

Lesson Title: Differing Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation of Korea

By Carl Hopple for a 9th grade World History class

Overview: This lesson uses primary source documents as tools for students to use in their analysis of how the Japanese occupation of Korea was viewed differently from the perspectives of the colonizers and the colonized.

Connection to the Ohio Content Standards for the 9th grade course: Modern World History

Topic: Imperialism (1800-1914). The industrialized nations embarked upon a competition for overseas empires that had profound implications for the entire world. This “new imperialism” focused on the underdeveloped world and led to the domination and exploitation of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Content Statement: 12. The consequences of imperialism were viewed differently by the colonizers and the colonized.

Content Elaborations: Dramatic differences in viewpoints existed between the European colonizers and those they colonized. Different viewpoints between these two groups included the extension of Western cultural practices vs. loss of traditions and modernization vs. breakup of past institutions.

Expectations for Learning: Describe how the consequences of imperialism were viewed differently by the colonizers and the colonized.

<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Academic-Content-Standards/Social-Studies/High-School/Modern-World-History/Model-Curriculum/April2014.pdf.aspx>

Resources and Materials required

March 1st uprising photos

<http://www.art-in-society.de/AS14/KOR2/1919demo-by-univ.students.jpg>

https://www.google.com/search?q=march+korean+uprising&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi2przgwcTbAhXB3VMKHytCBMIQ_AUICygC&biw=1280&bih=669#imgsrc=orS51TbjQQNtgM:

"The Old People and the New Government," by Komatsu Midori

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/korea/komatsu_new_govt.pdf

Declaration of Independence (March 1, 1919)

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/korea/march_first_declaration.pdf

Background:

Korea underwent drastic changes under Japanese rule. Even before the country was formally annexed by Japan in 1910, the Japanese caused the last ruling monarch, King Kojong, to abdicate the throne in 1907 in favor of his feeble son, who was soon married off to a Japanese woman and given a Japanese peerage. Japan then governed Korea under a residency general and subsequently under a governor general directly subordinate to Japanese prime ministers. All of the governor generals were high-ranking Japanese military officers.

In theory the Koreans, as subjects of the Japanese emperor, enjoyed the same status as the Japanese; but in fact the Japanese government treated the Koreans as a conquered people. Until 1921 they were not allowed to publish their own newspapers or to organize political or intellectual groups.

Nationalist sentiments gave rise to a Korean student demonstration in Japan, and on March 1, 1919, to a Proclamation of Independence by a small group of leaders in Seoul. With the consolidation of what became known as the March First Movement, street demonstrations led by Christian and Ch'ondogyo groups erupted throughout the country to protest Japanese rule.

<http://countrystudies.us/south-korea/7.htm>

The March 1st revolt was unsuccessful and the Japanese executed thousands of Koreans for participating in it.

Activity Description:

Set Up: Show students the photos related to the March 1st uprising and have them discuss the following questions

Photo of Korean Women Protesters

Questions:

1. How would you describe this protest in terms of level of violence, weapons, threatening features?
2. Does this protest seem like it is sophisticated or primitive and basic?

Photo of the trial of captured prisoner protesters

Questions:

1. How does the seating in the phot show the power difference between the Japanese and the Koreans?
2. How does the clothing in the phot show the power difference between the Japanese and the Koreans?
3. How do you think the Japanese viewed the Koreans?

Analysis of primary source text documents

Part 1- large group: Read Through "The Old People and the New Government," by Komatsu Midori as a class. The initial focus is making sure that difficult passages and words are explained and the main points of the document are understood. Then follow this with a discussion of the following questions:

1. How does the author view the purpose of Japanese occupation?
2. How does the author view the Korean people? What keys words or phrases hint at this view?
3. How does the author view the Japanese people? What keys words or phrases hint at this view?
4. How would this author likely view the concerns of the Koreans?

Part 2- large group: Read Through the "Declaration of Independence (March 1, 1919)" as a class. The initial focus is making sure that difficult passages and words are explained and the main points of the document are understood. Then follow this with a discussion of the following questions:

1. What issues do the authors of this document have with Japanese occupation?
2. How do they view the Korean people? What keys words or phrases hint at this view?
3. How do they view the Japanese people? What keys words or phrases hint at this view?
4. How would the authors of this document view the Japanese justification for occupation?

Part 3- Small groups: Comparison of the viewpoints of colonizers and the colonized. Break students into an even number of small groups. Assign one group the role of the Japanese and the other group the role of the Koreans. Have each group develop a set of arguments for their side based on the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of Japanese occupation?
2. How does this affect your people?
3. What should be done?

Part 4- Full Debate: Have a small group representing the Japanese and another small group representing the Koreans debates their positions before the whole class (or just next to each other).

Flip a coin on which side goes first. Each group makes an opening statement presenting its positions. After opening statements each group responds to the other groups opening statement. The class as a whole can vote on the winner.

Evaluation: Have students answer the following questions and check for a successful application of the understanding gained in this lesson:

1. How might this history affect the views of Koreans towards Japanese today?
2. How did the March 1st conflict show that the colonizers and the colonized had differing views of imperialism's benefits?
3. In another act of imperialism, when the US took over Cuba after the Spanish American War, how might Americans have justified this?

Photo of Korean Women Protesters



Photo of the trial of captured prisoner protesters

