State and Food in South Korea : moulding the national diet in wartime and beyond

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Chapter Two

The Administration of Food Rationing by Civilian Organizations

As Henderson described the Japanese style of rule over Korea as a 'stern, centralized, bureaucratic administration without constitutional or popular restraint', centralized administration was one of the principle features of Imperial Japan's control over its colonies (1968: 73). A rigid governance mechanism centred on the Governor-General who had the overwhelmingly strong authority, was crucial in exercising the colonial government's food controls in Korea, as I discussed in 1.1.

Yet repression and coercion were not the only measures that Imperial Japan adopted to control its people. The administrative efficiency was integrated into a high-quality penetrating ruling structure, especially after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1937). Just as the authorities in Japan Proper ensured the Japanese individuals' conformity with the framework of an officialdom-centred governance structure by integrating them into the numerous hierarchical civilian associations, similar ruling methods were employed in Korea (Braibanti 1948: 136; Garon 1997: 5). In order to secure public support for the war, the Japanese government ran war mobilization campaigns in Korea, making huge efforts to organize civilian groups. Originally set up for the spiritual indoctrination of the people, these groups became an extension of the nation and, as such, an effective tool for the state to use. Under the state's growing authoritarianism and militarism, they assumed a broad range of practical functions in implementing war policies, including operating the official food-rationing system, their major role in urban areas. The mass organizations were an integral part of the Japanese wartime food management programme.

After the decolonization of Korea, the civilian organizations' function as a rationing administration was revived under the US military government's rationing programme. It was further reinforced by the Korean government which used them as official food rationing channels, and to provide disciplinary control over the nation in

pursuit of the national goal of constructing an anti-communist country. For several decades after their creation, these mass associations continued to draw the attention of the government, which sought to reach into the lives of its people and increase disciplinary power over the populace in order to implement state policies and mobilize the masses for economic and political purposes.

This chapter aims to describe how the Japanese system of civilian organizations functioned as a rationing institution, remained intact in post-colonial society under another state food-rationing system, and was exploited as a political means to support anti-communist efforts during the Cold War. My focus will be on urban areas. Civilian associations also existed in rural areas, but food rationing was chiefly implemented in the cities. In the first section of this chapter, I will document the central role of civilian associations in the food-rationing system of the wartime Japanese government. In the following section, I will show that their function remained unchanged under the US occupation authorities' food management system, and that these groups were strategically strengthened by the Korean government for the political purposes. The goal of this chapter is to illuminate the economic and political factors which contributed to retaining the wartime colonial legacy in post-colonial Korea.

2.1 *Aegukpan*

The Rise of Civilian Organizations Supporting the Wartime Japanese Government

> The mission of the leaders of the *aikokuhan*[51] is truly important in rationing daily necessities…a smooth rationing operation shall only be achieved when there is consumer cooperation led by the heads of the *aikokuhan*. The rationing procedure requires even greater efficiency from the perspective of national economy than it does from an individual one. It is crucial to enhance the organizational strengths of each *aikokuhan* and their activities… More and more, the current [war] situation requires the enthusiasm and the strength to help each other which stems from the intimate cooperation of the leaders of the *aikokuhan*. The strength coming

[51] Japanese reading of *aegukpan*.

> up from the bottom of society is the very kernel of the National Total Mobilization Movement, and will become the driving force behind bringing a bright future to East Asia. Without the consolidation and advancement of each cell organization, town associations cannot function fully.
>
> (Keijōfu sōmubu kokumin sōryokuka 1942: 118)

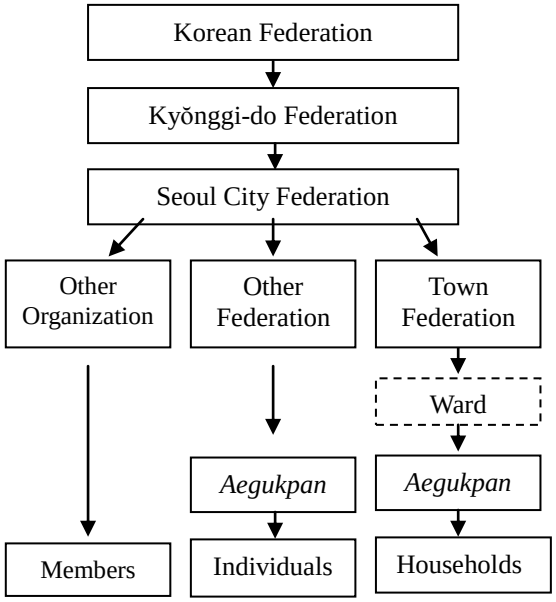
Civilian organizations, the so-called 'patriotic units' (*aegukpan* 愛国班), were created with the purpose of implementing Japan's war campaigns. They were the cell organizations of the Korean Federation for the Total Mobilization of the National Spirit (*Kokumin seishin sōdōin undō Chōsen renmei* 国民精神総動員運動朝鮮連盟), established on 7 July 1938 as the lead organization responsible for implementing the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement (*Kokumin seishin sōdōin undō* 国民精神総動員運動) in Korea. The Movement was the Korean version of the wartime national mobilization movement of the same name formed in 1937 in Japan by the Konoe Fumimarō cabinet (1937-1939 and 1940-1941). In 1940 the movement in Korea was renewed in parallel with the acceleration of the Japanese campaign, which was operating under the new name of the New Order Movement (*Shintaisei undō* 新体制運動) and run by the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (*Taisei yokusankai* 大政翼賛会), the fascist organization in power in Japan. In October 1940, the name of the national movement and the central administration in Korea were changed to the National Total Mobilization Movement (*Kokumin sōryoku undō* 国民総力運動) and the Korean Federation for National Total Mobilization Movement (*Kokumin sōryoku Chōsen renmei* 国民総力運動朝鮮連盟).[52]

The first step for the movement was to set up a nationwide organizational network. Setting its ultimate goals as 'national unity' (*kŏguk ilch'i* 擧國一致), 'loyalty and patriotism' (*chinch'ung poguk* 盡忠報國), and 'untiring patience' (*kyŏnin chigu* 堅忍持久), forming a network of unified organizations was fundamental to promoting the

[52] Hereafter I will use the term 'Korean Federation' instead of the 'Korean Federation for the Total Mobilization of the National Spirit' and the 'Korean Federation for National Total Mobilization' in the body of the text.

national movement. The Governor-General's Secretary for Political Affairs Ōno Rokuichirō led the formation of the central organization, with important Korean citizens, such as Yun Ch'i-ho (1865-1945), also involved (Chōsen sōtokufu 1940: 126-128). At the same time as the establishment of the Korean Federation, sub-organizations were rapidly created, along with jurisdictional administrative subdivisions: the Korean Federation provided the top level of the structure, with provincial federations (to *yŏnnmaeng* 道連盟) organized beneath it. The provincial federations were divided into city/county federations (*pu/gun yŏnnmaeng* 府郡連盟) and further into town federations (*chŏngdong yŏnnmaeng* 町洞連盟).[53] Comprised of ten to twenty neighbouring households, *aegukpan* units were established under each 'town association' (*chŏngdonghoe* 町洞會).[54] Some *aegukpan* were formed in offices, schools, factories and companies, but the overwhelming majority of the units were based in residential areas. Chart 2-1 shows a representation of the Korean Federation in Seoul City.

Chart 2-1: Organizational Chart of the Korean Federation in Seoul City



(Chōsen sōtokufu 1940: 65)

[53] Town federations were known as both '*chō renmei* 町連盟' and '*dō renmei* 洞連盟'.
[54] 'Ilman isang-ŭi aegukpan injŏphan sibo naeji ipho-ro chojik ch'ongdongwŏn undong-ŭi silch'ŏnmang 一萬以上의愛国班 隣接한十戸乃至廿戸로組織 總動員運動의實踐網', *Chosŏn ilbo* 朝鮮日報, 25 January 1939, p.3.

The government gave the highest priority to building up a solid *aegukpan* network that encompassed the entire Korean population (Kim Y. H. 2002: 237). The purpose of *aegukpan* units was to ensure the Korean people's integral cooperation with the implementation of state wartime policies.[55] What colonial authorities specifically had in mind was the spiritual education of Koreans in order to build a cooperative attitude towards the government's mobilization campaigns. It anticipated that the Korean populace would not happily submit to the coercive controls of the government. Therefore, it was necessary to induce people's willing cooperation with state policies in order to strengthen the war footing (Kim Y. H. 2002: 237; Yi C. M. 2004: 415). The government found a solution to the issue of mass education by setting three major goals: 'to found a national political ideology' (*kukch'e kwannyŏm myŏngjing* 国体観念明徴), 'to cultivate the idea of imperial subjects' (*hwangguk sinmin ŭisik simhwa* 皇国臣民意識深化), and 'to foster a greater understanding of the nation's situation' (*siguk insik ch'ŏlchŏ* 時局認識徹底) (Chōsen sōtokufu 1940: 31). With the aim of achieving these goals, a nationwide network of *aegukpan* was quickly created. The number of units reached approximately 280,000 within just three months of movement's beginnings in July 1938, and by December 1939, had expanded to 334,000 nationwide (Yi C. M. 2004: 417-418; Kokumin seishin sōdōin Chōsen remmei jimukyoku 1940: 24). At the beginning of 1939, there were more than 10,000 *aegukpan* units in Seoul alone (Yi C. M. 2004: 440). A well-organized network of *aegukpan* was an integral part of the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement as they were the 'executive instruments' (*silch'ŏn chojik* 實践組織) that put the state's strategies into action (Kim Y. M. 2005: 63).

Originally set up with the purpose of spiritually indoctrinating the Korean populace, the *aegukpan* assumed a wide range of practical functions in implementing the government's wartime policies. Nearly every kind of mobilization project organized by the government was carried out at the level of the *aegukpan* unit. Responsibilities entrusted to the civilian groups included labour and material mobilization, thrift

[55] 'Min'ga sipho-ro aegukpan chŏngsin tongwŏn chungang chibang-ŭi chojik taegang 民家十戸로 愛国班精神動員中央地方의 組織大綱', *Chosŏn ilbo*, 21 July 1938, p.3.

campaigns, campaigns for increased productivity (especially in rural areas), and encouraging the conscription of Korean men into the Japanese armed forces, as well as the operation of the rationing schemes for essential commodities (Chōsen sōtokufu 1940: 50). All these tasks were coordinated and carried out by the *aegukpan*, which acted as the basic unit for sanctions and took collective responsibility for each other under the command of a group leader.

The system of town associations and *aegukpan* was modelled after the Japanese 'block associations' (*chōnaikai* 町内会) and their sub-divisions, 'neighbourhood associations' (*tonarigumi* 隣組). *Tonarigumi* can be traced back to the 'five-man bands' (*goningumi* 五人組) forcibly formed by the Tokugawa regime in the Edo Period (1600-1867) for the purpose of creating collective responsibility for tax paying. The leader of each band was obligated to make sure that the people they were responsible for lived frugally and industriously so that their taxes could be paid (Braibanti 1948: 140).

The Japanese government's project to intensify the use of *chōnaikai* and *tonarigumi* for the promotion of the wartime nationalist movement was formulated to intentionally happen at the same time as the inauguration of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. On 11 September 1940, the Minister of Home Affairs officially ordered the reorganization of the block associations and, two weeks later, issued separate instructions for enhancing the *tonarigumi* network. The reorganization of the *tonarigumi* was an integral part of the Japanese war mobilization movement (Braibanti 1948: 141-142). As was the case with the *aegukpan*, the original role envisaged by the government for the *tonarigumi* was the spiritual indoctrination of its citizens, but they soon assumed similar responsibilities, including the administration of food rationing in the cities (Cwiertka 2010b). In terms of their function as agencies bridging the gap between the wartime Japanese government and the ordinary people, the civilian associations in Japan and Korea were quite similar to each other.

Despite these similarities, the organizations in Korea were more bureaucratic in nature, acting as an extension of the administrative organization. This was due to the different development of the civilian groups in these two countries. Even though they both originated from groups formed compulsorily by the authorities, between the Meiji

Era (1868-1912) and the 1920s the *chōnaikai* and *tonarigumi* had existed as autonomous communities led by the citizens for the purposes of self-help, having few links with the government. Before being put under government control, they had been run by ordinary people in pursuit of a better life. Their activities were purely based on community benefits, such as having a vaccination against dysentery every year, setting up outdoor lighting in their towns at nights to deter theft, decorating their shopping streets to increase business success, and organizing community events, such as sporting festivals (Araki 1938: 10-11). As autonomous communities led by civilians, these groups became highly active after calamities, such as the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923). This is illustrated by the fact that in 1923 there were approximately 600 *chōnaikai* in Tokyo, a figure that had increased to 1,400 by 1933 (Ibid.: 8).

In contrast to Japan, the civilian organizations in Korea had been designed and developed for political purposes under the leadership of the government from the very beginning. In 1916, for example, Seoul City government introduced the System of Town Representatives (*chŏngch'ongdaeje* 町總代制) to make use of civilians' assistance in handling the considerably increased administration after the reorganization of the city in 1914. It selected more than 100 'town representatives' (*ch'ongdae* 總代) and other members (fewer than five people per leader) from the citizens, based on their town of residence. Despite being ordinary civilians, they were entrusted with a wide range of administration-related tasks by the local government. For example, they disseminated newly passed laws among the people, and encouraged them to pay their taxes punctually and to report house moves and other changes in family status to the local government as required under the Family Registration Law (*Kosekihō* 戸籍法) (Sŏ H. J. 2001: 117-118). The civilian associations led by town representatives continued to function until Korea's liberation from Japanese rule in 1945. None of the representatives, however, were officially recognized by the government or paid for their work. In principle, basic financial support was provided by the city government; however, this was far from the reality (Sŏ H. J. 2001: 124).

The function of the civilian organizations was reinforced in 1933 with the promulgation of the Seoul City Town Association Regulations (*Keijōfu chōdōkai kisoku*

京城府町洞会規則). During the sixteen years under the former system, support from civilian organizations had become increasingly important to the city government (Sŏ H. J. 2001: 125). Therefore, the authorities intended to further enhance organizational performance by encouraging cooperation from more people. The regulations ordered the enlargement of the groups by setting up town associations, each of which was to include a board, with more members, led by the *ch'ongdae*, and the creation of sub-divisions under each town association to enhance operational capability. Along with administrative support for local government, activities for the improvement of community life (i.e., the enhancement of living conditions) were emphasized (Kim Y. M. 2005: 36). The civilian groups were allowed to collect money from citizens for activities in the form of a membership fee.

Supported by the authorities, town associations increased their activities, especially their administrative support for local government. For example, Samp'ant'ong town association in Seoul handled the delivery of 377 official documents to and from the government and other public offices in 1934; Wŏnnam-dong town association handled 422 during the space of a year between 1934 and 1935; and Tangju-dong town association handled 450 during eighteen months of 1934 and 1935. On top the administrative tasks, these town associations were involved in a variety of community activities. For example, Samp'ant'ong town association purchased some land and gave it to the Seoul government in order to build a road in their town. Educational activities, such as lectures for spiritual education and cooking classes for housewives, were also held using the money collected from the people (Anonymous 1936: 30-32). These examples show that the rise of civilian groups in Korea was largely a result of the government strategy to incorporate civilian groups into administrative organizations. Their activities became important to community lives in some ways; however, they never escaped from the influence of the authorities. When the war mobilization campaign was launched, the network of civilian groups was mobilized as part of the national movement to sustain the war efforts. As of 1938, there were approximately 260 town associations in Seoul (Kim Y. M. 2005: 33).

Well-functioning civilian groups in Korea were praised and held up as models by

the government in Japan. In Japan, the renaming of the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement as the New Order Movement in 1940 was largely due to the failure of the former. Highlighting the failure of the campaign in Japan as a bad example, the Korean Federation emphasized the importance of maintaining the pace of the national campaign in Korea (Kokumin sōryoku Chōsen remmei 1945: 43-44). The politicized features of the town associations were fully transmitted to their subdivisions, the *aegukpan*. In the name of autonomy, the government expanded and consolidated its political influence through the nationwide network of civilian groups.

Implementing War Policies through the Aegukpan

As explained previously, the purpose behind the establishment of the *aegukpan* was to ensure people's cooperation with the implementation of state wartime policies. To achieve this, it was important for the government to be able to convey directives and information to the people. One of the methods of communication used by the government was through official publications, such as the monthly periodical *Sōdōin* 総動員 (Total Mobilization).[56] Written in Japanese, it was chiefly aimed at middle-class leaders, the heads of town associations and *aegukpan* leaders, who functioned as the links between the higher-level organizations and their subordinate bodies and members. Kawashima, the chief director of the Korean Federation, clarified its objectives in the first issue, published in July 1939:

> The content of the official magazine, *Sōdōin*, covers essential information for all the people at each level of the organization. In particular, I hope that the leaders of the town/village [associations] and at the *aegukpan* level utilize it for their own education as well as for that of their members.
>
> (Kawashima 1939: 3)

Sōdōin disseminated government regulations and provided practical advice on how to put them into practice. Detailed action plans, determined by the Korean Federation and called 'agreement agenda' (*mōshiawase jikō* 申し合わせ事項), were to be carried out by the general populace in the form of monthly campaigns. For example,

[56] It was renamed *Kokumin sōryoku* 国民総力（National Total Mobilization) from November 1940.

the goals set for the austerity campaign of August 1941 were to not drink alcoholic drinks during the daytime; to refrain from extravagant dressing and wasteful spending; to collect waste materials; and to not send flowers to each other (Anonymous 1941f: 88). The aims for September 1941 were to participate in an air-raid drill; to not circulate false rumours; to save rice; and to encourage the use of vacant ground for vegetable gardening (Ibid.). The magazine also included economic information. For example, articles in the July 1940 issue dealt with the problem of wartime inflation, the need to buy state bonds, and the newly established restrictive regulations concerning price controls (Mizuta 1940: 33-37). In October 1939, the circulation of *Sōdōin* totalled 2,050 in Seoul, 460 in P'yŏngyang, 345 in Mokp'o, 326 in Inchŏn, 244 in Taegu, and 206 in Pusan (Anonymous 1939d: 88-91).

In addition to educating middle-class leaders, the government devoted efforts to diffusing its directives among the general public. With the aim of it circulating among ordinary *aegukpan* members, the Korean Federation issued another official publication in 1940 called *Saebyŏk* (Dawn), which was written in simple Korean. It was soon followed by a Japanese language version, *Aikokuhan* 愛国班 (Patriotic Units). Targeting the leaders of *aegukpan* and ordinary members, the Korean Federation published 350,000 copies of these publications in 1940 (Yi C. M. 2004: 418), and this had increased to 430,000 by 1942 (Kokumin sōryoku Chōsen remmei 1945: 123).

Another method of communication was the 'circulating bulletin board' (*hoeramp'an* 回覧板) which was passed around *aegukpan* members. Seoul City government sent out *hoeramp'an* three times a month until the *Maeil sinbo* newspaper took over the role of the board in March 1945 due to the shortage of paper.[57] Along with the prevalence of the word '*aegukpan'*, the term '*hoeramp'an'* quickly became a household name. Even though they were not actually *hoeramp'an*, a variety of campaigns were promoted among the *aegukpan* by borrowing the name. For example, during 1943 and 1944 the *Maeil sinbo* newspaper serialized articles that provided detailed guidelines for frugal living under the title of the 'Circulating bulletin board for decisive battle daily

[57] 'Sinmun-ŭl t'onghae palp'yo puyŏnmaeng-ŭi aegukpan hoeramp'an parhaeng chungji 新聞을通해發表 府聯盟의愛国班回覧板發行中止', *Maeil sinbo* 每日申報, 26 February 1945, p.2.

life' (*Kyŏlchŏn saenghwal hoeramp'an* 決戰生活回覽板).

The most effective method adopted by the government to disseminate directives was the monthly meeting. After policies were made by the Korean Federation, they were channelled to the people through regular meetings held by each echelon (Anonymous 1942d: 123). In order to systematically transmit information, the sectional meetings were scheduled beforehand. For example, in Seoul, the leaders of town associations (or wards) gathered on the third day of each month, the heads of the *aegukpan* on the fifth day and ordinary *aegukpan* members on the seventh day (Hizuka 1941: 120). By arranging meeting dates that followed the organizational structure, top-down directives were efficiently delivered from the Korean Federation to the members of the cell organizations.

There was a strong emphasis on the 'regular patriotic meetings' (*aeguk pansanghoe* 愛國班常會),[58] the lowest-level meetings of representatives of ordinary households. The authorities considered the *pansanghoe* to be the most important channel for the transmission of policies from the top to the general populace (*sangŭi hadal* 上意下達) and for conveying the practical situation of the people to the government (*hasang sangt'ong* 下狀上通) (Hizuka 1941: 111). Therefore, at least one person from each household was required to attend the monthly meetings. Guidelines were set out by the Korean Federation so that the meeting was carried out in a uniform order. According to the standards, the meetings started at the same time (8 p.m. in the summer and 7 p.m. in the winter) with an announcement via a nationwide radio broadcast following a fixed pattern. The agenda of the meetings of the Seoul City Federation followed the format below:

1) Opening of the meeting
2) *Kyūjō yōhai*[59]
3) Silent prayer (for national glory and fortune in war)
4) Announcement of the agreement agendum
5) Reports

[58] I use the term '*pansanghoe*' to refer to the '*aeguk pansanghoe'*.
[59] Performing a salutation in the direction of the Imperial Palace in Japan.

6) Lectures (on the National Total Mobilization Movement, wartime measures, air-defence drill, the situation of industries and the economy, hygiene and the reform of daily life)
7) *Kōkoku shinmin seishi*[60]
8) Close of the meeting

(Kokumin sōryoku Keijō remmei 1940: 69-70)

With or without the use of the radio, people were advised to hold meetings following the set procedure, at in the houses of the unit leaders or ordinary members, or even outdoors when other suitable venues were unavailable (Hizuka 1941: 121-122). To avoid wasting time and money, they were discouraged from preparing any snacks other than tea and from meeting for longer than two hours. Of the parts of the meeting, the announcement of the monthly agendum was the most important, as various state policies to be carried out by the people were transmitted within it. In order to ensure the smooth transmission of information, the government advised people to discuss items calmly, and not to complain or oppose the regulations for opposition's sake (Anonymous 1942b: 97).

Full responsibility for leading the meeting successfully and smoothly rested with the unit leaders (*panjang* 班長). When they delivered the instructions from the higher organizations, they had to translate the literary Japanese into simple Korean so as to ensure people fully understood them (Kawagishi 1941: 9). Although a representative from every household had to attend the unit meetings, not everybody could easily comprehend the state policies due to their differing ages, sexes and levels of education. The *panjang* had to deliver a variety of directives to these people in an efficient way, using understandable terms, and ensure that they were put into practice by each member. The leaders were also instructed to lead various discussions and lectures, on topics such as government announcements, the reports of activities and studies, and on personal experiences, which were intended to prevent people from complaining, grumbling and chatting during the meetings (Anonymous 1942b: 97).

In addition to supervising monthly meetings, all the missions assigned to the *aegukpan* were led by the *panjang*. The monthly ceremony held on the first day of each

[60] Chanting of the oath of imperial subjects. This was decreed by the seventh Governor-General in Korea, Minami Jiro (1936-1941), in October 1937. It was recited publicly in all schools and at other organizational meetings.

month to honour the Japanese state-religion of Shinto, labour mobilization, the collection of waste, the arrangement of support for the families of soldiers at the front, and the organization of (food) saving campaigns were managed and driven by the *panjang* in each unit. Despite being ordinary citizens, the *panjan*g were key players who took the lead in disseminating state directives and mobilizing labour and material resources from their own groups.

Despite such important jobs being entrusted to the *aegukpan*, their management was riddled with problems, which centred on the role of the *panjang*. Discord between the *panjang* and unit members was widespread. On the one hand, some unit leaders' sense of superiority over their members became problematic. The domineering attitudes of some leaders towards their unit members caused growing frustration among ordinary members (Satō 1942: 32). On the other hand, some people, particularly intellectuals in urban areas, were indifferent towards their *panjang*, as well as towards the activities of the *aegukpan* itself. They believed that the *panjang* were people of leisure, and that educated people would never accept such a role (Matsumoto 1942: 19). These contrasting problems resulted in inadequate cooperation between the members of units.

Another problem was that where women took the lead in *aegukpan* affairs, men were distanced from the unit's activities. The majority of *aegukpan* were led by women. One of the main reasons for the women's central role was their relative availability for participation in daytime air-defence training, one of the major *aegukpan* activities, and one which required a commander to lead the people at a time when most men were at work (Ibid.: 20). Women's activity outside the home also resulted in some undesirable responses from Korean men. Through the successive centuries of Chosŏn Korea (1392-1910), Korean women's social activities had generally been banned under the strict regulations of Confucianism that rigidly divided between the male and female spheres. [61] Even though adherence to such Confucian ideas had weakened by the end of nineteenth century, in Korea deeply rooted social values did not change easily. As a result, the activities of the *aegukpan* came to be considered as sundry women's work, and in turn, resulted in men's reluctance to become involved in unit activities.

[61] For a detailed account of Confucianism and Korean women's life in Chosŏn Korea, see Yoo 2008: 15-33.

Such a situation was a cause of serious concern for the government, since the cell organization's support through its cooperative relationship was a key element in the success of the national campaign. Encouraging men's involvement in their unit activities was a frequent topic dealt with in *Sōdōin*. In various articles, the government called for strengthened cooperation between unit members, regardless of the gender of the leader. One of them, for instance, praised the energetic activities of women, proclaiming that they received 'baptism in the name of the nation at war', and argued that if an *aegukpan* was led by a woman, it was acceptable for her to seek advice from her husband (Ibid.: 21). The government repeatedly exhorted men to participate in their unit's activities, such as attending monthly meetings, and called for a change to the prevalent thought that *aegukpan* affairs were nothing but women's work.[62] In July 1941, President of the Korean Federation Kawagishi developed a plan to revitalize the female-oriented *pansanghoe*. He ordered husbands to attend the monthly meetings, adding that it was ultimately preferable that they accompany their wives. Moreover, he expressly commanded the replacement of female *panjang* with men, with the exception of instances where having a female leader was unavoidable. In exchange, he encouraged the setting up of special meetings for women, especially in urban areas, in order to promote campaigns for the improvement of daily life (Anonymous 1941a: 61).

Despite the central organization's directives, in practice, the activities of the *aegukpan* remained chiefly in the hands of female *panjang*. For example, the Japanese scholar Higuchi illustrated in his research that the activities of *aegukpan* in Yŏngdŭngp'o in Seoul, were further invigorated after women took over as *panjang* from male leaders. The number of units also increased: between December 1940 and August 1941, their number grew from 80 to 120. By the end of 1942, approximately 70 per cent of the *aegukpan* in Seoul were led by women (Higuchi 1994: 121).

Many examples of female *panjang* and their unit activities were reported in the government-controlled magazines. As well as emphasizing their intellect and excellence in homemaking, articles in the magazines illustrated female leaders' earnest efforts and

[62] 'Ilche ch'amjŏn-ŭi kago-ro sil saenghwal-ŭl chasuk chagye pu-eso aegukpan-ege silch'ŏn o yogang-ŭl chisi 一齊參戰의覺悟로 實生活을自肅自戒 府에서愛国班에게 實踐五要項을指示', *Chosŏn ilbo*, 28 July 1940, p.2.

successful unit activities. For example, an article in *Sōdōin* introduced the *panjang* of Che-il-gu unit in Tangnaeyŏm-chŏng town in Seoul as a model leader. In spite of her own financial difficulties due to her husband's illness, her outstanding exploits as group leader brought success in her unit's activities. When air-raid training took place, she led them by wearing *mompe*[63] made from recycled waste, and hardily carried on (Anonymous 1941d: 86-87). Recognizing the essential role of women in the *aegukpan*, the Seoul government ordered the appointment of housewives as assistant leaders of *aegukpan* units; as of August 1941, there were more than 1,100 women acting as assistant leaders (Anonymous 1941c: 74-75). With or without the title of leader or assistant leader, many Korean women took on leadership roles during air-raid drills and labour mobilizations organized by their *aegukpan* (Hoshino 1942: 28-29).

The Food Rationing Programme and the Growing Authority of the Aegukpan Leaders

An important event that put the *aegukpan* at the core of community life in urban Korea was food rationing, which began in 1940. Beginning with staple foods (rice and other grains), various foodstuffs and daily commodities were put under rationing controls. Even though rationing was under the supervision of the government, the practical administration of it was almost entirely entrusted to town associations and *aegukpan*. For example, under the staple-rationing system in Seoul, responsibility for issuing and distributing purchasing permits to individual households was in the hands of these civilian groups. When staple food rationing began in May 1940 in Seoul, approximately 60 per cent of the population belonged to the distribution scheme managed by the town associations and *aegukpan*; from 1942, all citizens had to acquire purchasing permits through these organizations (see 1.1). As the food situation deteriorated, an increasing number of foodstuffs were included in the rationing controls. In Seoul, by 1943, the free trade of meat, fresh fish, chillies, fruit, vegetables, condensed and powdered milk, cows' milk for infants and the sick, salt, and alcoholic drinks had been replaced by a ration

[63] *Mompe* are coarsely made pantaloons originating from peasant work clothes worn in north-eastern Japan in the Edo period; they had become the home-front uniform by the time of the Pacific War in Japan. In Korea, the colonial government coerced people into wearing *mompe*, especially for air-raid drills, due to the freedom of movement they provided. For a detailed account of state regulations on women's clothing in colonial Korea, see An T'. Y. 2007.

permit system (Sugiyama 1943: 14, 17, 20, 25, and 41; Yi S. S. 2001: 59). These foodstuffs could only be officially obtained with ration permits issued by the town associations and distributed by the leaders of each *aegukpan*.

The *panjang*, who acted as end-distributors for the rationing system, were closely involved in the administration of various rationing controls and had significant influence over their management. As explained in 1.1, there were variations in the rationing methods for foodstuffs and daily commodities depending upon the supply situation and the administrative capabilities of the local governments. On the one hand, foodstuffs consumed by everybody on a daily basis were rationed according to a previously set daily allowance. For example, under the staple rationing programme in Seoul, citizens were given two to five days' rations at once, which contained a daily allowance of three *hop* (430 grams) of grain, including rice and others, per person.[64] On the other hand, another type of rationing met the specific needs of certain people, for example providing milk for infants. When requests for extraordinary commodities arose, the *panjang* played an important role in the rationing administration. For example, in order to acquire specific foodstuffs for infants and the sick, individuals were required to provide a certificate that proved the mothers' inability to breastfeed or sickness from the doctor. It was only once the leader of the *aegukpan* had accepted a person's application, after checking the actual condition of the applicant, that the applicant could be issued with a purchasing permit by the leader of the town association (Sugiyama 1943: 18-19). The *panjang* had a lot of power to control rationing.

The influence of the *panjang* was also exemplified in their control of the meat rationing programme. The programme took the form of a rotating schedule based on the registration of the size of each household at the distribution stations. Meat could be purchased twice a month per household on a designated day, with the allowance set according to family size: 50 grams for a household of up to four members, and 100 grams for up to nine people. Under this scheme, ration cards, on which the number of family members in each household was recorded by the *panjang*, were shared between the unit's

[64] 'Iril 2500-sŏk pu singnyang chohab-i paegŭp 一日 2500 石 府食糧組合이配給', *Chosŏn ilbo*, 3 May 1940, p.2.

households (ten households per ration card). After a family received their ration, the card was passed to the next household. The ration cards were kept under the strict supervision of the unit leaders, and could not be reissued. The *panjang* was the only person with the authority to correct the contents of the ration card when there was a change in the number of family members or when households moved in or out of the area (Sugiyama 1943: 41).

In addition to their involvement with rationing, the *panjang* were allowed to store food resources. In waging a long war, the government recognized the growing importance of securing emergency provisions for its people. The Seoul City government distributed canned food in 1942, the production and supply of which had thus far strictly been prioritized for feeding the troops in the field. The government decided to distribute the food to the leaders of each *aegukpan* and have them store it as emergency supplies for their unit members. Needless to say, in principle, the food was not to be consumed unless in an emergency situation and with official permission; however, it is noteworthy that the government left the distribution of the food to the discretion of the *panjang*. Thus, it was possible for the unit leaders to distribute the emergency provisions as rations (Anonymous 1942a: 48). The wartime scarcity of food resources boosted the unit leader's degree of control over the survival of the people for whom they were responsible.

The increasing power of the *aegukpan* leaders paralleled the expansion of the rationing programmes. During the complex and chaotic process of rationing, *panjang* were entrusted with making arbitrary decisions in the name of proper and fair distribution, taking people's individual circumstances into consideration. This was especially true of the irregular rationing of daily necessities when their supply was insufficient to evenly distribute them to all members of the patriotic unit. The programme of cotton distribution in Korea introduced in June 1940 in Seoul provides a good example of the malpractices of the *panjang*. At first, ration cards valid for one year were issued, taking into consideration the population of Seoul, and were distributed upon request. However, it soon became clear that it was impossible to supply cotton in the quantities required, owing to the increasingly deteriorating production capacity. Despite the supply deficiency, demand did not fall as the purchasing permits were valid for a relatively long period. The imbalance between supply and demand led to price hikes, and induced serious distribution malpractices by suppliers, including illegal hoarding and diversion to the

black market. To address this situation, the government amended the rationing system the following year; this time, considering monthly supply quantities, it distributed the 'correct' number of ration cards, restricting customers' demand as much as possible. Yet, a great number of people were left with purchasing permits for cotton rations distributed the previous year. As a result, the rationing system gave the unit leaders considerable freedom to distribute supplies. Some leaders held lotteries to select the recipients, while others distributed them to those most in need (Nishiwaki 1941: 31-32). In any event, it was the leaders who had the power to select the recipients. They could give the purchasing permits to their friends and relatives, or they could choose to keep them for themselves instead.

The rationing of rubber shoes bore many similarities to that of cotton. With regard to shoes, the size of each individual's feet needed to be considered as well as the supply situation, making it very difficult to distribute the right sized shoes to everyone. If someone received a ration card for an ill-fitting size of rubber shoes in the lottery, he/she could either give it to another member or return it to the unit leader. This situation led to widespread irregularities: ration cards frequently disappeared from the rationing channels without record and eventually appeared on the black market (Ibid.).

It was not uncommon for the unit leaders' privileged position in the distribution system to be exploited. For example, according to one *Keizai chian nippō* 経済治安日報 (Daily Report on Economy and Security), written by the economic police, the leader of an *aegukpan* in Yŏngdŭngp'o town, Seoul, was arrested by the police for keeping purchasing permits for cotton, towels and rubber shoes for his own consumption instead of distributing them to his unit members (Hōmukyoku keijika 1942b: 136-137). Common malpractices included adding non-existent persons to ration cards and receiving 'extra' rations by using additional ration books (Hōmukyoku keijika 1942b: 280). These irregularities were largely responsible for the alleged 'ghost population' of 150,000 in Seoul in 1944 (Mitsui 1944: 22). Within two years of the introduction of the rationing system in 1940, approximately 1,000 cases of 'favouritism rationing' (*chŏngsil paegŭp* 情

實配給) by *aegukpan* leaders had been recorded by the police.[65] The abuse of power by *aegukpan* leaders was one of the critical malpractices that undermined the rationing programme.

Despite the crimes committed by the *panjang*, the rationing mechanism strengthened the power of the unit leaders as this was the most effective way to ensure that unit members cooperated with their leaders and took part in unit activities. For example, the maternity cotton-rationing system, which began in August 1942 in Seoul, adopted an exceptional distributional method: the *panjang* were entrusted with issuing the purchasing permits for it. The unit leaders had already played an important role in keeping, approving and distributing ration cards; however, the authority to issue purchasing permits had, until then, belonged to the leaders of the town associations. An official of Seoul City government stated that such a decision would strengthen solidarity among *aegukpan* members by giving extensive power to the unit leaders (Keijōfu sōmubu kokumin sōryokuka 1942: 218). This example shows that *panjang* empowerment in the rationing administration was boosted by the authorities, which sought to enhance political integration by deeply embedding the function of the *aegukpan* as a rationing institution into the everyday lives of the people. Given that a study conducted by the Government-General in 1942 revealed that the ratio of cotton supply to minimum demand was just 24 per cent in 1942 in Korea (Yi 1992, quoted in Yi S. S. 2003a: 288), it seems plausible that this strategy worked.

The strategic rationing programme, including the *aegukpan* leaders' empowerment, tied people's daily lives to their *aegukpan*'s activities. In particular, food rationing was cleverly exploited to control and mobilize civilians. An example of this is that control over food rationing provided leaders with the absolute authority to compel unit members to attend the *pansanghoe*. At a round-table talk of *aegukpan* leaders organized by the Seoul City Federation in May 1941, Ms Hwang, the *panjang* of the 24th *aegukpan* in Changsajŏng town, and Mr Kim, in charge of the Tongsagu unit in Chunghakchŏng town, proudly reported the rules of their unit;

[65] 'Chŏngsil karinŭn aegukpanjang paeimchwoi-ro tanho ŏmbŏl kakto kyŏnje kyŏngch'al kwajang hoeŭi-eso kyŏlchŏng 情實가리는 애국반장 배임죄로 단호 엄벌 각도 경제 경찰 과장회의에서 결정', *Maeil sinbo*, 8 February 1942, p.2.

> The attendance of my unit is very good. I have arranged that grain will not be sold to people who present ration cards without my seal of approval. My members always attend because participating in meetings is closely tied to a variety of rationing controls, including staple food. I check the movements of each family member…If they do not come [to meetings] before eight o'clock, there is a fine of ten *sen*[66] per person…the collected money is used for buying necessary items, such as a ladder for air-defence drills.
>
> (Nagashima et al. 1941: 13, 15)

> In my unit, I have made it a rule to place my seal on the grain ration cards after checking members' attendance at the regular meeting on the seventh day of the month. Without the seal, people are not allowed to buy their staple foods. This means that if they do not come to the meeting, it is impossible to acquire grain since they do not have the approval. Even if they come to my home later and ask for my seal, I will not give it to them and tell them that 'because you did not come to the meeting, you must content yourself with eating substitute foods for a few more days.' To avoid treating them too severely, I allow them to buy food the next day. So, people attend well.
>
> (Nagashima et al. 1941: 16)

Such practices were even institutionalized in some provinces. In September 1941, the Hamhŭng Provincial Federation for Total National Mobilization reported that after it established a regulation to halt staple rationing when people did not participate in their monthly meetings, there was a much higher attendance rate (Anonymous 1941b: 75). Holding deteriorating food resources in pledge, the leaders of the *aegukpan* and the authorities exercised great power over civilians.

The right of town associations to handle purchasing permits was used as a weapon to force people to pay the membership fee. Even though the collection of money for membership had been allowed by the government since 1933, as explained previously it was not mandatory to contribute money to support the activities of the town associations and *aegukpan*. However, in practice, many citizens were coerced into contributing to these organizations. When people failed to pay the membership fee, the distribution of

[66] *Sen* is Japanese for *chŏn* 錢, a unit of Korean currency. One *chŏn* is 0.01 *wŏn*.

ration cards for necessities, including staple foods, cotton, sugar, towels and petroleum, was halted.[67]

In principle, the local governments prohibited town associations and *aegukpan* from imposing restrictions on the issue of purchasing permits to people who did not pay. However, in reality, the government gave implicit approval to such malpractices, since it entrusted almost full responsibility for the management of commodities' rationing to the town associations and *aegukpan* (Kim Y. M. 2005: 73). Realistically, the rationing systems were not able to function without the involvement of these civilian groups. Therefore, the stance taken by the government was to support the activities of town associations and *aegukpan*, rather than discourage them from collecting money: the government encouraged citizens to pay their membership fees.[68]

Indeed, the supporting role of these organizations was essential to the government's control and mobilization of the population. For example, as explained in 1.1, the staple food rationing programme in Seoul began with a population survey, and was maintained by relying on information collected by each *aegukpan* leader. A clear grasp of the size of each household and the population movements within the city was important in distributing accurate quantities of food to each rationing point, as well as in preparing ration cards. It was the responsibility of the *aegukpan* leaders to check the movement of people in and out of the area and to report the information to the government on a regular basis. Keeping up with current events and understanding the changes occurring in individual households was only possible with the help of the *aegukpan* leaders, who were closely involved in people's daily lives. The information collected by these group leaders was an important source for the government for various war campaigns as well as for the surveillance of its population (Ibid.: 75).

State supervision of the movements of the population increased from May 1942 with the announcement by the Japanese government of the establishment of conscription in Korea. Upon the decision of the central government, the Government-General in Korea

[67] 'Chŏnghoebi chingsu-ro munje wannap annŭndago paegŭpp'yo palgŭb-ŭl kŏjŏl 町會費徵收로 문제 완납않는다고 배급표 발급을 거절', *Maeil sinbo*, 4 October 1941, p.2.
[68] 'Chŏnghoebi chingsu-ro munje wannap annŭndago paegŭpp'yo palgŭb-ŭl kŏjŏl 町會費徵收로 문제 완납않는다고 배급표 발급을 거절', *Maeil sinbo*, 4 October 1941, p.2. .

immediately began to take preparatory action, including the development of a committee for the conscription programme, before its actual implementation in 1944 (Anonymous 1942c: 25). At the same time, it set up an official resident registration system in order to ease the enlistment of Korean men in the Japanese armed services. Under National Registration (*kungmin tŭngnok* 國民登録) all men between the ages of sixteen and 40 who lived in Korea were obliged to be officially registered.[69]

In parallel with the central government's actions, the municipal authorities introduced executive measures. For example, in 1943, the Seoul City government created the Town Register Book (*chŏngjŏkpu* 町籍符), which was to be chiefly administered by town associations and *aegukpan*. All movements of the citizens, including births and deaths in their households, were to be recorded in the book by their *aegukpan* leaders, and this information was conveyed to the city government (Kim Y. M. 2005: 73). The government encouraged registration by setting up a week-long promotion campaign in August 1943. Judge Kaneko of the Seoul District Court argued that town association staff needed to use the term 'family register' (*hojŏk* 戸籍) with the citizens as much as possible. Even though the registration procedure was entrusted to the *aegukpan* leaders, he stated, it would help to put the importance of registration into people's heads.[70] The result of such efforts was revealed in an interview with a surviving former colonial Korean citizen. When the 83 year-old interviewee heard the word 'town association', it was the registration of moving in and out that first came into her head (Sŏ H. J. 2001: 139). Needless to say, the registration administration was successful because it was closely tied to food rationing. In essence, the Town Register Book was a 'rationing ledger' and became the most powerful means of controlling and mobilizing the people (Kim Y. M. 2005: 73).

Aegukpan in Literature

The *aegukpan* were one of the central subjects of propaganda literature, the mainstream genre during the first half of the 1940s. To reshape Koreans into loyal subjects of the Japanese Empire through education, the colonial authorities had strengthened their

[69] 'Ch'ŏngjangnyŏn-ŭi kungmin tŭngnok 青壯年의国民登録', *Mael sinbo*, 22 September 1943, p.1.
[70] 'Hojŏk, kiryu chŏngbi-e aegukpanjang hyŏmnyŏk yomang 戸籍, 寄留整備에愛国班長協力要望', *Maeil sinbo*, 8 August 1943, p.3.

control over the Korean language and the publication of literary works from the end of 1930s. Once almost all Korean newspapers and periodicals had disappeared from circulation, the genre of National Literature (*kungmin munhak* 國民文學) surfaced, with strong backing from the colonial authorities. As a means of spiritual education, seven purposes were set for it: ‘‘clarification of the ideology of national polity’(*kukch’e kwannyŏm-ŭi myŏngjing* 国體観念의明徵); ‘raising the national spirit’ (*kungmin ŭisig-ŭi angyang* 國民意識의昂揚); ‘boosting national morale’ (*kungmin sagi-ŭi chinhŭng* 國民士氣의振興); ‘cooperating with national policy’ (*kukch’aeg-eŭi hyŏmnyŏk* 國策에의協力); ‘establishing the leading theory of culture’ (*chidojŏk munhwa iron-ŭi surip* 指圖的文化理論의樹立); ‘culturally integrating Japan and Korea’ (*naesŏn munhwa-ŭi chonghap* 內鮮文化의綜合); and ‘developing the national culture’ (*kungmin munhwa-ŭi kŏnsŏl*) (Im C. G. 2002: 65). As clearly demonstrated by these aims, literary works were used as a political tool by the Japanese colonial authorities, and Korean writers’ literary activities were directed to fulfil the state’s political purpose.

In line with the state’s strategies, literary works that aimed to convince Koreans of Japan’s right to wage war, and that encouraged the nation’s support of the war, were published one after the other. In so-called home-front literature (*hubang munhak* 後防文學), the Korean woman’s pivotal role as an imperial citizen was particularly emphasized. She fulfilled her mission by working hard as a member of an *aegukpan* and by willingly sending off her husband and sons to the battlefield.

Seiryō-ri kaiwai 清涼里界隈 (Ch’ŏngnyang-ni Neighbourhood), written by the pro-Japanese Korean writer Chŏng In-t’aek (1909-?), was a typical home-front novel. It was written in Japanese and published in the first edition of *National Literature*[71] in 1941. The story featured a young couple shortly after their move to Seiryō-ri (Ch’ŏngnyang-ni), an impoverished area of Seoul. The plot revolved around the neighbour’s boy who cut off his own finger to save his sick mother; however, the focus was on the protagonist’s wife,

[71] The monthly magazine *National Literature* was published from November 1941 until May 1945 as a nominal consolidation of the two Korean literary magazines *Munjang* 文章 and *Inmun p’yŏngnon* 人文評論. The citation of Chŏng’s novel in this thesis is from *Chōsen kokumin bungakushū* 朝鮮国民文学集 published in 1943 by Chōsen bunjin kyōkai 朝鮮文人協会 in Tokyo.

the leader of the *aegukpan*. At first, the young couple did not fit into their community. Their assimilation with the neighbours began after the wife assumed the role of the *aegukpan* leader. Her character, which was depicted as being somewhat selfish in the initial part of the novel, became more altruistic as a result of her experiences as a *panjang*. Chŏng expressed the wife's avidity for the role of unit leader thus;

> Another chance to get close to them [the neighbours] came up. My wife was recommended for the position of the leader of the *aikokuhan* of X unit in X ward Seiryō-ri. Apparently, she rejected the suggestion at first since it was an undeserved honour for her. Eventually, she accepted based on the reasons that she had received a secondary education and was young and without children. Another reason, that she was unaware of, was that it was a stopgap measure to fill the vacant position due to the former male leader's sudden move to the city centre. According to her, she accepted the honourable duty with a light heart and a slightly pretentious feeling. As a practical matter, however, the responsibility of the task was quite heavy and a slapdash performance was not acceptable. Panicking, she soon began to diligently attend meetings, frequently visiting her members' houses, and devouring *Kokumin sōryoku* and *Aikokuhan*. Amazed at this different side to her character, I watched her growth with satisfaction.
>
> (Chŏng I. T'. 1943: 92-93)

An unexpected event, taking on the role of the *panjang*, served as an important turning point that integrated the newcomers into community life. As the leader of her unit, she became the type of a person who made efforts to complete her missions. The process she underwent was described as a 'growth' by the narrator. Through the wife's efforts, the author intended to show the importance of national solidarity and the desirable attitude of wartime civilians who made serious efforts to follow the state's guidance. As time progressed, the woman in the story began to act her part as a *panjang* admirably.

> She came back home exhausted almost every day. Sometimes her return was even later than mine when I was late from work. In this area, the *kairanban* [circulating bulletin board] did not work since the majority of people could not read. Therefore, all the directives from the *chōdōkai* [town association] had to be verbally delivered to the people by my wife … people's lack of understanding of the air defence promoted by the government prevented her work from being done. She was

> assailed by questions and complaints wherever she went. According to her, she was tired out by going from door to door explaining the current emergency situation of the nation and the need for air-defence drills…however, no matter how tired she was the day before, she had always regained her vigour by the next morning, and was ready to deal with the challenging tasks of her unit.
>
> (Ibid.: 99-100)

The role of *panjang* changed the wife's life and her character. She came to devote her efforts with a spirit of self-sacrifice, and in turn, accomplished the mission of making her own unit a successfully functioning *aegukpan*. By describing her endeavours and the results, the novel attempted to glorify the activities of the *aegukpan*, providing the moral of the story.

Another example that dealt with *aegukpan* activities was *Changmi-ŭi chip* 薔薇의 집(The House of Roses), written by Ch'oe Chŏng-hŭi (1920-1990) and published in the monthly magazine *Taedonga* 大東亜 (Great East Asia) in 1942. This novel is classified as a broadcast novel (*pangsong sosŏl*) as it was originally intended for radio broadcast. Radio broadcasting was continuously supported by the colonial government from the beginning of regular broadcasting in Korea by the Keijō Broadcast Company in 1927. Due to the efficiency of broadcasting in disseminating information across a broad area simultaneously, the government intended for Koreans to be educated by radio broadcasts (Sŏ C. G. 2006: 528). During the first half of the 1940s especially, radio broadcasting was used to disseminate Imperial Japan's war propaganda among the general populace.[72] After its initial announcement on the airwaves, the contents, including novels and speeches by government officials, were redelivered to the people through various magazines for the edification of the masses (Ibid.: 537-538).

Changmi-ŭi chip was written to inspire *aegukpan* activity by creating an idealized model of the unit leader. The author gave much space to the description of the heroine, Sŏngnye, and her enthusiasm for housework. She was a humble, obedient and good housewife who put her knowledge gained through modern education into practice in

[72] For an account on the role of radio broadcasting in supporting Japanese assimilation policy in Korea between 1924 and 1937, see Robinson 1998.

housekeeping. Despite her modesty, she spoke out positively about *aegukpan* and eventually became the leader of her unit. The novel also dealt with the real issue of *aegukpan* operations, the communication difficulties between the administrative side and unit members, which were frequently discussed in government-controlled periodicals. The novel suggested that the best way of resolving disputes was the method used by Sŏngnye, the role model idealized by the author.

> Sŏngnye had never attended *aegukpan* [meetings] herself while she had hired a domestic servant…When she participated [in the meeting] personally after firing the servant, she realized for the first time that it had been wrong to send the servant instead of going herself. She felt keenly that all the people, including the head of the ward and the *aegukpan* and unit members, needed to improve [the way they communicated with each other]. Sŏngnye frequently expressed her opinion [in the meetings]. Even though she disliked speaking in public, she could not endure the indiscreet behaviour of unit members. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for the leaders of the ward, her unit, or even the *chŏngch'onghae*[73] to reply nastily towards ordinary member's questions when the people could not understand what they had been told. The administrators merely mechanically repeated the state directives delivered from the higher levels. In such circumstances, Sŏngnye insisted that someone had to explain why people were subjected to saving and contributing money to buying state bonds. She stated that few women [who attended their meetings] understood the aims and the purpose of their meetings since they stayed at home most of the time and had lost the sense of dedication to their own nation and the war effort. She said that these were the reasons for the troubles among unit members: they were worried about whether their money would be returned or not in the future from the government. Members even threatened *panjang*, saying they would not attend air-defence drills if *panjang* did not distribute them ration cards for rubber shoes. Those members were the very people who were not to be blamed, but rather to be explained why saving and air-defence training were necessary.
>
> (Ch'oe 1942: 148-149)

We meet the epitomized *panjang* through Sŏngnye's behaviour at the unit meeting. By

[73] The leaders of the town associations.

painting a desirable portrait of a citizen who willingly contributes to the government war efforts with a clear sense of nationhood, the propaganda literature aimed to re-shape colonial Koreans into members of truly 'patriotic units' serving Imperial Japan.

The *aegukpan* facilitated communication between the wartime Japanese government and the general population in its colonies. Originally set up for the spiritual education of the people, *aegukpan* became an indispensable administrative tool for the Japanese government. Their important role was described by the Korean Federation in the following:

> Defensive measures against invasions of the enemy are implemented by the *aegukpan* unit. It also functions effectively as a rationing and labour mobilization unit. Government research is also conducted via the *aegukpan*. The campaigns for austerity and the selling of government bonds are also carried out by the *aegukpan* unit. Without the *aegukpan*, it would be impossible to fight these major wars.
>
> (Kokumin sōryoku Chōsen renmei 1945, quoted after Yi C. M. 2004: 450)

There is little doubt that the food-rationing system was one of the major factors that enhanced the ability of the *aegukpan* as a political organization to carry out war-supporting programmes. According to an official document written by the Japanese Army, despite the consistent efforts of the colonial government, 77 per cent of the Korean population did not have a sense of nation (*kukka kwannyŏm* 國家觀念) until the first half of the 1930s (Ch'oe Y. R. 1994: 43). However, by the first half of the 1940s, the well-disciplined behaviour of Koreans in implementing war mobilization programmes was viewed with astonishment by the Japanese (Kokumin sōryoku Chōsen renmei 1945: 52). It seems reasonable that such a change was closely related to the fact that the citizens' attendance at unit meetings suddenly increased around the time when staple food rationing began to be distributed through their *aegukpan* leaders (Yi C. M. 2004: 442). The power of the *aegukpan* as political organizations intensified alongside the expansion of the food rationing programme (Higuchi 1994: 122; Kim Y. M. 2005: 73-74).

Integrating the mass organizations with the wartime food rationing channels, essential to daily existence to everyone, was an important factor in ensuring people's

cooperation with state war mobilization campaign as well as in heightening the efficiency of food management administration. It is no wonder that the highly efficient colonial system of *aegukpan* was resurrected by the US military government together with the Japanese food rationing programme in post-colonial Korea after 1945.

2.2 From *Aegukpan* to *Kungminban*

It should be borne in mind that the initial incentive for the restoration of the system of civilian organizations in post-colonial Korea was not just the food shortage but the rivalry between the US military government and the Korean leftist groups represented by the Korean People's Republic (*Chosŏn inmin konghwaguk* 朝鮮人民共和國)[74] and its local branches 'people's committees' (*inmin wiwŏnhoe* 人民委員會). Along with the latter, Korean people any person opposing the post-colonial authorities were labeled as communists or leftists at that time. As a means to ease the living difficulties of Koreans, the colonial system of civilian organizations drew attention from the Americans and the Korean leftist groups, both of which wanted to gain public support. They sought to stabilize people's economic lives by utilizing the highly effective organizational system as the basic unit of consumption. The two powers confronted each other over control of the civilian groups, and the struggle strengthened the system of civilian organizations. This political atmosphere in Korea was also important in stimulating the Americans to reuse the civilian associations in food rationing. The quasi-governmental mass organizations created by the colonial government experienced a resurgence amid the intricate economic and political atmosphere of post-colonial Korea.

The Re-emergence of Civilian Groups amid the Political Struggle in Decolonized Korea

The reorganization of town associations and their sub-organizations *aegukpan*, which had performed an important role in administering food rationing under the Japanese wartime authorities, was called for by the Korean people themselves relatively early in decolonized Korea. The Korean people reformed these groups not led by any strategic

[74] Hereafter KPR.

command, but rather with the aim of self-help in an effort to resolve the social disorders and economic chaos, chiefly responsible for the establishment of a free market in rice by Americans (see 1.2). The need to reactivate the function of the civilian associations was expressed by some newspaper articles:

> No matter by whose hand the system of *aegukpan* was made or what the political purpose of it was…it is necessary to make an effective use the pervasive organizations for our own purpose. There would be no more ethnic discrimination or evil customs of bureaucracy in the rationing system if using the *aegukpan*… [t]here is little doubt [that the *aegukpan* system] would be an effective means to curb prices if necessities were secured to some extent.
>
> (*Seoul sinmun*, 28 November 1945, quoted in Kim H. C. 2007: 295)

> Given that the Japanese colonial government made considerable achievements [in its administration] in adeptly exploiting town associations, we should definitely reform [the organizations], and lay the foundations for building our future society.
>
> (*Taejung ilbo* 16 February 1946, quoted in Kim Y. M. 2005: 84)

In pursuit of these goals, Seoul citizens reformed their town associations. For example, in September 1945, the people of Tongbu town established a new community group, based on the earlier town association, with the purpose of 'keeping up with the new era of Korea', and organized educational programmes for its members, such as lectures on Korean history and *Han'gŭl* (the Korean alphabet) (Kim Y. M. 2005: 87). On 2 October 1945, nearly 100 Kye-dong town residents gathered to reform their town association, re-electing group leaders who had caused widespread anger among the people in the colonial era for their role in an extension of the colonial authorities' harsh repression. In November 1945, residents in Aenggunam town renamed their organization the 'People's Autonomous Association' (Inmin chach'ihoe) and replaced the leaders and staff, who had, until then, been Japanese people (Ibid.: 87-88). While the reformation of some town associations was purely driven by a locally determined need for autonomy, as described above, others were reformed under the influence of people's committees, which I will

describe below.

The emergence of 'cooperatives' (*hyŏptong chohap* 協同組合) during the winter of 1945-46 greatly contributed to the revival of the town associations and *aegukpan* in city areas. The purpose of the cooperatives was to establish a collective purchasing system by reorganizing citizens into town associations in order to ease the hardships caused by the shortages of commodities and soaring prices, which had been deteriorating since the autumn of 1945 (Ibid.: 102). For the urban population especially, cooperatives were a practical solution that made use of their autonomy to acquire daily commodities in the midst of an increasingly worsening commodity supply situation, for which the USAMGIK did not seem to have a clear economic plan.

Cooperatives were organized by people's committees, the grass-roots leftist *inmin wiwŏnhoe* groups that had spontaneously mushroomed throughout the country shortly after Korea's liberation. The Seoul People's Committee was especially active in expanding cooperative associations, carrying out an important role in supplying daily commodities to the people in Seoul. It called for citizens to group themselves into town associations and then participate in cooperatives, emphasizing that those who became cooperative members were able to buy commodities at lower prices. The promotion took the form of a campaign called the 'Cooperative Movement' (*Hyŏptong chohap undong* 協同組合運動) (Ibid.: 104). All citizens were entitled to join the collective purchasing scheme as long as they organized their town associations into cooperative units and announced their participation in the network to the Seoul People's Committee.[75]

In order to make the group purchases, in December 1945, the so-called Department of People's Livelihood (*Minsaengbu* 民生部) was created within the Seoul People's Committee. This was a special section, responsible for purchasing and distributing commodities. After receiving orders, it used its vast purchasing power to buy commodities. The purchased commodities were first distributed to each town association, and then were further divided up for individual households by the *aegukpan*. The prices

[75] 'Kakchong sobi chohab-e saengp'il mulcha-rŭl paegŭp 各種消費組合에 生必物資를配給', 9 December 1945, *Chayu sinmun* 自由新聞, p.2.

of goods bought through cooperatives were half the respective market prices. Between December 1945 and January 1946, for example, foodstuffs such as dried anchovies (*myŏlch'i)*, soy sauce and soybean paste, and clothing were bought through the Seoul People's Committee, and distributed to people at relatively low prices (Kim Y. M. 2005: 103). The success of cooperatives in Seoul increased their recognition, and gave momentum to their spread to other areas. In January 1946, the National Federation of Cooperative Associations was officially established. As of June 1946, there were 121 cooperatives in the southern part of Korea. Seoul, with 53 cooperatives, had the greatest concentration (Ibid.: 104). The 'Cooperative Movement', led by the People's Committee, was an important facilitator in regrouping the Korean people into the civilian groups created by the Japanese government.

The resurrection of town associations and *aegukpan* is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the Korean leftists who invigorated these remnants of the colonial system had strong anti-Japanese sentiments. Many of them were former anti-Japanese activists, and strongly insisted on social reform in post-colonial Korea to eradicate the vestiges of Japanese imperialism (Cumings 1981: 88). For example, the head of the Seoul People's Committee, Ch'oe Wŏn-t'aek, urged the Seoul municipal government to change the Japanese-style names of wards and towns in the city immediately after Korea's liberation, a proposal that was accepted by the government the following year (Kim Y. M. 2005: 83). The People's Committees were also highly negative about town associations and *aegukpan*, since these groups embodied the controlling power of the colonial system over the Korean population.[76] The leaders of the *aegukpan* were particularly disliked among liberated Koreans (Anonymous 1948), to the extent that they were included in the group of pro-Japanese collaborators who were to be prosecuted when the punishment of pro-Japanese Koreans became a political issue in 1948.[77]

[76] 'Inmindang, kunjŏngch'ŏng-e mulka anjŏng kin'gŭp taech'aek kŏnŭi 인민당, 군정청에 물가안정긴급대책 건의', *Chunngang sinmun* 중앙신문 12 Decebmer 1945. Electric document, available at http://db.history.go.kr/url.jsp?ID=dh_001_1945_12_12_0050 (accessed 5 July 2012).

[77] Along with the approval of the Anti-Traitor Law *(Panminjok haengwi ch'ŏbŏlpŏp* 반민족행위처벌법) on 7 September 1948, an investigation was initiated by a special committee to uncover national traitors and collaborators. However, the American authorities, who relied heavily on the former Japanese administrative structure and previous Korean employees of the Government-General to carry out the Korean occupation

Despite their negative view of Japanese practices, a significant reason for the Korean Left's strengthening of civilian groups was that they had it in mind to use them to build their own nation. This project was led by the KPR, the country's leading group of people's committees. The KPR was created two days' prior to the arrival of the USAMGIK in Korea with the aim of taking steps towards establishing an independent Korean government. The Korean leftists did not want their country to be occupied by a foreign power, including America, and wanted to establish complete autonomy and independence for Korea (Cumings 1981: 86, 88-89). By the time the US troops arrived, the KPR had already created a loosely structured government, supported by the general populace and the provincial people's committees, which performed both legislative and executive functions (Meade 1951: 75). Even though they were not recognized by the Americans, the Left had a nationwide network of people's committees organizationally incorporating the town associations and *aegukpan*, which were known as 'town people's committees' (*chŏng inmin wiwŏnhoe*) and 'people's committees' respectively (Kim Y. M. 2005: 85). The Korean leftists sought to gain public support by providing people with a useful source for commodities through the resurrection of the highly efficient civilian organizations.

It seems that the strategy to integrate the general populace through the promotion of cooperatives was fairly successful. For example, on 3 January 1946, 300,000 citizens from 270 town associations met to participate in a political gathering organized by the Seoul People's Committee and the Seoul City Federation of Town Associations (*Sŏul-si chŏng yŏnhaphoe* 서울市町連合會), the organization for the representatives of town associations chiefly led by leftist sympathizers (Ibid.: 109). If we consider that the estimated total number of town associations in Seoul at the time was 280, almost every town association was under the influence of the Korean Left (Ibid.: 89).

The growing influence of the KPR and people's committees over the populace was of great concern for the Americans, who were occupying the southern part of Korea

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administration, refused to actively handle the issue. Bowing to the Korean government's request to halt the uprooting of collaborators, the committee was dismantled within a year of its establishment. As a result, only a handful of former collaborators were punished. See De Ceuster 2001: 207-215.

with the major political purpose of blocking the spread of communism in the peninsula (Cumings 1981: 136-137). Despite the fact that the people's committees took the form of locally originating autonomous organizations, the US military government considered them to be communist groups. This was due to the fact that many of the groups' leaders had colonial experience in social and political movements influenced by communism and socialism, including peasant protests, labour movements and the rather more radical Red Peasant Movement.[78] Moreover, by the time the US troops arrived in Korea, grass-roots groups led by former communists had blossomed throughout the country. To the Americans, the KPR represented a challenge to their authority and an illegal attempt to usurp power on the part of a minority communist element (Meade 1951: 76). The KPR's control of the people's committees posed a serious threat to political stability in the American occupation zone.[79]

Moreover, the major food crisis caused by the free rice market policy was a practical problem that had to be solved to maintain peace and order in the country. As explained in 1.2, the military government was unable to implement any measures to tackle the food shortage in cities until the beginning of 1946. An official American document reported that the shortage of rice in Seoul was serious, and the military government was openly criticized in all newspapers for its irresolute policies (G-2 Weekly Summary #22, 12 February 1946, quoted in Kim Y. M. 2005: 100). In a survey of 640 Seoul citizens carried out by Americans in April 1946, more than 40 percent of respondents replied that the administrative ability of the military government was worse than that of the Japanese Government-General in Korea, and highlighted the destitution brought on by the impractical economic policies of the USAMGIK as the major reason for this (G-2 Weekly Summary #22, 12 February 1946, Ibid.: 101). The failure of the rice policy led to a clear decline in popular support, especially in the cities. Many public demonstrations calling for rice in Seoul in 1946, such as those illustrated in 1.2, were organized by town associations or *aegukpan*. The associations became units for

[78] Examples of the activities of Red Peasant Movement during colonial era, see 4.1.
[79] Many Korean scholars argue that the deregulation of the rice market by the USAMGIK was a political strategy to weaken the influence of the KPR over the Korean population, since the KPR had successfully controlled food distribution until the US troops arrived in Korea. For example, see Ch'oe P. D. 1996 and Pak S. J. 2002.

expressing group dissatisfaction with the American authorities (Kim Y. M. 2005: 111-112). For the USAMGIK, turning public support the government by resolving the food shortage was not just a solution to the political struggle with the Korean leftist groups, but also a way to vindicate their occupation of Korea.

In January 1946, the Americans stepped up their administrative efforts with the creation of 'Consumers' Cooperatives' (*sobi chohap* 消費組合), which were formed to ease the difficulties of procuring commodities for Seoul citizens. These cooperatives formed a group purchasing scheme similar to that of the people's committees' cooperatives. In a meeting of the Provincial Governors in February 1946, it was decided to establish Consumers' Cooperatives in each city or county, district and township. In Seoul, in order to oppose the cooperatives of the Seoul People's Committee, the military government encouraged the leaders of the town associations who did not belong to committee to organize a new federation, the 'Hansŏng[80] City Federation of Town Associations' (*Hansŏng-si chŏng yŏnhaphoe* 漢城市町連合會).[81] They introduced a collective purchasing system, almost identical to that of the Seoul People's Committee. The military government supported the activities of this organization, allowing it to establish an office in Seoul City Hall (Kim Y. M. 2005: 130-131). While the Cooperative Movement of the People's Committees was carried out by the general populace, the organization of Consumers' Cooperatives was extensively backed by the government.

By October 1947, the military government had gained complete control of the town associations in Seoul and had reorganized the civilian groups into quasi-governmental organizations. This began with an administrative order in June 1946 to abolish all town association federations which had thus far taken the lead in collective acts, even against the government.[82] The authorities dispatched employees of Seoul City government to the offices of each town association to put them under the control of the Seoul City government. By providing practical solutions to deal with high prices in urban

[80] Another name for Seoul.
[81] 'Hansŏng-si chŏngyŏn sinbalchok 漢城市町聯 新發足', *Tonga ilbo* 東亜日報, 24 January 1946, p.2.
[82] 'Pullidoen chŏng yŏnhaphoe-to t'ongil Kyŏngsŏng-bu chŏnghoe ch'ongyŏnhaphoe kyŏlsŏng 分離된町聯合會도統一 京城府町會總聯合會結成', *Tonga ilbo*, 7 June 1946, p.2.

areas, the authorities were able to turn civilian organizations to quasi-governmental organizations. Among such governmental projects, making use of the groups in food-rationing administration was one of the most important factors which strengthened the function of civilian groups. The Americans never overlooked the fact that these organizations had been an extremely efficient part of the Japanese food distribution system prior to 1945.

The Revival of the Aegukpan under the Food Rationing Programme of the USAMGIK

The military government's rationing control over staple foods began in January 1946 with the promulgation of the National Rice Collection (*Migok sijangnyŏng* 米穀市場令) that allowed the government to coercively collect rice from producers. The government rice collection did not begin until February 1946, but price rises and the shortage of rice had already become a serious problem in city areas by the end of 1945. In January 1946, the military government was compelled to launch staple food rationing to address the acute food shortage in Seoul, despite the fact that there was neither sufficient rice nor the time to design a rationing scheme. In this situation, the ability of the civilian groups developed by the Japanese government to operate a rationing scheme was to prove highly important.

During the early stage, the USAMGIK food rationing programme was almost completely reliant on the roles of those civilian groups. The first staple food rationing scheme for Seoul citizens was run on 7 January 1946. Although the food to be rationed had already been distributed to the rationing points several days previously, the authorities were not able to launch the rationing distribution because they did not have a grasp of the size of the city's population.[83] Under the Japanese food management programme, the volumes of food to be secured from producing areas and delivered to each rationing point had been determined by the population of the entire city and each township. However, the military government's rationing scheme was far from ideal: in the face of a serious food supply shortage in the city, the authorities had to distribute the food collected without the fundamental studies which had to be undertaken prior to carrying out food rationing. The authorities called for citizens to report the number of

[83] 'Migok, sŏkt'an kyunbae 米穀, 石炭均配', *Tonga ilbo*, 7 January 1946, p.2.

family members in their household to their *aegukpan* leaders when they were given food. It was considerably different from the Japanese food rationing programme which had been launched after elaborate preparations, including various surveys, in collaboration with the government officials and police force. In contrast to this, the role of *aegukpan* leaders became overwhelmingly important, as emphasized by the head of the Department of Economy in Seoul City: 'In the current situation, only the population data collected by the *aegukpan* leaders shall be the accurate criterion [for food rationing]…'.[84]

As was the case under Japanese rule, the leaders of town associations and *aegukpan* were provided with considerable authority to issue and distribute purchasing permits to their members. The first staple food rationing was implemented using 2,600 bags of rice (approximately 210 metric tons), 1,200 sacks of wheat flour, and 7,000 *sŏk* (1,010 tons) of other grains secured by the Seoul City government. Allowances were determined based on the size of the family: eight kilograms for a household with less than five members.[85] In principle, the earlier ration books used under the Japanese rationing system were reused. Modification of the number of household members recorded in the ration books was only permitted by the leaders of the town associations and *aegukpan*. For those who did not have ration books, certification (*chŭngmyŏng* 証明), as part of which the size of the family was recorded, was provided by the leaders of the civilian associations. Certification and ration books were treated equally.[86] The important role of the leaders of these civilian groups in the rationing programme was emphasized by the government again and again during food rationing periods. For example, prior to another grain distribution in March 1946, Seoul City government announced that food was only available to those with ration books or certificates authorized by the leaders of the town associations.[87]

The responsibilities of the leaders of the town associations and *aegukpan* were not limited to authorizing purchasing permits, but included a wide range of food rationing

[84] 'Yanggog-ŭn ikkŏnman pagŭp chiji 糧穀은있건만 配給遲遲', *Ton' ilbo*, 6 January 1946, p.2.
[85] 'Migok, sŏkt'an kyunbae 米穀, 石炭均配', *Tonga ilbo*, 7 January 1946, p.2.
[86] 'Singnyang poyu-k'o sanŭn'gŏn maejŏm 食糧보유코 사는건 매점', *Chayu sinmun*, 8 January 1946, p.2.
[87] 'Maeil chunda kidae malla 매일 준다 기대 말라', *Chosŏn ilbo*, 14 March 1946, p.2; ''Ssal' ibŏn-enŭn kkok paegŭp 쌀 이번에는 꼭 배급', *Chosŏn ilbo*, 13 March 1946, p.2.

administration duties. For example, when rations were delivered to rationing stations, distributors were obliged to report the details of rationing, including the total volume of the delivery, prices and rationing days, to them. The heads of town associations also carried out inspections and checked distributors' books to ensure that foods were distributed properly.[88]

The special programme of rice distribution introduced in April 1946 also testified to the essential role played by the leaders of the town associations and *aegukpan*. In order to lessen the growing public discontents with the worsening food supply in Seoul, notwithstanding food rationing, the government temporarily lifted the ban on the personal purchase and delivery of rice from other provinces into Seoul by promulgating the Special Rice Ordinance for Seoul City (*Sŏulsi-e kwanhan t'ŭkpyŏl migokpŏp*). Under this ordinance, people were allowed to buy rice within the limit of the daily allowance of two *hap* (approximately 285 grams) per person, in exchange for written permission from the leaders of the town associations and *aegukpan*, who were in charge of the administration of this programme. Since the *aegukpan* leaders knew the most about their members' families, they were able to check whether the applications submitted by the people were correct or not. Only applicants approved by the *aegukpan* leaders received permission, which was issued in the name of the leaders of the town associations (or wards) (Anonymous 1946).

Despite their civilian status, the leaders of town associations and *aegukpan* were given enormous powers, not only to manage the rationing administration but to exercise police control over civilians. On 13 January 1946, Seoul City Governor Yi and US Commander Wilson appealed to Seoul citizens to notify their *aegukpan* leaders of neighbours with surplus rice, and announced the government's plan to buy the rice at a price of 750 *wŏn* per *sŏk* (144 kilograms) for rationing to Seoul citizens.[89] In reality, the appeal was a coercive rice collection using the power of the town associations and *aegukpan*. The following day, Commander Wilson ordered the leaders of the town

[88] 'Yŏngdan-sŏ hwakpohan 'ssal' ichŏnsŏk 營團서確保한 '쌀'二千石', *Tonga ilbo*, 20 February 1946, p.2; 'Maeil chunda kidae malla 매일 준다 기대 말라',*Chosŏn ilbo*, 14 March 1946, p.2.
[89] 'Sŏul simin-e ko handa 서울시민에 고한다', *Chosŏn ilbo*, 15 January 1946, p.2.

associations to collect a 'quota' of 80 to 85 *sŏk* of rice per town association within two weeks, and gave them the authority to use police force when needed.[90]

It is no wonder that such a food rationing mechanism created favourable circumstances for the growth of distribution malpractices among the civilian leaders, and provided them with plenty of opportunities to take advantage of the system. Their privileged position of issuing and controlling purchasing permits created a massive 'ghost population' (*yuryŏng in'gu* 幽霊人口) in Seoul: there were an estimated 203,000 'ghost citizens' between April 1947 and April 1948 (Ch'oe Y. M. 2008: 124). There were various ways of creating a 'ghost'. For example, the leader of an *aegukpan* in Tonam-dong town in Seoul was caught by the police receiving 21 people's grain rations illegally by using previous unit members' ration books which should have been destroyed after they had left the town.[91] Many citizens were guilty of creating the ghost population, not just the leaders of the *aegukpan*. People who moved to Seoul from the countryside, for instance, recorded all their family members, including those living in their hometowns, on their ration books. Family members who lived separately included the names of their parents on their ration books as if they lived with them. Many who were repatriated from abroad or the northern part of Korea when the country was liberated from colonial rule could easily fabricate their family, as the American authorities did not have any official records of their family status (Ch'oe Y. M. 2008: 119-120). Through such false reporting, people were able to secure far more than their entitlement. The misdistribution of foodstuffs became established practice in the southern half of the Korean peninsula during the second half of the 1940s, and the leaders of the town associations and *aegukpan* played a critical role in the majority of these operations.

A number of measures were introduced by the government to counter the misdistribution of scarce food resources. For example, in February 1947, the military government introduced a system of citizen registration (*chumin tŭngnokche* 住民登録制) to eliminate the 'ghost population', starting in Seoul and Kyŏnggi Province (Kim Y. M.

[90] ' Iju hu myŏn ch'aegim chigo chodal 二週後면責任지고調達', *Tonga ilbo,* 15 January 1946, p.2.
[91] 'Pujŏng paegŭp padŭn suhyŏngja-ka sanggo 不正配給받은 受刑者가上告', *Kyŏnghyang sinmun* 京鄕新聞, 2 February 1948, p.2.

2005: 150). The registration coincided with preparations for a new food rationing scheme that was scheduled to be put into effect on 1 April 1947. A major change in the new rationing system was that every individual citizen was to have his or her own ration book instead one shared by the whole household. By introducing a personal ration-book system, the authorities sought to remedy the widespread irregularities in rationing that chiefly came from the abuse of family-unit ration books.[92] The registration was carried out by the leaders of the *aegukpan* and town associations. Only those who completed the citizenship registration were issued with the individually prepared ration books needed to buy staple foods from April.[93] For this reason, registration progressed rapidly: it took just two months to complete the registration of more than one million Seoul citizens and distribute the new ration cards. People were required to show their registration card (*tŭngnokp'yo* 登録票) along with their ration book when they went to collect their rations (Kim Y. M. 2005: 151-152, 156).

The registration, accompanied by the new rationing scheme, enabled the government to eradicate the ghost population. Shortly after completion of the registration, Seoul City government set up special groups, Food Inspection Teams (*singnyang sach'altae* 食糧査察隊), consisting of policemen, government employees, and people from town associations and the Korean Commodity Company (*Chosŏn saenghwalp'um yŏngdan* 朝鮮生活品營團), the semi-public organization responsible for grain rationing. They went from house to house between 5 a.m. and 9 a.m. checking the status of the families against their registration with the town associations, in their ration books, and as actual residents. Through the investigation launched on 1 May 1947, Seoul City government were able to uncover a huge proportion of the ghost population. For example, 950 ghosts were discovered in just one town association, and 570 false ration books were confiscated (Ibid.: 159). During fifteen days in March 1948, more than 2,000 public servants were mobilized for a surveillance task led by the City Government and the National Food Administration (*Singnyang haengjŏngch'ŏ* 食糧行政處), the government

[92] 'Sinjang ch'ejung-to tŭngnok nam Chosŏn kongminjŭng-ŭl parhaeng 身長 體重도 登錄 남조선 公民證을 발행', *Chayu sinmun*, 12 February 1947, p.2.
[93] 'Yuryŏng in'gu ŏpsaegojŏ kaeinbyŏl t'ongjangje silsi 유령인구 없애고저 개인별 통장제 실시', *Chayu sinmun*, 12 February 1947, p.2.

institution in charge of planning the food rationing operation. Organized into pairs, they picked out the 'ghosts' from the people through door-to-door investigations between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. (Ibid.: 161). On the first day alone, 986 ghosts were found in 1,816 households. In one *aegukpan* in Hoehyŏn-dong, ten out of eleven households had 'unseen' family members, amounting to 61 additional rations.[94]

It goes without saying that all these government efforts were aimed at reinforcing the food-rationing system itself. But at the same time, such administrative action was part of state measures seeking to curb the excesses of the civilian organizations in rationing operations. The Director of Public Prosecutions clearly stated that the leaders of town associations and the people directly involving rationing were the main culprits behind the widespread malpractices in food rationing, and that strong measures would be taken against them.[95] Indeed, the 'ghost'-hunting projects were carried out by the whole town association as a unit, and where 'ghosts' were discovered, the whole *aegukpan*, including its leader, was forced to take responsibility.[96] 'Ghost'-hunting projects were carried out continuously by the South Korean government after its establishment in August 1948. Despite the persistent efforts of the authorities to curb the irregularities caused by group leaders, they continued under the food-rationing system in which the unit leaders remained closely involved.

Staying a Central Player in the Food-Rationing System in South Korea

A major revision of the food-rationing system was made by the South Korean government in April 1949, several months after the American authorities passed power over to the Koreans. Despite the initial plan to maintain the food rationing programme following the control policies of the US military government, the new government's first rice collection in autumn 1948 collected less than half of its target volume. The Korean government was compelled to change its food rationing programme, which had thus far

[94] ''Ch'uryŏnaen yuryŏng in'gu' ch'ŏnnal-e ŏmnŭn i 900-yŏmyŏng'추려낸 幽靈人口' 첫날에 없는 이 900 여명' *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, 20 March 1948, p.2.
[95] 'Tojŏn, migok pujŏng paegŭpcha sagichoe-ro ch'ŏdan 盜電·米穀不正配給者 詐欺罪로處斷', *Tonga ilbo*, 16 December 1947, p.2.
[96] 'Yuryŏng in'gu pan chŏnch'e-ŭi ch'aegim 幽靈人口 班全體의 責任', *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, 13 January 1949, p.4

aimed to feed the entire non-farming population, so that it only provided rice to government-selected groups of people. Under the new rationing scheme, approximately 60 per cent of Seoul citizens who had thus far received rations were forced to buy grain on the free market. Those who received rations were those who worked for state institutions and in priority industries, and the poor (see 1.2).

The problem with the new rationing scheme was that there was a wide difference between the price of rice sold on the free market and that rationed by the government. Due to the persistent inflation after decolonization, Korean authorities had to stick to a low-price policy following the US military government's economic strategy. This was especially important when the money supply rapidly increased after the harvest due to the release of rice onto the market – this was the chief factor aggravating an already serious inflation situation (Kim C. S. 2000: 184). In order to control the money supply, the Korean government distributed rationed rice at relatively low prices: between March and September 1949, the price of government rice was between a quarter and a half of that of free market rice (Ibid.: 185).

Under the revised rationing scheme outlined above people who excluded from the official appointments of rationing recipients had to use the free rice market. If we consider that the daily consumption of rice per person in 1947 was 2.5 *hap* (approximately 360 grams) (in cities) and the per capita ration distribution of rice between December 1948 and February 1949 was 2.1 to 2.2 *hop* (300-315 grams) (the national average), it seems plausible that the use of the free market to compensate for the rice shortage was indispensable to many Koreans (Ibid.: 101, 182). However, needless to say, the economical way to purchase rice was through rationing. Moreover, the price of free-market rice continued to rise due to the unstable free market situation in Korea. For example, the price of 20 litres of rice rose from 1,715 *wŏn* to 5,380 *wŏn* between March 1946 and June 1950 (Ibid.: 184). Naturally, few people wanted to purchase their food on the free market and the new food rationing scheme caused dispute among the people over rationing recipients.

Despite this situation, government standards for the selection of rationing subjects

were rather vague, and practical determination of the ration receivers was entrusted to the leaders of the *aegukpan*. Excluding the absolute rules for occupation, such as the inclusion of government employees, the number of 'the poor' who were to be given rations was decided by the leaders of the *aegukpan* from a pre-assigned number of rations per unit. In principle, priority was to be given to the poorest unit members, and a decision regarding who these people were was made during discussions at the monthly meetings.[97] However, in most cases, selections were made by the leaders of the *aegukpan* alone, without consulting the other members.[98] For example, in April 1949, the *Kyŏnghyang sinmun* newspaper reported that leaders favoured their friends and relatives when selecting rationing subjects. With the unit leaders' approval, the wealthy, those who owned even factories or who were affluent enough to afford a family car received rationing, while the poor who were in desperate need of cheaper government rice were excluded from the rationing lists.[99]

Towards the end of 1949 and during the first half of the 1950s, staple food rationing in Korea was particularly unstable owing to unstable market and social circumstances. In December 1949, Seoul City government further reduced the number of ration receivers by 38,000, or a third, from the level of the first revision in April 1949.[100] Two months later, the city government announced yet another new rationing plan for 1,000,000 Seoul citizens, with a daily allowance of 1.5 (approximately 215 grams) *hap* per person;[101] however, the number of people who actually received government rice totalled just 700,000 citizens.[102] The chaos caused by the Korean War which broke out in June 1950 was in addition to the already unstable free rice market situation in the country. In October 1950, everyone in war-torn Seoul was given a daily allocation of 1.4 *hap* (200

[97] 'P'aran-ŭi yanggok chungjŏm paegŭp taesang sŏnjŏng kongjŏng hara 波瀾의糧穀重點配給對象選定公正하라', *Tonga ilbo*, 16 April 1949, p.2.
[98] 'Hwoengsŏl susŏl 횡설수설', *Tonga ilbo*, 28 April 1949, p.2.
[99] 'P'at'an manŭn chungjŏm paegŭp 破綻많은 重點配給', *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*. 29 April 1949, p.2.
[100] 'Ch'ojung-pae taesangja sŏnjŏng-e kŭk kollan 超重配對象者選定에極困難', *Tonga ilbo*, 23 November 1949, p.2.
[101] 'Puja-nŭn chewoe hago paengmanmyŏng-e haru ilhapojak 富者는除外하고百萬名에 하루一合五勺', *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, 25 February 1950, p.2.
[102] 'Ssal kokka chojŏng pangdo ŏmna 쌀 穀價調整方途없나', *Tonga ilbo*, 17 June 1950, p.2.

grams) of free rice from the government as a temporary aid measure.[103] In March 1951, a general food rationing programme for the whole population, with a daily allowance of 1.5 *hap* (215 grams) of grain per person, was introduced in the 23 cities and townships that had a population of more than 40,000, but it did not last long. [104]

The power of the leaders of the town associations and *aegukpan* continued to increase. Ever since the colonial food-rationing system had been instituted, their authority to control food rationing had been the source of their power over people; now, due to the increasingly unstable rationing system, their malpractices grew ever more significant.[105] The high-handed money collections, which became especially serious during the 1950s, testify to this. The donations were collected by the *aegukpan* leaders for their town associations. Fundraising activities were ostensibly prohibited by the government; however, collections were carried out through the organizations, and were an open secret[106] in South Korean society (Kim C. S. 2000: 190). Even during the Korean War, citizens were coerced into contributing money in the form of a membership fee for town associations under the threat of being refused rations (Kim Y. M. 2005: 179-180). In Pusan, a city at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, where most of the population retreated during the Korean War, refugees also received food rationing via town associations. Notwithstanding the difficulties of being forced to lead the lives of refugees, people were required to pay the membership fee for the town associations to which they temporarily belonged.[107] Moreover there were various kinds of donation that people were urged to give.[108] The money collected from approximately 300 town associations in Seoul

[103] 'Kŭmil put'ŏ yanggok paegŭp kaesi irin iriltang irhapsajak-ŭl musang punbae 今日부터糧穀配給開始 一人一日當一合四勺을 무상 분배', *Tonga ilbo*, 6 October 1950, p.2.
[104] 'Miga chojŏl toena? Ssal paegŭp silsi siŭp hwakchŏng 米價調節되나? 쌀 配給実實施 市邑確定', *Tonga ilbo*, 23 February 1951, p.2. .
[105] 'Toksinjad ŭl-e 'ib'-i set? Tongdaesindongmindŭl cho banjang-ŭl pinan 獨身者들에 '입'이 셋? 東大新洞民들組班長을非難', *Tonga ilbo*, 19 May 1952, p.2.
[106] The money contributed by citizens was an important source of political capital for Syngman Rhee, the first president of South Korea. For a detailed account of Rhee's raising and use of political funds, see Chŏng P. J. 2000.
[107] 'P'inanmin kuho-lan hŏkkuhoman purŭji malgo tonghoebi tŭng pudam chŏkke mot hao 避難民救護란 헛口號 만 부르지말고 洞會会等費 負擔적게못하오', *Tonga ilbo*, 10 March 1951, p.2.
[108] In 1950s Korea, there was a wide range of state-involved right-wing mass organizations such as The Korean Young People's Association and the Korean Women's Association. In the name of 'anti-communist groups' this kind of associations were organized within town associations, and were dependent on the money collected from citizens for their activities (Kim H. C. 2007: 61; Yun C. N. 2010 89, 91)

during 1950 amounted to 800,000,000 *wŏn*. Town associations in Chŏlla-pukto had 93 different donation programmes, with 1,600,000,000 *wŏn* of money collected from citizens in the year prior to the outbreak of the Korean War (Kim H. C. 2007: 305). It was not only the system of food distribution and the concept of civilian groups being entrusted with rationing that remained as colonial legacies, utilized by the USAMGIK and further strengthened by the South Korean government, but also the power of the *aegukpan* and their leaders.

The use of Kungminban in Constructing an Anti-communist Country

It is obvious that the principal reason for strengthening the colonial system of civilian organizations was their effectiveness in operating the food control system in post-colonial Korea. However, the role that these mass organizations played in strengthening the governance of the authorities should not be underestimated when we consider the support they were given, and this contributed to the post-colonial continuation of Japanese practices. As explained in 2.1 and previously in this section, the civilian groups fulfilled an important role in state control over the population through their close involvement in resident registration under both the colonial Japanese government and the US occupation. Being a by-product of the food-rationing system, the power structure established within the civilian groups was tactically utilized by the authorities to control and monitor the nation. In South Korea, a country founded during the rise of the Cold War, the civilian organizations were politicized for use in the ideological confrontation on the Korean peninsula.

In 1948, the newly-established Korean government resurrected the organizational framework of the Japanese system of *aegukpan* for a political purpose. Succeeding the USAMGIK, Syngman Rhee (1875-1965), president of the First Republic of South Korea (1948-1960), upheld the country's national identity as a rigid anti-communist nation throughout his administration. In the context of the escalating politics of the Cold War, the Rhee regime carried out a series of anti-communist campaigns that wielded repressive power over the populace in the name of national security against its enemy, North Korea (Moon 2005: 24-25). The campaigns resembled the Japanese colonial authorities' war

mobilization campaigns. Encompassing entire regions through the organizational network, various campaigns were organized by the authorities under the flag of anti-communism. With their growing importance as a well-organized civilian network, the *aegukpan* were incorporated into the political mass mobilization led by the South Korean government.

The reorganization of the *aegukpan* was led by the 'National Society' (*Kungminhoe* 國民會), a nationwide network of followers of Rhee, created in 1946. In the wake of the Yŏ-Sun Incident,[109] the National Society launched the 'National Movement' (*kungmin undong* 國民運動) in December 1948, which used 'the dissemination of anti-communist thought' (*pan'gong sasang chŏn'gae* 反共思想展開), 'organizing the anti-communist nations' (*pan'gong kungmin chojik* 反共國民組織), and 'practicing anti-communist society' (*pan'gong sahoe silch'ŏn* 反共社会實践) as its slogans (Kang H. S. 2009: 48). The National Movement integrated and strengthened various mass campaigns sporadically implemented in post-colonial Korea, such as the New Daily Life Movement (*Sinsaenghwal undong* 新生活運動), which was led by local governments and called for thrift and the improvement of the daily diet (Kim H. C. 2004: 74). As the end-organizations responsible for carrying out the Movement's aims, the *aegukpan* were renamed 'national units' (*kungminban* 國民班),[110] and organizationally integrated under the National Society's local branches.

The organizational structure and operational method of the *kungminban* was remarkably similar to that of its colonial predecessor. As with the compulsory membership of the *aegukpan*, all citizens were compelled to participate in the *kungminban*.[111] Detailed 'Operation Regulations for *Aegukpan*' (*aegukpan unyŏng sech'ik* 愛國班運営細則) announced by Seoul City government in May 1949 stipulated

[109] A mass revolt occurred in Yŏsu and Sunch'ŏn villages in South Chŏlla province in October 1948 led by more than 2,000 left-wing Korean soldiers who were protesting against the South Korean government. This incident defined the anti-communist political atmosphere of Rhee's regime. For a detailed account of anti-government guerrilla conflicts around 1950 in South Korea, see Cumings 1997: 237-290.
[110] Even after the name *kungminban* was introduced, the term *aegukpan* was still widely used.
[111] 'Yi Yŏng-jin Ch'ungch'ŏngnam-do chisa, kungmin undong-kwa chibang chach'i munje tŭng-e taehae tamhwa-rŭl palp'yo 李寧鎭 충청남도지사 국민운동과 지방자치문제 등에 대해 담화를 발표', *Tongbang sinmun* 동방신문, 4 September 1949. Electric document, available at http://db.history.go.kr/url.jsp?ID=NIKH.DB-dh_014_1949_09_03_0080 (accessed 1 December 2011).

specific guidelines concerning the operation of *kungminban*. For example, the group meetings (*pansanghoe* 班常會), originally instituted by the Japanese government to systematically transmit government policies, were revived. The regular meetings of the *kungminban* leaders led by the town associations were also convened on the first day of each month and followed by those of the ordinary people of each *kungminban* on the third day, with police officers in attendance. To strengthen the function of the *kungminban*, the Regulations limited the size of each unit to fewer than ten households, making them smaller than the earlier *aegukpan* which had each included ten to fifteen households.[112] As of July 1949, there were 19,338 *kungminban* units in Seoul.[113]

One of the key objectives behind the government's creation of the *kungminban* network was to implement the 'lodging report' (*yusukkye* 留宿屆) programme, a system for surveillance of the citizens. The implementation of this programme is a clear example which demonstrates that South Korean authorities appropriated civilian groups originally served a functional purpose of food management for maintaining an anti-communist system of the country. Under the programme, the *kungminban* became a unit for mutual surveillance, with civilians required to keep an eye on each other. As part of the National Movement, this started in Seoul in June 1949 (Kim Y. M. 2005: 171), and by 1950, had expanded throughout the country to further increase public security after the outbreak of the Korean War in June.[114] Its purpose was specified as 'preventing traitors' activities from breaking the peace of society by keeping watch on the transient population'.[115] The 'traitors' were communists and other left-wing elements. The *yusukkye* system required the reporting of guests or other visitors (including relatives) who stayed overnight outside their own *kungminban* units. Both the visitors and the visited had to report their

[112] 'Sŏul-si yusukkye sech'ik palp'yo, panjanghoe-e kyŏngch'algwan imsŏk, 15-il put'ŏ siryŏng-ŭro silsi 서울시留宿屆 세칙 발표, 반장회에 경찰관 임석, 15 일부터 시령으로實施', *Chayu sinmun*, 17 May 1949, p.2.

[113] 'Pan chaep'yŏnsŏng wallyo 班재편성완료', *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, 22 July 1949, p.2.

[114] 'Ch'ian-ŭn chŏngsang sangt'ae yusukkye chŏn'guk-chŏk ŭro silsi 治安은正常狀態 留宿屆全國的으로實施', *Tonga ilbo*, 13 October 1950, p.2; 'Yusukkye chunsu hara 留宿屆 준수하라', *Tonga ilbo*, 3 December 1950, p.2.

[115] 'Sŏul-si kyŏngch'alguk, ch'ian yuji-rŭl wihae aegukpan-ŭl chaep'yŏnsŏng 서울시 경찰국 치안유지를 위해 애국반을 재편성', *Yŏnhap sinmun* 연합신문 8 April 1949. Electric document, available at http://db.history.go.kr/url.jsp?ID=NIKH.DB-dh_011_1949_04_07_0090 (accessed 6 December 2011).

movements to their own *kungminban* leaders within 24 hours of the visit.[116] Even though many politicians criticized the system, saying that it was a violation of civil liberties and caused division among the citizens,[117] the *yusukkye* system was justified by the government in the name of eradicating communists.

The leaders of the *kungminban* were entrusted with major responsibility in the operation of the *yusukkye* system. They functioned as de facto sub-organizations of the police, fulfilling a surveillance role. All reports from their members were submitted to the police through the unit leaders (Kim Y. M. 2005: 174). The leaders were ordered by the government to pay special attention to the movements of unit members. They had to follow the movements of each individual in their unit at all times, and submit up-to-date lists of their members to the town associations and the police. Also, they were obligated to ensure that people obeyed the rules of reporting by frequently visiting their houses.[118] For example, a *kungminban* leader in Hoehyŏn-dong town in Seoul visited his members' houses in the early morning to check on them, and found four families that had broken the rules of reporting.[119] When unreported 'strangers' were found within their areas, they had to report them to the police immediately. According to a police report, in August 1949 alone, the number of Seoul citizens who violated the reporting duties reached almost 36,800 (Kim Y. M. 2005: 175).

The *yusukkye* reports included detailed personal information about their subjects, including the place of family registration, their current address, occupation, age, destination or place of lodging, the date, the time of departure and arrival, and the reason for their movement. Through the reports, the police were able to follow the minutiae of the everyday lives and movements of the citizens. A newspaper article revealed this detail

[116] 'Sŏul-si yusukkye sech'ik palp'yo, panjanghoe-e kyŏngch'algwan imsŏk, 15-il put'ŏ siryŏng-ŭro silsi 서울시留宿屆 세칙 발표, 반장회에 경찰관 임석, 15 일부터 시령으로實施' *Chayu sinmun*, 17 May 1949, p. 2.

[117] 'Chungbae, yusukkye munje tŭng sojangguk ŭiwŏn-kwa chwadam 重配, 留宿屆 문제 등 少將國議員 과座談' *Chosŏn chungang ilbo* 조선중앙일보 6 May 1949. Electric document, available at http://db.history.go.kr/url.jsp?ID=NIKH.DB-dh_012_1949_05_03_0010 (accessed 6 December 2011).

[118] 'Sŏul-si yusukkye sech'ik palp'yo, panjanghoe-e kyŏngch'algwan imsŏk, 15-il put'ŏ siryŏng-ŭro silsi 서울시留宿屆 세칙 발표, 반장회에 경찰관 임석, 15 일부터 시령으로實施' *Chayu sinmun*, 17 May 1949, p.2.

[119] 'Sŏul sallim-ŭi manhwagyŏng yusukkye 서울 살림의 만화경 유숙계', 27 July 1949, *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, p.2.

by describing the first day's *yusukkye* reports submitted to a police stand in Namdaemun samga town in Seoul.

> Reports began to be brought around 10 p.m. on the 25th [July 1949]. By 9 a.m. the next morning, 28 reports had arrived. There were various reasons for people leaving their houses. For example, there were students who were going home for the holidays, a mother from the countryside going to see her daughter who had given birth to a baby, a man who was going home to the country to participate in an arranged marriage meeting, and even a wife from a remote place a long way from Seoul going to see her husband who was attending a public trial for his anti-government activities… Policeman Chang said, 'who can tell that there are not any subversives among them?…Using the reports, we shall identify suspicious people in cooperation with the *aegukpan* leaders...'
>
> (*Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, 27 July 1949, quoted in Kim Y. M. 2005: 174)

Even though legal action against the violators of reporting was the job of the police, as seen in the quotation above, the *yusukkye* system was operated almost entirely by the unit leaders. Using the network of *kungminban*, the government was able to monitor the people more effectively than it could through the police system. The *yusukkye* system was maintained until the end of the 1950s, along with strengthened surveillance, to prevent the infiltration of communism from North Korea. We can surmise that such a surveillance system would not have worked so well without the unit leaders' power over their members, which had originally come from their role in rationing control. The legacy of the colonial system, created and modified primarily for the purpose of food rationing, was incorporated into the state surveillance of Korean citizens.

According to Cwiertka's description, in post-war Japan persistent efforts by the US occupying forces to dissolve the *tonarigumi*, a Japanese version of *aegukpan* organization, were 'a mission doomed to fail'. Despite the recognition by Americans that *tonarigumi* were a feudalistic institution used by the wartime Japanese authorities as a political tool to control the people, they remained closely involved in the Japanese food-

rationing system after 1945. This was the reason behind the continuous function of the civilian organization in post-war Japan, constituting the central feature of the everyday lives of urban citizens (Cwiertka 2010b).

The same held true for decolonized Korea, except for the fact that the USAMGIK did not try to dismantle the mass organizations in its occupation zone. Adoption of the colonial apparatus was standard operating procedure in the civil affairs of the USAMGIK. The Americans considered it not only logical but also practical to reuse the Japanese system in tackling a range of problems in decolonized Korea (Meade 1951: 76). The Japanese system of civilian associations was strengthened within the framework of the US authorities' food rationing programme, also modelled after colonial mechanisms, and was inherited by the South Korean government as part of the institutional framework of the food management system. The civilian groups were further reinforced for surveillance purposes in the hostile relationship between South and North Korea. In short, the food shortage in post-colonial Korea was an important factor in bequeathing the wartime Japanese legacy to Korean society. It provided continuity between colonial and post-colonial Korea by supporting the revival of war tools, originally devised for Imperial Japan, for yet another ideological conflict between North Korea.

On 6 April 1964, a 60 year-old woman, Yi Sŏn-nye, who had been an *aegukpan* leader for 30 years in Ahyŏn-1-dong town, was given an award by Seoul City for her exemplary service. A newspaper ran an article about the woman, quoting her as saying:

> '[w]hen I was instructed by the [Japanese] government to collect brassware,[120] I hinted to people to conceal things in their houses…' [Under the South Korean government's grain rationing scheme,] [t]his hoary-headed leader had a skirmish with one of her members for the first time, 'A housewife visited me, and complained that I had not given her a purchasing permit.' She adds that the problem was that food rationing was only for 29 per cent of the entire population at that time… The achievements of Yi recorded by the town association of Ahyŏn-1-dong include 'reporting to the town association immediately when someone faced difficulty in her

[120] Traditional Korean tableware. During the war years, it was collected by the colonial government to convert into war munitions.

> area so that the office was able to handle problems quickly…reporting the movements of people who moved in and out without fulfilling the administrative requirements …she has cooperated with the administrative tasks of the town association for 30 years.' [121]

Even now, regular *pansanghoe* unit meetings are still conducted led by unit leaders depending on the locality. Even though the terms *aegukpan* and *kungminban* have lost their original connotations, and are no longer linked with food rationing and government's surveillance programme, the system of civilian groups still continue to exist. At the neighbourhood meetings, people discuss various subjects related to their community lives and public issues, such as elections. Civilian groups compromised of neighbouring households in contemporary Korea keep the colonial legacy alive.

[121] 'Mubosu 30-yŏn yŏ panjangnim kwi mit-en ŏnŭdŏt hŭin mŏri 무보수 30 년여반장님 귀밑엔 어느덧 흰머리', *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, 6 April 1964, p.7.