

The Japanese Imperialists' Maneuvers to Obliterate the National Language in Korea

O Sun Hui

The great leader Comrade **Kim Il Sung** said as follows.

“A common language is the soul of a nation. Therefore, depriving the nation of its language by obliterating it is a brutal act which is as good as cutting away the tongues of all its members and depriving them of their souls. Its language and its soul are all that remains to the nation that has been deprived of its territory and state power.” (REMINISCENCES “With the Century” Vol.6 P.144~145)

Language is one of the important features which characterize a nation and apart from language we cannot think about the national characters and fresh development of the national culture. If a person is deprived of his language, he becomes a fool who has lost intelligence and if a nation is deprived of its mother tongue, it gives up being a nation. Consequently, among the national features, along with the community of the blood, the community of the language is the most important component.

The Japanese imperialists who make no concession in brutality, greediness and brazenness enforced the cruelest policy for the destruction of nation during the whole period of the colonial ruling of Korea.

This essay aims to expose the crimes Japanese imperialists committed to the Korean people by considering the maneuvers for the death of the national language that they admitted in the primary education field of our country during the whole period of Korean occupation.

On November 17th 1905, the Japanese imperialists fabricated the "Ulsa Treaty" by brigandish means and moved fanatically to exterminate the Korean nation completely on the earth during the whole period of the Korean occupation.

Those brigandish crimes were expressed intensively in the educational field.

The Japanese imperialists fabricated the aggressive colonial slave education plan called “The Korean education reform plan” on April 1905 just before the Korean occupation.

In this reform plan, it is openly revealed that the purpose of the educational modification was to enforce the colonial slave education as befits the need of the colonial enslavement policy of the Japanese imperialists to Korea. And also they planned to accomplish their heinous aggressive purpose to make the Korean people their permanent colonial slaves which would result the slavery obedience idea and non-protest idea.

Afterwards, the Japanese imperialists announced the colonial slave educational law called “Korean education order” through several occasions including Aug. 23rd 1911, Feb. 6th 1922, Mar. 4th 1938 and so on. They even went through 6 rearrangements to be fanatic about the realization of the colonial slave education in Korea during that period.

The brazenness and brigandish natures of the colonial slave education that the Japanese imperialists forced to Korea can be intensively found from gradually restricting and prohibiting the Korean education and greatly increasing the Japanese education in schools.

They planned to realize their "assimilation" by destructing the national characters of the Korean people accompanied by destructing Korean and using Japanese.

The Japanese imperialists increased the Japanese lessons much more than Korean lessons in all schools and also defined Japanese as the mother tongue and forced to use it in all other subject lessons unconditionally .

The diagram below shows the analysis of the primary educational plan of the Japanese imperialists to destruct the national language from 1894 to 1945.

Analysis on the curriculum of primary education(1894-1945)

year	subject	Numbers of lessons for each grade						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
1894~1905	Mother Tongue	8	8	8				24
	Reading	4	4	4				12
	Writing	2	2	2				6
	Penmanship	2	2	2				6
	Japanese	3	4	3				10
1905~1910	Korean	6	6	6	6			24
	Japanese	6	6	6	6			24
1911	Korean, Chinese Writing	6	6	5	5			22
	Japanese	10	10	10	10			40
1920	Korean, Chinese Writing	10	6	5	5	4	4	34
	Japanese	10	10	10	10	9	9	58
1922	Korean	4	4	3	3	3	3	20
	Japanese	10	12	12	12	9	9	64
1929	Korean	5	5	3	3	2	2	20
	Japanese	10	12	12	12	9	9	64
1938	Korean	4	3	3	2	2	2	16
	Japanese	10	12	12	12	9	9	64
1941	Korean	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Japanese	11	12	9	8	8	7	55

The preceding table shows clearly that Japanese Imperialists took a very tricky method to teach Japanese throttling Korean education systematically during their occupation .

Before 1905, in 1890s before Japanese occupation of Korea, thanks to the positive efforts of patriotic intellectuals and innovative government officials, modern, national and new school education system was established at a certain degree in common education field and progressive school education were carried out.

Concerning the increasing invasion of outside forces at that time, it was very urgent to defend the independence of the nation and to educate national knowledge including our language, history and geography in schools. In September 1895, feudal Joseon Dynasty published No.4 Notice of the Ministry of Education saying "Education is the cornerstone of modernization. Patriotism and the method of prosperity start from learning so the civilization of the nation depends on school. ... We should get rid of useless learning and improve useful education by educating our country's history, geography and mother tongue, mathematics and the history and geography of other countries."

This statement proves clearly what has been said before.

In 1894, language mainly used in teaching was Korean in the primary education curriculum. The proportion of Japanese teaching was 12.3% compared to 22.2% of Korean teaching.

During 1905-1909, Korean teaching and Japanese teaching was just the same by 20.7%.

Japanese imperialists forced all schools to teach Japanese compulsorily. Especially in every grade of common schools, they forced to teach Japanese more than 6 lessons during the 36 weekly teaching lessons. This shows that the Japanese imperialists saw Japanese teaching an important means of throttling the Korean nation from the first days of their occupation.

In 1910, establishing military rule in Korea, the Japanese imperialists doubled Japanese teaching in every grade of primary schools providing 10 lessons a week nearly 40% of the total lessons per week saying "National assimilation comes from language assimilation." Thus, Japanese teaching increased to 37.7% and Korean teaching decreased to 20.7%.

Talking about Japanese education for each grade after 1910, in the first and second grade, Korean and Chinese writing were 6 lessons but Japanese was 10 lessons, 1.7 times larger, in the third and fourth grade, the former was 5 lessons and the latter was 10 lessons, 2 times larger.

At that time, the Japanese imperialists focused on "Japanization" Korean Youths in teaching Japanese.

The proportion of Japanese teaching in primary schools of Korea increased day after day. As you can see from the curriculum of the first education program the first amendment (Nov. 10th 1920) during Cultural Rule in 1920, they pretended to distribute a lot of lessons to Korean teaching but in real they even strengthened Japanese teaching in the total amount of lessons. That is the proportion of Korean and Chinese writing teaching was 19.7% but Japanese increased to 33.7%.

In 1922, when they promulgated the second education program, Korean teaching lessons decreased by 2 lessons including Chinese writing in 6 year primary education compared to 4 year primary education in contrast to the increased lessons of Japanese teaching by 24 lessons. Even in 4 year primary schools, Korean teaching decreased by 7 lessons. It is said that Korean education took up 11.7% but the Japanese education took up 33.6%. There were all 84 language lessons at that time and this is one third of all curriculum. Especially, Korean lessons were even smaller than singing or sports and in 5th, 6th grade, Japanese history and geography were added in place of Japanese teaching.

Maneuvers of throttling national language by Japanese imperialists took even a more tricky way afterwards.

In 1929, during the period of second education program the first amendment, Korean teaching took up no more than one tenth of the total lessons.

These times, the Japanese were crazy about making Koreans their cheap labor and all the education was programmed centered on vocational education. Even in this circumstance Japanese teaching was the same taking up 35.5% of the curriculum and the status of Japanese history and geography got even higher. Talking about the proportions of each subject in detail, Korean took up 11.1%, Japanese 35.5%, Japanese History 2.2%, Japanese Geography 2.2%, sports and singing 12.2% and vocational education 4.4%.

Third Education Program promulgated in 1938 was made in purpose of making Koreans “Imperial citizens” serving for the implementation of fascist oppression policy. “Imperial citizens” policy that Japanese sought for at that time aimed to take out the spirit of nation from their minds and destruct nationality. In other words, it was not for making Koreans “the first class citizen” as Japanese themselves but for making them a “Imperial citizen” following the Japanese “Emperor” and militarism, a “Japanese” who will gladly die for Japan.

Consequently, Japanese teaching had a very high status in the curriculum but Korean teaching was only one forth of Japanese. If you see the time distributions at that time, 2 lessons of reception subject were added to every grade and business education increased with Korean taking up 8.29%, Japanese 33.1%, vocational education 4.1%, History 2.07%, Geography 2.02%, Sports and Singing 13.4%, Manual training 3.1%, Reception 6.2% and Drawing 3.1%.

Especially, at that time Japanese Imperialists were striking to the implementation of “making Korea base for war supplies” policy and put forward Japanese teaching the first task of Korean Primary School and forced to use only Japanese not only in schools not only in schools but also in families and general social life. As a result, in the first grade of Korean Primary Schools, Japanese teaches who were unaware of Korean taught Japanese to Korean children.

Japanese Imperialists, in their Third Education Program First Amendment in 1941, got rid of Korean Education in primary education curriculum.

Japanese Imperialists militarized school education extensively extending aggression wars in Asian region in pursuit of achievement of ambition of “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”.

“National School Law” was made in 1941 and from April 1 of that year, primary schools were called “National School” and schools got even more militarized.

Consequently, all school books were revised so that they justify their aggression wars and inspire militarism. Absolute faith to Japanese Emperor, misanthropy, national chauvinist “anti-communist idea” ran through the whole books.

Japanese Imperialists completely deleted Korean teaching in the curriculum of national schools and forced extensive military sports and training in order to drive Korean young people as cannon fodders of their aggression wars.

Minami, the viceroy of Korea at that time said “Mother tongue(Japanese) cannot be apart from people’s idea and emotions, Making Koreans true ‘Imperial citizens’ means forcing them use

Japanese.” And he forced people to use Japanese not only in schools but also in ordinary lives.

Under the pressure of forcing Japanese, Japanese was used in all social factors including organs, companies, mines even in churches and official documents were also made in Japanese.

The actual situation was even severe in schools and even Japanese publications said “Japanese is everything in today’s primary schools. Teachers wouldn’t listen to Koreans and Korean teachers also can’t answer in Korean. There are also outrageous laws of applying for penalty 10 jon if they use Korean for one time.” and revealed the actual situation “They can’t read a page of magazines and write a sheet of letter in Korean even though they graduated primary schools.”

Historical facts clearly show that Japanese Imperialists are the most cruel, wicked and brazen faced sworn enemy who deprived Koreans of our language and forced innumerable misery and pain during the whole time of their occupation.

We’ll never forget the greatest crime of Japanese Imperialists on Korean people and make them pay for the blood shed by our nation from generation to generation.