareness that would encourage them to overcome and overthrow bourgeoisie control.

*Pyŏllara* and *Sinskyŏn* were not, however, written only to be consumed as political
propaganda. They were highly accessible and contained diverse content. Much like Ŭrini, they
were written mostly in vernacular Korean with a few or no Chinese characters. When they were
included, Chinese characters were usually in the title of the text and the author titles, and much
less frequently in the body of the text. The magazines opened with a table of contents and
included creative pieces (fiction, poetry, plays); illustrations (icon designs, comic strips);
non-fiction (essays on science, social science, history, travel essays), translations and musical
scores. But while an effort was made in these magazines to entertain the reader, the
entertainment was not indulgent; the editors of and contributors to these magazines saw it as
their responsibility to develop class consciousness in children. They were to do so by narrating
“real life”: by publishing pieces that exposed children to the true evils created by colonial rule,
including the hardships of workers and farmers, the suffering of due to extreme gaps between
the rich and poor, and of course, the suffering of children too poor to attend school.

As one of the towering figures of proletarian literature comments, the solutions to these
great social ills were the magazines themselves. Im Hwa wrote about the importance of
children’s literature and the role that it must play in shaping the young generation. In his essay
“Adong munhak munje e taehan 2-3 ŭi sagyŏn” [Some Personal Views on the Problem of

which some writers were able to address issues of racial hierarchy in relation to class and
colonial capitalism (105).
Children’s Literature[342], Im first states that children’s literature is in need of reform more urgently than any other form of literature. Increasingly, says Im, literature is being used as teaching materials; but the content itself is growing more detached from and irrelevant to adult’s and, more particularly, children’s real lives. The problem, says Im, is that many children are excluded from mainstream culture and are kept ignorant. This is unfavorable considering the large and weighty role that children are expected to play in the future. Children’s great thirst for knowledge and the immeasurable influence exerted upon them by education must not be forgotten. This thirst occurs most intensely, says Im, in the period between birth and youth (ch’öngnyŏn’gi). This is when children are shaped as human beings, and also when children are most heavily influenced by literature and education. It is therefore the responsibility of the older generation to provide the proper infrastructure for the shaping of young people. This requires utmost care and preparation—nothing must be left to chance. Unfortunately, since the emergence of modern literature in Chosŏn, very few writers have dedicated themselves to the problem of children’s literature in Korea other than those visible in Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn, and there has been very little support of children’s literature within the larger literary community. Im demands that the larger literary community take an active interest in children’s literature and contribute to its shaping. Furthermore, children’s literature must help children understand themselves better. Children’s literature must be produced to reflect and answer to the different stages in children lives: their psychological, intellectual, and actual lived experiences that change with time. This literature must make them feel that it is written exclusively for them. All those pieces of literature that are not intentionally for children must be removed from these magazines. As a first step, the children’s works of the past must be reexamined. More

342 Pyŏllara (1934.2) 2-4.
importantly, Im insists that in order to establish a more authoritative critical voice, a standard theoretical, scientific approach must be applied to children’s literature. The criticism must be generous and sincere in order to guide children into being future leaders and thinkers.

Essays such as this one by Im Hwa were prevalent throughout the magazines, but some of the pieces were less didactic than others. In general, however, Pyŏllara and Sinsonyon were magazines that aimed to bestow class consciousness upon children. Most importantly, these magazines challenged the existing construction of the child. The child of Ch’oe Namsŏn’s Sonyŏn and Pang Chŏnghwan’s Ŭrini were mere manifestations of false class consciousness, meaning that they embodied the material and institutional processes in society—one that was being exploited by colonial capitalism, no less—and thus misled the people. If Sonyŏn’s child was the Sin Taehan [new Korea] child primed to turn his back on his past and to absorb modern knowledge, and if Ŭrini’s tongsim child was the vulnerable victim of parental and colonial abuse that needed both distraction and protection, then the proletarian child, the child of Pyŏllara and Sinsonyon, was an empowered child. Children were now fully aware and prepared to take action and rise up for the sake of the revolution.

4.5 Sites of Conflict

The proletarian magazines Pyŏllara and Sinsonyon proposed, as noted above, to convey to children an understanding of the world around them in Marxists terms; in other words, to recognize that they were being exploited, to understand the mechanism behind this exploitation, and to then be angry enough to do something about it. It was convenient, then, for many writers to choose appropriate settings for the dramatization of the exploitation. Some of these sites included the school, the factory, and the sea. The first is obvious: education was the banner of success and deemed indispensable for the nation’s progress, but it had become a commodity to
be purchased only by those with means (means that were obtained through exploitation).

Factories, too, were ideal sites for the purposes of dramatizing exploitation, since they were by definition an intersection between the capitalist owners of the mode of production and the disenfranchised and exploited laborers. The sea emerges from the poetry and prose as another site, particularly in contrast with the sea images from Ch’oe Namsŏn’s Sonyŏn. In the imagination of the proletarian magazines, the sea inhabits an entirely different space.

4.5.1 School

If the magazines from the previous two decades celebrated learning, or at least took it for granted, the proletarian magazines made school the poster child of their grievances. The fact of the matter was, of course, that many Chosŏn children were still unable to attend the presumably free, accessible and public education offered by the Japanese colonial government. The contributors to this magazine broached this topic as an issue of class, since it was only children of means who were able to attend school and pay the fees expected of them. Indeed, one of the ways in which writers illustrated the inherent inequality suffered by children in Korea was through the depiction of the lack of access of many children to education due to their family’s low income. The magazines Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn describe education as a commodity rather than as a state-sponsored institution whose purpose is to serve all children of Korea regardless of economic means or class. The discourse of enlightenment emphasized education and modern knowledge as the only means by which Chosŏn might have any hope of progress. The value of education (or what ‘progress’ means) is not the subject of questioning per se; what is criticized is the commodification of education and its consequent availability only to those with access to the means of production.
The poem “Punhan pam” [angry night] by Yi Kuwŏl reads as follows:

Our school is a night school, *Oemot’harŏnŭi*.  
In rain or snow we are sturdy comrades  
But each day we fear illness.

Our school is a night school, *Oemot’harŏnŭi*.  
Teacher tells us we are bad, we have no money.  
We know, we know what is in our bellies.

Shall we push forward with clenched fists in this angry night?  
Let us show them how powerful we are.  
Let us fight bravely and let us be victorious.

The narrator attends night school, implying that he must work during the day. Despite the difficulties, he is clearly trying to pursue the goal of obtaining an education, and his passion for education is evident in his attendance through adverse weather. Still, the teacher is the enemy: he humiliates his students, dismissing them for being “bad” and having little money. But the narrator is not going to remain a passive victim, nor is he alone. Flanked by his “sturdy tongmu” comrades, the narrator proposes that they gather their strengths and fight their oppressors. And win.

Im Hwa often portrayed disadvantaged children who lack the financial means to pay for education. The short prose piece “Chajang chajang” [Lullaby] is a snapshot of the life of young children who are charged with minding their younger siblings on a boat instead of attending school while their parents work. They are poor, and barely have the means to survive. They watch their peers dress in proper clothes and enjoy the privilege of attending school, and sing a

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343 *Pyŏllara* (1930.11) 9.
sad song to their young siblings: “Sleep, baby, sleep/ grow big and strong/ grow powerful and scary”.  

4.5.2 Factory

Many writers championed the factory worker—adult and child, male and female—and constructed him or her as the site of capitalist exploitation and the culmination of all that was wrong with the current state of affairs. In “Sangho ŭi kkum” [Sangho’s dream] by Kim Uch’ŏl, Sangho was once a top student who was forced to quit school and work at a factory. Sangho flees from his drunken father who is bent on beating him and runs off; before he realizes it he has arrived in his school. There he meets his old teacher, who flashes him a lukewarm smile, and his old elementary school rival (and much his inferior at school), Manbok. Manbok (which means “full of luck”) is the son of rich man Kim and now a high school student. Manbok asks Sangho about factory vacations, and this puzzles Sangho, who had never heard of such a thing; a bell wakes him from his reverie and he discovers that it had all been a dream. He is, in fact, in the factory and trapped in his own harsh reality. Sangho asks about vacations in the factory, but of course, no one has ever heard of such a thing. He returns home with his perpetually empty lunchbox, as dejected as ever.

In “Abŏji wa ttal” [Father and daughter] by An Unp’’a, a middle-aged man wearing tattered clothing walks listlessly through the neighborhood in an attempt to start some kind of business. He is ignored, and he then starts to worry not only about his inability to pay for his daughter’s school tuition but also about having enough money to buy something to eat. Meanwhile, his 15-year old daughter Poksuni (meaning lucky and pure) is at school and can

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344 Pyŏllara (1930.7) 29.
345 Sinsonyŏn (1932.2) 44-48.
hardly concentrate from malnourishment. She is anxious that her father will not be able to make
even enough money to pay for her extra-curricular activities; and when she goes home, all she can
think about is the daughter of the landlady, who gets new outfits made of special material.
Poksuni has been orphaned by her mother, yet despite the hardships her father still urges her to
continue her schooling. Poksuni tells her father that her teacher won’t let her graduate if she
can’t pay her fees. Her father goes in search of odd jobs and gets himself a position in the home
of a rich man, where he contemplates stealing. The social and economic gap between Poksuni
and her father and the wealthy man’s house is astounding. And the “Kongjang ŏnni” [factory
sister] by Pak Maeng
347 narrates the miserable conditions of young girls enslaved in factories:

Our sister, factory sister, poor dear sister,
Each morning, with the siren,
She eats cold rice for breakfast and takes her lunch to the factory,
Like a frog walking toward a snake.

Facing the poisonous factory owner,
If she errs she’ll be struck.
Our sister’s wages are barely 4 wŏn a month,
But every mistake costs her money.

“Rŏsia ŭi kongjang” [Russian Factories]
348 by Ku Chinhŭi explains that the Soviet Union
is the only country in the world that exists and functions entirely for the sake its workers. He
praises the 5-year plan, which has brought great results in the harvest. He gives a particular

346 Pyŏllara (1934.9) 16-22.
347 Pyŏllara (1930.11) 42. For more on the plight of the factory girls see Ruth Barraclough
348 Sinsonyŏn (1932.1, 12-14)
example of a factory in Stalingrad which, aside from its great productivity, also has decent working hours and rest periods for its workers. Ku describes in great detail the various heavy industries that are under development in the Soviet Union, including construction and automobile industries, and speaks with great admiration about their achievements.

Such prose, poetry and political essays openly challenge the intense inequalities inherent in the capitalist (colonial) system. The claim that in the mid-1920s the suppression of radical thought removed the discussion of socialism and other radical ideas from the Korean press and removed leftists from public view does not hold here. These pieces were published, despite their outright challenges to the authorities and empowerment of their young readers.

4.5.3 Sea

Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 illustrated the central theme that the sea played in the imagery of the period of enlightenment in Korea. Ch’oe Namsŏn’s famous poem “From the Sea to the Boy” echoes Lord Byron’s narrative poem “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage.” As Samuel Baker (2010) notes, sea imagery was central to the romantics’ construction of empire. The sea makes a comeback in the proletarian magazines, but with a twist.

In the July 1930 volume of Pyŏlla ra there is a collection of four short prose pieces titled collectively “Musings about the Sea.” The contributors include Im Hwa, Yi Kiyŏng, Kim Yongp’al and Yun Kijŏng, all four of whom played central roles in the leftist movements in Korea and all four of whom ended up going North after 1945. Im Hwa’s piece, “Chajang chajang” [Lullaby] discussed above (“School”, 3.4.1), describes the quiet determination with which children, who cannot go to school, sing to their siblings while their parents are out on a

350 (1930.7) 28-9.
boat trying to make a living. The title of Yi Kiyŏng’s piece, “Ŏgiyŏch’a,” is an onomatopoeic poem that captures the effort it takes strapping, youthful oarsmen to throw their bodies in a passionate struggle against the waves. In another poem with an onomatopoeic title, “Tti tti tta ttara tta” by Kim Yŏngp’al, the sea’s waves conjure up images in the speaker’s mind of young soldiers (sonyŏn ’gun) fighting the onslaught of waves with their oars. The seagulls remind him of fighter planes, their cries remind him of friendly trumpeting; and he ends his piece with a passionate call to the reader: “Ah, sea! Our sea! Tatata—let us move forward! Hold hands and—ttattattatta!” And the prose piece by Yun Kijŏng, “P’ungdŏng p’ungdŏng” [Splish splash] recalls for the speaker the feats of the haenyŏ, the women divers on Cheju Island who dive deep into the sea all year to gather oysters and seaweed. He expresses his frustration at the Japanese fishing industries that have begun to interfere with these women diver’s livelihood. The prose pieces reflect an appropriation of sea imagery that departs from the romantic imagery of the discovery (and conquest) of the outside world. In these prose pieces, the sea is a metaphor of youth in its struggle against its obstacles: corruption, exploitation, colonial repression. For Im Hwa, the sea is a bitter reminder of the families of poor fishermen whose children attend school; for Yi Kiyŏng and Kim Yŏngp’al, the image of sea waves conjures up Korean youth struggling against repression; and Yun associates the sea with a symbol of victory of proletarian Korean women: the brave divers of Cheju who, far from being tenants, are in complete control of the means of production.

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351 Yi Kiyŏng (1896-1984) studied in Tokyo and returned to Chosŏn in 1923 following the great earthquake. He penned many important leftist works (including Kohyang [Ancestral Home]) and continued writing after he moved North in 1945 where he had an illustrious career as a novelist.

352 (1904-?). Kim was a writer, actor, and broadcaster, and was active on the literary scene until his death in 1950. He wrote novels, plays and poetry. He went North after division and appears to have died during the Korean War.
4.6 Knowledge for Empowerment

The importance of the acquisition of knowledge, much the centerpiece of the enlightenment period in Korea (see chapter one), was never doubted. Children’s magazines from 1908 and onward addressed issues of education both directly through didactic prose on the importance of education, or indirectly, through prose and poetry that narrate the consequences of receiving poor or not education. But in the magazines Pyŏlla and Sinsonyŏn, the precise purpose of knowledge is questioned, and modern (scientific or political) knowledge is replaced by the encouragement toward the pursuit of knowledge informed by a Marxist historical materialism.

The knowledge that is conveyed to the young readers is done so with two explicit purposes. The first is to grant them class consciousness and debunk their false class consciousness which has thus far obstructed their ability to see the exploitative processes of the institutions around them. Class consciousness is granted both through non-fiction pieces that analyze and explain the way in which they are being exploited and the way that knowledge itself has been commodified, and through fictionalizing exploitation in order to add an emotional punch. This is also achieved by insisting on solidarity with other proletarian children struggling throughout the world.

The second purpose of the knowledge conveyed in Pyŏlla and Sinsonyŏn is to mobilize children’s indignation and create the explosive energy needed for revolution. Yi Kihun (2004a) notes the proliferation of discourses about breaking with the past; again, the purpose of this is not, as with Ch’oe Namsŏn, to be able to acquire modern knowledge for the purpose of progress, but in order to see the exploitation clearly and to be angry enough to start a revolution.
4.6.1 Class Consciousness

Kim Pyŏngho published his essay on the society of bees\(^{353}\) in *Pyŏlla* between June and November of 1930, echoing the interest in bees featured in the work of one of the most prominent figures of Bolshevik Feminism, Alexandra Kollontai.\(^{354}\) Kollontai (1872-1952), famous for being the world’s very first female diplomat, “defended a vision of emancipation premised on equality, comradeship, and personal autonomy, where society would take responsibility for domestic labor while enabling individuals freely to express their sexuality.”\(^{355}\) Kollontai’s views on marriage and society were published in her *Love of Worker Bees* (1923), and portrayed the society and organization of bees in an extremely favorable light. Kim notes the intelligence, fairness, and the impeccable organization of bees that allows them to maintain order despite their great numbers. This is made possible by the equality and fairness that exists between members of this society. Kim also notes their readiness to sacrifice themselves for the protection of their society: their sting is vicious, but it also kills them. Those who are unwilling to sacrifice themselves for the safety of the group promptly remove themselves from society and commit suicide so as not to create a burden for their fellow bees. Kim ends his series by stating that this exemplary society runs according to the same rules that govern the Soviet Union.\(^{356}\)

Other openly political essays include “*Wŏlgŭp iran muŏsīnga*”\(^{357}\) [What is a monthly wage?] by Song Yŏng.\(^{358}\) In this piece, Song Yong explains the significance of the monthly

\(^{353}\) *Pyŏlla* (1930.6) 30-32.

\(^{354}\) I am grateful to Vladimir Tikhonov for alerting me to this connection.

\(^{355}\) Sypnowich 287.

\(^{356}\) See also Tikhonov, “Images of Russia in the Soviet Union and Modern Korea” (2002).

\(^{357}\) *Pyŏlla* (1930.10) 7-10.

\(^{358}\) Song Yŏng (1903-1977) was a famous playwright. He participated in the very first socialist theatre group, Yŏmkunsas, and was later one of the representative KAPF
wage in Marxist terms and frames his argument through a description of the process of historical materialism: first, five or six thousand years ago, the concept of *sak*, or wage, did not exist. Though the organizations could not even be called ‘societies’, they also did not take advantage of each other, and worked very hard. Then, with time, people learned to divide labor, and a division was created between those who owned the modes of production and those who did not. Advances in science brought about the development of agriculture and industry, which stimulated the development of machines to help produce more food. At this time, however, society was divided, and the owners of the modes of production exploited the workers. In general, wages are given in a way that disadvantages the workers and benefits their employers. Salaries are so insignificant that people cannot survive on them: factory girls work hard to put together clothes of silk, but they themselves never get to wear them.

In “Chiju wa sojagin” [Landowners and tenants]³⁵⁹, Song defines both ‘landowner’ and ‘tenant’ and explains that the landowner owns the land and means of production, while the tenant is the farmer or laborer that works the land without owning it and without access to the profit that it yields. Song gives a quick history lesson about the evolution from a hunter-gathering society to the discovery of agriculture and the realization of the value and importance of land. After this, says Song, people’s greed got in the way as they each carved out their own space, claiming land as their own. Land became occupied by landlords, who did less and less, and tenants, who worked more and more. Then Song goes on to explain the system by

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³⁵⁹ *Pyōllara* (1931.8) 20-22.
which tenants work the land and pay their landlords, and details the way in which they are
exploited on this land. This is what leads to poverty and hunger.

4.6.2 Solidarity and Revolution

One of the important missions of the proletarian magazines was the creation of a strong
community of support for children. As we saw in the discussion of the emergence of youth
groups in chapter two, community building was crucial to supporting the collective resistance to
exploitation both at the hands of the Japanese and the wealthy Korean landowners and factory
owners. One of the ways in which to build a new community was through an emphasis on
solidarity with other working-class children, both within Korea and without.

Some, for example, encouraged building solidarity with children from other parts of the
world. Kwŏn Hwan (1903-1954), a prominent leftist writer, wrote “Miguk ui Yŏng P’aionia”
[The American Young Pioneers].\(^{360}\) In this essay, Kwŏn calls into question the notion that
America is a rich and wealthy nation, and he points out that their wealth is supported by large
factories with unhappy workers who raise underprivileged children. He then points out that
while rich kids go to church and get to hear stories (tonghwa), poor kids go to vocational
schools and learn practical life lessons. These Young Pioneers\(^{361}\) (differentiated from the
bourgeois Boy Scouts) even have their own magazine, and they are organized and active; they

\(^{360}\) Sinsonyŏn (1932.7) 2-3.

\(^{361}\) The Young Pioneers were the youth groups associated with the Soviet Communist Party.
See Raising Reds: The Young Pioneers, Radical Summer Camps, and Communist Political
gather on May Day, wear red clothes and sing together of their aspirations to be just like their parent workers.\textsuperscript{362}

Song Yŏng’s allegory “Korae” [Whale]\textsuperscript{363} tells of a whale living in the deep sea. As master of his domain, he swims around all day and enjoys the pleasures of the deep. He helps himself to whatever fish meets his fancy. But one day, the fish get together to decide what to do about this menace. They conclude that if they gather their strength, they can overcome the brute. Soon after, when the whale is swimming, the fish attack and kill him. The narrator’s voice then interferes and provides the rather clear moral of the story — together, the weak can overcome the strong. This allegory resonates with particular force because it conjures up the more familiar alternative in the famous Korean saying, “shrimp among whales” (korae ssaum esŏ saeu ŭng t’ŏjinda), in which shrimp are crushed.

4.6.3 Heros and Antiheros

The inclusion of biographies was not new in the proletarian magazines; as we saw in section 1.5.1, Ch’oe Namsŏn’s Sonyŏn presented both photos and biographies of Western figures, known and admired for their political and military prowess. The choices of biographies are transparent indications of the values the editors believe to be important for emulation by children. This is true also in the proletarian magazines, except that these magazines judge past heros harshly, and replace them with new ones: the suffering factory workers, exploited children at school, and above all, Karl Marx.

\textsuperscript{362} On the leftist children’s writers in the US, see Julia Mickenberg’s excellent book \textit{Learning from the Left: Children’s Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States} (2006).

\textsuperscript{363} Pyŏllara (1930.7) 56-68.
Song Yŏng challenges the concept of heroism in “Yŏngung iyagi” [About heroes]. Song addresses the young reader and asks, “Who is a hero? Is it someone of lofty position?” Song’s response to this rhetorical question is that until now, heroes were thought to be men of superior strength and ambition such as Napoleon, Bismarck, and other famous Korean and Chinese generals. These men, Song says, are no longer admired as they once were. This is because Napoleon, despite his great military achievements, ended up taking thousands of innocent lives in his rise to power; by the end of his life, he was a drunkard. Song Yŏng says that “all of our past heroes were like this,” and must be criticized.

In “Maksŭ nŭn nugu inga” [Who is Marx?], Pak Yŏnghŭi explains that “Marx must enter your hearts like a beacon of light… He must not leave our daily life even for a moment.” Pak goes on to call upon readers to reflect on the world around them, asking them to recall all the people in the who are repressed, who cannot act or speak as they wish; who are exploited in their workplace and cannot, even after endless days’ work, live in a decent house or eat a decent meal. He then explains that Marx saw through the hypocrisy and exploitation, proclaiming, “Workers of the World, Unite” and startling the “capitalists and landowners.” Marx deepened his understanding of the plight of the exploited workers by experiencing their life in his own skin, and thus arrived at an understanding of the process by which workers everywhere can unite and resist. Despite his death, says Pak, workers everywhere are making his legacy come to life.

364 Pyŏllara (1931.6) 10-12.
365 Pyŏllara (1930.10) 4-6.
4.7 Empowerment for Action

The proletarian writers offered an alternative construction of the child in the late 1920s that challenged the one that had been imagined by the Enlightenment- and Ch’ŏndogyo-inspired writers. As illustrated above, the kind of knowledge that they proposed was not the kind that reproduced the inequalities and exploitation inherent in the capitalist system, but the kind of knowledge that would awaken them to an understanding of these deep inconsistencies. But the proletarian discourse went one step further. The awakening that the proletarian writers proposed was not meant to induce a passive understanding but an active one that would lead to action and eventually to revolt and liberation. Two figures stand out for their prolific legacy: Yi Tonggyu and Yi Chuhong. While the first was doomed to anonymity until recently and the other rose to fame in South Korea, both men left an indelible mark on children’s literature through a range of genres that include wall novels, prose, essays and poetry.

Yi Tonggyu (1911-1952) made his debut as a writer of “Pyŏk sosŏl” or wall fiction: fiction that was short enough to be pasted on the walls of gathering places for factory workers and the unemployed. Yi wrote fiction and poetry for children, plays, and literary criticism. He was jailed for two years in 1934 for involvement in the famous “Chŏnju sakŏn” [Chonju incident] in which 23 members of a theater group were jailed, and after their release were forced to change their ideological convictions. This incident is also known for the role it played in the dispersion of the KAPF movement. Following his release from prison in 1935, Yi changed the

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[366] “Wall novels” existed in the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s, and Kelly (2002) notes that these stengazeta “referred to a home-made news-sheet produced by members of a Soviet enterprise or institution… and posted on noticeboards and display stands as well as directly on walls” (578). Yi’s first work of this kind was “Pŏng’ŏri” [Mute] and appeared in the magazine Adŭng 我等 [Us] in December 1931.
focus of his work to write about social conditions in a less direct manner, and his works examined the psychological state of women and intellectuals.

After liberation in 1945, Yi returned to his critical examination of the corruption of the landowners and social inequality created by the Japanese. He was particularly vocal about the corruption, nepotism, self-publicity and self-interest he witnessed among the intellectuals. He joined his other KAPF colleagues such as Yi Kiyŏng, Han Hyo, Song Yŏng, Yun Kich’ŏng, Pak Seyŏng, and Hong Ku to create the leftist literature organization Chosŏn p’ürollet’aria munhak tongmaeng immediately after liberation in 1945. As a member of this organization, he spoke out in editorials about the “problem of skills” reflected in the creative works, and urged writers to work toward techniques of social realism and other approaches which would break free of what he called the formulism of literature. He went North in 1946 and became a professor in the P’yŏngyang sabôm taehak [P’yŏngyang Teachers’ College]. He served in the North Korean army as a writer and was killed in the Korean War. A collection of his works was published after his death in North Korea in 1956.367

Yi Tonggyu’s poetry and short stories for children appeared in Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn even before his official appearance on the literary stage.368 He was publicly active when it came to children’s rights, and Kim Mansŏk notes that in a 1932 editorial in the Chosŏn chungang ilbo Yi criticized the system of labor that employed children; lamented the fact that KAPF had no

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367 See Kim Mansŏk (2008). According to Kim, Yi Tonggyu was widely forgotten until he wrote the first comprehensive review of his life and work in 2008. Yi Tonggyu’s scope as a writer for children seems to be even larger than indicated in this article.

368 Yi Tonggyu’s children’s works appear months before Kim Mansŏk claims that Yi made his debut as a writer of “wall novels” in December of 1931.
youth division; and insisted that literary production must not end with reading, but must lead to awakening and action.\textsuperscript{369}

Yi Tonggyu’s poetry focused on the conditions of poverty and exploitation of children. “Ŏrin namukkun” [Young Woodcutter],\textsuperscript{370} tells of a young boy who collects wood for a living; he does so in the harshest of weather. He is so hungry that the snowflakes look like flour; but of course, these snowflakes cannot possibly fill his empty stomach:

\begin{quote}
The river has frozen into a hard sheet of ice
And even on days when the snow falls hard
The young woodcutter treads up the mountain
Small rack strapped to his side.

Snowflakes like rice flour, falling hard
Can’t fill the boy’s tummy
No matter how hard he works
His empty tummy cannot be filled.
\end{quote}

This particular poem does not provide a solution; rather it captures the painful moment of this boy’s existence, which lasts a lifetime in the poem.

Other poems by Yi Tonggyu rile the reader into action, calling for solidarity and action. For example, note “Norae rǚl purűja” [Let Us Sing]:\textsuperscript{371}

\begin{quote}
Our song boils the blood,
it clenches our fists and grinds our teeth.
Sing, tongmo, sing this powerful song,
The future is ours, this is our world.

You work the machines in oil-drenched factories,
Clutch the handle in your black hands,
Let us sing our song with strength!
Sing the song of the machines and handles.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{370} Pyŏllara (1934.1) 25.  
\textsuperscript{371} Pyŏllara (1931.9) 37.
Our song is a powerful song,  
it steadies our weakened hearts, races our blood.  
Let us sing in loud, strong voices!  
The future is ours, this is our world.

“Let Us Sing” offers a solution of song and solidarity. The resistance imagery is much stronger in this poem: boiling blood, firm grips, loud voices broken out in song: it is with these that the factory children will conquer the world.

“Pe rūl simō” [Plant rice]\(^{372}\) takes this resistance a step further:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Walgang talgang} plant the hemp

Spend all summer making it grow  
After autumn, cut it all down  
Finally to have a nice, full gut.

Take it to the landowner’s house  
Pay back your dues at the supervisor’s house.  
A bite from here, a bite from there  
and all that’s left is barely some chaff.

Should we boil it in this pot?  
Should we boil it in that?  
Or should we throw it at the greedy landowner  
And tell him where to shove it?
\end{quote}

This poem describes the desperation felt after laboring in the fields for many months, and the joy and excitement at the thought of finally having a full tummy. But as the poet says, by the time the debts and dues are paid off, the leftovers are so meager that it is almost comical. The questions about how to cook these insignificant leftovers are heavily ironic, and the last line—which literally reads, “shall we throw it at him and tell him to eat it all?” carries overtones of tremendous frustration.

\(^{372}\) \textit{Pyöllara} (1932.1) 28.
Yi Tonggyu’s prose was also published in the proletarian magazines. Yi published monthly installments of readers for young children (Yu’nyŏn tokbon, 幼年讀本)³⁷³ including a two-page story about two sisters, Kŭmsun and Kŭmnye. Sixteen year-old Kŭmnye works as slave labor at a rich woman’s house, where she cooks and cleans in exchange for a mere pittance and basic nourishment. One day, when her seven year-old sister Kŭmsun goes to visit her older sister (much against the landlady’s wishes, since the younger sister is despised there), she overhears the landlady berating her sister for eating from one of the beef side dishes. Young Kŭmsun runs home and asks her mother: is it so terrible for Sister to eat that food, when all she does is slave at their house? Her mother is silent in response; the young girl is very, very angry. Yi ends the story here, leaving the girl’s indignation and her keen sense of injustice ringing in the ears of the reader. Indeed, one of the distinct features of Yi Tonggyu is the clarity with which he calls children to action. His works portray a certain reality that must have been close to the truth in many cases in the 1930s. But the anger and call for solidarity that resonates in some of his work indicates that children have the internal resources to resist their oppression.

Yi Chuhong (1906-1987) straddled both sides of the ideological divide, but, unlike Yi Tonggyu, went on to enjoy a successful career as a children’s write in South Korea in the postwar period. Yi Chuhong served both as the editor of Sinsonyŏn and as contributor to the magazine. His fiction often reflected the harsher realities of children, such as the short story “Uch’et’ong” [mailbox], in which a young girl comes to understand current events through the comings and goings of letters from her father in Japan; and “Kunbam” [Roasted chestnuts], a class-conscious story about a landowner’s son who is outsmarted by a peasant boy. In his longer fiction, Yi described the experience of poverty, highlighted the struggle in the countryside and

³⁷³ Sinsonyŏn (1932.7) 34-5.
of workers, and described the misdemeanors of the exploitative class. “Ch’ŏng’ŏ ppyŏdagwi”[Fish bones], for example, captures the plight of the landless peasants that are exploited by wealthy and heartless landowners. Sundŏgi’s family is a walking tragedy: his mother is sick, her illness exacerbated by the death of her darling and witty three-year-old child; his father turns taciturn and hopeless, and out of heartbreak ceases to attend to his farming; and Sundŏgi has pus-filled blisters all over his shoulders from sweeping the streets, a job for which he is not paid. When the landowner comes to scold Sundŏgi’s father, the boy’s father prostrates himself before the landlord, discarding any sense of self-dignity, and this infuriates Sundŏgi. The boy’s invalid mothers manages to conjure up superhuman strength and serve the landowner fresh herring and rice; their starved son nearly chokes on his saliva, but his mother manages to calm his appetite, assuring him that there will be leftovers. When the dishes come back empty, the boy explodes in anger, his father beats him, and the boy’s wounds erupt in the room, staining it with yellow pus and red blood. The father apologizes to his son, but the boy immediately begs for forgiveness. Yet while the family members comfort each other, the boy feels his hand clenching into a fist and his teeth grinding in anger. The story entertains certain elements of melodrama, culminating with the tearful family embrace as the finale, but the boy’s sense of indignation and horror that he experiences at the sight of his parents surrendering indicates that this is not the end of the story. His anger has been aroused, and he will take revenge. In his work, Yi Chuhong manipulates his child characters to elucidate the social inequalities facing children in colonial Korea. Yi Chuhong’s children stare face to face with terrible injustices, but do not leave it at

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374 *Sinsonyŏn* (1930.4) 3.
375 Jin-kyung Lee (2006) also addresses the presence of proletarian narratives that focus on the abject body and the physical manifestation of exploitation, and notes the wide variety of such instances in literature of the 1930s (119).
that: they join forces to overcome their situation, illustrating what Pak T’aeil calls a spirit of “enlightenment”. 376

4.8 Conclusion

The proletarian magazines for children emerged in the mid-1920s in response to the general disengagement of children’s print culture with colonial reality and the specific prevalence of the ‘myth of innocence’ or tongsimjuŭi, in children’s prose and poetry. With the rise of socialism in the early 1920s, opposing social discourses competed for hegemony, but also reflected the desire to find solutions and effect change in Chosŏn society. Children and youth were at the center of the discussions; nothing, after all, could be more crucial at this time than educating Chosŏn’s future leaders. Proletarian magazines seem to have been relatively uncensored sites where writers, poets, social activists and public intellectuals constructed the child in essays, fiction, allegories and poetry. The constructed child was still innocent, but not ignorant; pure, but not passive. This child was educated and informed about the evils of capitalism and exploitation. If he could not be educated in school, then he was educated in the streets; if not by teachers then by older peers; and if not through positive examples than through negative models. The knowledge conveyed to children in the proletarian magazines was less academic and more moral; less fiction and more political science. The tongsim of the early 1930s, as constructed by the leading proletarian writers of colonial Korea, was on the path toward obtaining class consciousness, and was also angry enough now to take the necessary action in order to effect change.

Sonyŏn and the Natural Child

5.1 Education, Publication and Censorship

The magazine Sonyŏn published between 1937 and 1940 shared the same title as Ch’oe Namsŏn’s magazine published thirty years earlier, but the two share little else in common. The Sonyŏn of 1908 was published at the height of the enlightenment period, before official annexation, and shone a spotlight on children and youth as the future of Korea. The Sonyŏn of 1937 was published during a period of intensifying colonial repression and on the eve of the Sino-Japanese war, after Korea had been subjected to more than thirty years of colonial rule with no end in sight, and at a time when youth culture—indeed the child itself—had been a contested site of discourses about nation and progress for decades.

As Caprio (2009) demonstrates, the Japanese colonial cultural policies in Korea fluctuated throughout the colonial period, and it is impossible to tell the story of the children’s magazines without contextualizing their position vis-à-vis publication policies at the respective stages of colonial rule. It is important to remember that the external conditions that allowed for the contestation over the child—namely, the proliferation of socialism and publication of proletarian literature—came to an end by the mid-1930s. The silencing of the proletarian voices in children’s magazines heralded a new era of publication which reflected the concerns of a militarized society bent on accelerated assimilation of the Korean population.

The history of censorship, according to Mark Caprio, shows that while the period following the March First Movement (1919) saw a relaxation of publication, presumably motivated by the government-general’s desire to allow for “a forum through which [Koreans
could voice their opinions on Japanese administrative practices,"³⁷⁷ the relative freedom of publication meant that critics of the Japanese assimilation policies could voice their opinions to a certain extent in Korean newspapers. Indeed, this would partially explain how Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn published politically leftist content with little interference by the censors. These magazines, however, were shut down by 1934. This coincided with a new phase of assimilation policy by the Japanese colonial government, which affected the content of children’s magazines and shaped the publication and content of Sonyŏn, which was published between 1937 until 1940. By 1940, the governor-general had closed down all major Korean newspapers in its effort to exert fuller control over Korean media in the context of the escalation of the Sino-Japanese War.

Mark Caprio notes that in the late 1930s and in the face of mounting crises on the Asian continent, Japan realized that the acceleration of assimilation was critical to the success of the integration of the Korean peninsula into the empire.³⁷⁸ In terms of education, Caprio notes a heightened frequency of the discussion over “civic education,” which meant, for example, a focus on legal (civic duties) and moral education (traditional responsibilities). The examples Caprio provides indicate that the practical curriculum included ceremonies through which school children had to perform their loyalty to Japan; the purpose of this curriculum was to “instill loyalty to the empire as a logical extension of familial piety.”³⁷⁹

Caprio reveals the details of two particularly interesting reports issued by the government-general in 1938. These reports spelled out the achievements made in the assimilation of Koreans, and also suggested further directions to pursue in this regard. Among

³⁷⁷ Caprio 174.
³⁷⁸ Caprio 141-2.
the achievements noted was the increase in frequency of visits to Japanese Shinto shrines, as well as an increased fluency of Korean children in Japanese or, as it was called, in kokugo or the national language, something that indicated higher rates of education and school attendance.\textsuperscript{380}

The second of these reports, the “Counterplan Proposal,” argued that complete assimilation would be impossible if Koreans were provided with access to their culture and language. The recommendations targeted Korean education: schools should now focus on the cultivation of three principles: “clarification of the national polity, endurance of \textit{Naisen ittai},\footnote{\textsuperscript{381} Naisen ittai, or Naesŏn ilch’e in Korean (内鮮一體) was one of the guiding principles and mantras of late colonial authority. Literally, “Japan and Korea as one body,” this slogan captured the assimilation policies that aimed to transform Koreans into (theoretically equal) Japanese subject.} and discipline.”\textsuperscript{382} The blood ties between Korea and Japan were to be emphasized, and Japanese language acquisition was to be encouraged. Education had to “foster within Korea’s youth the ‘spirit of industry and patriotism… the instruction aimed to provide means for the Korean people to ‘rationalize their lifestyles and soften their [Korean] mannerisms.”\textsuperscript{383} This included a recommendation to exercise more control (censorship) over Korean “documents, speech and behavior, resources, movies, and music that obstructed \textit{Naisen ittai}.\footnote{\textsuperscript{384} Caprio 147.}"

Another part of this Counterplan Proposal was the discussion over how to prepare the Korean peninsula for war. In order to facilitate this preparation, Japan was “to increase the peninsula’s health facilities to handle wartime casualties.”\textsuperscript{385} In order to improve health conditions in Korea, for example, Koreans were urged to exercise and walk (rather than take public transportation). The rhetoric about health practices (including discipline in eating and

\begin{footnotes}
\item Caprio 144-5.
\item Caprio 145.
\item Naisen ittai, or Naesŏn ilch’e in Korean (內鮮一體) was one of the guiding principles and mantras of late colonial authority. Literally, “Japan and Korea as one body,” this slogan captured the assimilation policies that aimed to transform Koreans into (theoretically equal) Japanese subject.
\item Caprio 147.
\item Caprio 147.
\item Caprio 147.
\item Caprio 148.
\end{footnotes}
physical exercise, dress, and overall frugality) was a part, says Caprio, of the larger discourse about general frugality (thus saving money and fuel) and the regulation of Koreans’ lives (for example, through group exercise to the radio).\textsuperscript{386}

Following the urgency to expedite assimilation, changes were made in the classrooms, such that “civic education” was replaced with “national education.”\textsuperscript{387} As a part of this new educational philosophy, other changes were made to the school curriculum.\textsuperscript{388} Also, physical education changed so that a greater focus was placed on martial education; and Koreans needed to acquire Japanese to a more sophisticated level in order to serve the Japanese army with more efficiency. Education also targeted women, who were responsible for raising healthy babies and for educating them properly so as to allow for their success in school.\textsuperscript{389} The wartime period also put an end to the deliberation over language use in the colony. “Japanese language” Caprio says, “grew in dominance as Korean language mediums gradually disappeared.”\textsuperscript{390} By the late 1930s, the education system in Korea was manipulated completely to serve the purpose of mobilization, both materially, in the form of military draft, and spiritually, using rhetoric that encouraged all children to see themselves as a part of the greater Japanese empire.

Newspapers, magazines, and other commercial print culture played a critical supporting role in the dissemination of state ideology. As Caprio notes, the press (and by extension, print culture in general) was “instrumental in both instructing the people of the present circumstances that the empire faced (including wartime news), and instructing them on their special duties as

\textsuperscript{385} Caprio 149.  
\textsuperscript{386} Caprio 149.  
\textsuperscript{387} Caprio 153.  
\textsuperscript{388} Caprio notes that the subject “Japanese history and geography” was changed into “history and geography” and that the Korean language was demoted to an elective subject. (153)  
\textsuperscript{389} Caprio 154.
imperial subjects.\textsuperscript{391} Not only was commercial print culture implicated, however; literature, too, was acknowledged for its important role in the shaping of the colonial subjects. In his examination of the emergence of the study of literature as a part of the education curriculum of late colonial Korea, Pak Yŏnggi (2008) shows how educators made reference to the importance of including literature study in schools already in 1910.\textsuperscript{392} In the 1930s, Chu Yosŏp\textsuperscript{393} argued that the study of literature was the mark of a more evolved education curriculum; literature, he explained, was important beyond the study of Korean literature: it must be viewed as a part of an arts education in general. However, as Pak points out, commercial magazines continued to publish creative fiction and poetry, particularly the poetic genre of sijo, at a time when school textbook excluded them completely. In school textbooks, (Japanese) folk tales and biographies of notable Japanese persons were included in the literature curriculum; and without exception, all school reading material was rhetorically geared toward assimilating Koreans into the Japanese colonial empire. How, then, did Korean writers respond to this climate of late colonial rule in commercial magazines? Did the magazines participate in the propagation of ideas of assimilation (for example, militarization and loyalty to the Japanese) or did they resist it in language and content? Or did they maintain a quiet third space in which they navigated through the social climate by publishing less socially engaged and more detached “entertaining” reading?

\textsuperscript{390} Caprio 159.  
\textsuperscript{391} Caprio 156.  
\textsuperscript{392} Pak Yŏnggi (2008) 42.  
\textsuperscript{393} Chu (1902-1972) was an important fiction writer in Korea. He was also an important contributor to children’s magazines in the late colonial period and throughout the liberation space and postwar period. He published a critique of the education system in 1930, arguing that schools were still occupied more by Japanese than by Korean students, and that schools were not being built as fast as needed. He also noted the poor status of education of women (Caprio 176-7).
5.2 Sonyŏn

The late colonial period saw the publication of several children’s magazines, including the magazine Sonyŏn. Sonyŏn was published by the newspaper Chosŏn ilbo [Chosŏn Daily] and
was edited by Yun Sŏkchung\textsuperscript{394} from 1937 to 1939. Sonyŏn placed a great emphasis on publishing content that was entertaining. As Yun says in the “letter from the editor” of the first issue published in 1937: “Children, take a break from your studies and come to this gentle and affectionate magazine; it will doubtlessly give you laughter. Please guide it wherever you wish to go.”\textsuperscript{395} Yun’s philosophy of entertainment is reflected in a rich diversity of both visual and textual content: his magazine carried illustrated short stories, poetry, journalism, cartoons, allegories, quizzes, mazes, lessons in magic, arts and crafts activities, and much more.

Sonyŏn was distinctly different from the leftist magazines Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn. Its difference lay in the content, which was, at least on the surface, more frivolous, and in its visual layout, which was much more rich, detailed, and diverse. But similarly to the proletarian magazines, Sonyŏn, too, reflected the changing sociopolitical atmosphere within Korea and the shifts in Japanese assimilation and other cultural policies. While Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn reflected the general mood of social protest against corruption and the exploitation suffered by the colonial economy, Sonyŏn gave evidence of the now hegemonic rhetoric of late colonial Korea in its consumer economy, development of hobbies and pastimes, and militarism that echoed Japan’s involvement in the second Sino-Japanese war. Many of the writers who contributed to Sonyŏn were later labeled ch’înilp’a, or Japanese sympathizers; their contributions, some of which can be called explicit propaganda, show the extent to which they had internalized the wartime colonial rhetoric propagated by Japan and had accepted, for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[394] Yun Sŏkchung (1911-2003) is one of Korean children’s literature’s household names. He was born in Seoul, and went to study journalism in Tokyo in 1942. He published poetry throughout his career in such venues as the proletarian magazine Sinsonyŏn. He took over the editorial position of Ôrini soon after Pang Chŏnhwan’s death in 1933, and later went on to work as the editor of the later colonial magazine Sonyŏn and the liberation space magazine Sohaksaeng.
\item[395] Sonyŏn (1937.4) 9.
\end{footnotes}
example, their position as a proud member of Japan’s Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Kim Hwasŏn (2004a) argues that magazine publications and radio broadcasts focused on the education of children in a deep sense, the purpose being to shape not only their knowledge but their interior landscape. This rhetoric, which called for the preservation of children’s inherent joy and cheerfulness, says Kim, was part of a larger, regional discourse that participated in the discourse of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere. The way that the editors and writers of this magazine achieved this integration was to reach out to children and inspire them to become loyal, militarized servants of the Japanese emperor.396

5.3 Wartime Rhetoric: Text and Visuals

From 1937 until its cancellation in 1940, the magazine Sonyŏn participated to a certain extent in the reproduction of militarized and assimilation rhetoric. Although military content was not overwhelming in the early issues, from 1938, an increased presence of war is visible on the pages of Sonyŏn. This is evident both in the text—more and more prose, poetry, and general essays relate in some way to the war—and in images. Stories such as "大旋風" [Taesŏnp’ung Whirlwind]397 by Kim Hyewŏn boast of the militaristic spirit through a positive portrayal of the aspiration of Korean youth to become patriotic subjects. Taesŏnp’ung tells the story of a boy who adopts the role of village protector after his father is drafted into the war. He saves the lives of soldiers later in an act of bravery while acting in utmost filial devotion to his mother, whose illness he is also able to cure. The work is explicitly and unapologetically didactic. It reproduces the rhetoric aimed at integrating Korean children into the Japanese empire by creating a seamless identification between the protagonist and the war effort. It proposes to

396 Kim Hwasŏn (2004a) 22-4.
encourage its young readers to embrace their part in mobilization on behalf of the Japanese army.

The images in Sonyŏn include photographs, illustrations, and even advertisements that draw the reader’s attention and enrich his or her visual reference. For the most part, the illustrations maintain a general detachment from the horror of war by sanitizing the photos of pain and suffering, and emphasizing ‘cuteness’ (as in the figure 34), or scientific detail.

Figure 34 Salute

Figure 35 from January 1938 captures the delight of the troops at seeing the friendly planes dropping all sorts of treats, including cigarettes, caramels and even a duck, as a token of thanks.

397 Sonyŏn (1939.11) 19-25.
for their efforts. Pilot and soldiers wear friendly smiles, and billowy clouds indicate carefree skies.

![Figure 35 Happy to See Planes](image)

After 1938, the magazine *Sonyŏn* published letters from soldiers at the front who are self-proclaimed readers of the magazine. For example, O Myŏngbok writes from his service station in Manchuria in “戦線通信” ([Chŏnson t’ongsin Letters from the front])\(^{399}\), in response to letters that he has received from readers. He says that he has translated *Sonyŏn* there on behalf of Koreans who could not read it; and that thanks to his translations, soldiers asked him to write to the magazine and give out their address so that they could receive and give letters as well. The 18-year old soldier describes his routine as a translator, and notes that he eats very well. He then goes on to describe a recent battle on Chinese ground, and once again appeals to the

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\(398\) *Sonyŏn* (1939.4) 7.

\(399\) *Sonyŏn* (1939.4) 22-5.
magazines’ young readers to exchange letters with the soldiers. The photograph that he includes (figure 36) depicts soldiers (holding the Japanese flag) in a tension-filled pose, the drama of their movements enhanced by the diagonal separating ground from sky, and the rifles pointing forward:\textsuperscript{400}

![Figure 36 Tense Soldiers](image)

The sections dedicated to science also shift away from astronomy and physics to the science of bombs, e.g. the sections “P’ok’t’an i toegi kkaji”\textsuperscript{401} [How to build a bomb] and “Paengnyŏn hu Ŭi kongjung chŏn”\textsuperscript{402} [Air battles in the next century], complete with illustrations of futuristic weapons (figure 37) and “Pihaenggi ka nalgi kkaji,”\textsuperscript{403} [How to build fighter planes] (figure 38).

\textsuperscript{400} Sonyŏn (1939.4) 24.
\textsuperscript{401} (1939.2) 34.
\textsuperscript{402} (1939.4) 56-59.
\textsuperscript{403} (1939.6) 22-3.
Appearing also from 1939 are “Announcements from Behind the Lines” [Sonyŏn chŏnhusŏn chŏnhu midam], which recount feats of bravery and struggle of children and soldiers at home and abroad. From July of 1939, the magazine also included a section called “Chŏnsŏn nyussŭ” [news from the warfront], which reported on the bravery of the volunteer Korean soldiers fighting with patriotism for the Japanese. The fact that the colonizers and colonized had been conflated is apparent also in the essay “Pon padŭl hit’ŭllō yugent’ŭ wa mussollini ch’ŏngsonyŏn tan” [Models to Follow: The Hitler-Jugend and Mussolini’s Youth Groups] which opens: “As you all know, Hitler and Mussolini are two of the greatest heroes alive today. Their countries of Germany and Italy are our allies.”

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(1939.7) 71.

(1940.1) 58.
Perhaps the clearest evidence of the degree to which Sonyŏn participated in wartime rhetoric can be viewed in the advertisements on its pages. The advertisements first bear witness to a growth in consumerism and a purchasing public that would be swayed by such ads. See, for example, these two advertisements for cookies. The left one reads: “Delicious cookies: With every cookie that you eat, you feel strangely more energetic.” In figure 39 the Japanese boy-soldier in the background carries the sword while the boy in the foreground carries a Japanese flag and a beaming smile. On the bottom right of Figure 40 of the advertisement for “Morinaga’s Milk Caramels” are three young boys saluting by way of bearing witness to their friendship; they stand, from left to right, a Nazi, a Japanese in the centre and an Italian Fascist on the right.

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Figure 39 Maraton  
Figure 40 Fascists

While the sample illustrations and photographs shown above bear witness to the trend in Sonyŏn toward general detachment from the subject matter through a “cute” fetish, there is also evidence of a darkening in the illustrations. Illustrations such as those in figure 41 and 42
published in 1940 seem to point to an intensification both in the production and increasing tolerance of the reception of visual violence:

![Figure 41 Ax](image1.png) ![Figure 42 Punch](image2.png)

There was also a general severity in tone of some of the non-fiction pieces, indicating that, despite some of the lighter content, the magazine was still viewed as a pulpit of sorts from which to lecture to children about proper conduct. Yi Kwangsu, for example, published his work in several issues of Sonyŏn, where he wrote mostly didactic essays about manners. In the first issue of Sonyŏn from 1937, his writing appears next to a serious photograph of himself and under the title “Thank you.” Always be grateful,” he says: “When you eat, think about the sweating farmers that worked to harvest your rice and be grateful to them…. If you wear silk, think about the hard work of the silkworms; if you wear cotton, think about the cotton harvesters. If you pull a thread, think about the suffering factory workers, breathing foul air in inhuman factory conditions. Be grateful to the sky and earth as well; and above all, be grateful

407 (1937.1) 26-8.
to your country for its generous bestowal of language and script, for its laws that make our lives comfortable, and be grateful to your teachers and guides, be they the Buddha, Confucius, or Jesus.” Being ungrateful, says Yi, is tantamount to a crime. In another section “On Blame” he writes, “Children, never blame others for anything, not even if you are insulted. Always say to yourself, ‘it is my fault.’ Because it is always our fault. If you are hated by others, it is your fault.” Yi then continues to use religious rhetoric, saying that God sees everything and keeps a record of everything; he is like a banker, keeping tabs on your good deeds, and allowing you to ‘withdraw’ only the amounts that you have ‘deposited’. He turns to the authority of the Buddha as well, quoting the Buddha in saying that a gentle heart is repaid with happiness. He finally appeals to Confucian rhetoric and insists that virtue is the guiding principle according to the sages, whose wise words are guided by the righteousness of heaven, whose laws are unchanging.

5.3.1 War is Child’s Play

One of the ways in which Sonyŏn reproduced colonial rhetoric is through the aestheticization of violence by presenting it as harmless child’s play. Poetry and prose portrayed children at (war) play, suggesting that it is both natural and, to a certain extent, harmless. The poem, “Aegi pyŏngjong” [baby soldier] for example, looks upon this want-to-be soldier with great affection and humor:

A six year old baby is a soldier
A soldier at war with a chicken

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408 It is not clear if he means Japan or Korea in this instance.
409 (1937.10) 38-41.
410 Han P’aryŏng, Sonyŏn (1940.7), 63.
A bowl on his head
Bottle cap decorating his breast
A wooden poker is his sword.

He comes after the chicken,
Toy rifle aimed high,
In hot pursuit of his enemy.

He hides in the corner of the stone fence
Bang! Bang! Bang!
He shoots at the chicken.

A six year old baby is a soldier
A soldier at war with a chicken.

Another short piece by Yi Kujo, “Pyŏngjŏng nori” [Playing War] describes children at war play. The story opens with a delightful description of the boys’ lively imagination:

Three boys were playing in the yard.
The first boy broke off a piece of sorghum straw and balanced it on his shoulder. The moment it touched his shoulder it became a rifle.

“What do you say about my rifle? I’m a soldier, a soldier I tell ya!” Gun on shoulder, the soldier puffed his chest out with pride.

The second boy broke off a piece of sorghum straw and attached it to his left hip. The moment it touched his hip it became a sword.

“What do you say about my sword? I’m an officer, an officer I tell ya!” Sword at his side, the officer puffed his chest out with pride.

Now that the game was on, the third child could not simply sit there. So he broke off a piece of sorghum straw. He broke it off and mounted it.

“What do you say about my horse? I’m a general, a general I tell ya!” The mounted general puffed his chest out with pride.

The boys romp around until they find their first “victim,” a girl named Makpuni who unwittingly interrupts their play. They threaten her with their “gun,” “sword,” and “horse” and frighten her terribly, yet the narrative describes their antics in a rather detached way without any sense of urgency. Their second victim, Pukchegi, gets more involved in the game: they threaten
him and make him submit to their authority by turning him into a human horse. They finally accept him into their ranks after he has withstood their test, and the story ends when the mounted general, now supported by two soldiers and his officer, gives the command to another approaching boy. The narrative voice seems sympathetic toward the three troublemakers. The illustration that accompany this story (figure 43) depicts the young boys, drawn in round and robust lines, marching with their heads held high with pride, and their faces without any malicious expressions, even when the boys humiliate Pukchegi:

![Figure 43 Child’s Play](image)

The drawings express a deep sympathy for their subject matter and obscure the real war taking place in the adult world. Their antics seem to suggest that all who are outside the army are worthy of healthy mockery, and that girls have no place in this system. The humiliation and exclusion in this piece are depicted rather playfully, and the hierarchy that the boys adopt appears as a completely natural part of boy’s play.

5.3.2 Discipline through Hygiene, Health, Exercise and Frugality

Todd Henry (2005) demonstrates of the connection between control and sanitation in colonial discourse already in the first decade of the twentieth century; yet the subject of hygiene, health,

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411 Sonyŏn (1940.12) 46.
and exercise⁴¹² does not seem to occupy as central a position in children’s magazines until Sonyŏn in 1937. The obsession with discipline of the mind and body becomes central particularly with the intensification of the war effort. The rhetoric of militarization is apparent in such poems and illustrations as the poem “Narani narani”⁴¹³ [Side by Side in a straight line, figure 38] by Pak Yŏngjong. Kim Hwasŏn (2004a) notes that this rhythmic poem was broadcast on the radio, and that children would line up and march to it at school.

Figure 44 Side by Side

Ring ring ring goes the morning school bell
Wŏlsŏng Elementary, grades one and two.
It is gym time for grades one and two.

In a straight line wearing white hats
In a straight line wearing red hats
In a straight, straight line, standing side by side
In a strait line we circle the school grounds.

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⁴¹² On colonialism and discipline, see, for example, Pierce and Rao (2006), Mills and Sen (2004).
⁴¹³ Sonyŏn (1939.3) 7.
In a straight line fly the ducks, too
In a straight, straight line standing side by side
In a straight line we circle the school grounds.

In a straight line the sunflowers, too
In a straight, straight line standing side by side
In a straight line we go round and round.

The emphasis in this poem is on highly choreographed order and on physical discipline that facilitates the control of young Korean bodies and minds for the purpose of creating obedient Japanese subjects. The illustration of this poem reflects the discipline: the children are standing straight, their arms at their sides, and toward the end of the line on the left they are barely distinguishable one from another.

Caprio notes that newspapers advertisements changed in the late 1930s, moving away from a focus on beauty products to health products. These included those that “would strengthen children” such as those that “would increase a child’s appetite and lessen any fatigue they might experience from study and exercise.”\textsuperscript{414} The preoccupation with children’s physical exercise, proper posture, and hygiene appears in essays and illustrations (figure 45). In a section titled “Sonyŏn ch’eyukkwan”\textsuperscript{415} [Gym time], exercise is encouraged through rope-jumping, good hygiene (cleaning the floors with a rag) and good study habits (maintaining proper posture).

\textsuperscript{414} Caprio 157.
\textsuperscript{415} Sonyŏn (1937.4) 56.
Economic frugality is also emphasized in the context of war, as the authorities call upon each individual to do her share of saving for the benefit of the country. One announcement calls out in three slogans to cut down on New Year’s celebration spending for the sake of the nation. Now is the time, it reads, to gather our wits and cut down on the traditional presentations of food and clothing for the new year. Material goods should be volunteered for the use of the nation. Snacking must stop; and every penny must be put away for savings for the home and the nation.
5.3.3 The Natural Child

One of the distinct features of the construction of the child in the magazine Sonyŏn is the depiction of the “natural child,” particularly in poetry. The child is depicted as an integral part of nature, as in this opening page: it is not clear where the leaf ends and the child begins, or vice versa. This view has its roots in the tongsim construct of the child which harkens back to the early 1920s, which insisted that the child was pure, angelic and perfectly innocent and vulnerable, and therefore in need of protection. In the late colonial period, however, this construction has different consequences. The image of child in nature played a complicit role in advancing the militarized ideology of late colonial Korea: since children are organic, they are
perfectly pliable for their moral and social (re)forming. The beautiful child in figure 46 is unharmed by late colonial policies; on the contrary, this child thrives and is flourishing.

This opening image of the June issue of 1940 captures the tone of much of the children’s poetry. Note, for example, the poem “Dewdrops” [Isūl] by Yun Sŏkchung:

Dewdrops.

Dewdrops descend each night
Slumber in the grass and are gone.

Dewdrops,
The sun has not risen,
So they sleep on.

And just so that they will not wake,
The wind blows ever so gently,
And the birds glide by in silence.

Nature in this poem is anthropomorphized. The dewdrops descend onto the world and, when the sun is slow in rising, they indulge in lazy slumber. The wind and birds, sensitive to their precious presence, take care not to wake them. The dewdrops here are treated as small children, with nature being attentive and caring to their needs. This attentiveness toward nature is realized also in the poem “Daytime” [Taenat] by Yun Sŏkchung.

His hands grab at smoke,
But no matter how hard they try, the smoke is not to be caught.

His feet stomp on his shadow,
But no matter how hard they try, the shadow is not to be trod upon.

It’s a boring morning.

The child takes the butterfly net
And is off to catch dragonflies.

416 Sonyŏn (1940.5) 38-9.
417 Sonyŏn (1940.3) 52.
The narrator in this poem looks affectionately upon this child, and both admires and pokes fun at his senseless activities. He tries to grab at smoke, to no avail; he wants to step on his shadow, but fails; and now he is on his way to catch dragonflies. The narrator doesn’t seem to have much confidence in the child’s future attempts, either, but rather admires the child for his aspirations and hopes. The illustration (figure 47), too, pictures the child walking with energy and optimism toward the dragonflies in the background. They are the symbols of his aspiration, which he has no thought of giving up.

Figure 47 Fireflies

Another poem by Yi Wŏnsu 418 (1912-1981), “Lullaby” [Chajang norae], 419 conveys the perfect harmony between child and nature:

Sleep, child, go to sleep.
Mr. Sun is off to bed behind the mountain,
the hills and fields are sound asleep,
sound asleep under a dark blanket.

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418 Yi published his first poem in Pang Chŏngghwan’s magazine Ŭrini in 1925. He straddled both sides of the ideological divide, showing socialist tendencies while also publishing in pro-Japanese magazines. He went on to have an illustrious career as the editor of the magazine Sonyŏn segye [Girl’s world] and as a children’s poet and writer in South Korea.

419 Sonyŏn (1940.7) 44-45.
Sleep, child, go to sleep.
The deer are sleeping in the hills,
and in the branches of the trees the birds are sleeping, too,
their heads drooping with sleep.

Sleep, child, go to sleep.
If you sleep, they say he’ll come, round Mr. Moon.
Underneath your sleeping head
He will bring with him dreams of the moon.

Hush, hush dear child.
Child, go to sleep.

In this poem, a mother is putting her child to sleep under a looming, full moon. She calms him with images of nature which, she assures him, will keep him company in his sleep. Child and nature are joined in their journey.

Some voices in Sonyŏn complicate the idyllic child-nature image by providing hints of less-than-idyllic realities of children in late colonial Korea. The poem Poya nenneyo by Yi Wŏnsu is an intimate portrait of a young girl trying to put her crying sibling to sleep by singing Poya nenneyo, poya nenneyo. She continues:

*Kwinama, kwinama,*

Where do you live?
Is it beyond that mountain?
Do you have a mother and father?

The west mountain, lined with trees,
Grows red, red with the light of the setting sun

The light of the setting sun is in your eyes, *Kwinama.*

The rhetorical voice of the narrator begging for news of the baby’s mother and father hint at a more heartbreaking reality that exists beyond the lines of the poem. The poem’s sad undertones, however, are softened by the illustration (figure 48) of this poem, which depicts a young girl

\[420\] Sonyŏn (1938.10) 40-1.
with rosy cheeks looking quietly and calmingly at her baby beyond her long eyelashes. The

girl’s teardrop-shaped face, button nose and red lips rather detracts from the sadness of the song
by evoking an idealization of cute-fetish.

Another of Yi Wŏnsu’s poems, “Namu kan ὃnni” [Sister who has gone to cut wood] is an appeal by a young girl to the sun to shine just a bit longer on her older sister who has gone out in the middle of winter gathering wood. As in other poems, the privileged relationship between child and nature allows for an open path of communication between them; however, in the poem, the appeal reveals a tragic reality in which a child must work in the freezing mountain, perhaps because her parents are unable to do so or because they do not have money to pay for her schooling:

421  Sonyŏn (1940.10) 12-3.
Even on this cold day,
Ŏnni has gone to cut wood, an A-frame on her back.
She went to cut wood, blowing into her freezing hands.

The icy winds
Blow and blow
The valley, the brook
Are frozen solid through.
The valley cannot even
complain about the cold.

Hey, Sun!
Floating up high in the sky!
Come down a bit closer
And shine down on Ŏnni cutting wood.

“Oppa úi chajŏn’gŏ” [Brother’s bicycle], also by Yi Wŏnsu, is told in the voice of a young girl helping her older brother learn to ride his bicycle. The two are practicing in the schoolyard, and the younger sister is desperately trying to steady him so that he can keep his balance. The playful poem, set in the romantic light of the moon and depicting a harmonic relationship between the siblings, changes somewhat in the last stanza:

Brother can’t go to school.
Since yesterday he started to work as an assistant.
He is learning to ride his bike, he says.
So that he can run his errands as fast as a flying arrow.

The poem provides the reader with a glimpse of the dire situation in which, as in the previous poem, young children are forced to quit school and work. The illustration, however (figure 49), glosses over the more tragic element of this story.

422 Sonyŏn (1937.5) 18-19.
While there is some indication of their poverty, represented by the patch on his left pant leg, the round faces and lack of realism in their expression contributes to the general aestheticization and idealization of family harmony.

The appearance of the conflation of the natural child and her environment seems particularly significant in late colonial Korea. One way of reading the conflation of child and nature is through one common trope of late colonial Korea: the *hyangt'osaek*, or local color, which, as Poole points out,\(^423\) alludes to the way in which images of rural countryside, women and children — “exoticised rurality”—are aestheticized in order “to stabilize the representation of Korea as a part or a region of the greater imperial realm.” The implications of propagating images of idealized childhood, particularly in the increasingly militarized mood of late colonial Korea, lie beyond a desire for escapism. The utopian vision of child and nature can be interpreted as, perhaps unwittingly, contributing to the colonial project that infantilizes and objectifies the child, thus eliminating the undeniable hardships and potential confrontations that might arise from a more complicated depiction.
5.4 Voices of Contention

Given the intense militarization of the late 1930s and the strict censorship and control exercised by the colonial government, it is not surprising that children’s magazines became ripe sites for the reproduction and manipulation of hegemonic discourse. What is particularly notable, however, is that among the voices of the colonial state, there are other voices to be found in the magazine that have not been explored in scholarship: voices of contention. While Sonyŏn was published in the late colonial period and is considered to be largely a voice of the Japanese sympathizers (Kim Hwasŏn (2004a); Pak Yŏnggi (2008)), the magazine played host, in fact, to a wide range of voices, including those of prominent proletarian writers. While their essays in this magazine appear to be devoid of any explicit ideological tendency, they do exude a spirit of resistance to authority that was such a prominent feature of their earlier pieces published in Pyŏllara and Sinsonyŏn.

Sonyŏn published among its pages the personal essays of the most prominent literary figures of colonial Korea from across the entire ideological spectrum. Every few issues, Sonyŏn dedicated a space for these famous men and women to reflect upon their childhood and convey ‘words of wisdom’ to the young readers of the magazine. These writers included An Hoenam, Yi Kiyŏng, Song Yŏng and Paek Sinae. Many of their personal essays, however, are simply affectionate recollections of their past. Yi Kiyŏng, for example, looks back to his childhood and recalls how badly he looked forward to New Year’s in order to get one year older and be treated

424 An (1910-?), one of Korea’s famous wŏlbuk writers who went north, appeared on the literary scene first in 1931. He fostered close working and personal relationships with many of the leftist writers of his time, including Yi T’aejun and Pak T’aewŏn.
as an adult. Paek Sinae recalls how much she looked forward to getting a year older because her father would not let her read books until she was of appropriate age; and An Hoenam recalls the joys of playing a pretend game of the famous Chinese novel “The Three Kingdoms”, a game in which each of his friends chose a character with which to identify.\footnote{426}

Song Yŏng’s contributions in Sonyŏn are not explicitly didactic; rather they are anecdotal. For example, he reveals the details about a brush with death when he was almost run over by a train.\footnote{427} In another personal essay, however, Song Yŏng tells a story from his childhood: he hated school, he recalls, yet his parents forced him to go, telling the teacher to take extra care to make sure that their son didn’t escape. Song Yŏng recalls how this hateful teacher turned against one of the students and beat him mercilessly, at which point Song Yŏng seized the opportunity, claimed that he had to pee, and rushed to the outhouse; from there, he says, he escaped through a hole in the wall, saving his calves from a rough beating.\footnote{428} The tone with which the story is delivered is sincere and quite removed from the cororatist lecture delivered by Yi Kwangsu in the first issue of Sonyŏn in 1937.\footnote{429}

Some hints of resistance can be detected in the illustrations of Sonyŏn. One of the more explicit examples of this is the “Kŭrim soktamjip” [illustrated proverbs] series. Among the eight examples is one outstanding example from February 1938 (figure 50):

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\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{425} Paek (1908-1939) was one of Chosŏn’s famous women writers who appeared on the literary scene in 1928.
\item \footnote{426} Sonyŏn (1937.12) 24.
\item \footnote{427} Sonyŏn (1938.3) 17.
\item \footnote{428} Sonyŏn (1937.4) 53.
\item \footnote{429} See discussion in section 4.3.
\end{itemize}
Second from the bottom on the right hand side is the saying, “Once one’s sword is in another’s sheath, it is difficult to reclaim.” The illustration portrays a Japanese soldier standing cold and stiff, sword placed firmly in sheath. It can be read as an intentional reference to Korea’s sovereignty which, now firmly placed in the grasp of the Japanese, will not easily be recovered.

Other pieces throughout the magazine share overtones with those more resistant pieces by socialist writers in the 1930s. The difficulty of children in continuing their education during the late colonial period is addressed also in non-fiction pieces like one published in 1938 by Sin
Yŏngch’ŏl. Sin notes that the month of March marks the beginning of a new school term, and Sin congratulates the students who successfully completed their primary schooling (either four or six years) and who, with graduation, must be “singing like the birds and dancing like the butterflies.” However, Sin also points out that many young friends are not privileged to continue with their schooling, noting that only one in ten children will continue with their education, while the rest will either help at home or be forced to join the labor force. But there is no need to lose heart, says Sin; one can easily continue one’s studies by engaging in self-study. Many great men and women engaged in self-study, as attested to by western and eastern biographies. Our culture has come a long way, says Sin; it used to be nearly impossible to get your hands on books or to find good teachers; but conditions now have so improved that newspapers reach even the most secluded parts of Korea, and graduates of high school and postsecondary schools can be found everywhere. These graduates, he assures his readers, can certainly answer any questions. Still, Sin reminds the young readers that one must work very hard to acquire knowledge; that ages ago, people had to withstand poverty and all sorts of difficulties, and that the only way they (and children today, by extension) were able to achieve knowledge was through tremendous work and dedication. Those children who are forced to embark on the path of self-study, says Sin, are not privileged enough, say, to receive money from their parents and study at someone else’s expense. But the road of self-study and of self-motivated exploration will lead to great discoveries that cannot be taken away. We live in times that require practical thinking and action, says Sin; and there is no shame in grabbing farming tools, or books, and getting dirty in the process.

\[430\] Sin was at one time the editor-in-chief of Ŭrini.
\[431\] Sonyŏn (1938.3) 36-9.
The most significant voice of contention in late colonial Korea is undoubtedly the voice of its most talented and inspiring (mostly children’s) writer of the colonial period: Hyŏn Tŏk (1909-?). It was, perhaps, an unlikely venue for his work, but Sonyŏn published Hyŏn’s short stories from August of 1938 until the cessation of the magazine in 1940. Despite his widely acknowledged talent, Hyŏn was doomed to anonymity in South Korea until recently because of his short career, his relatively limited number of works and the fact of his wŏlbuk, or defection to North Korea. Hyŏn’s works attest to a rich imagination, poetic expression, and a profound sense of identification with children that lack any overtones of patronizing judgment. His intimate and sincere voice acquired an even more striking presence in Sonyŏn because of its appearance at end of the colonial period. His resonant voice succeeded to be socially engaged while avoiding the traps of didacticism and judgmental condescension. He spoke from a place of deep affection and sincere sympathy for his child characters, and wrote with a masterful subtlety that has rarely been seen among Korean writers.

Hyŏn Tŏk was born in 1909 into a family that had once been quite prominent but had lost its riches due to his father’s poor management skills. He graduated from middle school and attended high school for only one year before his financial situation prevented him from continuing his studies. This much prepared him, as Wŏn Chongch’ an (2005) notes, to develop feelings of sympathy and affinity that drove him closer to the approach of KAPF. Hyŏn’s first debut took place with one of his short stories that won first prize in a newspaper competition in 1927; he was seventeen at the time. His official appearance on the literary scene came several years later, in 1932.

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432 Wŏn Chongch’ an (2005) 60-70.
433 It was apparently Hyŏn’s friendship with writer Kim Yujŏng that changed Hyŏn’s life and motivated him to become a writer Wŏn Chongch’ an (2005) 75-6.
It was only in 1938, however, that Hyŏn entered the literary scene with full force with his adult novel Namsaengi, which was published serially in the newspaper Chosŏn Ilbo.

Between his publication of Namsaengi and his last publication in South Korea, dated 1941, Hyŏn wrote nine short stories, 37 children’s stories, 10 young-adult novels, and two radio-broadcast scripts.\footnote{Wŏn Chongch’an (2005) 82.} Hyŏn’s friendship with Kim Yujŏng (1908-1937) also brought him closer to the organization of the Kuinhoe,\footnote{The Kuinhoe, or Group of Nine, was created in August of 1933. It represented a form of a proletarian counter-group to KAPF that differentiated itself by virtue of its lack of political affiliation. Members of this group include Chŏng Chiyong, Yi T’a ejun, Pak T’aewŏn, Yi Sang and Kim Yujŏng. See Wŏn Chongch’an (2006), “Kuinhoe munin t’ul ŭi adongmunhak” [Children’s Literature of the Group of Nine].} where he became acquainted with An Hoenam\footnote{An Hoenam was particularly enthusiastic about Hyŏn’s work, and greatly praised his novel Namsaeng’i. Hyŏn’s work was also widely acknowledged by Im Hwa, Kim Namch’ŏn and Paek Ch’ŏl. Wŏn Chongch’an (2005) 79-82.} and other members. After liberation in 1945, he accepted a leadership position in the leftist literary organization, the Chosŏn Munhakka Tongmaeng, and went North with his family during the Korean War. But he was not an active member of KAPF, nor was he politically active in any noteworthy way.\footnote{Pak Yŏnggi 105-6.} He continued his activity in North Korea until 1951, but was silent thereafter until 1961. At that time, he wrote stories that contained no trace of the kind of writing he had done before the war. Hyŏn was purged along with Han Sŏrya in 1962.\footnote{Yi Kyŏngjae 496}

Hyŏn’s body of work is of central significance not only because of its artistic merit but also because of its appearance in the magazine Sonyŏn during an increasingly militarized period of accelerated assimilation initiated by the Japanese colonial government. As seen above, war news and militarized culture was quite conspicuous throughout Sonyŏn and was presented as the only reality. The first appearance of Hyŏn comes in 1938, in a work titled “Hanūl ŭn
Although the sky is clear…] (see Appendix B). This short story examines the psychological workings of a young boy, Mun’gi, who is thrown into a state of confusion when the butcher accidentally gives the boy more change than he owed him. Mun’gi is distraught, because he feels guilty for having accepted the change, yet he is also unsure of what the right change should have been. On his way home he meets Sumani, who encourages Mun’gi to enjoy the unexpected gift; the two celebrate in a day on the streets. They buy a ball and binoculars, go to the movies, and even think up a business scheme that will generate revenue on a regular basis. When the ball and binoculars are discovered by Mun’gi’s uncle and guardian, however, his uncle reminds Mun’gi of his responsibility to work hard in school and become a good person. From then on, Mun’gi’s emotional state deteriorates as he desperately tries to assuage his guilt but is unable to confess his crime.

At first glance, the story appears to be a didactic story about taking responsibility and the consequences of lying. But the writer’s skill layers the story in a way that communicates greater details and provides insight into the social structure surrounding the boys’ world. Mun’gi may live in material comfort, but the house is not his own — his mother has died, and he was abandoned by his father. It is money, in fact, which sends Mun’gi on a downward spin: he is thrown into confusion when the money enters his pockets, and he goes on a wild spending spree, but then has trouble walking away from it when his accomplice and clearly less fortunate friend Sumani blackmails him (figure 51).

439 Sonyŏn (1938.8) 10-21.
440 This psychological examination is reminiscent of the work of Dostoyevsky, who apparently exerted a great influence on Hyŏn’s work. Wŏn (2005) 92.
Money is the source of Mun’gi’s downfall, and sends him further over the edge when he steals from his aunt and then fails to confess; as a consequence, an innocent girl is blamed for his wrongdoing. He is “saved” at the end of the story, in a didactic twist, by a car accident which he recognizes as appropriate punishment and which gives him the courage to confess his wrongdoings.

The story is in essence a critique of material wealth and the corrupting powers of consumerism. It is also a statement about the disadvantage of children within this capitalist system. Hyŏn’s poetic skill for the most part succeeds in masking the story’s didactic messages.
by probing with scrutiny and deep sympathy the mindset of the boy. When Mun’gi goes on his first shopping spree, he buys a ball; later, when he is reminded by his uncle of the responsibility Mun’gi has to his family to grow into a trustworthy man, Mun’gi is consumed with guilt and decides to get rid of the items he has bought. Mun’gi’s guilt warps his sense of perception of the items he has wrongfully acquired, so that “the darker night grew, the whiter and larger the ball felt.” Later, an innocent Chǒmsuni gets blamed for his crime and is beaten; Mungi does not witness the beating, but her sobbing rings out in his head for hours. In his narration, Hyŏn succeeds in being critical and engaged, and yet he does not lose his sense of sympathy and understanding for the children’s plight.  

Besides the work published in Sonyŏn, Hyŏn’s a linked short story collection was published in the Sonyŏn chosŏn ilbo from May of 1938 until the following year. It was later re-published as a novel of linked short stories in the liberation space under the title P’odo wa kusŭl [Grapes and Marbles]. The stories are set in the east side of Seoul, in a neighbourhood straddling cityscape and countryside. The characters that appear in this novel are all pre-primary aged children. They are each marked with specific characteristics: Noma is the smart and brave one, Yǒng’i is the girl, Kidungi is the rich boy and Ttolttori, is far the youngest. Hyŏn’s work is unique in the music of its language, and in the gentle way in which he explores his children’s relationships with each other and with the world around them. At the same time, his

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441 Hyŏn’s talent has been noted in recent scholarship. Pak Yŏnggi (2006) notes that Hyŏn’s child characters have the potential to overturn the colonial order and restore people to their original state of goodness; Kang Chunho (1996) notes that Hyŏn contributed greatly to Korean literature through his creative work that resisted the idea of using literature as a tool; O Hyejin (2006) notes that Hyŏn’s characters behave like real children with real emotions; and Wŏn (1999, 2005) praises Hyŏn for portraying children with charm and sincerity, children that live and act within a believable reality and for managing to achieve this without falling into the traps of sentimentalism or didacticism.

work explores the way that the children’s environment shapes the construction of the gender identity. Hyŏn’s illustrator, Chŏng Hyŏnungrung, contributes to the Hyŏn’s work with subtle illustrations that give the reader small bits of information that enrich the written text.

P’odo wa kusŭl, [Grapes and Marbles], which was re-published in 1995 as Nŏ hago an nora [Not playing with you], is divided into thirty-five sections, seven of which are illustrated. The first section, “The Water Gun,” introduces the reader to the main characters, along with an illustration that enhances the sense of power and drama. “Kidungi has a water-gun,” the narrator explains, and “Kidungi shows off. And he has every right to show off.” Noma, on the other hand, does not have a gun. Kidungi teases Noma, promising him a turn with his gun if Noma supplies him with water. Then he shoots Noma right in the face, and the illustration captures this humiliating moment (figure 52):

Figure 52 Squirt

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443 Hyŏn liked to use these names for characters in his other stories as well.
444 Chŏng Hyŏnungrung was born in 1911 and studied at the Kawabata School in Japan in 1929. From 1937 he illustrated for the magazine Sonyŏn, and he also illustrated the works of Yi Kiyŏng, Ch’ae Mansik and Yi T’aejun. He went north after the Korean War and went on to enjoy a successful career as an artist. Most of his illustrations in Sonyŏn tend to be very dark, such as the one above of Mun’gi and Sumani (Cho Yŏngbok 2002).
445 The illustrations included here are from the Liberation Space publication from 1946.
The illustration shows Kidungi standing flat on his feet, belly out, hands straight; Noma’s face is hidden by the powerful squirt of water, which has knocked him off his heels in surprise. The last paragraph reveals that Kidung’i is from a “have” family – he has money, he has candy, he has a father. Noma, on the other hand, has none of these things: no status, no money, and no father, either.

Though the reader learns much about the children in the following chapters, and about their families, their class, and their personalities, the narrator does not divulge everything at the outset. In our first encounter with Kidung’i we see him taking aim at a sleeping crow and at his surroundings, and in this way we get a picture of where he lives. The narrator aligns himself with the reader by divulging information and saying “well, it is only proper that Kidung’i show off.” The narrator is not detached but is a part of the children’s world; he understands their rules and their logic.

Hyôn’s language—his asides to the reader, the subtle way in which he sets up his surroundings—is successful also in the way in which it reproduces the children’s conversations. He uses repetitions, fragments, and spelling errors that imitate real speech; he masters the various mannerisms of the children and reproduces their conversations. The narration does not lose sight of the social issues at hand; when Noma begs his mother for a gun like Kidungi’s, his mother explains that they are from different social classes that are separated by a gap that cannot be bridged. Noma wants a water gun so badly that he starts seeing water-guns in every object he looks at. In this way, Hyôn captures both the child’s rich imagination and his intense yearning for this toy, and the social tensions which frame the child’s yearning.

Hyôn’s narrator successfully captures the children’s state of mind through careful orchestration. For example, the second section, “Only the Wind Knows…” unfolds like a poem:
three “colored skirts”, one pink, one yellow and one blue, sit and wait for the much-anticipated arrival of the cotton candy man. The reader gets a sense of the girls’ anticipation through the distant rhythm of the cotton candy man’s drum, as well as through the exchange between the girls and the various characters they encounter. The narrator shows rather than tells the reader about the girls’ excitement. So, too, in chapter ten, “The Grasshopper.” Through repetitions that force the reader to “listen” closely to the text, the narrator draws the reader into the dreams and aspirations of three of the young children in this text: Noma, Yǒng’i and Ttolltori. Noma listens to the grasshopper, identifies with the grasshopper, and becomes the grasshopper. He grows so close with it that Noma feels that the grasshopper knows what is in his heart: Noma yearns for the return of his father. Yǒng’i hears something different in the grasshopper’s song: she feels that the grasshopper, like her, is waiting for the chestnuts to ripen. Ttolttori finds his dreams in the same song: he wants to grow tall. The children each embrace their dream, and for one single moment there is nothing more important than each of their selfish and innermost desires. Hyŏn’s prose narrates their aspirations with poetic language that captures with great humility the state of mind of these children.

Hyŏn’s language also captures and conveys the relationships between the children without having to overstate any superfluous details. For example, in section three, “Corn Snacks,” the reader is introduced to the girl of the group, Yǒng’i, who is inflicted by the punishment of quietly have to watch Kidung’i eat his corn snacks one by one. His arrogant pose, the way in which he eats his corn snacks, and the drawn-out pleasure he takes in eating in his friends’ hungry faces, reveals more about this child than if it were narrated directly. Yǒng’i, for her part, keeps tight control over her own desires, which she reveals in the terribly brief but charged dialogue:
Is it yummy?
You bet.
Sweet, too?
You bet.

As seen in this brief dialogue, Hyŏn does not spell out the children’s desires or spoon-feed the reader with commentary. The minute change in nuance in Yŏng’i’s second question, contrasted with Kidung’i’s monotonous answer, reveals much about what is going through these children’s minds.

In section eight, “Father’s Shoes”, something starts to happen between the children. In all previous sections we see Kidung’i standing on one side of the social divide, while the other children stand on the other. Kidung’i takes many opportunities to show off his money and social status, but the children begin to exclude him from their games, which sends him off in tears. The illustration (figure 53) reflects the change in Kidung’i’s position:

![Figure 53 Shoes](image)

Having been excluded several times from the children’s games, Kidung’i steps into his father’s shoes to try and get some attention and throw his weight around. As the illustration shows, though Kidung’i is wearing adult shoes (he is, in fact, the only child in this text who actually has
a father), and though his chest is inflated with pride, the children keep their backs to him and ignore him completely.

Section nine, “Snacks”, reveals more of the author’s political affiliations. Once again, Kidung’i uses his ever-powerful tool, his snacks, to show off his social position. He lures the children toward him as, one by one, each child swears loyalty to Kidung’i in exchange for a single snack. Eventually Kidung’i runs out of snacks, at which point the children lose interest in Kidung’i and ignore him completely. The “have” child Kidung’i, who has gathered a group of children based only on his possession of treats, loses their attention when his treats runs out. Kidung’i alienation is exacerbated in section eleven, “The Brawl,” when quick, sharp words are exchanged between the children. When their exchanges threaten to turn into an outright fight, Kidung’i realizes that he stands alone. His distance from the rest is accentuated in the illustration, for example, of section fourteen “The Mask,” in which Kidung’i stands again with an inflated chest, but a foot ahead of his friends (figure 54):

![Figure 54 Mask](image)

In “The Mask,” Kidung’i takes the children along to shop at the rich boys’ toy store, where he purchases a fancy mask. The narrator explains that the toys sold at the “rich boy” store are much
more significant than those “useless” ones sold at the “poor boy” store, where you can only buy toys that can be played with other children. Later, however, Kidung’i’s is embraced by the group. He is with them by the end of the story, in section twenty-nine, “Disappointment”, when the children all go fishing but discover that the river is dry. Won (1999) comments that this text shows the victory of the lower-classes: the poorer children manage to include Kidung’i in their games, and he surrenders to their charms.446

Several sections in Hyŏn’s work provide interesting insights into role play and gender. In “Girls’ Rubber Shoes”, for example, Noma becomes terribly embarrassed when his mother gives him the wrong pair of rubber shoes. Noma’s mother sends him on an errand, but Noma is too ashamed to go because his rubber boots are too worn out. His mother gets him a new pair to wear, but when she presents them to Noma he discovers to his horror that they are girls’ shoes. On the way to his errand, Noma runs into his girl friend Yŏng’i, who is equally mortified at having been forced to wear boys’ shoes (Noma and Yŏng’i’s mother switched the children’s shoes for the sake of this errand), and all this is seen by Kidung’i, who delights in Noma and Yŏng’i’s mortification. The section ends with poor Noma slinking off “looking at the ground like a girl.” The gendered articles of clothing are powerful symbols for both children who are so humiliated they cannot stand to look up. In contrast, the chapter “Bravery” depicts the children at a game of mock war: Kidung’i plays the sergeant, and the others play the soldiers awaiting his orders. What “makes the man”, or the sergeant in this case, is the clothing: Kidung’i is the only one who owns a suit, a hat, and a real, shiny sword that his father bought for him. Noma, who does not have these things, decides that there must be a new way to decide “what makes the sergeant”: a test of bravery, which involves running and shaking the gate to the house with the

446 Won (1999) 249.
big dog. In the end, Noma is the only one who pulls it off; he’s the only one qualified to be the sergeant. And in “Mother’s strength”, children playing house dramatize the mother’s role, and through dramatic play the children voice the heavy responsibilities resting on mothers. From the play we learn that mothers nag their children about keeping clean and staying calm. The game ceases to become make-believe when a big dog threatens their play, but then the “mother” truly does risk herself and scares the hound away. The self-sacrificing role of the mother is dramatized to the very end.

5.5 Conclusion
The Sino-Japanese War and the intensification of assimilation cultural policies effectively ended the period of leniency on publication in colonized Korea. For children’s writers, this meant that the forum for discussing class-based issues or challenging the exploitation of children through a political lens was no longer available through children’s magazines. By the mid-1930s, both the proletarian organizations (such as KAPF) and the magazines that hosted their writing (Pyŏllara, Sinsonyŏn) were no longer in print. In their place, Sonyŏn became the new children’s magazine. Published between 1937 and 1940, this magazine was a stage upon which writers published for their imagined child audiences. But gone were the empowering messages. No longer was the child imaged to be a righteous warrior who, seeing the exploitation and corruption around him, was ready to take a stand and correct his parents’ mistakes. The child constructed by the many illustrations, essays, prose and poetry in Sonyŏn had reverted, for the most part, to the original state of vulnerability and purity, except for one difference: the child was no longer to be protected so much as to be inculcated, as quickly as possible, into orderly colonial society. Its body was to be cleaned and disciplined; its mind informed about the sophistication of war and
of the sacrifices of the soldiers at the front fighting for the sake of the Pan-Asian cause. Poetry showed children as inseparable from nature, and it is this natural quality that made them all the more pliable. This magazine was not, however, without its fissures, and was not bereft of any contending voices. Voices of resistance were able to break through, but not through vocal protest. As the work of Hyŏn Tŏk shows, there was room in the magazine for a writerly voice to both see and show the complexity of the lives of children caught in the whirlwind of colonialism and war.
6.1 Introduction

Liberation finally came to the Korean peninsula on 15 August 1945. It is easy to imagine how the period immediately following the defeat of the Japanese and achievement of long-awaited independence was charged with immense expectations. Liberation from the 36-year Japanese occupation must have been an exhilarating experience; but it also brought in its wake intense feelings and anxieties about how to realize the hopes and dreams for Korea’s future. Of course, the “Korean dream” of liberation was defined differently by groups of people divided along ideological and economic lines. As Dae-Sook Suh notes,

During the three years from liberation in 1945 to the establishment of the Republic of Korea in August 1948, the USAMGIK [United States Government Army in Korea] was challenged many times by the right-wing nationalist groups demanding rapid independence and the left-wing groups with their ideological ties to the North. Politicians of all persuasions made demands on the occupation authorities, and violent uprisings and armed riots were common occurrences. 447

At the same time, there remains a question regarding the degree to which Korea was liberated in the full sense of the term, as many governing institutions shifted from being controlled by the Japanese to being controlled by the USAMGIK. The implications of this shift were that surveillance and control continued in many ways, and that the basic power structure was upheld. 448

Liberation from the Japanese and Independence on 15 August 1945 created the opportunity for open dialogue and confrontation over how to empower those who had been disenfranchised under Korea’s loss of sovereignty, how to deal with those who had remained in favor during the Japanese occupation, how to define the now independent national character,

and how to move forward as a sovereign nation with its particular national character and voice. As Joel Stevenson notes,

With the end of Japanese colonial rule, there was a groundswell of optimism for Korea’s future. Koreans had their country back. The suppression of literary activity in the closing years of Japanese rule was suddenly lifted, and Korea’s writers were let loose to pursue whatever course they chose. This was the only time in modern Korean history when writers were free to write with impunity.449

Ted Hughes reviews the reaction in the literary world to newfound independence in the works of prominent critics such as Kwŏn Yŏngmin, Kim Yunsik and Sin Hyŏnggi. In his article “Producing Sovereign Spaces in the Emerging Cold War World Order: Immediate Postliberation “South” and “North” Korean Literature,” Hughes provides a summary of the issues of the period based on the aforementioned scholars’ works, which include “the trajectory of collaboration confessional, the reemergence of proletarian writers soon opposed by the reassertion of literature as an autonomous sphere in the name of pure literature (sunsu munhak), the rapid formation of rival literary organizations, the eventual splitting of the literary field into what became “North and South Korean literature.”450 Korea’s past, present and future were on the line and different groups with opposing philosophies were vying to have their voice heard. But what marks the Liberation Space most is the intense and vibrant discussion that took place over every aspect of material culture production in Korea: the debate over how to define liberated ‘Chosŏn culture’ and how to revive it. One thing is clear: following liberation, the censorship and limitations on reading and publishing were lifted, allowing for an outpouring of books of all genres.451 The rapid changes in consumer culture and the availability of a wide

448 See Millet (2005).
451 Yi Chung’yŏn 117.
range of choices made for a vibrant period of book culture in general, and children’s literature in particular.

While post-liberation Korea was immersed in ideological confrontation, writers who were active in the field of children’s literature did not yet participate fully in ideological battles on paper. The children’s magazines that were published in the Liberation Space were affiliated with leftist or rightist organizations, but there was a fair amount of cross-writing from one to the other. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, however, North and South Korea hardened their ideological stances and broadcasted their versions of national identity that were now exclusively linked to identification with anti-Imperialist or anti-Communist ideology.

6.2 Publishing Trends in Liberated Korea

Publication in post-liberation Korea was seen as a crucial part of the nation-building process. Publishing houses made it clear that the purpose of their industry was now the rehabilitation of Chosŏn culture. Of course, diverse ideological motivations also drove each publishing house to publish texts of its own particular ideological leanings, and each defined Chosŏn culture and nationalism differently. As for children’s literature, writers from the political left and right contributed to magazines on both sides of the political spectrum, and their voices contributed to the polyphony of opinions on Chosŏn’s present and future until they were increasingly censored and, with the Korean War, silenced completely.

The publishing trends of children’s literature in the Liberation Space cannot be examined separately from the general state of book publishing in this period. Immediately after liberation, publishing houses in Korea suffered a shortage of both Korean alphabet type sets and

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452 Ch’ŏn üi ölgul 99.
staff with publishing knowhow. However, an explosion of publications ensued with the support and active participation of the intelligentsia and the lifting of the ban on publications in the Korean peninsula in 1945. Publications of socialist content enjoyed particular success, particularly in 1946, in the form of leftist pamphlets. Yi Chung’yŏn argues that the presence of leftist pamphlets and their popularity can be ascribed to the fact that until the end of 1945, the Americans had not established a strong presence and the ideological face-off was still much under control. Even more illuminating is Yi’s research pointing to the degree to which the leftists actively took over the print-houses occupied and run by the Japanese, to a much greater extent than their counterparts on the right of the political spectrum.

How did the ideological divides play out in children’s literature? Writers of left-leaning politics had unquestionable leadership in the field of children’s literature, at least until 1947. This is reflected in the renewed publication in 1945 of such proletarian magazines as *Pyŏlnara, Saedongmu* and *Adong munhak*, which participated in the discussion over the direction of children’s literature after liberation and in which maintained general visibility in the postwar period. Writers of right- or center-leaning politics cooperated more with the political line touted by the government and enjoyed greater prosperity. However, what becomes clear

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453 Yi Chung’yŏn 117-8.
454 Yi Chung’yŏn 47-51. Other pamphlets from this period that enjoyed popularity were what Yi calls pamphlets of “enlightenment” about language and history, and pamphlets of “instigation” that were meant to ignite discussion on social issues (48).
455 Yi Chung’yŏn attributes the increased publication of left-leaning books to their active propogation, the growth in reading demand, and the profit-seeking behaviour of publishing houses and bookstores. (55-8)
456 The senior editor of *Adong Munhak* was Chŏng Chiyong, and the other contributors included prominent political activists and leftist writers such as Pak Seyŏng, Song Wansun, Yi Tonggyu and Yi Chuhong. Ch’ŏn ŭi ŏlgul 102.
457 Yun Sŏkchung, for example, led a successful and lucrative career during and after the liberation; he played a central role in the publication of the magazine *Sohakraeng.*
from a survey of all the magazines published in post-liberation Korea is the general tolerance of all voices, regardless of political convictions.\textsuperscript{458}

Statistics from book publications in 1947 indicate a significant rise in publication of educational materials and creative fiction, and a decline in just about any other kind of genre. In fact, Yi Chung’yŏn notes that educational textbooks consisted of half of all publications in the years following liberation, something that indicates an increase in demand for textbooks that would “rescue” Korean children from the “deceitful education” they had received under the Japanese.\textsuperscript{459} Publishers of educational materials in general, and children’s books specifically, were also affected; since profit was of prime concern, children’s books had either to be sold and marketed as educational materials or, on the flip side, to be mass produced according what Sŏn Anna describes as second-rate graphic novels and translations.\textsuperscript{460} She quotes a survey of all publications of children’s materials in the Liberation Space which reveals that of the 170 published children’s books up until 1948, 44% were labeled “educational,” while children’s magazines made up 6% of those publications.

The liberation space was a vibrant time for the publication of children’s books by both children’s writers and adult writers (including, for example, Pak T’aewŏn, Ch’ae Mansik, Kim Tongni and Yŏm Sangsŏp). Some claim, however, that many of these writers wrote without

\begin{footnotes}
\item[458] Kim Chonghŏn also points to this general tolerance in his book on Liberation Space (1945-48) children’s poetry (Kim Chonghŏn (2008) 14).
\item[459] Yi Chung’yŏn 69-72. One cannot overemphasize the importance of books in the post-liberation period. Yi Chung’yŏn claims that while there is room to argue about the quality of books published after liberation there is no question regarding what he calls the “revolution” in publication that took place. (73-4) At the same time, one cannot forget that basic survival was still the foremost concern, and that books were still a luxury.
\item[460] Ch’ŏn üi ölgul 99-100.
\end{footnotes}
much regard for quality.\textsuperscript{461} In fact, many of the adult fiction writers who took to writing children’s fiction in the liberation space went on to write mostly anti-Communist literature in the post-war period, contributing to the heavily ideological and didactic production of texts that continued for several decades after the war.\textsuperscript{462}

In the field of literature in general, and book publishing in particular (as opposed to pamphlets or newspapers), writers who stood to the right of the political spectrum were equally or even more active than their leftist counterparts.\textsuperscript{463} By 1947, however, publishing houses re-channeled their interests and efforts from translations to original works, signaling an end to the dominance of political writing in favor of creative fiction. Yi notes that by 1948, fiction and educational materials continued to grow in popularity at the expense of more politically didactic texts.\textsuperscript{464} At the same time, Yi points to a slowing of publications in 1948 that cannot be explained by a decline in interest on the part of readers, but must rather be attributed to harsh economic conditions that prevented people from spending money on books.\textsuperscript{465} More notable is the fact that in 1948, a much wider range of books became available to readers who were now in a better position to make choices about their reading materials, including popular novels and translations.\textsuperscript{466} However, this seemingly “free range” of choice was also clearly guided by public institutions such as radio broadcasts and newspaper articles that recommended certain readings to the public.\textsuperscript{467} In 1949, statistics show a continuing concentration of publication of

\textsuperscript{461} Ch’ŏn ŭi ŏlgul 107.
\textsuperscript{462} Writers included Pak Kyeju and Chŏng Pisŏk.
\textsuperscript{463} Yi Chung’yŏn 64-5.
\textsuperscript{464} Yi Chung’yŏn 91, 103. One of the genres that grew in popularity and received much criticism for its low-brow appeal was the genre of what was called ero, or romance novels (104).
\textsuperscript{465} Yi Chung’yŏn 101.
\textsuperscript{466} Yi Chung’yŏn 105-8.
\textsuperscript{467} Yi Chung’yŏn 108.
educational materials such as textbooks, with literature and plays coming in second; children’s literature occupied, according to these statistics, 3.2 percent of the publications in 1949, slightly behind political pieces but well ahead of books about Korean history and language.

What is clear from Yi’s survey of the development of publishing and book culture in the Liberation Space is the degree to which publishing houses provided the opportunity for writers to express their visions of the present and future direction of Korean culture. Yi summarizes the general differences between the ideological camps as follows: for the leftists, establishing a national culture meant the elimination of both the vestiges of feudal society created by class inequalities, as well as ridding Korea of the remnants of Japanese colonial control. As for the writers and publishers on the opposite side of the political spectrum, they insisted on a more abstract concept of national culture that transcended the sticky political present and harkened back to a pure, glorious and constructed past.

Finally, it is interesting to note that one of the issues of great concern with regard to book publishing and culture in the liberation space was the question of profit. Now that the chains earlier placed on publications had been broken and “all books sold well,” concern began to grow over those publishers that had an eye only for profit and not for quality. One of the areas that was considered “infected” was that of children’s books. The genre of children’s graphic novels (adong manhwa) grew in popularity to such an extent that their publication

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468 Yi Chung’yŏn 134.
469 Yi claims that most historical texts were published by right-leaning publishers and writers who concentrated on a search for a reconstructed nationalism in Korea’s past (Yi Chung’yŏn 139).
470 Yi Chung’yŏn 148.
rivaled textbooks and fiction by 1949. Graphic novels by Kim Yonghwan, for example, were apparently snatched off the shelves as soon as they were published; he also illustrated stories and short cartoons for the magazines Sohaksaeng and Ŭrininara. While Yi Chungyŏn does not examine children’s magazines in his discussion, it is clear that publishers of children’s magazines in the liberation space pursued profit by marketing books that burst at the seams with cartoons, ideas for crafts, and jokes; but they were clearly driven in their interest to engage children’s interest in thinking about issues of language, history, and the future of their nation.

6.3 Children’s Magazines in Post-Liberation Korea

Several children’s magazines were published and circulated in Korea during the liberation space. The right-leaning magazines include Sohaksaeng (1946-50) and Adong kurakbu (changed from its earlier title Chindallae (1947-1950)); and the left-leaning magazines include Ŭrininara (1949-50) Saedongmu (1945-47), Pyŏllara (1945-6), and Adong munhwa (1948). Together, these magazines enrich our understanding of this period, and provide insights into the contesting voices that made the child — and by extension, the future vision of the nation — their battleground. Published side by side in these magazines were works by avid anti-Japanese nationalists, who used this medium to voice their virulent hatred of Japan and Japanese collaborators and who expressed their concerns over a perceived Japanese threat; and also works by writers who steered center or left of the political spectrum, and who remained critical of

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472 Yi Chung’yŏn 161.
473 Yi Chung’yŏn 162.
474 Other magazines, which I was unable to obtain at the time of writing, include the right-leaning magazines Sonyŏn (1948-50), Saessak (1946-7), Ŭrini (1948-9), and Adong (1946-8).
capitalism and consumerism. Many of the writers and illustrators that published in the Liberation Space magazines went north sometime during the 3-5 years before the outbreak of the Korean War, and joined the ranks of writers and artists in North Korea. The magazines published in this period bear witness to a great deal of outspoken nationalist rhetoric: at least until 1948, writers were free to voice their beliefs with regard to what they perceived was at stake in the future of the nation. The writers and editors of the magazines liked to emphasize that liberation was a watershed. For a time, everything written was given an epithet of “before” or “after” liberation.

At the same time, magazines in this period proposed to entertain their young readers. While the presence of didactic political essays set a certain stern tone, the inclusion of cartoons, jokes, musical scores, ideas for crafts, and illustrated poetry and fiction indicated that, at least on the surface, these magazines were meant to be consumed for pleasure. As writer Chi Yong writes in one of the opening pages of Ŭrininara from 1949, the magazines were written by adults who were themselves deprived of playthings (changnankam) when they were young; and it is in this spirit that they intend for the magazine to be a plaything for the young generation and a way to make up for their own loss. ⁴⁷⁶

The magazine Sohaksaeng published 79 issues between 1946 and June 1950, the month of the outbreak of the Korean War. The first 45 issues appeared in 1946, ⁴⁷⁷ and were only several pages each. After 1947, the magazine appeared in a longer format, with each magazine running about 40 pages, and included more fiction and musical scores. As reflected in

⁴⁷⁵ Other magazines that I was unable to obtain include Adong Munhak (1945-7) and Sinsonyŏn (1946).
⁴⁷⁶ Ŭrininara (1949.1) 11.
⁴⁷⁷ Unfortunately, the copies of Sohaksaeng were in poor condition and I could not detect a page number in any of them. The material can be tracked down by issue number.
the title *Sohaksaeng* “Young student,” the magazine was geared toward young school children, and the reading material was adjusted to this age group. Increasingly, the magazine published “educational” pieces, taking a particular interest in science and history. Indeed, most of the content was related to some kind of learning: scientific, linguistic, historical (both world and Korean), and anthropological. Poetry was prominent throughout the magazine, with later issues published after 1948 including more short fiction. But even so, a heavy emphasis was placed on education, as reflected in this poem by Yi Wŏnsu titled “Ŏkkae nŏmŏ kongbu” [Learning over others’ shoulders].

> Learning goes on also  
> When looking over others’ shoulders.

> Learning goes on also,  
> When reading books over other’s shoulders.

> Learning goes on also  
> When glancing here and there over others’ shoulders.

> Wanting to go to school so badly so,  
> Looking over others’ shoulders.

The editor of this magazine, Yun Sŏkchung, was one of the most prominent figures in children’s literature. Yun (1911-2003) emerged on the literary scene with two poems: “Pom” [Spring] in 1924, published in the magazine *Sin Sonyŏn*, and “Ottugi” [Roly poly] published in 1925 in Ŭrini. He took over Ŭrini after the death of Pang Chŏngghwan in 1931, continued to be active in the following decades, and published in the late colonial period in the magazine *Sonyŏn*. He edited the magazine *Chugan Sohaksaeng* (the weekly *Sohaksaeng*, which later dropped the “weekly” and became just *Sohaksaeng*) throughout the liberation space, and also organized the

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478 *Chugan Sohaksaeng* (1946.44).
Chosŏn Adong Munhwa Hyŏphoe [The Korean Children’s Culture Organization], which brought together the voices of children’s literature and culture in Korea.

In its early issues published in 1946, this magazine exhibits an explosion of visual stimuli; each page was filled to its seams with illustrations, political essays, jokes, cartoons, riddles, activities, poetry, fiction and non-fiction. The density of material crammed on each page attests to the unleashing of energy, as if to make up for the years of both external and self-censorship (figure 55):

![Figure 55 Sohaksaeng](image)

This layout also shows evidence of the development of a culture of play and leisure that is increasingly visible in the Liberation Space. In the April volume of 1949, for example, there is a section dedicated to “teachers and mothers” in which educators and writers give their advice on
three queries: 1. What kind of reading to recommend to children; 2. What toys to recommend; and 3. What to do on Sundays. The responses come, for example, from a school principle and university professor, both of whom recommend “scientific reading”; and writers for children who recommend reading that is “appropriate yet entertaining.” The list of toys is less inspiring, some responding simply “I don’t know, I don’t have children” or “Anything that contributes to exercise”; and on Sundays, almost all the authoritative figures recommend going out into nature and chatting. The interest in leisurely activities (paper folding, arts and crafts) is evident also in the late colonial magazine Sonyŏn; but there is much more of it in the liberation space, something that either reflects the fact that there is more time and money to spend on leisure, or is an indication of an attempt to build a culture of leisure.

6.4 Language and Writing in Post-Liberation Children’s Magazines

The Liberation that came to the Korean peninsula with the defeat of the Japanese in August 1945 was not just a liberation of the nation; it was, as Yi Chung’yŏn describes it, a liberation of language, which is a crucial element of national identity. Korean language scholars fought fiercely for the maintenance of the Korean language under colonialism (King 2007; Song Seok Choong 1975), and grammarians made efforts to hold Korean language workshops and to battle illiteracy. The Korean dictionary is symbolic of this struggle: the need for a dictionary was felt early on. The project finally got under way in 1929, and despite many obstacles the team of scholars finally had a draft in 1939. Permission was granted “with stipulations” for the publication of the dictionary, and the first draft was set in 1942. The “ten grueling years” of

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479 Sohaksaeng (1949.4) 39.
480 See Meek, Children’s Literature and National Identity ix-x.
work that culminated in this book were stymied at the last minute when the Japanese raided the editorial office and seized the completed document, with grave consequences for those involved.⁴⁸¹ Some of the subversive elements that irked the Japanese in their raid on the dictionary included entries on Korea’s national symbols such as t’aegŭkki [the Korean flag], Mt. Paektu, Tan’gun, and Korea’s national flower, the Mugunghwa or Rose of Sharon.⁴⁸² During the most oppressive period of Japanese control over the use of Korean, those writers and poets who insisted on continuing their creative work in vernacular Korean resorted to hiding their manuscripts from the frequent visits by Japanese police.⁴⁸³

Liberation from the Japanese brought with it also the liberation of publications. The freedom of publication was enforced with the rescinding of Japanese law banning publications on September 22 of 1945.⁴⁸⁴ As Yi points out, the publishing houses that were active during the colonial period were only those that participated in the propaganda efforts of the Japanese colonial government; publishing houses such as Tonga P’ūrint’ū enjoyed considerable growth and circulation. The numbers are revealing: while the number of active publishing houses directly after liberation was 45, it grew to 581 by 1947. As Yi puts it, after liberation there was “no book that could not be published.”⁴⁸⁵ And of these, it was the liberation of books having to do with the Korean language and history that exerted significant influence on post-liberation education.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸¹ Song Seok-Choong 40-2.
⁴⁸² Yi Chung’yŏn 14.
⁴⁸³ Yi Chung’yŏn 18-22.
⁴⁸⁴ Yi Chung’yŏn 23.
⁴⁸⁵ Yi Chung’yŏn 27.
⁴⁸⁶ Yi Chung’yŏn 34.
The late colonial repression of Korean publications (not, of course, Japanese books, which many Koreans could and did read) explains how the act of reading Korean after liberation was infused with the spirit of anti-colonial resistance and triumph. As Yi notes, “It was precisely when the annihilation of the Korean language was brutally enforced that the process of reading Korean novels and arriving at a sense of national identity became so important; this process, in turn, prepared Koreans for the liberation of reading.”487 The long period of thirst and yearning for liberation of the language, particularly in the first part of the 1940s, prepared the ground for the explosion of publications and consumption of books that took place after liberation.488 The books that enjoyed particular popularity were those about social sciences, history and language; writers from this period attest to their powerful experiences being exposed to the “beauty of our language.”489

The relationship between readers and their language in the post-liberation period is apparent in the children’s magazines of the liberation space. It manifests itself in the overwhelming concern with the revival of the Korean language, and specifically with the purity of spoken and written Korean. The interest in language cuts across political lines, as magazines associated with both the left and right of the political spectrum pronounce their commitment to the Korean language and writing system.

487 Yi Chung’yo’n 37.
488 Yi Chung’yo’n 37.
489 Yi Chung’yo’n 60-1. Yi also notes that although much criticism was directed at the low quality of the books published in the liberation space and their purely benefit-driven motivations, the sheer number of them attests to the copious consumption of books and the passion for reading in this period (40).
6.4.1 Recovering Han’gŭl: Language Purity and Morality

“Our nation’s soul is hidden in our language, and our nation’s pulse is entangled in our writing” wrote Kim Pyŏngje in his essay “Uri mal kwa kŭl 1” [The Korean language and script 1] which appeared in the children’s magazine Pyŏlla in 1945. In the essay, Kim recounts the painful history of censorship; compares this history to that of the Polish children forced to learn German in schools; and finally reminds his readers of the international significance of the Korean language and writing system. Coming on the heels of liberation, and particularly on the tail of strict censorship and enforced language assimilation, the magazine (weekly) Chugan Sohaksang, featured with each issue essays on proper writing of fiction, non-fiction and poetry, as well as exercises in grammar and spelling. “Sang t’agi han’gŭl paro ssuigi” [win a prize, write han’gŭl properly], “t’ŭlligi swiun mal” [words we often get wrong] and “Chaemi nanun uri mal” [Korean is fun] are a few serial titles. The exercises and examples provided in these sections are not merely practical instructions on correct spelling and grammar; they are rich sites of language ideology that severely criticize the use of Japanese and Chinese characters and remind young readers of the greatness of the Korean language and writing system.

In “Sang t’agi han’gŭl paro ssuigi,” the reader is asked to point out the mistakes in sample sentences. This exercise appears in almost every issue of the weekly Sohaksang, and its example sentences, which are provided as grammatical exercises, contain uninhibited expressions of didactic nationalism. For example, the sentences in the first issue include this one: “Japan was destroyed by the Japanese soldiers, who know how to do nothing but murder,

490 Pyŏlnara (1945) 11-12.
and by other money-greedy bastards”; or this one: “King Sejong was a great King, and his invention of han’gül is something to show off to the entire world”; or this one: “Children in our new nation are early to rise; our nation is a good nation without late sleepers.” The answer key is provided.

Another grammar exercise in issue five includes this example sentence: “If there is any person in the land of Chosŏn that was not looking forward to liberation, then they must be completely crazy.” In issue 8, the sentences read: “You children are the workers (ilkkun) that will grow and lead our nation of Chosŏn”; and “We should study our country’s writing in a diligent fashion.” After 1947, this section’s title is changed to “Aedokcha wihan sangt’agi munje” [Award-winning questions for devoted readers]; issue 47 includes this sample question (which demands a spelling correction from the reader): “Our children need first a strong will; second, a determined spirit; and third, they need to study tirelessly, and they have to be optimistic and hopeful.” And in issue 5, the section titled “han’gülloman ssügiro” [Let’s write only in Korean script] reads:

Han’gül, our treasure and pride of the world, was banned by the Japanese bastards; we were not permitted to read or write it. Only after liberation on August 15 were we able to raise our voices and read in han’gül, and recently [it has been decided] both that writing should be horizontal and on the abolition of the use of Chinese characters.

In the section titled “Chaemi nanŭn uri mal” [our language is fun], Ch’oe Hyŏnbae (1894–1970) focuses on animal names, which are based either on the sounds that the animals make, the way they move or the way they look (in Korean, ŭisŏng’ŏ [phonomimes] and ŭitt’aeŏ

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491 Kim Pyŏngje went on to become an influential authority on linguistics in North Korea, authoring books, dictionaries and works on dialectology.
492 Sohaksaeng (1947.47) 19.
He explains that it is obvious why the Korean language is as diverse as it is, and it is therefore a great pride to Koreans:

There are a lot of fun expressions in the Korean language. Of course, other countries have amusing expressions as well, but there are few languages that have such expressions as there are to be found in Korean. There is a reason for this. The sounds of the Korean language are so varied that they can transform into a thousand different shapes; and the alphabet may only be composed of 24 signs, but they can realign themselves into endless combinations.

Other sections attest to the prevalence of spoken Japanese in the streets through a section that explore common mistakes in the Korean language. The author of “Words we often get wrong” insists that Korean children should be as motivated to learn their language, as the Japanese are driven in their studies. He deplores the situation in which he claims that there are “still people speaking Japanese,” and demands that all Japanese words be obliterated from the vocabulary. He then goes on to correct common errors of spelling and pronunciation. In issue 28, Yi Yongch’ol condemns the use of words based on Chinese characters, and urges young readers to replace these with pure han’gul words. He then recounts a conversation with a school principle who lamented the fact that fewer students are enrolled in schools after liberation, and blames this on the fact that students once felt that they needed formal education in order to learn Japanese and Chinese, but now that schools are teaching Korean they feel that they no longer have a use for it. But Korean is essential, says Yi: “If you learn Korean you can become president, a world-famous scholar, or a leader in society. We must abandon Japanese and Chinese and revive our own language; this will lead our people to live better lives and our culture to develop.” In issue 38, Yi Yongch’ol also explores the history of the name of the

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493 Ch’oe studied under Chu Sikyong before he went on to study in Japan’s prestigious Imperial University in Kyoto. After liberation he was immensely active as a linguist and educator.

494 Yi Yongch’ol Chugun Sohaksaeng 26.
Korean script, and urges the readers to abandon such derogatory names as “amk’yul” [female script] and “önmun” [vulgar script] and urges people to call it by its proud name of han’gul [Korean script]. In his series titled “Uri munhwa wa han’gul” [Korean culture and language], Yi examines Chinese characters and says that “It is because of the difficulty of the Chinese characters (hanja) that the Chinese civilization, and by extension our own, is so backward.”

China, too, Yi says, is trying to walk away from their characters; but in Korea, unfortunately, many still maintain their loyalty to the Chinese script.

In issue 36, there is a section by Yi Hŭisŭng called “Uri charang” [our pride] in which the author explains that not only is the Korean writing system a subject of national pride, but also the language itself. This is because the Korean language has a diverse range of pronunciations; the sound combinations allow for over 3000 syllables. Japanese, by comparison, allows for far fewer possibilities. In issue 37, Yi continues to note that Korean is far richer in sounds than English and German; and that Korean is far more musical than other languages. In volume 47 from 1947, Yi Hŭisŭng recalls that in his youth, he was unable to go to school but could only study the ‘foreign language’ of Chinese in texts such as the Ch’ŏnjjamun [Thousand Character Classic] and the Tongmong sŏnsŭp [Eradicating Youthful Ignorance].

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495 Yi Yŏngch’ŏl Chugan Sohaksaeng 38.
496 Yi Hŭisŭng 李熙昇 (1896-1989) was a hugely famous linguist. In his youth he received wide and eclectic training in foreign languages, law, science and literature. He played a central role in the creation of reference books on orthography and standardized language. He was among those arrested in 1942 over the publication of the ten-year project of the Korean dictionary, and spent three years in prison. After liberation, he became one of the first leading scholars in linguistics in Korea; he was tenured as Keijō Imperial University, and then became a professor at Seoul National University, its successor institution. He occupied several important administrative academic positions and published several volumes of poetry and prose.
The insistence on the obliteration of Japanese from the Korean language continues throughout the later magazines, and attests to the fact that the presence of Japanese is still a pressing concern. In “Urimal toroch’atki” [Recovering our language] the anonymously writer pleads:

It is imperative to wipe out the filthy imprint left by the Japanese on our language; in order to recover our true form, we must first eliminate any residual smell of the Japanese language. Though it has been four years since liberation, one can still hear Japanese in the streets. How sad is that? We believe that none of our readers do such a thing, but since the Ministry of Education has deemed it necessary, we have decided to include this section called “finding our language again”, for those of you who cannot find Korean expressions for commonly used Japanese.\textsuperscript{497}

The October issue of 1949 (issue 71) also includes a special address for the celebration of Han’gûl Day in Korea. The author, Chang Chiyŏng of the han’gûl hakhoe [Korean language society], recounts the history of language in Korea; he starts by noting that “our older sisters can read books that we have no access to if we don’t read han’gûl” (referring, by this, to the fact that han’gûl was supposedly circulated more among women at this time); and that han’gûl is a wonderful tool that opens doors to reading. However, the author reminds the reader that this was not always the case. In old Korea, it was hanmun, or classical Chinese, that was the main writing system; this writing system was foreign and difficult, and was only accessible to a select few in Korea who had to learn classical Chinese for ten years but. Later, the Japanese occupation threatened to cut Korea off from its writing and culture. But now children have access to Korea’s writing system, easily learned and accessible to all. Children must continue to learn Korean and han’gûl, and make them even more beautiful.\textsuperscript{498} And issue 71 from 1949 includes a transcribed conversation between prominent poets, fiction writers and illustrators

\textsuperscript{497} Sohaksaeng (1948.55) 41.
\textsuperscript{498} Sohaksaeng (1949.71) 4-5.
highlighting the place that han’gŭl is seen to play in the new cultural space of liberated Korea. It begins with the observation that children in Korea now gravitate more toward fiction than ever before; all the men agree that this is thanks to their increased fluency in han’gŭl and the elimination of Chinese characters.\textsuperscript{499}

As Schmid notes, “the simple act of writing in Korean” was seen “as repudiating the colonial past and heralding a new beginning.”\textsuperscript{500} The degree of language purity was partly judged by the degree to which Korean speakers were able to obliterate the vestiges of Japanese and Chinese influences. In the children’s magazines, however, this reform went beyond technical corrections of vocabulary words, grammar and orthography; what was sought was a reform of children’s minds expressed through language. In “Mal ŭi hyanggi” [Scent of language],\textsuperscript{501} Kim Soun\textsuperscript{502} addresses young readers about “responsible speaking.” He first addresses the duality of speech: sound and meaning. Sound, he said, had an inherent smell, color and temperature. Sound reflects the soul of the speaker; therefore, utterances must be made with utter caution. The production of meaning, too, is the ultimate responsibility of the speaker; one must be wholeheartedly involved and dedicated in one’s speech. “It is essential to remember that only those who respect and love their language (mal) can cultivate a beautiful soul and a righteous persona.”

What these impassioned appeals in children’s magazines reveal is the seriousness of the perceived “problem” of language and literacy at the end of the colonial period: illiteracy

\textsuperscript{499} Sohaksaeng (1949.71) 28-9.
\textsuperscript{500} Andre Schmid, 257.
\textsuperscript{501} Sohaksaeng (1949.2) 22-23.
\textsuperscript{502} Kim Soun (1907-1981) was born in Pusan, and in 1920 went to Japan where his studies were interrupted by the Great earthquake of 1923. He continued to live in Japan and dedicate himself to education; he was also an applauded translator from Korean into Japanese.
rates were high,\textsuperscript{503} Japanese had infiltrated spoken Korean, Sino-Korean-based words were still widely used; the Korean language was certainly not helped by the lack of standardized orthography.\textsuperscript{504} What is important to note, however, is that the concern with the revival and reclamation of the Korean language was not born on the eve of liberation. What liberation facilitated, in fact, was a return to the passionate discussions about language purity and the directions of Korean orthography that harkens back, as Ross King demonstrates (1998), to the nineteenth century and in fact continued to varying degrees throughout the colonial period (King 2007). King quotes Yu Kilchun, whom he calls Korea’s first “language entrepreneur,” arguing in 1909 that “we the Korean people possess our own language and our own indigenous script. These enunciate thought and meaning by means of spoken sounds and transmit them by means of writing [in a spirit that] reaches back more than four thousand years.”\textsuperscript{505} As the Korean language and script were touted as the nation’s central assets, scholars also emphasized the danger of continuing the custom of writing in classical Chinese, warning that “if one uses another nation’s writing…. the human feelings of the ancestral country mutate, and the local customs are thrown into confusion…”\textsuperscript{506}

What must also be noted is that the concern about corruption of language purity by Japanese and the contamination of the Korean script (and spirit, as well) by classical Chinese was one that cut across political lines and which, in fact, continued to resonate in the language policies of North and South Korea. North Korean language policy, which was bent from the start to make its written language “accessible to the populace at large,” banned the use of Chinese characters and made language purity the center of its language journals and

\textsuperscript{503} King (2007) 210-11.
\textsuperscript{504} King (2007) 212.
\textsuperscript{505} King (1998) 38.
campaigns.\textsuperscript{507} And in South Korea, “various government committees since the declaration of the ROK in 1948 have declared campaigns to “purify” the national language of foreign (mostly Japanese) elements.\textsuperscript{508} And the roots of North and South Korean language nationalism and patriotism, and script nationalism,\textsuperscript{509} which predate the colonial period, are laid bare and are revived in post liberation children’s magazines.

6.5 Recovering History: Yi Sunsin and the March First Movement

As Yi Chung’yŏn notes, the reclamation of Korean history was another of the foremost concerns for writers in the immediate post-liberation period, and it was a concern that cut across political lines. The magazines \textit{Sohakraeng} and \textit{Ŏrininara} contain essays, poetry and fiction written on Korean history, anthropology, biographies, landmarks, and symbols. Some of the titles of these historical pieces include “Uri charang” [our pride] and “Chosŏn yŏksa iyagi” [Tales of Chosŏn history]; these pieces re-introduced aspects of Korean history and culture, and were written with particular nationalistic fervor and ideological design.

6.5.1 Yi Sunsin and Notable Biographies

General Yi Sunsin\textsuperscript{510} was celebrated as a national hero and a symbol of the Korean struggle against the Japanese beginning from the early twentieth century. In a pre-annexation

\textsuperscript{506} King (1998) 56.
\textsuperscript{507} King (2007) 211-2; see also Spencer Jentzsch, “Munhwaa: The ‘Cultured Language’ and Language Branding in North Korea, 1964-1984” (2010).
\textsuperscript{508} King (2007) 216.
\textsuperscript{509} King (2007) 218-9.
\textsuperscript{510} (1545-1598). Yi Sunsin was a renowned general who was made famous by his naval tactics and who commanded Korean naval forces to victory and against all odds in battles against the invading Japanese armies in 1592 and 1597.
publication, Sin Ch’aeho emphasized the general’s achievements in a particularly virulent attack on the Japanese. In the 1930s, Yi Kwangsu and Ch’oe Namsŏn both serialized their versions of the biographies of this quintessential nationalistic hero. Yi Kwangsu highlighted the general’s personal sacrifice and unwavering patriotism, and placed the blame for the Japanese invasions (both the sixteenth-century invasions and the current colonial colonization) explicitly on the corruption of the Korean royal court/government. Ch’oe Namsŏn also celebrated this hero but in a much more abstract manner, probably, Chŏng Tuhŭi notes, due to censorship. Regardless, however, their renditions of the story of Yi Sunsin and their manipulation of its details reflect the degree to which this story was intertwined with the most central question of nation and national identity.

General Yi Sunsin made his first cameo appearance immediately after liberation in the inaugural issue of *Chugan Sohaksaeng* of 1946 (figure 56):

![Figure 56 History](image)

The title of this section, which ran through many subsequent volumes, is “Chosŏn yŏksa iyagi” [Stories of Chosŏn history]. These brief sections covered a range of issues, from anthropology (Issue 1: “Chosŏn saram ŭn ŏsŏ watna?”[Where did the people of Chosŏn come from?]);

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511 Sin Ch’aeho (1880-1936) was a nationalist historian who, in the words of Henry Em, set forth the “first and most influential historical narrative equating Korean history (kuksa) and the history of the Korean nation (minjoksa).” (Em 289) See also Pak Noja (2010) and Schmid (1997).


story of Tan’gun (Issue 4); Loss of the nation to Wiman (Issue 5); the Three Hans (Issue 7).

Each of these sections is headed by a small illustration with the face of Yi Sunsin on one side and his turtle boat on the other (Figure 56). After the defeat of the Japanese in the Second World War and their retreat from Korea, his image was endowed with even greater meaning and served to reestablish Chosŏn’s image.

In issue 4 of 1946, the tale of Yi Sunsin appears briefly in the section titled “Uri charang” [Our pride] which explains that the general’s name was enough to make enemies flee in fear. Then, starting in issue 33 in 1946, one of the first serialized novels to appear in the magazine Sohaksaeng is “Yi Sunsin changgun” [General Yi Sunshin] by Pak T’aewŏn 1909-1986.515 This “historical novel” [yŏksa sosŏl] ran from November 1946 to November of 1947 (issue 52). In an announcement of the immanent arrival of this serial novel in the magazine (issue 32), an editorial explains that the time has come to tell this tale, which was censored by the Japanese; the novel is “precise,” and therefore all children of Chosŏn are obligated to read it. The novel recounts the achievements of this general and his success in defeating the Japanese enemy against all odds, and was illustrated by eminent artist Kim Kich’ang (1913-2001).516

515 Pak T’aewŏn is one of the central figures of colonial period literature, and one who ended up going to North Korea in 1950. Pak made his literary debut in 1926, travelled to Japan and returned to Korea in 1931. In 1933 he joined the Kuinhoe, and in 1946 he joined the leftist artist group Chosŏn munhakka tongmaeng. His work is famous for its unique narrative, and for its successful evasion of categorization as belonging to one political camp or the other. Wŏn (2006) claims that while some of Pak’s children’s fiction from the 1930s exhibits a sensitivity to social issues, particularly with regard to victimization and exploitation by the colonial economy, some of his later works have been branded as mildly “collaborationist” for their aestheticization of Japanese militarization. For a discussion of collaboration politics, see De Cuester, 2001.
Many chapters are accompanied by a small illustration and explanation of an archeological find that relates to the military history and reflects the greatness of this leader. For example, chapter five (issue 37) includes the illustration titled “Yumul kugyŏng 1” [Relic viewing 1], an exhibit of General Yi Sunsin’s copper seal (figure 57); other examples of relics attributed to general Yi include his nameplate, sword collection, flagpoles, and battle trumpets. Yi Sunsin’s famous

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Kim Kich’ang was a Catholic and a traditional (tongyang) painter; in his early years he known to paint for the Japanese government, but after liberation he enjoyed an international career.
turtle boat (figure 58 number 6) is included in the illustrated history of naval vessels, alongside the Roman ship (Figure 58 number 4) and Columbus’s ship (Figure 58 number 8).\textsuperscript{517}

As we have seen, a recurring subject in children’s magazines is biographies of notable persons. The personalities that are celebrated in children’s publications are chosen for the merit they are perceived to carry at a particular time; changing images also indicate changing perceptions in Chosŏn. Napoleon and Peter the Great were championed by Ch’oe Namsŏn in Sonyŏn; and Marx was featured in the proletarian magazine Pyŏllara; and wartime Sonyŏn carried stories about Mussolini and Hitler. Sohaksaeng, for its part, carried many biographies of notable foreign figures, and most of these biographies were of men and women that made significant contributions to science and art. These include, for example, Chopin, Beethoven, Ibsen, Michelangelo, Balzac, Thomas Edison, Newton, Dostoyevsky, George Washington, Jean D’Arc, and Pestalozzi. The biographies of these notable persons invariably emphasize their loyalty to their nation. Chopin, for example, “did not, for a single moment, forget his love for his country. Although almost a century has passed since his death, his beautiful and elegant music is still praised and played by everyone. Don’t forget: even if and when you become famous, and the more famous you become, the more you must love your country” (issue 18). Michelangelo and Balzac were included for their hard work (issue 25, 26); Thomas Edison and Gorky for their perseverance in the face of adversity (issue 28, 39); Dostoyevsky, for the way in which he championed the cause of the poor and took literature out of the hands of the privileged, creating a national literature that reflected the sensitivities of the population (issue 40); and George Washington for his truth-telling and leadership in the struggle for independence (issue 43).

\textsuperscript{517} Sohaksaeng (1947.9) 49.
6.5.2 The March First Movement

Children’s magazines of post-liberation Korea invariably reinforce important historical events, and contribute to the formation of collective memory. After liberation, March volumes were, without exception, dedicated to the events of the March First Uprising, when Koreans took to the streets on the first of March 1919 to protest the harsh colonial cultural policies. Issue 40 of *Sohaksaeng*, for example, marks the second year of celebrating the March 1st movement since liberation: “Remember our promise from last year to dedicate our bodies and minds, and to study and work for our country?” This issue contains both stories about the gathering of people in Pagoda park and the manic waving of flags, and also lists statistics of the numbers of people incarcerated and injured.

A large spread is dedicated to the March 1st Movement in issue 76 (1950.3), marking the 31st anniversary of this movement, titled “1919 nyŏn kwa 3 wŏl 1 il” [The year 1919 and March 1st] by Hong Chongin (1903-1998). Hong recalls the striking of the bells by churches and temples from every city in the country, including P’yŏngyang and Hamhŭng. Hong explains the events leading up to the March First Movement in a global context, framing Korean liberation within the context of the liberation of other colonized nations.

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518 Hong was born in Pyŏngyang and was expelled from school for his participation in the March First demonstrations. He later worked as a journalist and after liberation was appointed the main editor of the *Chosŏn ilbo.*

519 Korea was divided by the time the essay was written.

520 Hong’s emphasis on other newly-liberated nations in Asia is reflected also in the magazine *Ŏrininara* in a series about the “Weak Nations of the World” that reports on the state of present and former colonies. In the April issue of 1949, there is a report on the Dutch colony of Indonesia. The article paints the Dutch very negatively, noting that Holland, a country slightly smaller than Korea’s South Hamgyŏng Province, managed to exploit a country 60 times its size for 300 years, during which it drained the country dry of its rubber, oil, cotton and steel. In return, all Holland bestowed upon its colony was starvation,
accompanied in the sidelines by another section called “Nae ka kyŏkkŭn 3.1 undong” [How I experienced the March 1st movement], written by prominent educators. One university professor, Yi Hŭisŭng, recalls arriving at Pagoda Park on the day of the demonstrations, and the beatings he suffered at the hands of the Japanese.

The Japanese occupation figures centrally in the March issues of Ŭrininara, the magazine with leftist leanings. Noteworthy in this magazine are the more brutal and explicit illustrations whose purpose is to elicit more visceral reactions in the reader/viewer. The March 1949 issue is dedicated in great part to the recollection of the March 1st movement: the editorial opens with an address to the readers that recalls the bravery and great sacrifice of the Korean children and adults that gathered in unarmed resistance. Particularly striking is the end of this editorial, in which the narrator adds that, shockingly, there were Koreans among the Japanese soldiers that brutally quelled this resistance; but thankfully, these treacherous collaborators are in the process of being eliminated.\footnote{Orinara (1949.3) 11.} The same issue also recalls the Japanese occupation in illustrated poetry:

\textit{ignorance, and death (16-7). Another article covers a report on Burma and its struggles for independence (1949.5:34-5), Malaya (1949.6: 27) and Palestine (1949.10:19).}
The poem “Yu Kwansun nuna” [Our big sister, Yu Kwansun] by No Ch’ónmyŏng (1912-1957)\(^{522}\) recalls the bravery of this famous young woman who died at the age of eighteen. Yu is famous for yelling “Manse!” [Long Live Korea!] while in custody at the cost of heavy beatings which caused her death: “Even as the ferocious whip dug into her body/the spirit of Chosŏn independence was not broken / Even as she was cut by the Japanese sword that killed parents and burned siblings /shouting Independence in her last dying breath.” The illustration (figure 59) provides readers with a visual representation of her brutal repression. The poem on the following page (figure 60) also recounts the brutality of Japanese soldiers: the poem is told from the point of view of two siblings in the midst of play who have to hide in terror as their grandfather is beaten. The illustrations of both poems bring out the brutality of the Japanese in

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\(^{522}\) No made her literary debut in 1932.
their ruthless attack against both young woman and old man. Yu appears as the central heroic figure in the March issue of 1950:

![Figure 61 Yu Kwansun 2](image)

Both the poem and the graphic illustrations make use of the image of Yu Kwansun as the central hero of the struggle against the Japanese. Yu’s youth is emphasized as the focalizing point of identification for the youth of Korea. At the same time, poets, essayists and illustrators use this platform to revive the memory of the March First Movement and to draw a line between the (child) martyr’s sacrifice and Korean independence.

These illustrations also point to another feature of post-liberation children’s magazines: the uncensored expressions of hostility for Japan. Writers and poets encouraged Korean children to be vigilant regarding Japan’s continuing evil intentions; in a sense, the national identity of Korean children is constructed as a virulent anti-Japanese stance in which hatred is supposed to fuel intense feelings of nationalism and patriotism. For example, the very first volume of Sohaksaeng opens with the essay “Manghaenna?” [crushed?], and the opening line states that the Japanese nation was destroyed by its own greed, of which the leading criminal was the
Japanese Emperor. In that same volume, Yi Wŏnsu’s poem “Children of Okinawa” tells the story of poor children of Okinawa whose country was stolen by the evil Japanese; and that it was not past the ruthless Japanese to kill children in their insatiable greed for the island. Let us remember the children of Okinawa says, Yi Wŏnsu:523

If we do not get rid of those greedy people who do not know how to live together, Then we cannot become a happy country.

Young tongmu! Study hard and grow We must become workers that set up a good nation.

Another editorial from the volume titled “Koreans, stay vigilant: Japan is rising again” explains that witnesses just returning from Japan attest to the fact that Japan is gathering its strength. The writer accuses those who collaborated with the Japanese, and calls for the cooperation of everyone in Korea to pool their strength and make Korea into “one of the best countries to live in the world.”

6.6 Science and Technology

The passing down of knowledge was always a central goal for children’s magazine writers. It is the nature of this knowledge, however, that undergoes shifts and transformations from one period to the next. In Sonyŏn, knowledge is the key ingredient for achieving enlightenment; specifically, modern knowledge and more specifically, a grasp of world geography and intellectual history. In the later proletarian magazines, knowledge is driven by politics, and arriving at a correct knowledge and understanding of exploitation is crucial for achieving revolution and change. In the late colonial period, the scientific knowledge is broad: it includes

523 Sohakaeng 1945.
articles on zoology ("Yŏrm konch’ung" [summer insects]); astronomy ("Pyŏl ŭi hwaltong" [movements of the stars]); geology ("Chigu iyagi" [About the Earth]); anthropology ("Saram ŭi sich’o yaegi" [On the origins of man]); and dinosaurs ("Yetnal e koemul" [The monsters of the past]). Late colonial magazines included articles with military content, as well as technical articles on fire-making, complete with instructions ("Pul ŭi yŏksa" [The history of fire]); and clocks ("Sigye iyagi"). However, these pieces are infrequent, and do not draw any particular attention to themselves in the magazine Sonyŏn.

After liberation, however, a considerable amount of space is occupied by pieces on science and technology, complete with complex illustrations and diagrams. Even the magazine Sohaksaeng, which was published weekly for 47 issues and consisted of only a few pages each week, invariably included a scientific piece, including such articles as "Konggi wa mul" [Air and water] and "Pyŏllara iyagi" [On stars]. These articles and others are classified in sections called "Ŏrini kwahak" [Young scientist], "Changp’yŏn kwahak tonghwa" [Full-length science fiction], "Sonyŏn ch’ŏnmunhak" [Young astronomer] and "Kwahak kongbu" [Science study]. These section’s titles attest to the renewed vigour with which writers were attempting to whet the interest of young readers.

The concern over science and technology as a crucial tool in nation building is illustrated further in a conversation between prominent writers and illustrators of children’s

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524 Sonyŏn 1940.8 53-59.
525 Sonyŏn 1940.10 48-9.
526 Sonyŏn 1937.5 60-5.
527 Sonyŏn 1940.10 74-76.
528 Sonyŏn 1940.12 54-5.
529 Sonyŏn 1940.12 51-3.
530 Sonyŏn 1940.6 31-36.
531 Sohaksaeng 3.
literature in the day. Published in 1949, Kim Kyut’aek, Pak Yŏngjong, Cho P’ungyŏn, Chŏng Hyŏnun (see note on page 188), and Chŏng Int’aek discuss the importance of science in the context of liberated Korea. The men all agree that science must play a large part in the defining and shaping of the future. Kim Kyut’aek observes that children are quite critical of their toys, claiming them to be unrealistic, and that this reflects their thirst for proper scientific content and knowledge that was repressed by the Japanese. Cho raises the danger of children reading only fiction, noting that scientific education is of utmost importance and must make its way into creative fiction. Pak suggests that fiction for children should motivate curiosity and make children wish to become scientists. “What our nation needs now is great scientists: chemists, physicists, medical doctors, mathematicians,” argues one writer; another explains that Koreans must focus more on the study of science and says that American children are so versed in their numbers that, when asked for their birthday, they respond, for example, “eight and four months.” Korean children, on the other hand, are much less sensitive to numbers, especially because Korean custom has all children aging at the same time. Korean children should learn from the spontaneous way in which American children learn science, for example, from frequent visits to children’s museums. It is in the liberation space, then, that

532 Sohaksaeng 7.
533 Sohaksaeng (1949.71) 28-33.
534 Kim Kyut’aek (1906-1962) was born in Korea and graduated from art school in Japan. In the 1930s he illustrated books by Yi Kwangsu, Han Yongun and Hong Myŏnghŭi.
535 Pak Yŏngjong (better known as Pak Mogwŏl 1916-1978) was a poet who played a major role in the shaping of the literary field in Korea since his debut in 1939.
536 Cho P’ungyŏn (1914-1991) made his debut in the late 1930s publishing novels in major Korean newspapers. He began publishing works for children more actively after the Korean War.
537 So Hyŏn (Sohaksaeng (1949.5) 67-8.
science and technology are explained as crucial tools, and are mobilized very explicitly for the project of nation building.

6.7 Discipline, Nutrition, and Sports

The “New Life Campaign” that was set off following liberation was intended, according to Kenneth Koo,\(^{539}\) to re-educate the population toward better hygiene practices as part of a larger campaign of institutional control. The issue of control over the population spills over into daily life routines. There is something strikingly familiar about the use of the rhetoric of discipline, which shares resonant undertones with control in the late colonial period. In other words, despite the vehemently hostile anti-Japanese sentiment that can be found everywhere in *Sohaksaeng*, there is still a traceable continuity in rhetoric from the late colonial period throughout the liberation space with regard to physical discipline in the service of the nation. Notice this poem by Yun Sŏkchung, published alongside an innocuous illustration of a robust and cute baby (figure 62),\(^{540}\) titled “Ap’ūro ap’ūro” [Forward, Forward].\(^{541}\)

*Tongmu, tongmu, our tongmu*
Forward, forward
Step in line, feet together,
Forward, forward
Be not distracted, keep on moving
Forward, forward
Cows, horses and dogs, too
Forward, forward
Dragonflies and butterflies, too,
Forward, forward
The sun, moon, and clouds, too
Forward, forward.

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\(^{540}\) *Sohaksaeng* 1947.3. This same illustration appeared randomly alongside other poems by Yun Sokchung.

\(^{541}\) *Sohaksaeng* 1947.3.
Another poem, “Chejari kŏrŭm” [March in Place] by Kim Insu,\textsuperscript{542} deploys similar imagery and celebrates children’s seemingly spontaneous self-discipline:

\textsuperscript{542} Sohaksaeng (1949.67) 10. Compare this to the poem “Narani narani” by Pak Yŏngjong in section 4.3.2.
One two three
Marching in place
White clouds in the sky
Drift on
The spring breeze
Caresses our cheeks
Circles the school playing ground
Once around
One two three
Marching in place

The control that is pictured here in both text and illustrations is not strikingly different from that pictured in the late colonial poem mentioned above. Coordination and discipline serve simply a different agency, but are no less crucial in the postliberation period than they were for the control and formation of colonial subjects a mere decade earlier.

Another noticeable change from the late colonial period in children’s magazines is the emphasis on nutrition and sports. Advertisements for medical or nutritional products existed throughout the colonial period. The usual products touted in the magazines included toothpaste, medicine and chocolate. Sohaksan, however, had none of these commercial advertisements. Instead, information about health and physical conditioning was incorporated into the body of the magazine. Note this chart, for example (figure 64):
Figure 64 Vitamins
The chart and its attached explanation instruct children on what foods to eat to supplement their diet, urging children to make themselves aware of the nutritional value of their food and take a greater degree of agency when eating (or asking their mothers for food in the kitchen). 543

Another article from 1947 reminds children that their bodies are part of nature, and that they need to adjust their bodies to the different seasons (figure 65):

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543 Sohaksaeng (1949.64) 13.
This includes staying covered at night even in the summer, and being wary of pneumonia (note the dancing bacteria on the bottom left corner). The cycle on the right illustrates proper lifestyle, which includes “lots of sleep—lots of food—lots of study—lots of exercise.”

Adult magazines also advertised health products for children, including, for example, the “nation-building pill”:

![Figure 66 Nation Building Pill](image)

This pill, advertised as “quality medicine for small children” in *Sin Ch’ônji* 1946, embodies the connection between nation-building, youth and health.

Besides discourses of self-discipline and nutrition that emerge in post-liberation magazines, other discourses—sports and exercise—also appear *Sohaksaeng* with renewed vigour. The absence of explicit sport references and images in *Sonyôn* of the late 1930s may be explained by Koen de Cuester’s claim that “patriotism rather than health concerns came to dominate Japanese physical education”; but in the liberation space, the subject of organized sports appears in articles and illustrations. The connection between children and physical exercise is noted, for example, in 1949. The May issue of that year was dedicated to *ôrini nal*, or

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544 *Sohaksaeng* (September 1947) 14-5.
545 *Sin Ch’ônji* (1946.4). I am indebted to Kenneth Koo for alerting me to this product.
“Children’s Day,” and included several pages devoted to the explanation of the importance of this special holiday:

In the past, Chosŏn culture revolved completely around adults, without consideration of children… then our country was inspired by ideas from the West, and people’s attitudes toward children started to change. Children became centrally important, culminating in the creation of the children’s holiday ŏrin nal. This brought a change in children as well, who realized how important they suddenly were to their home and country. Our newly born country… needs to grow and develop, and our country can develop only if children grow up properly… This means physical development: children need to play hard, run around, be tough. They also need to be polite and respectful. Children, you must grow strong and tough! Strong and tough children will mean a strong and tough nation.\(^{547}\)

The September issue of Ŭrininara (1949.9 11) begins with an appeal to children to play soccer in order to strengthen their bodies, not just in order to be soccer players. It recalls the way in which children who played with makeshift straw balls had to adjust to life in Seoul where they played with leather soccer balls. Baseball is also brought into focus with an article and illustrations in the magazine Sohaksaeng. In a piece titled “Yagu wa sohaksaeng” [Baseball and the young student], Yi Yöngmin, the president of the Korean Baseball League, explains some basic rules (“This game is different from other sports. Even if you are of sound body, if you have a slow mind you will not be a good player. And even if you are smart, you will not be a good player if you are physically unsound”); reveals the history of the game, including the introduction of baseball to Korea in 1903 and the role played by the YMCA in forming the Korean team during the Japanese occupation; and finally, the new and energetic beginning of the game once again in Korea with liberation in 1945.\(^{548}\) The US military played a particularly important role, says the narrator, by engaging in friendly games that greatly helped the development of the game in Korea. The narrator expresses disappointment that the game has not

\(^{546}\) de Cuester 59.

\(^{547}\) Sohaksaeng (1949.5) 6-7.
been embraced by the Ministry of Education in Korea and turned into a school curriculum activity.

Research has linked sports to civilization and control (Dunning 1999; Elias and Dunning 2004); and, as Keon de Cuester explains, when the YMCA arrived in Korea via Japan in 1903, its intention was to “work on the implementation of its agenda of disciplining bodies through an elaborate sports programme.”\(^{549}\) Sports during the colonial period, as Keon de Cuester illustrates, enjoyed the privileged position of being “sheltered from any overt prosecution by the colonial master.”\(^{550}\) However, de Cuester warns against an anachronistic interpretation of sport in the colonial period as a top-to-bottom channel of ideological dissemination,\(^{551}\) and points instead to the rise in popularity of sports in Korea as organic and gradual. In the colonial period, he explains, Koreans “were carving out spheres for themselves, partaking in the social developments occurring in colonial society, but also proactively shaping these developments.”\(^{552}\) While physical education, \textit{ch’eyuk}, was “initially met with incredulity by Korea’s upper class,”\(^{553}\) Koreans soon took an interest in organized sports, although for some, as de Cuester notes, it was a question of following Western fads.\(^{554}\) As de Cuester explains, Byron Barnhart came to Seoul in 1916 as manager of the Sports department of the Korean YMCA, and in his capacity steered Korean sports to converge with ideas about modernity, including orderly conduct and self-restraint.\(^{555}\) By the 1930s, de Cuester explains,
“sport was escaping elite control, developing its own dynamics, averse to any ulterior motive but the enjoyment of a good game.”

An examination of post-liberation magazines reveals less of an indication of how much children were “owning” sports in the subversive manner that de Cuester finds, and more of a top-down urging of children to take interest in physical exercise. The October 1947 issue was devoted to the upcoming Olympics, which marked Korea’s very first appearance in the Games as a liberated nation (figure 60). The contributors to this issue make the readers fully aware of the political stakes of this sporting event. “Ladies and gentlemen, you all know what “strength” is, do you not? Strength is power, strength is righteousness. This is true for spiritual power, and it is true for physical power as well. And what builds this strength is sports.” The author then reminds the reader of Korea’s wonderful achievements in the area of competitive sports, beginning with the Olympic victory in Berlin—the gold medal of the Japanese flag-bearing Korean marathon runner Son Kijŏng, at a time when Korea was still under Japanese control. But now, Korea is preparing for its first appearance since liberation in the Olympics in London, and the author notes: “We hope, with the rest of you, to see Korea’s flag fluttering in victory next August in London” (figure 67):

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556 de Cuester 83.
557 Sohaksaeng (1947.10) 5.
558 Sohaksaeng (1947.10) 8.
This interest in physical exercise is reflected also in illustrations such as figure 68,559 which explains the technicalities of jumping rope, and figure 69, which asks the reader to match the uniform and carrying bag of the (male) players with the sport:

The post-liberation magazines, then, exhibit a prevalence of sports images that are reinforced by discourse linking physical exercise to responsible and powerful citizenship in the new nation. The illustrations are all male, and so, presumably, are the implied practitioners of sports in this

559 Sohaksaeng 1949.
period. In any case, articles in the post-liberation magazines encourage children to think of physical discipline as both modern and as a successful performance and fulfillment of one’s national identity.

6.8 Critical Voices

It was immediately after liberation that writers for children were able to fully and publicly engage their readers with regard to their now recovered national identity. The foremost concern on the agenda was the recapturing of children’s imagination, and reclaiming it on “Korean” terms. This reclamation of Korean children’s imagination was to occur through the reclamation, first and foremost, of the Korean language, and also of history, science, and leisure culture such as sports. But more importantly, those critical voices of the proletarian writers, which had been silenced since the mid-1930s, re-appeared in the liberation space magazines. Their appearance on the scene was short-lived, since many of the leftists resettled in North Korea when the political balance began to shift against them. The works of An Hoenam and Hyŏn Tŏk appeared in magazines such as Ŭrininara and the revived leftist magazine Pyŏllara. The first essay in Pyŏllara of 1945 explains to the young reader, lest there be any misunderstandings, that Korea during the colonial period was exploited by the collaborators (Yi Wanyong (李完用), Cho Chungŭng (趙重應), Song Pyŏngjun (宋秉畯), and Yi Hayŏng (李夏榮) and the capitalists who sold the nation out to the Japanese.

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560 Pyŏllara (1945) 4-5.
561 Yi (1858-1926) was an active member of the enlightenment movement; he went on to serve in office and to sign the Japanese-korean agreement that relinquished control of Korean affairs to the Japanese and effectively signalled the beginning of annexation in 1910.
562 Cho (1860-1919) was an active member of the enlightenment movement; he lived in exile in Japan and returned to Korea in 1907 to serve in the colonial government.
The magazines from this period can be roughly divided into right-leaning (Sohaksaeng) and left-leaning (Ŏrininara and Pyŏllara), but in actuality all the magazines acknowledged the fact that, despite liberation, much still needed to be fixed in Korean society. Note, for example, Yi Wŏnsu’s poem, “I kolmok chŏ kolmok” [This alley, that alley].

Let us study hard and grow quickly
And become
Workers that will make a good nation.

In this alleyway, from that alleyway
From this alleyway and that
There are so many wonderful things.
So many pencils
So many notebooks.

So many snacks and so much bread
And shoes
We cannot buy them yet,
Who will?

The lingering social issues are most pronounced, perhaps, in the post-division magazine Őrininara. This magazine published the works of writers who went North after the outbreak of the Korean war. One such example is Chŏng Int’aek. Chŏng (1909-1952) wrote prolifically after liberation, and his serialized stories were then turned into and sold as books. The famous pointer Chŏng Hyŏnŭng (see chapter 4.4) credits Chŏng Int’aek’s fiction with stimulating wide-spread interest in fiction in the post-liberation period. Chŏng’s stories resonate with many of the issues that featured prominently in the early and late colonial era magazines, among them particularly

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563 Song (1857-1925) played a central role in the signing of the agreement of Korean annexation to Japan.
564 Yi (1858-1929) was a member of the privileged class who has also been remembered as a collaborated with the Japanese around the time of annexation.
565 Sohaksaeng (1946.37).
the exploitation of children by the upper classes. In his liberation space fiction, the evil landowners are Koreans who made their easy fortune after the Japanese departed; they appear in stories such as “Palgūn kil” [Bright path]. In one story, a country girl, young Chŏnghŭi, is sold to a rich family in the city by her father who cannot afford to feed her. The girl is promised food and an education, but instead endures beatings and harsh treatment by her landlady (figure 70), who stays home and “lolls about all day, snacking, reading fiction, and napping.”

Chŏnghŭi eventually escapes her landlady’s home and is rescued by a neighbour who offers the girl a chance to make a proper living at her house. The kindly neighbour offers to buy the girl a train ticket home as well, but then suggests that it is far better for the girl to earn her own living than to accept a handout.

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566 Ŭrininara (1949.3) 12-17.
Another indication that liberated Korea has inherited serious social issues is reflected in the story “Undonghoe” [Sports day]\(^{567}\) by Chŏng Wŏnsŏp. In this story, a young boy named Kinami is preparing to run in his school’s sports day event; his participation is made particularly poignant when he takes out his skimpy lunch and eats it away from public view, because he is embarrassed at how little he has to eat. The narrator mentions that with liberation, his father was released after being jailed by the Japanese for a long time, only then to be captured by the Chosŏn authorities and thrown back in prison (indicating his father’s involvement in leftist movements). Kinami is approached by the rich kid, called “son of director Yi”; this boy tries to bribe Kinami into sabotaging the race so that the rich kid can win; this win is particularly important to the rich boy, since his entire family has come to watch (Kinami, on the other hand, has no one rooting for him). The rich boy tries to buy the boy American sweets: he offers him gum and chocolate. Kinami refuses, but indicates that he would love to have squid, a Korean snack, instead. But when Kinami realizes what the rich kid wants him to do in exchange, Kinami refuses and goes on to win the race. This piece indicates that social inequality persists, and also hints at the fact that Korean thugs have replaced the corrupt and cruel Japanese authorities.

6.9 Division and the United States: 1948-1950

The Korean peninsula was formally divided in 1948; the division was marked by the proclamation of the South Korean government on 15 August of 1948 and the declaration of the establishment of North Korea on 9 September 1948. The division is not readily detected or reflected in the magazines: the leftist magazine Ŭrininara, for example, continued to publish

\(^{567}\) Ŭrininara (1949.5) 18-23.
works by leftist writers An Hœnam and Hyœn Tœk, and illustrator Chœng Hyœnœung in 1949. In 1949, writers still referred to the peninsula as a whole, as is apparent in the rightist magazine *Sohaksaeng*; for example, in April 1949, in an article about Indonesia, Korea appears undivided (figure 71):

![Figure 71 Indonesia](image)

While there isn’t yet evidence of ideological censorship, there is evidence of subtle yearning for a part of Korea that is now out of reach, such as is expressed in Yi Woonsu’s poem “Chœn’gittae” [Electric Poles]:

Electric poles, electric poles
Standing in line in the windy fields
Hand in hand, how far do you go?
Over mountains, across fields, how far do you go?

Do you reach as far as
Hamgyœng Province,
to my father?

They say that electric poles bring word from afar
That you can press your ear and hear words coming from over one thousand *li*.

Electric poles, electric poles
Bring me news of my father
who does not come no matter how long I wait.

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*Sohaksaeng* (1949.3) 27.
The piece “So iyagi” [A Tale of Two Cows] reads like an allegory about the politics of division. Two cows are brutally driven out of their pasture by hunters who set fire to their habitat (and thus also cause the exile of a rather unlikely group of animals that includes tigers, lions, monkeys and squirrels). The cows are separated, and the narrative follows only one who is rescued by a kindly farmer. The surviving cow pines for its friend, whose fate remains unknown.

Another reference to the new political reality of division can be found in the story “Ŏnjena k’ŭn ttŭs ūl p’umja: ŏrinin nal ūl majihaya” [Let us always dream big: thoughts on children’s day]. The narrator addresses the young readers, saying:

You are the youth of our nation. Our nation was born last year and will grow and develop. In order for our nation to grow, you young people have to grow and make this nation into a great nation with your own hands. The growth of this nation depends entirely on your proper growth. To grow properly, you must first be tough in a child-appropriate way. Children who nag their parents when it is cold and say, “Oh,

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569 Chŏng T'aebŏng, Ōrininara (1949.1) 12-14.
570 So Hyŏn, Sohakaeng (1949..5) 6-8.
it’s cold! It’s cold!” are not tough. Tough children are those that run outside and warm up by moving their bodies. Tough children are not those who cry when they are scolded, but apologize with a bow and modestly say “I was wrong” and decide not to do their bad deed again…. Tough and vivacious children — this is precisely the symbol and spirit of our nation.

Some stories reflect a patronizing approach, taken by writers such as Pak Hwamok (1924-2005), who describes the plight of refugees from North Korea as pitiful. In Pak’s story “Kun pam changsa iyagi” [Tale of roasted chestnuts], a successful business boy by the name of Pongnami (Lucky South) invites a taciturn boy he spots watching him across the street to share some of his roasted chestnuts. It is the middle of winter, and the boy is clearly hungry and underdressed. It turns out that the boy, Haksu, is a refugee from the north, and has come with his father and mother; they do not have an appropriate place to sleep. Haksu opens up to the boy, and by the end of the story Haksu learns to sell his own chestnuts across the street. The two boys smile at each other from their stands, sealing their newfound generosity and solidarity.

6.9.1 The US in Post-Division Children’s literature

The role that the USAMGIK played in shaping post-liberation South Korea is detailed in the seminal work of Cumings (1981) and also in Millett’s study of the US in post-liberation Korea, which he opens with the statement that “the Koreans—at least the educated political elite—knew a great deal about Americans. They regarded them as the most selfless and helpful

571 Pak was an active poet for children who also identified strongly as a Christian. He was born in North Korea and lived and studied in Manchuria.
572 The child’s name consists of two characters: Pok (福) and Nam, which could be both South (南, i.e. South Korea) or boy (男).
foreigners…” Korea’s interest in new political order is reflected in the children’s magazines, where increasing exposure is given to foreign countries that are examined from different political and historical angles. In the early years after liberation, however, the US receives no more attention than other nations; articles about the US include one such as this one, from 1946, titled “Miguksŏ kajyŏ on koksik” [Grains imported from the US], which expresses a certain anxiety regarding the debt to the US. The narrator notes that since liberation, Korea has received grains from the United States valued at 1.8 million dollars, and expresses concern about how this debt will ever be paid off.

By 1949, however, the tone adopted toward the US changes. A two-page layout titled “Miguk ŭi ŏrinidŭl”[American children] explains that all readers are now familiar with the United States thanks to the close relationship that has been formed between South Korea and the US since liberation. Korean children are no different from Americans, except that Korean children have to “get organized” if they want to exceed their American counterparts. Pae also notes that American children do not fight amongst themselves, and that the rich children with roller skates play alongside the poorer children. The article intimates that this is a model that is lacking in Korea, and that it is one that should be followed.

In children’s postliberation fiction, it is not so much the United States that is at fault but the fickleness of those opportunist Koreans who switched alliances quickly after the defeat of the Japanese. In the short story “Isanghan sŏnsaengnim” [Strange Teacher] by Ch’ae Mansik (1902-1950), teacher Pak is a despised instructor under the Japanese who is particularly strict.

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574 Sohaksaeng 1946.40.
575 Pae Chunho in Ŭrininara (1949.11) 12-14.
576 Ŭrininara (1949.1) 22-27.
with schoolchildren, punishing them for any use of Korean on the playground. After liberation, he is temporarily humiliated, as the school is taken over by the kinder teacher Kang, who actually spoke Korean to the children despite the fact that this was not allowed. But Kang is expelled, accused of Communist activities, and Pak takes over the school. The narrator does not openly criticize Pak but does so circumspectly by attributing to him ugly physical and facial features. The narrator ends the piece abruptly after describing Pak’s toadyism to all things American (which have simply replaced all things Japanese), saying only in the last line: “In any case, Teacher Pak was a very strange teacher.” (Figure 73):

![Figure 73 Teacher Pak](image)

Ch’ae’s story, published here in a children’s magazine, is remarkably similar to some of his other stories published for adults with similar themes of fickleness of loyalty toward the colonial authority. Famous for his novel “T’aep’yŏng ch’ŏnha” [Peace Under Heaven], and known particularly as a satirist in stories such as “Ch’ŏja” [The Wife and Children], “Redimeidŭ insaeng” [Ready-Made Life], “Ch’isuk” [My Innocent Uncle], and perhaps the most

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similar story to the one published in Sohaeksaeng, “Maeng Sunsa” [Constable Maeng].\textsuperscript{580} One of his stories, “Minjok ŭi choein” [Public offender], has been described as “a semi-autobiographical apologia for those branded as collaborators for their failure to actively oppose Japanese colonial rule.”\textsuperscript{581} The accusation of teacher Pak, while it does not come in words, comes in the form of his physical description that is deformed, presumably because of his immoral character. While Ch’ae tones down his accusation of toadyism toward the US by closing the story with the rather flat conclusion that the teacher was merely “strange”, its place is significant in the magazine at a time when the US had inherited and for the most part preserved the systems of Japanese surveillance. Stronger language against the United States is not visible anywhere else in the magazine.

6.9.2 Conclusion: The Liberated Child and the Rediscovery of Tongsim

The period bracketed between liberation on 15 August 1945 and division in August/September of 1948, often called the Liberation Space, is significant because in that window of time, publication bans were lifted that allowed for a plurality of voices, until the establishment of the kukka poanpŏp [National Security Law] in 1948. Previous scholarship (Yi Chaech’ŏl 1978; Kim Chonghŏn 2008) has also proclaimed the liberation space as a formative period of children’s literature for that reason.\textsuperscript{582} On the surface, then, it appears that the Liberation Space was a period during which contending voices and visions were able to compete openly over what they

\textsuperscript{579} In Modern Korean Fiction, an Anthology (2005) 95-112.
\textsuperscript{580} In Acta Koreana (1999) 2, 145-152.
\textsuperscript{581} In Modern Korean Fiction, an Anthology (2005) 96.
\textsuperscript{582} Kim Chonghŏn points out that early scholarship such as that by Yi Chaech’ŏl was shaped by anti-Communist ideology at the time of its publication, something which tainted his and
believed was the true essence of Korean culture and identity. Indeed, children’s magazines published in the liberation space reflect the intensity of feeling surrounding questions of where Korea’s future lay. Never was it spelled out more clearly that the future of Korea was most decisively in the hands of the young. Since everything was at stake, a clear understanding of language and history, and a more sophisticated knowledge of science and technology, accompanied by young and sound bodies, were crucial as never before. The question is whether liberation in a more inclusive sense—liberation of the nation, liberation of publications, liberation of thought—really took place, and whether it carried with it implications about the role of the child and the way in which the child was now expected to carry on the great promise of the future. To put the question more bluntly, was the child really liberated? If so, in what way? What did liberation mean in terms of the way that adults saw and wrote for children?

Literary critics in the liberation space were well aware that certain constructed paradigms were controlling and shaping the way that adults were writing for children. Some of the prevailing paradigms of the past were already under attack: the child-as-hero/child-as-victim and the child-as-social-activist constructs were each in their own way participating in a nationalistic or highly politicized and didactic narrative that was manipulating the child to its own ends. In a 1948 article titled “Tongsim” [The Child Mind]583, one critic argues that the term tongsim has been subjected to a kind of inflation; it has been tossed around so frequently that it has lost its value. He insists that this term is not objective but one that has been appropriated for

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583 Ch’oe Yŏngsu, Adong Munhwa (1948.1) 101. The magazine was connected to the journal Adong Munhak published by the Chosŏn munhakka tongmaeng, a left-leaning organization of writers that included Yi Kiyŏng and Yi T’aejun, for example. It was aimed at an adult readership and was published only once under that name, after which its name was changed to Ŏrininara.
convenience’s sake; in order to recover this term, Ch’oe argues, the world of the *tongsim* must be unlearned, it must be returned to its natural state. It must also be taken out of the hands of the adults and re-constructed in a way that is beneficial for the real *tongsim*. Notably, Ch’oe does not go so far as to argue against the existence of *tongsim* — indeed, his article calls for a resurrection of the term — but he recognizes the constructedness of it and calls for a self-awareness that might free the term from bondage to adult agendas. It is significant that Ch’oe acknowledges the constructedness of child-as-*tongsim* at this point in time, but that he takes *tongsim* so very much for granted. He assumes that there is a knowable child essence, a child-mind or child-heart that has to be resurrected by adults to its rightful place.

Kim Chonghŏn (2008) claims that there was a shift in the paradigm of the child that can be traced in the genre of *tongsi*, or children’s poetry. Kim argues that while some poets reproduced past discourses of innocence which merely worked to maintain the hegemony and control of society of what its children should be, two poets in particular managed to subvert these ideologies and arrive at a new kind of construction that presented an alternative understanding of the child.

Kim argues that up until the liberation space, children’s literature was written so as to manipulate the reader’s sympathy; he argues that children’s literature since the 1920s was sentimental, and was meant more to comfort its (child) audience than anything else. But in the liberation space, children’s literature is shaped by writers both right of the political spectrum such as Yun Sŏkchung, who was invested in reviving the Korean language in poetry for children; and leftist writers who wanted to instil a new vision regarding the nation that was more sensitive to social class issues. Kim explains that while Pang Chŏnhwan “discovered” the child as a separate entity differentiated from adults, the child of the liberation space was
acknowledged as an agent of power.\textsuperscript{584} What differentiates the poetry in this period is the fact that these poems spoke from a universal \textit{tongsim} experience, and not from individual experiences with ideological agendas. Kim claims that for the first time, poets were concerned with the question of how to understand \textit{tongsim}.\textsuperscript{585} It is here that the liberation space marks a real departure from the past: Kim observes a new kind of construction of subjectivity in the liberation space. “The child does not learn about the anxieties and instabilities of the world from the mouths of adults or through education; the child achieves wisdom by living among adults, running errands, watching over her siblings. Through the de-centering of the child [in the text], the child comes to understand life and own his rights as a full member of society.”\textsuperscript{586} The child, according to Kim, is no longer a victim of society reduced to venting and bemoaning his fate, but is now constructed as an adult-in-progress who, in the process, achieves his or her own subjectivity and does so not passively but as an agent of action.

Kim supports his arguments with an examination of children’s poetry from the liberation space, paying particular attention to the poetry of Yun Pokchin, Yun Sŏkchung, Kwŏn T’aеŭng and Yi Wŏnsu. It is among these poets that Kim finds two reprehensible interpretations of \textit{tongsim}, and two commendable ones. The reprehensible interpretations include a utopian vision (Yun Pokchin) which eventually falls into schematic formulas of class struggle, and an idealized \textit{tongsim} (Yun Sŏkchung) which simply reproduces discourses of innocence.\textsuperscript{587} Commendable interpretations of \textit{tongsim}, in which the poets attempt to find the real child in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{584} Kim Chonghŏn (2008) 238.
\item \textsuperscript{585} Kim Chonghŏn (2008) 239.
\item \textsuperscript{586} Kim Chonghŏn (2008) 250-1.
\item \textsuperscript{587} According to Yun Sŏkchung, “\textit{tongsim} is the heart of humanity. It is our conscience. It transcends time and space and can communicate with animals, trees and rocks; it is the communicator of affection.” (Quoted in Kim Chonghŏn 2003, 196)
\end{itemize}
public space, include the work of Kwŏn T’aeŭng; and the work of Yi Wŏnsu is commendable to the extent that its constructs a real (as opposed to abstract) self-awareness. The multiple *tongsim* discourses compelled the poets to look for new models, resulting in structural changes (freer poetic verse) and a restyling of content (changes in more traditional uses of repetition and rhythm).^{589}

Kim argues that it was only in the liberation space poetry of Kwŏn T’aeŭng and Yi Wŏnsu that there was an attempt to break the paradigm set up by Pang Chŏngwhan. Although Pang was motivated by a sincere hope to raise social awareness of children’s plight, advocate for their human rights, and elevate their social status, in effect his approach simply reproduced the hegemonic social discourse and paved the way for the manipulation of children into colonial subjects. Kwŏn T’aeŭng, however, rejected the constructed “imagined child” and attempted to bring the “real child” into his poetry, and Yi Wŏnsu engaged directly with social hierarchy through the eyes of the child but without falling into the didactic trappings of the political left.^{590}

Kwŏn T’aeŭng rejected the notion of the abstract child, the imagined and idealized child that was divorced from tradition; rather, his poetic attention was focused on real children playing in their village communities in nature. The children that occupy his poetry are children who seek out games in nature, and mature through play.^{591} Kwŏn’s poetry sought to “unmask” children of the guises placed upon them by education, culture and ideology and find their “true

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^{588} Kwŏn (1918-1950) studied at Waseda University but was jailed for a year for anti-government activities. He returned to Korea and wrote children’s poetry before dying of tuberculosis in 1951.

^{589} Kim commends the work of the class-conscious poets, whose work, on one hand, helped to spread interest in children’s fiction by engaging many writers and involving them in the writing of children’s poetry; on the other hand, these writers had a political agenda that overwhelmed their creative process.

image”.\textsuperscript{592} Nine of Kwŏn’s poems are staged in nature or in some point of the farming process; four of his poems capture children’s play. What Kim emphasizes is that even when children play in Kwŏn’s poetry, they are still deeply connected with the earth and not isolated from the workplace of the adults. This play poem, for example, titled “changma pi kaein nal” [When the rains cleared].\textsuperscript{593}

Now the rains have cleared.
The dragonflies dash, pleased.
We are fishermen off to the creek.

Kim argues that Kwŏn’s literary child was a “true” child with a universality in its literariness, and that it is through such poems that the children “discovered” in Kwŏn’s poetry gain subjectivity, unlike children that were constructed and constrained by economic or political ideologies. However, the question can be asked as to whether Kwŏn, and like him the critic Kim, did not fall into the trap of his own constructed paradigm. The poems that Kwŏn provides do, indeed, celebrate moments of idyllic play in nature; but considering the harsh reality of the times, suffered particularly by farmers, one wonders if the imagery and language of Kwŏn’s choices have their own social agenda that equates child and nature and constructs children as free and uninhibited. Kim argues that Kwŏn’s intention is to show children as an organic part of life and nature, and as human beings who mature alongside adults. While it is true that Kwŏn’s voice is different from other poet ventriloquists who manipulated their child characters, the seamless relationship he forges between child and nature seems suspect, as in this poem:\textsuperscript{594}

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\textsuperscript{591} Kim Chonghŏn (2008) 186.
\textsuperscript{592} Kim Chonghŏn (2008) 187.
\textsuperscript{593} Kwŏn T’ae’ŭng, Sohakaeng 1948.59.
\textsuperscript{594} Quoted in Kim Chonghŏn (2008) 199.
Leading the cow home,
the child lost his grip on the tether.

The cow followed along,
the child chased from behind.
They skip and jump competing to see
who will get home first.

Who’s gonna be first? Skippity hop.
Who’s gonna be first? Clippity clop.

The cow stops on the way to graze,
the child is panting with a big smile on his face.

While the language is undoubtedly delightful, I would argue that Kwŏn’s child-in-nature poems have their own political or ideological logic: Kwŏn brings the child out of politics, out of the messy streets into the safe and uncomplicated bosom of nature in which the child (and adult) is provided relief from the anxieties of the unknown future.

Kwŏn’s poetry for children in the liberation space was by no means divorced from politics. Many of his poems are fully engaged with the reality of their times. Kwŏn’s poems are marked by a strong sense of optimism, like “Uri tongmu” [Our friend]:

Though we wear tattered clothes
and eat vegetable gruel

_Tongmu, tongmu, our tongmu_
We are energized!

We clench our fists
and sing our songs

In this wonderful new nation
We dream again

We may not have enough to eat
Monthly wages may be postponed

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595 Sohaksaeng (1947.50).
*Tongmu, tongmu, our tongmu*

With great affection, all together

We place our arms on each other’s shoulders
And sing our songs

Again, we look for
a nation, a good place to live.

In this poem, the children are committed to supporting each other and remaining optimistic. It is a mistake, however, to assume that the merits of his poetry are in his ability to observe reality in an objective way, as Kim Chonghŏn claims. Kim interprets Kwŏn’s poetry as poems that are written not with the intention of manipulating or disciplining children, but as poems that speak from the hearts of children and reflect the inner strength that children find to cope with their situations. Note “When we grow up” from 1949:

When we hurry and
grow up
We will put the adults
to shame.

Not only will we not
threaten our siblings with guns and knives
but we’ll live happily and peacefully

When we hurry and
grow up
we will make the adults
feel ashamed.
We’ll erase the border at the 38th parallel
become a country of 30 million
and come out into the wide world.

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While this poem is marked by a strong sense of optimism, one can detect the resonance of the myth of innocence that has dominated children’s literature since its inception in the 1920s. Children are endowed with the ability to see the truth, and are therefore entrusted with the ability and even responsibility to respond to adult follies. Children here exist outside of the conflict, and in a sense they are emptied of their own complex subjectivities for political purposes.

The other poet that Kim Chonghôn presents as one who emphasized children’s subjectivity in his work and who succeeds in constructing a more complex child voice is Yi Wŏnsu. For Yi, liberation meant “opposing ideologies whose confrontation was going to create a new society.” The development of events that followed liberation was greatly disappointing to him, and so his poetry reflected an impassioned yearning for a better future.

With liberation, Yi joined the leftist Chosŏn munhakka tongmaeng organization (1946), a group that was committed to eliminating the vestiges of Japanese occupation and to a proletarian children’s literature. Yi’s work, however, did not fall into these schematic frameworks constructed by ideology but followed his own unique path, championing instead what Kim calls a “vision of the child centered on child subjectivity.” He rejected tongsimjuŭi or the ‘myth of innocence’ construct that had guided children’s literature in the hands of Pang Chŏnghwon, and insisted that the subject matter of children’s fiction and poetry had to be complex and yet pitched properly toward children’s level of understanding. Yi believed that children should not be shielded or protected from reality, and many of his poems portray hungry and poor children that are waiting for their families or waiting for the country to be at peace; at

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the same time, Yi urges them not to collapse in the face of hardship but to find inner strength to overcome. Kim Chonghŏn explains that Yi felt that the postliberation period was a precarious period in which the Japanese tyrant was now replaced by mercenary opportunists; and he condemned children’s literature for still depicting the postliberation space as an idyllic space. Yi’s poetry offered an alternative vision: one that was both engaged but optimistic, but which also maintained a lyrical voice in “Nŏ rŭl purŭnda” [Calling you].

The tree leaves are beckoning, calling you.
The zelkova tree in the schoolyard, adorned with green leaves sways in the breeze, calling you.

The flower petals, every one of them is calling you.
The wild roses along the fence emitting their wonderful smells undulating in the breeze are calling you.

Sunhŭi! Sunhŭi!

American cigarettes, American candy stacked in your carrying case you don’t come to school you wander all day. We, too, call you with choked voices.

Yi’s poems celebrate children in nature, but also empower them, as in the poem “Yŏn” [Kite].

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603 Yi Wŏnsu Nŏ rŭl purŭnda (1979) 78-9. The poem was originally published in 1946.
604 Sohaksaeng (1946.34).
My kite plays in the sky
I play on the hill

My kite flutters up high
But still follows my firm grip.

Even though I cannot fly
I play in the sky with my kite.

Looking down on this new world,
It sees a flag on each house
It hears patriotic songs in the streets

When the sun sets, the city’s lights are even prettier
It flies even in the cold evening wind.

Like Kwŏn T’aeŭng, Yi Wŏn-su also celebrates the child in nature. However, his poetry
maintains a voice that is at once joyous yet sober and grounded. Note “Chinggŏm tari”
[Stepping stones].

The rain has stopped but the waters rise
All who cross get soaked in the creek’s waters.
Heave and ho, gather the stones
Let’s line them up so that all can dance across.

Cute Kwinami of the first grade can cross without crying
The old halmŏni can cross without falling in
At night, the bunnies can hop across, too.
Let’s set down the stones, our little stones.

In conclusion, then, a review of the content of some of the children’s magazines published in the
liberation space from both left and right of the political spectrum indicates that while the system
of Japanese censorship might have been eliminated, allowing for greater freedom of expression
of political opinions, the (pure and innocent) child’s body and mind was still—perhaps more
than ever—a site of manipulation. While Yi Wŏn-su’s poetry made an attempt to relinquish some

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605 Yi Wŏn-su Nŏ rŭl purŭnda (1979) 130. This poem was originally published in 1946.
control of the adult writer over his child protagonist by allowing for layered responses to be reflected in his writing, children’s magazines from the liberation space reflect an over-arching concern over instilling a “correct” and “modern” sense of national identity. The ability to inculcate a social and political awareness and identity in children’s magazines was still predicated on an understanding of the child that had held firm since the 1920s: that the child is, in essence, pure and innocent. The tonghwa [children’s prose] genre published in the liberation space was particularly susceptible to the ‘myth of innocence’; in these stories, the child was often “natural” (able, for example, to communicate freely with animals and plants) and tame (good, kind and considerate). While the myth of innocence has been condemned in western scholarship on children’s literature because “the myth of childhood innocence… ‘empties’ the child of its own political agency, so that it may more perfectly fulfill the symbolic demands we make upon it. The innocent child wants nothing, desires nothing, and demands nothing—except, perhaps, its own innocence.”606 This construction served different political purposes at different stages of Korean society and culture under colonial rule. In post-liberation Korean children’s print culture, the child had not been liberated at all.

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This thesis has examined the child as a site of ideological inscription through the texts and illustrations of children’s magazines from 1908-1950. By looking at a representative range of magazines along the political spectrum, I have demonstrated how the child—as a crucial site of ideological inscription—was constructed and manipulated in children’s magazines through a negotiation with the discourses of colonial and newly liberated Korea. At the same time, I point to the existence of voices that wove a more complex tapestry and which, by problematizing the more prevalent constructions of the (enlightened/pure and innocent/rebel, politically conscious/wild, natural) child, nuanced the hegemonic discourses and provided their young readers with images that reflected, in part, the experience of being a young person during the tumultuous first fifty years of the twentieth century.

My inquiry began with an examination of the social and political conditions that opened the space for the emergence of children’s culture in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century. The men responsible for founding the industry of publication for children’s magazines had two main sources of inspiration. They were inspired, on the one hand, by their firsthand witnessing of a vibrant children’s culture in Japan. This inspiration came at a point in time when the child had emerged at the center of social discourse in Korea and had come to embody Korea’s only hope for the future. My analysis of the magazine Sonyŏn revealed that the child was expected to turn its back on the past in no uncertain terms. The evils that plagued Korea at the turn of the century—economic and social stagnation, the looming threat of colonialism following the defeat of China in the first Sino-Japanese war of 1894-5 and then of Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5—created a sense of grave urgency that was projected onto the
future generation. Besides being urged to turn their backs on the past—and even to think of themselves as orphans—youth were also encouraged to master new, modern knowledge. This modern knowledge included familiarization with the military and nationalistic giants of the nineteenth century, and included an encouragement to embrace more generally the individualism coming out of the western movements of enlightenment. The written texts were supported also by a diverse range of visual images; these images enriched the text by providing an accompanying “visual lexicon” of militarism, but also contributed to the sense of time-space compression. In Sonyŏn, young readers had access not only to reading material but to photographs (of mostly western monuments), illustrations, and even graphic design which tapped into their imagination and enhanced their reading experience.

While Sonyŏn is considered by some to be the watershed publication for young readers, some argue that it was in fact the magazine Ŭrini, in the hands of Pang Chŏngwhan, that signalled the birth of children’s literature in 1920. Chapter Three follows the development of youth groups and the indigenous Korean religion of Ch’ŏndogyo, which inspired Pang to emphasize the importance of a concept he called tongsim, the child-essence or child-mind, in his writing. Pang’s stories and his own creative-writing essays attest to the compassion he felt for the children of Chosŏn, who were, in his mind, the ultimate victims of colonial oppression; he was passionately committed to reforming the minds of adults who perpetuated their own form of “colonialism” on children by ignoring their agency. His stories created protagonists of faultless purity and angelic goodness. To answer to the question posed in the introduction—what children were supposed to “be” and “do”, I argue that Pang, perhaps unintentionally, positioned the child as a performer of victimhood. Given his ideological background and his social activism, there is no doubt that part of his construction may have been a product of his sense of
urgency regarding the need to protect the child. But his works created an adverse effect. They robbed children of agency and denied them the complexity or even spiritual resilience that might allow them to resist, making the child an even more pliable image in the hands of hegemonic ideologies.

Chapter Four examined another construction of the child that emerged in the mid-1920s and continued for the following decade. Socialism captured the imagination of many in Chosŏn, and inspired hopes for the creation of a new society that would be more egalitarian and empowering to its citizens. The freedom to express and explore these new political ideologies was granted, in part, by a relaxation in colonial cultural and censorship policies following the resistance movement of March First, 1919. The children’s writers who took up their pens in the mid-1920s—many of whom went on to become prominent literary figures in North Korea—argued for a new kind of child. Theirs was not a pure creature of angelic disposition with the ability to withstand all kinds of abuse; their children were angry rebels who recognized inequalities and corruption for what they are and were clenching their fist in anger. The child of the proletarian writers could not attend school because he was too poor; because she had to work in a factory; and because the child’s parents were timorous and fearful and unable to seize control from their oppressors.

The construction of the angry rebel child was promptly censored in the mid-1930s, when the magazines Sinsonyŏn and Pyŏllara were shut down, only resuming publication again after liberation. Chapter Five examined yet another construction of the child in late colonial Korea as reflected in the magazine Sonyŏn, published between 1937 and 1940. The militarization in Japan and accelerated assimilation policies in the colony seeped into the texts and images of Sonyŏn. Essays focused on fighter planes and bombs, Hitler’s youth movements,
and countless reports about the war and letters to and from the front. The fighting was aestheticized through delightful descriptions of child war play and heroic soldiers. The visuals in Sonyŏn enhanced the aestheticization of war through innocuous images of happy soldiers, saluting children, and robust colonial subjects of a prospering empire. One striking textual and visual image that recurs in this period, however, is that of the natural child: the child that is in tune with nature and at times almost a natural part of it. Julia Thomas’s theorization of the nature discourse in Japan, along with research on the “local color” phenomenon in colonial Korea, contributes to an understanding of this natural child as an anti-modern construction that facilitated the subjugation and control of the colonial subject. But while this “natural” construction nudged the child toward compatibility with colonial discourses, some writerly voices, such as that of Hyŏn Tŏk, rose to the surface and offered a construction of the child that exhibited a wider range of human emotion and ambiguity.

The final chapter examines children’s magazines published after liberation, through division and up until the Korean War. As expected, Ōrininara and Sohaksaeng practically burst at the seams with images and text that celebrated newfound liberation. Japan was deprecitated and besmirched at every opportunity, and a heated discussion ensued about the urgent need to purify the Korean language through the elimination of both Japanese and Chinese influences. However, as Chapter Six shows, the discourse of language purity did not originate in the postcolonial period but signified, to a great extent, a continuation of the conversation started in the 1890s and first decade of the 20th century but was stifled throughout the colonial period. In fact, what emerges from the texts and images of the liberation magazines is a scrambling effort to reconstruct national symbols through historical figures and moments in order to reinforce a quickly emerging nationalist identity. Much of the discursive regulation that was expressed
through images of self-control and discipline that had been prominent in the late colonial period were continued, in a slightly changed form, after liberation. Despite the existence of voices that complicated and nuanced the post-liberation child construct, the child was co-opted completely soon after division and the ensuing Korean War by the new anti-communist discourse. The anti-communist discourse consequently paralyzed storytelling to a large degree until the 1980s.

Viewed together, then, the chapters of this dissertation illustrate how the Korean child in the twentieth century became a site of ideological inscription. As John Stephens explains:

Children’s fiction belongs firmly within the domain of cultural practices which exist for the purpose of socializing their target audience. Childhood is seen as the crucial formative period in the life of a human being, the time for basic education about the nature of the world, how to live in it, how to relate to other people, what to believe, what and how to think – in general, the intention is to render the world intelligible. Such ideas as these are neither essential nor absolute in their constitution but are constructed within social practices, and the intelligibility which a society offers its children is a network of ideological positions, many of which are neither articulated nor recognized as being essentially ideological.

In Chosón and postcolonial Korea, the child was imagined differently across decades and across political and social convictions. But images of the child were appropriated by adult writers who were more concerned with socializing children to satisfy their own objectives than with looking into children’s eyes and imagining their fears, hopes, jealousies, anger, joy, selfish pettiness, and all the other range of human emotions that children must have experienced. The division and ensuing strident North Korean-style communism in the north and military anti-North-Korean-communism in the south stymied the development of children’s literature for decades to follow.

The approach taken in this dissertation has been a chronological one, and this approach has several disadvantages. The danger of marching through the decades and looking for
landmarks to define and differentiate one period from the next prevents a more complicated understanding of the history of children’s literature as fluid, as one that reaches forward and backward, as one that contains as many inconsistencies and repetitions as it does clear-cut and representative characteristics. Also, any attempt at an overview falls into the potential danger of over-simplification and under-analysis, and this dissertation may be guilty of both. The reason I chose this approach, however, is because no work of its kind has ever been done in Korean, and no analysis of Korean children’s literature has ever appeared in the English language. One of the achievements of this dissertation, then, lies in the fact that I have created a preliminary road map of the way in which the child reader was conceived before and after liberation. It was my intention to show how writers both deliberately and unconsciously responded to social discourses—Social Darwinism, modernity, colonialism, socialism, and nationalism—and how these discourses bled into the magazines and shaped their narratives and visual texts. Recognizing these intersections between discourse and children’s print culture contributes greatly, I believe, to our knowledge of how Koreans negotiated and navigated the rough waters of colonial subjection. Janet Poole comments astutely on the inability of some novels before the 1920s to depict a future in Korea. Perhaps the construct of the child was a way for writers to reach for an imagined future at a time when the future, at least the future of an independent Korea, was hardly imaginable. It is for this reason that the child is important, and that children’s magazines are indispensable to our understanding of the colonial and postcolonial period. This dissertation, I believe, is a project that can pave the way for more complex examinations in the future.

The second achievement of this dissertation is the attention I have drawn to the

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pervasive myth of innocence and the concept of *tongsim*, or the child-heart or child-mind, in the trajectory of literature for children, and its implications as an agency-emptying mechanism that allows adults to ‘pour in’ ideology as they see fit. The concept of *tongsim* has held, and continues to hold today, a position of great importance in both primary and secondary sources in Korea. Not only is the idea of the existence of *tongsim* still taken for granted in South Korea today as something that writers must keep in mind when they write for children, but it is alive and well in North Korea as well. A study of children’s literature in North Korea remains a project for another monograph, but the existence of North Korean academic publications like the 1995 study *Tongsim kwa adong munhak ch’angjak* [*Tongsim and creative writing for children*]—which describes in detail, for example, what colors and what kinds of phrases must be used to best address children’s *tongsim* essence—indicates that this concept still captures the imagination of writers when they imagine their child audience.

A third achievement of this dissertation, and one that is only preliminary, was the discovery of the masterful voice of Hyŏn Tŏk. I first came across upon his works in a paper I wrote for a symposium hosted in 2008 at the University of Washington, and the moment I began reading his collection *P’odo wa Kusŭl*, I knew that I had discovered a poetic voice and masterful craftsmanship that has few equals in Korean literature, for children or otherwise. Hyŏn’s uniqueness lies not only in the fact that he is one of the only writers who attempted to climb into children’s heads and see the world—in all its joys, jealousies, suffering, and humor—with an even tone. His work is remarkable even more for the fact that he wrote at a time, in the late 1930s, when military rhetoric was growing stronger by the day, leaving, one imagines, little space for sincere expressions of quiet resistance. Hyŏn achieved this but I fear that the one story

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608 Poole 13.
from the late colonial period that I translated here has not done justice to Hyŏn’s work. It is my hope that in the future I will be able to bring his short stories into English and showcase them in the light they deserve.

Much work lies ahead, both in children’s literature in general and on children’s magazines of the colonial period, in particular. For one thing, a comprehensive history of childhood in Korea would greatly illuminate the question of the emergence of child culture in early twentieth century Korea. This would require a consolidated, close reading of texts studied by children in the pre-enlightenment period, research on the history of education in Korea, and an examination of a wide range of textual and visual sources (such as diaries and paintings) that would indicate how children were viewed in society.

In addition, an analysis of children’s magazines in tandem with other visual and literary products of their time can further illuminate their position in the grand scheme of cultural production of the colonial period. The colonial period saw the emergence of films, both domestic and foreign, and the production of the image of the child and its reception in film would add an important dimension to this study. Likewise, an in-depth examination of the construction of gender could not be included in this dissertation. This, and other thematic inquiries, would contribute to a more complex and nuanced understanding of the construction of the child in Korean children’s literature. An investigation of the postwar trajectories of children’s literature in north and south Korea would also contribute to an understanding of the ways in which the colonial origins of children’s literature shaped literary production in the two Koreas, but that, too, would be another dissertation.

Nodelman and Reimer note that “Children’s literature is a body of texts defined by its
intended audience. What it is and how adults think about it are intertwined with society’s ideas about children – about who they are and how and what they need to read.”

Cleverly and Phillips also posit that,

Models of childhood… are disseminated in diverse ways – through the theories of philosophers and psychologists, through childcare handbooks, through the arts and the various popular media, through biographies, and by word of mouth, which remains as popular as ever. And it is not only parents, teachers, and educational researchers who fall heir to the latest perceptions – for children themselves hold sets of ideas about their own childhoods, as evidenced in distinctive youth cultures, movements for children’s rights, the contents of diaries kept by schoolchildren, and, of course, the ideas that persist about their childhoods when they have grown to maturity.

The task of future research on Korean children’s literature lies in uncovering and exposing the multiple layers of the construction of the child produced and reproduced in both public and private, in high art and in popular culture. If the child was ever viewed as a separate entity that does not have access to self-knowledge or knowledge of the world until he or she reached an age of maturity or was given permission to do so, this is no longer the case. The multiple discourses that shape the child, including those that children develop about themselves, are crucial indications of the future that we are building for ourselves and for our children.

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609 Nodelman 79.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Brave Boys of the Sea by Ch’oe Namsŏn

Three boys of the Sea,
are the grandest, most splendid children
of all those multitudes on the Korean peninsula.

There, a water pillar rises up,
charges the sky, churlish
and sinister.

Behold! Their single-sailed Boat, small and narrow
barely keeps afloat,
but their spry faces have no trace of fear.

With arms of iron and with might of Kŭmgang
they defeat foe after foe.
Their torrential courage is astonishing.

Let us turn our ears
to the reedy resonance of their powerful song:
“Ŏiŏra ŭiŏra, dear countrymen

Of the Korean Peninsula, who live by the vast, open sea,
our hillocks are awash with water, fragrant and clear,
our land is covered by salt-tinged, dry air.

We must act, we must labor
until the snows of Mount Paekdu melt
until the ocean waters dry,

So that evil strangers from a foreign land,
will not invade us, and
so that we will not be shamed.

This wonderful treasure, entrusted by Hananim,
this beautiful heirloom, passed down from the ancestors,
we must beautifully protect it for eternity!

Only at the very end, after the Lord made this world,
He attached the flower, our peninsula, to the Great Earth,
wiped his palms, He spoke:

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‘There is a reason that I place you in the world.  
When your time comes, forget not and be diligent.  
Do your duty!

Don’t wait until it is too late.  
Know this: a catastrophe will beset you; yet  
I expect great things of you.’

He commands us to become great vessels  
and when our divinely ordained task becomes clear.  
Know it is a trial, and accept it.

Long have we suffered in silence;  
violation has been like sweet honey to us.  
Mock us not—for there is a purpose.

Will it be today? Will it be tomorrow? -- Wait with patience  
‘till the Eastern Sky bursts with the rising sun,  
and then act quickly, and lose not a moment.

If your belief runs deep and you persist,  
you will not be defeated;  
as they say, nothing can stand in the way of a hero.

Valiant children, brave hearts!  
You will prevail and be victorious.  
The Dragon Fortress will be ours

And we will preside over  
the Temple of Jerusalem.  
Once we are the proud Kings of the World,

We will build a road in the Rock of Truth and pave it with love,  
and fulfill our dream of founding the Land of Heaven here;  
from start to finish, the future will be impeccable.

When we bring order to the world --  
if we believe that effort builds virtue --  
then inch by inch, greatness will come

To fulfill this grand calling, start with yourself.  
Then together, use all our might and make ourselves  
beautiful, and complete.

Great Korean peninsula! Beautiful as silk, Land of Joy!  
Our history will live out its full potential
mobilizing the duties of the people.

Our land will become the citadel of the King on Earth. 
Please lead with diligence so that this land 
will flourish for a hundred million years.

Ōiōra ōiōra, look at us! 
In such waters, in such a boat, we struggle on! 
Our endeavors are not for the weak of heart.

We believe and depend on our strong hearts, on our formidable minds 
and the virtues that we accrue in the midst of this struggle 
will result, before long, in the conquering of the sea! …”

Lovely, courageous boys! 
They fulfill their duty to the very end 
and display long forgotten sea-faring skills.

Their song is carried off by the Southeast Winds, 
and sadly, can be heard no more. 
But while their voices fall silent, we know what comes next:

I bless you, and honor you, 
And wish that you remain this way forever
And I beg you to invoke your nature

Korean peninsula—body hidden by the sea
Korean peninsula—blessed with such brave children
Korean peninsula—endowed with such good fortune!

I know that you are the youngest child of the King of the World. 
May you embrace your complete and pure happiness 
and become the Shimmering Light, under Heaven, on Earth.
Appendix B: A Shirt to Last Ten Thousand Years (Mannyŏn syassũ⁶¹²) by Pang Chŏnghwăn

It was time for Biology.

“Who knows what animals have no teeth?”

Teacher repeated the question twice, but not a single student raised his hand. Suddenly, one hand shot up followed by an enthusiastic, “I do!”

“Yes, Ch’angnami. What’s the answer?”

“Animals without teeth? Why, old gentlemen, of course!”

“Scoundrel!” The teacher cried. The entire class was in stitches, but Ch’angnami remained calm and smug in his seat.

It was time for Ethics.

“A single match has burned down thirty homes. Beware of the terrifying danger of a single match.” Teacher explained in grave tones. But he was hardly out of the classroom when heard, loud and clear,

“A single drop, and then another, has collected into a flood. Beware, ye all, of the terrifying power of a single drop of snot running from your noses…”

Teacher swallowed back his laughter, turned around and glared.

“Who said that? Ch’angnami again, wasn’t it?” The giggling class quieted down

⁶¹² “萬年 色쁘” in: Ĭrini (1927) 5.3, 38-44.
“Yes, sir. I thought you had already left, sir. I won’t do it again.” Ch’angnam bolted upright as a soldier. Teacher’s feigned anger was replaced by a big smile. He left the classroom without another word.

The classroom erupted into laughter and clapping.

Ch’angnami was the most lively and cheerful student in the entire first year class of high school.

His name was Ch’angnam and his last name was Ha—just like An Ch’angnam, Korea’s first pilot. The kids nicknamed him Pilot, and he was, in fact, confident and easy-going as a pilot.

He was dirt poor, judging from the fact that he never replaced his hat even when it was worn out, and when his pants got holes they would get covered by patches. But he never looked concerned and never seemed jealous of other people’s stuff.

While other kids scowled or frowned, he always told jokes and when his friends struggled he always gave out good advice. Pilot grew very popular.

He was an articulate and smooth talker, so that whenever there was betting involved he always won. But no one actually knew whether he was rich or poor. Some kids tried to follow him, but they gave up halfway. This was because he lived 20 li away from school.

Even though he was a big clown, he never never said a word about his family or his situation. He was what they called a “heavy mouth,” meaning that he was always discrete. But it wasn’t just his mouth that was heavy; his butt was heavy as well, and he was forever getting in trouble with the gym teacher because he couldn’t clear the monkey bars.
His friends sometimes spotted him practicing and working up a sweat in the school yard even after everyone else had gone home.

“Hey guys, Pilot’s alone practicing on the bars.”

“I know! I saw him sweating like a pig.”

“He’s getting better, isn’t he?”

“Are you kidding? He’s practiced more than 200 times, but he still can’t get through them.”

“I know! I saw him slapping his patched-up butt and yelling, ‘Fatso! Fatso!’”

“Slapping his own butt?”

“What a freak!”

They all laughed. Ch’angnam was his classmates favourite topic of discussion.

2.

It was the dead of winter. And it was freezing cold.

On one frigid morning the first bell rung. Ch’angnam, who had never been absent once, hadn’t arrived.

“Newsflash! Pilot’s absent!”

“Last night’s vicious wind must’ve blown him away.”

“Maybe he’s sick. He might’ve caught a cold.”

“Don’t be such a know-it-all.”

Everyone in class was talking about Ch’angnam.
Half of first period was over when the door opened. In walked Ch’angnami with a bright red face.

The teacher and students smiled, delighted to see him. Then they looked down at his shoes and laughed.

His right shoe was wrapped up in a bolt of cloth, tied around his shoe with rope and another handkerchief. It was gigantic.

“Mr. Ha Ch’angnam, why are you late for school today?”

“Ah,” he answered calmly, and lifted his hugely bloated shoe. “On my way over one of my shoes fell apart and was flapping as I walked. I found a piece of rope and tied it together but it fell apart again. It took me six tries to get it fixed. That’s why I’m late.”

At the end of class and during recess, Ch’angnami took off his tattered shoe and patiently wrapped it with a handkerchief and another strip of cloth.

Then it was time for gym, which they hated even on warm days. And today it was frost-bitingly cold.

“How can they make us do gym today?”

“That meany is going to make us take off our tops off again. I just know it!” The time for that hateful class was upon them.

Their blunt and unforgiving teacher, liked to carry himself with a military air, was shouting his commands when he saw Ch’angnami’s bizarre shoe.

“Ha Ch’angnam! You think you can exercise with that thing? Cheeky boy.”
“Yes, sir, I sure can. Watch this!” And Ch’angnam jumped, sprinted and marched in place without even being asked.

Even the gym teacher was left speechless. “I guess you did a good job fixing those.” He said, and he went on with his commands.

“Front line: three steps forward. Now!”

“Back and front lines: tops off!”

3.

They hated the gym teacher’s commands more than anything in the world, but the entire class took off the black school jackets and stayed in their shirts. Even the teacher had taken his off. But Ch’angnam did not.

“Ha Ch’angnam! Why is your shirt still on?”

Ch’angnam’s head hung and his face had turned beet red. He’d never been that way before. He hesitated for a moment longer, and then looked up.

“Sir, is it OK to be in my mannyŏn shirt?

“Huh? Your mannyŏn shirt? What in that world is a mannyŏn shirt?”

“M—m—my skin.”

The teacher approached him furiously. He looked like he was about to slap the boy.

“Take it off!” He ordered.

Ch’angnam took off his jacket. Underneath, he was wearing nothing. Not even a t-shirt or an undershirt. The teacher was shocked. The kids laughed.
“Ha Ch’angnam! Why aren’t you wearing a shirt?”

“Because I don’t have one.”

The eyes of that ferocious teacher filled with tears. The laughter stopped. Poverty! Suffering! The children realized how desperate Ch’angnami’s family’s situation really was.

“Ch’angnami, you really don’t have a shirt?” The teachers asked gently, wiping away his tears.

“Only today and tomorrow. The day after tomorrow my brother is coming, and he said he’d buy me one.”

“Alright then. Put your jacket back on.”

The teacher raised his voice again.

“It’s OK for Ha Ch’angnam to wear his jacket today. I have only one thing to say to you young soldiers. I wish that you’ll all be as bold as Mr. Ha. Most of us wouldn’t show up at school without a shirt. Not because of the cold, because of the shame. But Mr. Ha showed up, on the coldest today, without a shirt, with nothing but his mannyŏn shirt. I know that some of you are wearing two shirts. Not to mention jacks and winter coats. Of course, it is not proper to come to school without an undershirt. The point is that it takes courage and guts. And Ha Ch’angnam has guts. I hope you all learn from him.”

Mannyŏn shirt! From that day on, the nickname Pilot was dropped. The name mannyŏn shirt had spread throughout the school, and that it what he was called from that day on.
Mannyŏn shirt Ch’angnami was not late the following day, but as soon as he approached the school grounds the other students burst into laughter.

He wore a jacket alright, but wore traditional baggy Korean pants that were paper thin and worn to bits, had no socks, and on his bare feet he plodded forward in straw shoes.

A jacket with no shirt. Mismatched Korean pants that were worn and torn. And straw shoes on bare feet?! And to think how ridiculous he looked walking that way for 20 li. And yet, Ch’angnami was calm as a cucumber.

“He looks like a kid out of an orphanage.”

“He looks like a street beggar.”

The gym teacher pushed through the chattering group to see what was going on. When he saw Ch’angnami, he was shocked.

“What happened to your pants?”

“I don’t have them.”

“How do pants disappear? Are you losing your clothes one piece at a time?”

“Yup. One or two at a time.”

“What’s going on?”

“Well….” He swallowed. “Two days ago, when it was really windy, there was a fire in our neighbourhood and half of our house burned down. We lost everything.”

The children shook their heads in sympathy.
“But you wore your pants yesterday! You said the fire happened before that…”

“Our house got only half-burned and we were able to save part of it, but our about ten neighbours lost their homes and its a big mess. In my house its just me and my mom, so with half of the house left there’s space for us to eat and sleep. But most of our neighbours have no place to eat or sleep. So my mom suggested that since it’s only us two and we have a place to eat and sleep, we should just keep one set of clothes and give the rest away to those people shivering in the street. So we did. I was wearing my school pants and so I hadn’t given them away, but then the old man next door is sick and keeps complaining about the cold. I felt so bad for him that I gave them to him. And now I’m wearing my pants from last fall.

A silence had fallen upon the students. The teacher hung his head, too.

“So you’re saying that you gave them everything, even your shirt and socks?”

Ch’angnami hung his head. “Nope. I kept a pair of socks and a shirt. But my mom gave all hers away and was shivering, so I offered her my shirt. “I thought you gave everything away — do you still have an extra one?” she asked. I told her I did even though I only had the one, and gave her the one I was wearing. “I guess you were wearing two because of the long way you have to walk to school” she said, and accepted my shirt. But her feet were freezing, too. She asked me if I had two pairs of socks. I told her I did even though I didn’t, and I offered her the socks I was wearing. I lied to her. I knew it was wrong, but I lied. Even today as I was leaving, she said “you’ll be cold with only one shirt,” but I tricked her and told her that I’m warm with my shirt and socks, even though I had neither. I’ve become a liar.”

“But if your mother saw you walking out bare-chested and barefooted, she would know, wouldn’t she?”
“Not really, you see…” Ch’angnami’s voice trembled. Tears dropped from his bowed head into his straw shoes.

“M—my mother lost her eyesight when I was eight. She’s blind.”

Heavy years fell from Teacher’s eyes. The children, who’d been so chatty only moments earlier, were as silent as sleep. There were no sounds but the sounds of weeping.
Appendix C: “The Sky May Look Clear…” by Hyŏn Tŏk

The ball, which he’d hidden behind the large wooden board in the inner gate, was gone. He reached out and felt for it, but the space was empty. Mungi’s heart began to race.

*What if the kids in the neighborhood have gotten their hands on it?*

On second thought, that might actually be for the best. Because if the ball had found its way into Aunty’s hands, that would mean big, big trouble.

Mungi watered the flowers in the inner courtyard and tried to maintain his cool. All the while, his eyes darted searchingly to auntie’s face. She was in the kitchen making dinner. Their eyes met when she walked in and out of the kitchen. He found nothing different about the way she looked at him. He started to feel better. *I’m sure a street beggar or one of the neighborhood kids took it. Otherwise she would never be this calm,* he thought. He returned promptly to his room.

But when Mungi opened his desk drawer, he made another shocking discovery. The binoculars, which he’d hidden so carefully deep inside the drawer, were gone. And that’s not all. The contents of the drawer were a mess. Someone had been there.

*Uncle will be home from the office any minute now. I’m doomed!*

Mungi sat at his desk and tried to read. But his eyes were blurry and his heart was pounding. There was no way he was going to be able to read.

The whole thing started a few days earlier. Mungi was given money by his aunt to go to the butcher’s and buy a slab of meat for the evening meal. The local butcher was always packed at that time of day. He waited forever for his turn. Then he presented the cash. The fat owner took the money, placed it in the deep straw basket, sliced the meat slowly, weighed it, wrapped

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Mungi was confused. When Aunty had given him money, and even when Mungi had handed it over to the butcher, Mungi was sure that what he had was a one-won note. Mungi looked suspiciously at the money, then at the butcher. But the butcher was busy slicing meat for the next customer. In Mungi’s confusion he had been pushed to the back of the line. The more Mungi thought about it, the less certain he was that Aunty had given him a one-won note to begin with. And if she hadn’t, then it wasn’t necessarily a big deal. The best thing to do was to check with her as soon as possible. On the way home he kept shaking his head and thinking about what had happened. Was it his mistake? Or the butcher’s?

He turned to walk down the alley. There, a few steps away, was his buddy Sumani. Mungi hurried to catch up.

“When are you going home?” he asked Sumani, and threw one arm over his shoulder.

“Wanna hear something weird?”

“What?”

“I went to the butcher, right? And I thought I gave him a one-won note but he gave me ten-won’s worth of change.”

“For real? Let’s see.”

Mungi opened the palm of his hand, and examined the money and the meat again. Sumani blinked for a moment. Then he spoke.

“I’ve got an idea.”

“What?”

“First, give your aunt only the small coins.”
“Then what?”

“If she doesn’t say anything, come back and meet me. We’ve got work to do.”

“Work? What kind of work?”

“Just come over, ok? It’s the good kind of work.”

Mungi did as he was told, and took out from his jacket pocket only the small change. Aunty took the money, counted it carefully twice, put the money in her pocket and turned around to wash the meat as if nothing were amiss. Just to make sure Mingi lingered for a while and watched her closely, and then he sneaked out. Sumani was waiting for him with a strange smile.

The ‘good kind of work’ Sumani had mentioned was to walk up and down the street and buy all the stuff they had never been able to afford but had always dreamed of owning.

“We shouldn’t use this money!” Mungi protested.

“Don’t worry. Just do as I say.” Sumani threw a confident arm over Mungi’s shoulder and strutted forward. As as for Mungi, well, the truth is that it wasn’t like there weren’t any toys that he’d always wanted to buy. Besides, he figured that he was just following orders, so it wasn’t his fault, really. And Sumani, for his part, knew that it was Mungi, after all, who had produced this money; there was no way he would be held responsible. The boys set off.

There was something about the walk through the deserted alleys that made their chests pound with fear. But as soon as they were out in the lit street, their foreboding turned into glee. The bright stores that lines both sides of the street were filled with what looked like their belongings, and these belongings were calling to them in a sweet voice. They bought a ball.
They bought a pen. They bought binoculars. They bought a comic book. They saw a film. And they munched on all kinds of snacks as they went.

With the leftover money, they had an exciting plan. They would buy a small film projector. Then they would put it to work, and charge the neighborhood kids one čôn to watch it. The plan was to create a constant flow of income. And they decided to start that very evening.

But now this plan was about to meet its timely end. In the main bedroom, Uncle called for Mungi from where he was taking his supper. Mungi-ya! he called twice, three times, and his voice shook the windows of Mungi’s room. Mungi pretended not to hear and said nothing. On the fourth time, the sliding door of the main bedroom slid open.

“Mungi, are you in here?”

Mungi’s thoughts were far away, but he could not pretend not to be present. He had no choice but to kneel respectfully across from Uncle. Uncle continued with his meal. Under the table was the ball that Mungi had hidden in the inner gate. Uncle spoke when the table was cleared.

“You been going to school every day?”

“Yes, sir.”

Uncle rolled out ball that had been under the table.

“What’s this?”

“Sumani gave it to me, sir.”

“This, too?” Uncle asked, reaching for the binoculars that he had placed under his folded legs.
“Yes, sir.”

“Sound like this Sumani likes to waste his money. I bet this ball cost at least fifty chŏn. And these cost at least one wŏn.” And then he added, “What do his parents do?”

Mingi sat quietly with his head bowed. Uncle drank a glass of rice-water and pushed the low folding-table away.

“Sumani gave it to you, huh? I believe you. I’m sure you would never lie to me. But you should think twice about accepting such gifts.” Uncle wasn’t done. “Another thing: I heard that you’ve been eating out these days. Is Sumani paying for that, too?”

Mungi blushed furiously, his eyes still pointed at the ground. Uncle stared at him for a moment and then continued in a harder voice.

“Your mother died young, and your father is hopeless; you are the only one left who can save your family’s name. If you loiter with deceitful children and stray from the right path, just think about what that makes you, and also about what this says about me. I promised to support your studies as far as the’ll take you and am doing my best to turn you into a proper young man. Be a man and do your part.” Uncle then went on list several examples of people who’d ruined their lives because of momentary lapse of judgement, and he ended by accepting Mungi’s oath to never, ever accept these kinds of gifts again. Mungi was dismissed.

Mungi went back to his room. Now that he was alone, he blushed even more fiercely than he had in Uncle’s presence. He had stared right in the face of the one person that he had been trying so hard to avoid. And he knew that it was him, Mungi, in every cell of his body, that had already strayed from that path that Uncle had mentioned. He knew, of course, that his insistence that Sumani made him do it, that Mungi wasn’t to blame, was, from the start, a poor
excuse, a way of passing the burden of responsibility to someone else. Mungi had already lied to his uncle. And he’d spent money that was not to be spent. Mungi’s mother had died when he was small, and his father was a pathetic loser who wandered aimlessly from the countryside to the city and back. It was Uncle who had raised Mungi. And Uncle was more concerned with his nephew’s future than with his own, and wished the best for the boy. Why, only a few days ago Mungi had clenched his fists and had sworn that he would never, ever disappoint his uncle. This recollection made Mungi cringe with shame. He picked up the ball and binoculars and stepped outside. 

Evening was settling on the streets. Mungi turned into the alley. He was terrified that someone, anyone, might see the ball in his hands—the same ball with which he had played with so blithely in the busy streets and in broad daylight that very morning. The darker the day fell, the whiter the large ball grew, and Mungi became increasingly agitated about handling it. Mungi turned a sharp corner and then turned again, dodging people’s gazes. The binoculars and his bulging pockets were burning. When he came out of one of the alleys, Mungi feigned carelessness and dropped the binoculars to the ground. Then he hurried and entered an alley across the way. He came to the stream. He placed the large ball at his feet, crouched and waited to be alone.

A bicycle passed by and then an old man, and in the brief intermission between the two Mungi hurled the ball into the flowing white water. Then he drew the leftover money from the inside of his jacket pocket. He was just about to toss that, too, but stopped himself at the last minute. His eyes followed the bobbing ball with great satisfaction before he turned to walk back.
Mungi headed for the butcher’s. He approached the store from the back alley, wrapped the remaining money in some paper, and flung the small package over the fence at the foot of the store’s front door.

Mungi’s shoulders relaxed, as if he’s just been unstrapped of a hefty weight. His gut felt cleansed, and his affliction was now headed 10, 20 li downstream with the bobbing ball. Never again. Never again. Mungi swore a hundred times to never, ever to take on such an affliction again. He walked home. But all this was still not enough to rid him completely of his affliction. At his doorstep he was awaited by an unexpected visitor.

“Where’vya been?” Sumani stepped out of the house’s dark shadows to greet him. “I was looking for you,” he said, throwing an arm over Mungi’s shoulder and pointed him toward the main street. “Let’s go.”

Sumani wanted Mungi to buy that projector that they had talked about. They’d taken note of the projector and its price through the window of the toy shop across from the cinema. Sumani had double-checked again that morning.

“I hope no-one’s bought it!” Sumani started to walk faster. Mungi allowed himself to be guided until, suddenly, he shook Sumani’s arm off and faced him.

“Forget it.”

Sumani stared back. “Forget what? Forget the projector?”

“There’s no money left.”

“What?” Sumani’s eyes rounded in surprise. He then flashed Mungi an insidious smile.

“I see what’s going on. You’re going to use that money all for yourself. Com’on now, don’t be like that. Let’s go.”
“I’m serious. I just threw the rest of it back over the fence to the butcher. I threw out the binoculars and the ball, too.” He turned his pockets inside out to prove it. Sumani snorted.

“You think you’re the only one who can play games around here?” His voice dripped with sarcasm. “The butcher’s, huh? That’s a good story.”

“It’s not a story. It’s true.”

Mungi didn’t know what else to say. He hung his head. He felt as though he might burst into tears. “Uncle yelled at me. I’m not going to do stuff like this anymore.”

“You still have a promise to me that you need to keep. If you don’t want a part of it anymore, that’s fine. Back out. Just give me the money.” Sumani shoved an open palm under Mungi’s chin.

“I already told you, I don’t have it.”

Sumani’s hand was suddenly at Mungi’s shirt collar. “So you’re gonna play hardball, are ya?”

A neighbour passed by with a cough. Sumani jumped back. Mungi was slinking away when Sumani called, “See you tomorrow! I can’t wait.”

The next morning, Mungi turned into the main street on his way to school when he saw that large white letters—Kim Mungi is a you-know-what—had been drawn with chalk on the wooden fence. The same words had been jotted across the door panes of the corner store. Mungi was startled. He quickly took off his hat and used it to erase his name. From across the street, Sumani watched this with a twisted smile.
“You scared of something?” Sumani muttered as Mungi passed him by. Sumani followed Mungi and added in a smaller voice, “Go ahead. Use the money for yourself. I’m just starting to warm up.”

While Mungi stood unsuspectedly by the monkey bars, Sumani snuck up behind and tripped him. Sumani pretended to be practicing sprints and ran ahead of Mungi only to break his speed at the late minute and cause Mungi to crash into him. And when the two were alone, Sumani said, “You get to do whatever you like, don’t you? Well, guess what—so do I. You think I won’t tell? You’re wrong.” Then he counted on his fingers and told him, “This is what’s gonna happen if I tell. First—you’re going to get kicked out of school. Second—you’re going to get kicked out of your house. Once a thief, always a thief, you know, so you’ll be dragged to the police station. I’m gonna tell.

After recess, it got worse. There, smack in the center of the blackboard, was Kim Mungi is a you-know-what printed in large letters. Then the teacher walked in. She didn’t make much of it—she asked who the prankster was and erased it—but the time that elapsed from the moment he saw it until she came in felt like an eternity.

Sumani, however, was not done. When the school day was over, things got a lot worse. Sumani walked a few steps behind Mungi and chanted, “the boy in front of me is a you-know-what.” Even worse, he deliberately scrambled the word theif and chanted, “the boy in front of me is a fieth.”

Mungi was almost home when Sumani caught up with him. “If you don’t come up with the money right now, tomorrow’s gonna be much worse. Tomorrow I’m going to spell it out: T-H-E-I-F.”
Mungi ignored him and kept moving. He stepped through the front gate of his house. The house was silent except for auntie’s voice that was coming from behind the house. “Plant them here, and here.” Mungi heard her say; she was watering flowers and giving instructions to the errand girl who lived downstairs.

And there, in full view, was the safe where the family kept their valuables. Inside were a few notes and some loose change. And outside the gate was Sumani, waiting for Mungi to bring him money. Mungi embraced his affliction.

“See? You shoulda listened the first time.” He heard Sumani say as he flung the money at him as if hoping to slap to his face, and ran.

In his flight, Mungi ran past one intersection. Then another. Then he started to slow down. And he started to think.

OK, so I did kind of take that money, but all I need to do is pay her back and it’ll be as if nothing ever happened. I’ll just eat less and be more careful with my school supplies and my clothes. It’ll be just like paying her back.

He mulled over his plan again and again in an effort to gather enough gumption to hold his head up high and go back home. Instead, however, he wandered the public park and streets for hours.

Evening fell and Mungi came home completely dejected. He sat at the front steps to his home. Auntie came out to greet him.

“Are you just coming from school?”

And she added, “Did you happen to see the money that was in the safe?”
And before Mungi could answer, she continued, “Of course, how could a child just coming from school know? I tell you, that Chŏmsuni is a devious little wench. Earlier when I was watering the flowers in the back she said she was going home and guess what? She stole some money.”

Mungi listened in silence. In his heart, he clung to his oath—once I pay it back it’ll be as if nothing ever happened.

That night, the sobbing of a young girl could be heard from downstairs. It was Chŏmsuni, the errand girl. Auntie must have gone to the house directly to have a talk with her, but since news travels fast the landlady must have gotten whiff of the discussion. She beat the girl and chased her out. For a while a group of children had gathered and were gossiping, but they left one by one and nothing but the sound of sobbing remained. Mungi did not sleep a wink that night.

The next morning, Mungi took only a few bites of his breakfast rice. He wasn’t sure this was the right way to go about repaying that money. His appetite was gone. He went to school. The first class was ethics, and the topic of the day was, all things, honesty. The teacher assumed his severe lecturing pose—his hands joined behind his back and his legs carrying him back and forth across the room—and he repeatedly expounded on the evils of lying and the virtues of truth-telling. His bespectacled eyes glimmered and settled on Mungi again and again. And each time they did, Mungi felt as if an arrow had struck him right in the chest. Mungi knew that the day’s topic was meant for one person only: that entire lecture was intended only for himself. The teacher, thought Mungi, could see straight into his soul.

He had no energy for the playground, either. He remained with his head lowered deep in thought in the back of the empty classroom or by the willow tree. He paced the grounds, arms
folded at his chest. Whenever someone tapped on the shoulder, he shrank back in surprise and fright.

The sky was its usual clear blue, but Mungi did not have the courage even to look up. He did not think that someone with his load of guilt and shame deserved to look upon it. What Mungi most yearned for most was to be able to once again play under the clear sky without a worry in the world. He longed for a heart with which he could once again look up at the sky with pride, a heart with which he could face others with dignity.

The sun was setting. Mungi’s backpack was slung over his shoulder, his head was bowed, and he passed back and forth in front of his teacher’s house, unable to bring himself to stop by. After three attempts he made it to the front door. His teacher led him inside. At school he was strict, but now he smiled softly at Mungi. Mungi had planned on throwing himself at his teacher’s feet and confessing everything. But his teacher’s gentle reception shut Mungi down completely. And then he heard a baby cry from the room across, and Mungi again could say nothing. Then his wife came in, then a guest dropped by. Mungi left without being able to say a word.

His heart was now a hundred, thousand times heavy and dark. The burden had grown too heavy for Mungi’s weak shoulders. His legs were headed for home but his heart was pointed in the opposite direction. He was scared of Auntie, Uncle, and Chŏmsuni most of all.

In his reverie he had arrived the the intersection. He heard a car horn and urgent cries to move away, first faintly and then, suddenly, right in his ear. He looked up in time to see a car headed straight for him. He sensed his body being lifted up, then down. Then he lost consciousness.
He had no idea how much time had passed. When Mungi’s eyes pried open, he was blinded by bright lights. The second time they opened, he slowly made out the outline of Uncle’s face.

“Do you know who I am?” Uncle asked gravely. Mungi thought he must be dreaming and tried to smile, but then he remembered. Mungi realized that he was lying on a hospital bed. Nothing hurt, but he couldn’t move. Uncle looked upon him with distress.

“Uncle,” Mungi began, “I got what I deserved.” Then Mungi closed his eyes and told his uncle everything, slowly, from beginning to end, starting with the butcher giving him change, to the shopping splurge, to the stealing of the money from the safe. He told Uncle everything, and didn’t omit a single detail. And as he spoke, he felt his affliction leaving his body, one layer at a time, the darkness in his heart evaporate and his heart brighten. And as his heart brightening, his body felt lighter. For tomorrow the sun will rise and the skies will be clear. And Mungi will be able to look upon them, with dignity, once again.