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# Memory and Reproduction: A Study of 1980s Chinese Ethnic Korean Revolutionary Narratives Focusing on Yun Il-san's *The Roaring Mudan River*\*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper takes as its subject the mass appearance of revolutionary narratives in Chinese ethnic Korean (*chaoxianzu* 朝鮮族) literature in the 1980s, and examines this literary phenomenon as exemplified by Yun Il-san's 尹日山 novel *The Roaring Mudan River*. This novel deals with the familiar topic of the role of Northeast *chaoxianzu* in the Liberation War in a new way. It recalls not only the repressed memories of the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree but also the ethnic conflict between the poor Han Chinese and the Korean peasantry. Moreover, it rediscovers the historical specificity of the Northeast region in terms of the historical rupture between heartland Han Chinese and Northeast Han Chinese. It features the agency and voluntarism of the Northeast *chaoxianzu* as cooperators and a base of early support for the CCP and the Eighth Route Army, rather than treating them as submissive followers. This means that 1980s Chinese *chaoxianzu* revolutionary literary narratives as exemplified by *The Roaring Mudan River* constitute an effective literary response to the serious crisis in national identity that emerged among the *chaoxianzu* during the Cultural Revolution. In this sense, 1980s Chinese ethnic Korean revolutionary narratives can be said to have expanded ethnic consciousness as broadly as possible. In so doing, they paradoxically reconstructed a more robust sense of national identity for *chaoxianzu* than had been presented previously.

**Keywords:** 1980s, Chinese Ethnic Korean Literature, Revolutionary Narratives, Yun Il-san, *The Roaring Mudan River*, National Identity, Ethnic Identity

## 1980s Ethnic Korean Literary Circles and Yun Il-San's *The Roaring Mudan River*

The history of Chinese ethnic Korean (henceforth *chaoxianzu* 朝鮮族) literature<sup>1</sup> conventionally narrativizes the 1980s as “the Age of Chinese Economic Reform,” “the Age of Diversification,” and “the Age of Post-Ideology.” This history describes the defining event of 1980s *chaoxianzu* literature as the advent of scar literature<sup>2</sup> and self-reflective literature.<sup>3</sup> It focuses on literature written to create solidarity during the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, and features the expansion of the quotidian and post-ideological as a way to escape the identification of politics and literature in the new age of economic reform. This narrative fits well with the process of China's historical development, and assumes that *chaoxianzu* literature possessed a trajectory similar to that of mainstream Chinese literature of this time. But 1980s *chaoxianzu* literary history exhibits a particular characteristic that

is difficult to fit into conventional historical accounts, namely, the concentrated appearance of a number of “revolutionary narratives,” which by then were already considered “historical artifacts” belonging to an earlier age of unity between politics and literature.<sup>4</sup> The revolutionary narratives of *chaoxianzu* literature of the 1980s, in fact, far outnumber the revolutionary narratives of the 1950s and 60s (the early years of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China), and their themes (such as immigration, revolution, anti-Japanese resistance, and the War of Liberation) also cover the entirety of *chaoxianzu* history. The concentrated appearance of numerous revolutionary narratives<sup>5</sup> in the form of the staggering publication of

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<sup>1</sup> Here, *chaoxianzu* literature refers to literature that projects the realities of life and history of *chaoxianzu* in China, as well as the conflict in the duality of their identity as a group that formed after ethnic Chosŏn people chose to remain in Manchuria rather than return to the Korean peninsula after 1945 and subsequently underwent the process of becoming a part of Chinese history as a minority group.

<sup>2</sup> Scar literature (*shanghen wenxue* 傷痕文學) refers to a trend that appeared in Chinese literature after the end of the Cultural Revolution, starting in 1977, reflecting the pain and tragedy that people went through in that massive historical maelstrom. In *chaoxianzu* literature, we see scar literature begin to appear in 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Self-reflective literature (*fansi wenxue* 反思文學) appeared in Chinese literature after scar literature. Self-reflective literature showed a clear distinction with scar literature in its method of presenting and working through problems, and concluded that the Cultural Revolution was not an accidental occurrence but rather already existed in contemporary history in terms of ideology, behavior, and psychology, and was related to remnants of “feudalism” in contemporary Chinese national culture and psychology.

<sup>4</sup> The “age of unity between politics and literature” refers to the time period when literature was placed directly under the powerful magnetic field of politics. In the case of *chaoxianzu* literature, which can never be completely independent of the socio-political circumstances of China, we can divide it into the following time periods: a) the era of political turmoil following liberation, when literature was completely in service to politics, and b) the era of relative freedom after Economic Reform (following the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP in 1978) which saw diverse directions of development. In examining the developmental stages of *chaoxianzu* literature, there are two main schools of thought. The first school contends there are three stages: the first 17 years from the creation of the PRC to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (1949–1966); the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976); and the New Age (1976–present). This is a periodization that closely follows contemporary Chinese literature’s periodizations and is used most notably by Cho Sŏng-il and Kwon Ch’ŏl (1990, 7, 278). The other school considers Chinese political history and the particularities of *chaoxianzu* literature’s development at the same time, and defines the three stages as follows: the era of reconstruction after liberation (1945–1957); the era of political resonance (1957–1979); and the era of diversification (1979–1989) (Yi 2003, 61). These two schools of thought notably diverge in whether they take the 1957 Anti-Rightist Struggle and the 1959 Movement against Regional Nationalism into special consideration, but generally agree in viewing literature after the end of the Cultural Revolution, or after Economic Reform, as a new era of literature, or an era of diversification in literature. Therefore, the “age of unity of literature and politics” in *chaoxianzu* literature generally refers to the era before the Economic Reform.

<sup>5</sup> The Revolutionary narratives that appeared *en masse* in *chaoxianzu* literary circles in the 1980s are as follows: *Saebiyŏk ū meari* (Kim Ul-lyong, 김운룡, 1983), *Mŏndong i t’unda* (Kim Kil-lyŏn, 김길련, 1993), *Ōdum ūl ttulk’o* (Yun Il-san, 윤일산, 1981), *Sap’um ch’inūn kyŏngnyu* (Kim Yŏng-nam, Yi Sang-jun, 김영남·이상준, 1985), *Kyŏkchŏng sidae* (Kim Hak-ch’ŏl, 김학철, 1986), *Togang chŏnya* (Ch’oe T’aek-ch’ŏng, 최택청, 1981), *P’ohyo hanūn Mudan’gang* (The Roaring Mudan River, Yun Il-san, 윤일산, 1986), *Konan ū yŏndae* (Yi Kūn-jŏn, 이근전, 1982, 1984), *Chitpalp’in nŏk* (Im Wŏn-ch’un, 임원춘, 1988), *Pŏn’gae ch’inūn ach’im* (Kim Song-juk 김송죽, 1983), *Pŏmbawi* (Yi Kūn-jŏn, 이근전, 1986), *Millim ūl ttal* (Kim Yŏp, Kim Ul-lyong, 김엽·김운룡, 1983), *Sup sok ūi udŏngpul*, 숲속의 우등불 (Yu Wŏn-mu, 류원무, 1980), *Changbaek ūi soryŏn* (Yu Wŏn-

fifteen long-form novels makes debatable the conventional description of the 1980s as “the Age of Chinese Economic Reform.” Because *chaoxianzu* literary history has continued to focus on the official narrative of “the Age of Chinese Economic Reform,” however, the presence of revolutionary narratives in 1980s *chaoxianzu* literature has received little serious attention.<sup>6</sup> Rather, this phenomenon has been dismissed as either the continuation of the self-censorship that developed under the Cultural Revolution or as an anachronism stemming from a belated understanding of the central government’s economic reform policies. As such, it is generally considered to be part of a “sinification” wave in *chaoxianzu* literature (Yi Kwang-il 2003, 123–24).<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein, it has also been perceived as a “rewrite of pseudo-nation building” or a rereading of actions taken “under the Chinese Communist Party’s leadership” (Sö Yöng 2014, 177–78).

These characterizations, however, do not fully account for the 1980s revolutionary narratives. As mentioned above, these were far more plentiful in number than those of the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, the revolutionary narratives in the 1980s cover the entirety of *chaoxianzu* revolutionary warfare on Chinese territory, in particular remembering and restoring nationalist independence movements, such as the Battle of Ch’öngsal-li and the Battle of Pongo-dong, which had been forgotten or avoided (Yi Kwang-il 2003, 206–08).<sup>8</sup> In addition, the 1980s narratives reveal the particularities of *chaoxianzu* experience that were not visible in narratives written in the early decades of the PRC. An example can be seen in the writing and re-writing of Yi Kün-jön’s novel *Pömbawi* (Tiger Cliff). The first edition of *Tiger Cliff*, published in 1962, portrays *chaoxianzu* in Manchuria immediately following Korea’s liberation in 1945 as facing a choice between aligning with the CCP or the KMT. This presentation places Manchurian *chaoxianzu* within the general category of Chinese citizens. In having to make this choice, they are similar to other ethnicities in China. However, the rewritten and re-published

mu, 류원무, 1978), *Hyangjön Pyölgok* (Kim Hak-ch’öl, 김학철, 1983), etc. Of these, Yi Kün-jön’s *Pömbawi* is a major revision of his 1962 version, and *Millim üi ttal*, *Sup sok üi udüngpul*, and *Changbaek üi sonyön* are shorter than other long novels and are sometimes categorized as mid-length novels. *Hyangjön Pyölgok* is, strictly speaking, reportage literature.

<sup>6</sup> Academic research publications on *chaoxianzu* literary history include the following: *Chungguk Chosönjok munhaksa* (Cho Söng-il and Kwön Ch’öl 1990), *Kaehyök kaebang kwa Chungguk Chosönjok sosöl munhak* (O Sang-sun 2001), *Haebang hu Chosönjok sosöl munhak yön’gu* (Yi 2004), *Chungguk Chosönjok munhak üi öje wa onül* (Ch’öng Tök-chun 2006), *Chungguk Chosönjok munhaksa* (O Sang-sun 2007), *Chosönjok munhaksa* (Yi Kwang-il, Kim Ho-ung, and Kwön Ch’öl 2013), etc. All of these works focus on the concept of literature in the time of Economic Reform and on diversification in their evaluation of 1980s *chaoxianzu* literature, and therefore do not pay particular attention to the revolutionary narratives that appeared *en masse* at this time.

<sup>7</sup> However, even Yi Kwang-il acknowledges that the literary recreation of *chaoxianzu* revolutionary resistance is significant in that it “holds a value that cannot be ignored in how it solidified the confidence and pride of *chaoxianzu* living in China, and confirmed through literature the potential and accomplishments of *chaoxianzu* in their ability to survive in China, compared to other minorities” (2003, 123–24).

<sup>8</sup> On the idea of how the revolutionary narratives of the 1980s rest on *chaoxianzu* revolutionary history, Yi Kwang-il writes that it is “noticeable with regards to subject material” and views it positively for its breaking of the pattern of “under the CCP’s leadership” and its illumination of history from a nationalist point of view. Moreover, Yi finds significance in how “it indicated that our authors were moving away from a static thinking process, and adopted a more autonomous perspective in examining *chaoxianzu* revolutionary history” (2003, 206–08).

1986 edition of *Tiger Cliff* adds to its narrative the third choice of return to the Korean peninsula. This revision reveals the national and historical specificities of *chaoxianzu* who do not fit neatly into the category of typical Chinese citizens (Li Haiying 2006, 73–93). In a certain sense, this rewriting can also be seen as an expansion of national consciousness. In his 1986 novel *P'ohyohanün Moktan'gang* (The Roaring Mudan River),<sup>9</sup> Yun Il-san directly confronts the problems of the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree (of the Manchukuo period) and the deep-rooted conflicts that consequently developed between Northeast Han Chinese people and *chaoxianzu*. These problems had been forgotten, avoided, or buried by both the *chaoxianzu* who remained in China to become Chinese citizens and by the Manchurian Koreans who returned to the Korean peninsula following liberation. Scholarship on the literature of the 1980s, however, has refrained from concretely investigating these excavations of buried ethnic histories and from formally and thoroughly examining 1980s revolutionary narratives, with the result that it has prematurely reached the “sinification” conclusion.

Through a reading of Yun Il-san's *The Roaring Mudan River* (1986), this paper reconsiders the goal of these 1980s revolutionary narratives: was it the “complete sinification” of *chaoxianzu* literature, a repetition of the “under the CCP's leadership” narratives, or something else entirely? To do so, it looks at instances of repressed memory, methods of confession, and the inner logic of national consciousness. Furthermore, this paper reflects on why revolutionary narratives appeared in such volume in 1980s *chaoxianzu* literature and why such an anachronistic phenomenon occurred.

### **Chinese-Ethnic Korean Relations in the 1960s–70s and the Crisis of Ethnic Korean National Identity**

To outline the characteristics of 1980s revolutionary literature, which both recalls 1950s–60s revolutionary literature and must also be differentiated from it, we must first examine the relationship between China and North Korea during the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 70s, and then look at *chaoxianzu* society within this context.

The frenzy of the Cultural Revolution that overtook China from 1966 to 1976 had a massive impact on Chinese foreign policy. Chinese diplomacy during the Cultural Revolution was both singular and abnormal. In the early years of the Cultural Revolution, China's conflict with the USSR and the sentiments of anti-imperialism and anti-revisionism (*fandi fanxiu* 反帝反修) were exacerbated. China blatantly characterized pro-US and pro-USSR nations as “cronies and running dogs of American imperialism” and “cronies and running dogs of Khrushchev,”

<sup>9</sup> The 1952 establishment of the Chinese Ethnic Korean Autonomous District is commonly viewed as the official recognition of Chinese *chaoxianzu* as a minority in China. Before then, they were called “*chaoxianren* 朝鮮人” or “*chaoxianzu*.” Also, in September 1945 (immediately following liberation), the Dongbei chapter of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee announced that “the ethnic Koreans in the Dongbei area are recognized as an ethnic minority within Chinese borders” (Kim Ch'un-sōn 2011, 33). This paper generally uses “Korean” (*chaoxianren*) for pre-1952, and *chaoxianzu* for post-1952. However, it also uses *chaoxianzu* for instances from pre-1952 where the image of that ethnic minority appears to be significant.

respectively. Consequently, between 1966 and 1967, China had diplomatic disputes with thirty out of the forty-eight nations with which it had formal diplomatic relations. In 1967, the Red Guards began to attack the Chinese Foreign Office and foreign embassies as China attempted to pass down its revolutionary legacy to the Socialist Party. This resulted in the ostracizing of China from the socialist bloc (Pak Chong-ch'öl 2015, 108).

Discord between North Korea and China first emerged over differing opinions on the new USSR leadership following the ousting of Khrushchev on October 14, 1964 (Yi Chong-sök 2001). Cracks began to appear with the 1967 Red Guards' attack on Kim Il-sung and followed a pattern typical of China's disputes with other nations during this time (Pak Chong-ch'öl 2015, 109–10). However, unlike China's disputes with nations in Eastern Europe, the conflict with North Korea was not only an important issue for Chinese leaders, but also involved elements that played on the emotions of the Chinese people. Historically, China and North Korea had shared borders along the Tumen and Yalu rivers. The leaders of both nations had formed a camaraderie through the shared experience of anti-Japanese resistance and revolution that continued after the fall of the Japanese empire and the Chinese Civil War.

As members of the socialist bloc, China and North Korea also strengthened their alliance into blood ties when China deployed troops to North Korea during the Korean War under the slogan of “Resist US Aggression and Aid North Korea, Defend Home and Protect Our Country” (*kangmei yuanchao, baojia weiguo* 抗美援朝, 保家衛國) (Yi Chong-sök 2001, 193). With China's entry into the war and its deployment of troops, North Korea was able to fend off defeat at the hands of US troops and emerge from the crisis of war. China paid a massive price in blood for its deployment of troops in the Korean War. Its casualties included the death of Mao Zedong's eldest son, Mao Anying, who had taken part as a Russian translator and adviser, and the deaths of close to 170,000 soldiers (Yao Xu 1980, 5). The deployment took place less than a year after the People's Republic of China was established. After a long period of war with Japan and civil conflict, China's economy was in dire straits. Soldiers and civilians alike were exhausted by war. The Chinese leadership had been severely split on the question of entering the Korean War, with the final decision having been made by Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai 周恩來. The Chinese leadership used its slogan, “Resist US Aggression and Aid North Korea, Defend Home and Protect Our Country,” to argue that participation in the war was necessary to defend the nation. It used the wartime mobilization logic of “No nation, no home” to encourage people across the country to volunteer for the war. In the discourse created by this logic, aiding the “brother country” of North Korea in the war was an act that protected not only one's own home but also the new nation of the PRC (Li Haiying 2016, 216–17). In this way, the “War to Resist US Aggression and Aid North Korea” was identified as a war of all the Chinese people, with the populace remembering their participation in the war as “an act of support for a fellow socialist state” or an act of “special, blood-tie comradeship between China and North Korea.”

As a result, the relationship between the Chinese and the North Koreans

was much more immediate and experiential than interactions between China and the nations of the Eastern European socialist bloc. It was also a relationship fundamentally different from the China-USSR relationship, which was perceived as a vertical relation in which China imported revolution and was guided and aided by the USSR. In contrast, China considered itself to be in a mutually supportive relationship with North Korea (Chaoxian 朝鮮). This North Korea-China relationship was a hugely important variable element at a time when China was undergoing a major crisis in its relations with the USSR. Consequently, it became a focus of attention for the Chinese leadership. Practically speaking, North Korea chose to enthusiastically support China and criticize the USSR near the end of the 1950s—precisely when the China-USSR conflict was emerging.

For all of these reasons, North Korea maintained an intimate relationship with the PRC. Almost every year, members of the North Korean leadership—including Kim Il-sung—visited China for talks with Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and others. As the Chinese-USSR conflict escalated, the Chinese leadership also made major concessions to North Korea, which was explicitly pro-China in its stance. This is evident not only in the “China-North Korea Border Treaty” but also in the “China-North Korea Frontier Protocols,” signed on October 12, 1962 and March 20, 1964, respectively. Moreover, when China-North Korea ties began to show signs of strain in 1964, China paid close attention to the relationship, as evidenced by the personal efforts made by then-Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to persuade North Korea to maintain its favorable attitude to China (Yi Chong-sök 2001, 240–41). Despite all these efforts, the relationship between the two countries ultimately collapsed, and Chinese popular sentiment evinced a sense of fury and betrayal. In 1967, the Red Guards attacked North Korea and Kim Il-sung for revisionism and also admonished them to “remember how China aided North Korea during the Korean War” (Pak Chong-ch’öl 2015, 109).

During the Cultural Revolution, the deterioration of the China-North Korea relationship brought direct and serious consequences for ethnic Koreans in China. Autobiographies and memoirs that record the experience of the Cultural Revolution in Yanbian include works contained in *P’ungnang* (O T’ae-ho et al. 1993), such as “Kölch’urhan chöngch’i hwaltongga Chu Tök-hae” (Prominent politician activist Chu Tök-hae) (*Chu Tök-hae üi ilsaeng* writing group 1988), “Pan-up’a t’ujaeng kwa minjok chöngp’ung undong” (The Anti-Rightist Movement and the National Rectification Movement), “Munhwa Taehyöngmyöng’ kwa Chosön Minjok” (‘The Cultural Revolution’ and the Chosön people), “Chu Tök-hae üi Ilsaeng” (The life of Chu Tök-hae), “Kohyang ttöna 50 nyön” (Fifty years away from home) (Chöng P’allyong 1997), and “Cho Nam-gi chön” (The biography of Cho Nam-gi) (Qu Aiguo and Zeng Fanxiang 2004). In these works, one notes a repeated occurrence of themes such as “North Korean special agents,” “betrayal of the nation (motherland),” “national traitor,” and “anti-revolution riots.”<sup>10</sup> In Yi Hye-sön’s novel *Ppalgan Kürimja* (Red Shadow), which was written in 1998, twenty years after the Cultural

<sup>10</sup> For more on ethnic Koreans’ memories of their experiences during the Cultural Revolution, see Hyun Ok Park (2015, 146–52).

Revolution, this history is brought to life in the following example:

“Let’s write the urgent wire to Shenyang as follows.”

The secretary quickly took dictation.

“The political situation in Yanji is very tense. They have burned Hebei and are rushing toward Henan; they have stormed the provision store and surrounded the oil storehouse. They aim to drench Yanji in blood and go through Tumenguan to return home. It is certain that they will start an uprising, but there have been numerous failures, as the leftists do not have any weapons and they also lack strategic command.” (Yi Hye-sön 1998, 202)

The above excerpt is a realistic description of the Yanbian *chaoxianzu* “national betrayal” incident that shook the entire country at the time. The report of the Yanbian *chaoxianzu*’s “betrayal of the motherland,” described with the phrase “They aim to drench Yanji in blood and pass through Tumenguan to return home,” gives insight into the serious national identity crisis that the *chaoxianzu* were experiencing during the escalation of China-North Korea tensions in the midst of the Cultural Revolution.

The ringing sound of a water bucket came from outside. From the open door, some Han Chinese peered in and cursed.

“We heard you *chaoxianzu* poisoned all the tap water in Yanji City; why would you do such an immoral thing?”

“They say you people want to betray the nation and go back home; is that true?”

“You people really have no conscience. If there is no China, where would you people live? South Korea is a capitalist country, and according to rumors, [North] Korea is also revisionist. How could you people betray this socialist country? And they say the dog you raise will bite your heel!” (Yi Hye-sön 1998, 204–05)

This excerpt effectively portrays the escalation of the conflict between Han Chinese and *chaoxianzu* in Yanbian during the Cultural Revolution. It also shows how the Chinese viewed *chaoxianzu* in the context of China-North Korea relations and expresses the strong sense of betrayal that the Chinese felt.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, ethnic Chinese in North Korea were also experiencing injustice at the hands of the North Korean government. In August 1963, following the decision of the North Korean Ministry of Education, Edict No. 17, all the textbooks at Chinese

<sup>11</sup> This excerpt reflects the ordeal suffered by *chaoxianzu* and the apex of ethnic conflict between Han Chinese and *chaoxianzu* in Yanbian following the worsening of North Korean-Chinese relations, but such situations were not limited to Yanbian. Rather, they occurred all across China. Yanbian merely had more instances of such conflict because of its larger *chaoxianzu* population.

elementary and middle schools were exchanged for textbooks issued by the North Korean Ministry of Education, and all classes had to be conducted in Korean. In 1966, it was mandated that the principals of all Chinese schools be North Korean. Ethnic Chinese (*huaqiao* 華僑) were forced to rely on farmers' markets and black markets because of the reduction of rations and other worsening treatment.<sup>12</sup> From 1966 to 1968, a total of 6,285 ethnic Chinese returned to China by way of Tumen, Ji'an, and Zhangbai (in Jilin province) (Pak Chong-ch'öl 2015, 113–14). In the deterioration of China-North Korea relations, both *chaoxianzu* in China and *huaqiao* in North Korea experienced serious crises of national identity.

Therefore, at the end of the Cultural Revolution, the most pressing issue for *chaoxianzu* was to resolve this crisis of national identity, which directly impacted the work of organizing the history of *chaoxianzu* in China (i.e., the creation of a history of *chaoxianzu* as an ethnic minority in China, or the insertion of *chaoxianzu* into Chinese history). This organizational and insertional work had already been undertaken once before. In the midst of the series of movements that included the national Anti-Rightist Movement<sup>13</sup> and the *chaoxianzu* literary movement against regional nationalism (*difang minzuzhuyi* 地方民族主義) that swept across China between 1957 and 1959,<sup>14</sup> *chaoxianzu* experienced their first national identity crisis since the establishment of the PRC state. Therefore, if we understand the revolutionary narratives that appeared in the 1950s as an effort on the part of *chaoxianzu* to gain the right to Chinese citizenship in the early days of the PRC, the revolutionary narratives that appeared in the early 1960s after the Rectification Movement can be seen as a literary response to the crisis of national identity that *chaoxianzu* experienced during the Rectification Movement (Li Haiying 2011, 312), and as a suturing of the ethnic schism between the *chaoxianzu* and Han Chinese. But the limitations, weaknesses, and incompleteness of such efforts were revealed immediately in the Cultural Revolution, which demanded that the *chaoxianzu* have

<sup>12</sup> For research on North Korean discrimination against *huaqiao* during the Cultural Revolution, see Yi Sŭng-yöp (2012) and Tchaerüch'ijüsük'i (2014).

<sup>13</sup> Anti-Rightist Movement: In 1956, aiming to resolve social crises at the inception of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong presented an article titled "On the Precise Resolution of Contradictions amongst the People" and attempted to conduct a party rectification movement that would push back against subjectivism in ideology, factionalism in organizations, and bureaucratism in writing style. However, in the midst of this Rectification Movement, the language between some democratic figures and other party outsiders became forceful, and the tone of criticism directed at the Party and its members became sharp and acerbic. The opinion was expressed that political parties other than the Communist Party should also take turns holding power. Mao Zedong, concerned with the seriousness of the situation, switched direction in 1957 from the Rectification Movement of the Chinese Communist Party to instead attack counter-revolutionary rightists who disagreed with the party and with Socialism. At the beginning of the Anti-Rightist Movement, Mao Zedong attempted to ferret out about 4,000 Rightists across the country, but due to the movement's expansion, the Rightists apprehended in the end totaled 552,877 (over 100 times more than Mao's original goal). Most of these Rightists were intellectuals.

<sup>14</sup> Movement against Regional Nationalism: This occurred after the Anti-Rightist Campaign, in 1959, going against Great Han Chauvinism and seeking to overcome regional nationalism in order to achieve a new ethnic alliance and provide a new environment of survival. Ultimately, however, it resulted in eradicating the so-called "nationalism" that existed in ethnic minority groups that were not Han. If the Anti-Rightist Movement was an ideological movement, the Movement against Regional Nationalism was an ethnic one, and so nationalism became a forbidden zone for *chaoxianzu* literature. See Yi Kwang-il (2003, 124–25).

a clear understanding of the past and forced them to confront history directly. This was the duty assumed by the revolutionary narratives of the 1980s.

### **The Invocation of Buried Memories and the Establishment of New Ethnic National Relations**

Among all the revolutionary narratives produced in the 1980s, Yun Il-san's *The Roaring Mudan River* most clearly embodies the theme of reordering the past and reconstructing history.<sup>15</sup> This novel emphasizes the ethnic problems at the root of the *chaoxianzu* national identity crisis that began with the establishment of a New China and continued until the 1980s. Moreover, deep-seated ethnic conflict and animosity between Han Chinese and *chaoxianzu* are threads that run through the entire book. The contradictions and conflicts converge into multi-class, multi-dimensional oppositions, such as the Japanese police and the Korean police who act as their henchmen versus the Chinese peasant class; the Chinese landowner class versus the Korean peasant class; and the Chinese peasant class versus the Korean peasant class. All of these contradictions pit poor Chinese against poor Koreans (*chaoxianzu*) and set up a dynamic that is not found in any other *chaoxianzu* novel.<sup>16</sup> In particular, *The Roaring Mudan River* smashes the myth of friendship and solidarity between poor *chaoxianzu* peasants and poor Chinese peasants in their opposition to Chinese landowners. Instead, it speaks of the deep-seated conflict and animosity between the two ethnic peasant groups. As the novel reports, the conflict between the two groups was rooted in the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree.

The novel fearlessly portrays the realities of this decree, which was at the heart of ethnic relations in Manchurian rural areas under Japanese colonial rule, as no other *chaoxianzu* novel had previously done. At the time, under the pretext of providing land for Japanese pioneer settlers or newly settled Koreans,

<sup>15</sup> Thus far, there is almost no research focusing on Yun Il-san. All we know about the author is from the introduction to *The Roaring Mudan River*. According to this introduction, Yun was born in Longjing, Jilin Province and left for Yanji City in his second year of middle school in 1960. He became a teacher in 1969 in Ning'an, Heilongjiang Province. In the 1980s, he began to concentrate on creative writing. At the age of 14, Yun witnessed the Anti-Rightist Movement and the Movement against Regional Nationalism that occurred in the Yanbian area starting in 1957. In his adolescence, he would also have observed the early years of the Yanbian Cultural Revolution. Therefore, while *The Roaring Mudan River* takes postwar Northern Manchuria (that is, Heilongjiang Province) as its setting, the motivation for his writing may lie in his personal experiences and his reflections on the conflict between *chaoxianzu* and Han Chinese. He may also have been motivated by the issue of unresolved historical problems for *chaoxianzu* in the Cultural Revolution in the Yanbian area.

<sup>16</sup> Prior *chaoxianzu* novels and Korean novels that bring Manchuria to life deal mostly with conflicts between Chinese landowners and ethnic Korean peasants. *Chaoxianzu* novels mostly feature a structure where ethnic conflict is translated into class conflict; Korean novels pit Chinese landowners against the entire bloc of ethnic Koreans. In consequence, they do not emphasize class differences among Koreans themselves. The most exemplary novel about the "Manchuria" experience is the Korean novel *Pukando* (North Kando) by An Su-gil (1911–1977). This novel also deals with the conflict between Qing landowners and Korean peasants. However, the class conflict it portrays amongst the peasants is not clearly formulated, and they are united into a community under the title of "nation/ethnicity *minjok*." Thus, the novel is still able to present an intimate friendship between the Chang Ch'i-dök family, who are peasants turned pro-Japanese business owners, and the Yi Han-bok family, which has members who are independence activists. For more about the novel *North Kando*, see Hyun Ok Park (2003, 24–43).

the Manchukuo government used the Land Expropriation Decree either to buy land at a discount or to confiscate it forcibly from native Chinese or sometimes from Koreans. The government then distributed the land to immigrants for cultivation and drove out Han Chinese locals. Only Koreans who knew how to farm rice paddies were allowed to remain. Manchukuo's immigration policy, in practical terms, was a policy of land exploitation (Yun Hwi-t'ak 2001, 212). In the process, Korean farmers were accused by the Chinese of stealing land (Yun Hwi-t'ak 2013, 365). The Chinese who were divested of their property and driven out of their homes were the victims. In contrast, the Koreans were split into two groups: those who had newly received land, and those who had also been stripped of their property and driven from their homes. Therefore, Koreans were seen as both perpetrators and victims.

For years, the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree and its consequences for ethnic relations in Manchurian rural society were thoroughly forgotten, avoided, or repressed in North Korean, South Korean, and *chaoxianzu* literature. These experiences were excavated by the South Korean author An Su-gil in his later years in his novel *Hyosu* (Decapitated, 1965), which reflects on the Manchurian experience.<sup>17</sup> In *The Roaring Mudan River*, this repressed memory is brought to light in the following excerpt:

Indeed, it was feasible if you looked at the case of Zhang Xiaoyun. Zhang Xiaoyun was the direct victim of the Bohai Waterway Incident that the Japanese Police Chief at the Dongjingcheng Police Station had fabricated with the Chief of the Judiciary Police and the Dongjingcheng military police special officers' henchmen (*riho* 李浩), all of whom were Korean. The incident involved the rerouting of a large waterway—the Bohai Sea, which irrigated water from the Mudan River into the surrounding flats. The direction of its flow was changed from the southwest to the northwest, and the land on either side of the waterway was forcibly confiscated from the local Chinese who lived there.

At the time, the land surrounding the waterway were mostly uncultivated wetlands, but some areas were well-frequented by the Chinese. Of course, the lands were the property of the Manchurian Reclamation Company, and had been given for tenant farming, but there were some plots privately owned by farmers. Of the independent farmers' plots, there were two that belonged to Zhang Xiaoyun. The Chief of Police negotiated with the Manchuria-Korea company to collect the tenant farming rights and give them to newly settled Koreans from Korea for paddy farming, while at the same time pressuring independent farmers to sell their lands on either side of the waterway cheaply. In such circumstances, the Chinese could not sit idly by and not protest. . .

<sup>17</sup> In the novel, the narrator is a twenty-eight-year-old journalist working for a Korean-language newspaper in "Manchukuo." He grieves for the Korean peasants who are helpless against the armed Japanese settlers who acquire their land at dirt-cheap prices. However, upon seeing a decapitated Chinese man's head hanging from a white poplar tree beside a dam, he realizes that the land belongs neither to the Japanese nor the Koreans. Rather, the land belongs to the Chinese. This realization awakens him to the error of his ways. In works before *Hyosu*, An depicts "Manchukuo" as a space of ethnic reconciliation (his "Manchukuo"-era works), or else represents it as a space of Korean resistance and suffering (postwar works such as *Pukkando*). For more on this, see Li Haiying (2015b, 297–327).

The situation was not exactly good for the Koreans either. Though they had received land for tenant farming, they were required to pay massive sums in rent, and they stood to gain little. But for the Chinese who had been divested of their rights or their land, the Koreans naturally became the enemy. It was as if, had it not been for them, the farming rights and the land would not have been taken away. Zhang Xiaoyun was one of these people. The fire of resentment that burned in his heart turned not only toward the Japanese Chief of Police and the Chief of the Judiciary Police, but also toward all the Korean people. . . . And so Zhang Xiaoyun, even as he was forced to leave behind his own home to find a new means of living, swore to return one day to wreak vengeance on the Japanese Police Chief and all the Japanese, the Chief of Judiciary Police, and all the Koreans. (Yun Il-san 1986, 28–30)

The excerpt above reveals plainly how the damages caused by the Land Expropriation Decree in the Mudan River area of Dongjing County, also known as the Bohai Waterway incident, became a source of ethnic conflict and animosity between ethnic Koreans and Chinese in the area. For the most part, the novel's content is corroborated by the historical record. The novel accurately portrays the way the newly settled Koreans—the “Koreans who came after”—obtained their lands through the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree. Moreover, it shows how the poor Chinese peasants felt about the Koreans: they blamed the Koreans for the confiscation of their land. Ultimately, they also came to view the Korean peasants who received tenant farming rights (which were formerly held by the Chinese) as the enemy, just like the Japanese Police Chief and the Korean Higher Police Chief.

But the following scene deserves attention, as it reveals something that is not included in the historical record or prior literary works:

The Japanese Police Chief, who had secretly hoped that the Chinese would rise up in protest rather than obediently hand over their land, set the Korean Judiciary Police Chief in charge of the situation.

The Judiciary Police Chief threw himself into the task, as he had the authority of the Japanese Police Chief behind him, and the situation offered the opportunity to obtain fertile lands at a cheap price. . . . The Judiciary Police Chief ran amok. He arrested people who refused to sell their land, without inquiring into right or wrong, and beat them like dogs. Independent farmers, fearing for their lives, had no choice but to sell their land. And even that was at such a cheap price that it was little different from having the land forcibly taken from them without payment. Lands that were taken in such a fashion passed into the hands of the Judiciary Police Chief and his henchmen, and so they became well-known rich men in the Dongjingcheng area. (Yun Il-san 1986, 30)

This excerpt portrays how, in the process of obtaining land for Koreans, the Japanese Police Chief and the Korean Judiciary Police Chief and his henchmen intervened to violently oppress the local Chinese. Here, the Japanese Police Chief plans and initiates the entire Bohai Waterway incident. However, instead of leading the charge, he uses Korean policemen as agents of violence toward the Chinese. The Korean Judiciary Police Chief and the Korean special military police goons (*riho*)

are enthusiastic in their roles as, they have “the authority of the Japanese Police Chief behind [them], and the situation offered the opportunity to obtain fertile lands at a cheap price”: these lands will ultimately become theirs.

This text attests to the historical reality that some ethnic Koreans in Manchukuo were “pseudo-colonialists” who acted on behalf of colonial forces. Yet one sentence is particularly revealing: “The Japanese Police Chief, who had secretly hoped that the Chinese would rise up in protest rather than obediently hand over their land. . . .” This phrase suggests that the root of the conflict was created by the Japanese Police Chief. As such, it was a result of Japan’s ethnic alienation policy. Thus, Japan’s “Land Expropriation Decree” in the novel differs in character from the decree in the historical record. History texts describe the Land Expropriation Decree as part of a larger immigration policy aimed at transplanting Japanese and Korean citizens into Manchukuo. Here, it is described as an alienation strategy deliberately conceived to incite ethnic conflict between Chinese and Koreans in Manchukuo. At the same time, the novel also takes care to distinguish the ambiguous situation of Koreans as both beneficiaries and victims of the decree; in particular, while they are provided with land to cultivate, “they were required to pay massive sums in rent, and they stood to gain little.” This is what differentiated the Korean peasantry from the ethnic Korean colonizing forces who were used as agents of the Japanese and the pro-imperialist Koreans who used Japanese authority to lead the charge to divest the Chinese of their land. Through this reframing, the novel argues that the Land Expropriation Decree had little to do with most Korean people, and that it was important to differentiate between pro-Japanese Koreans and the Korean populace at large. Thus, it demonstrates that the deep-seated ethnic conflict and animosity between poor Chinese peasants and Korean peasants was in reality engineered by the Japanese alienation policy. Ultimately, the ethnic conflict was caused by a deliberately engineered misunderstanding.

But the defeat of Japan would bring about a massive change in the relational dynamics between the main ethnic groups (Japanese, Korean, and Chinese) in the Northeast region. The Japanese fell from their colonizer-ruler status to a position of weakness, citizens of a defeated nation, and came face-to-face with the retaliatory looting and murder of the furious Chinese. Koreans were also vulnerable to the Chinese people’s indiscriminate violence and looting, as an ethnic group that had been viewed as secondary citizens under the Japanese, thanks to the Japanese colonial policy of inter-ethnic estrangement. In areas outside Yanbian, in particular, Korean villages were often attacked by Chinese rebels and massacred in their entirety. Such historical events are well-portrayed in the novels of Yöm Sang-söp (who witnessed such turmoil when returning to Korea from Manchuria after liberation), *Hollan* (Chaos), and *Moryak* (Plot), as well as in Kim Man-sön’s return novel *Ijung kukchökcha* (Dual Nationality).

Following the end of World War II, it was local rebels (who had been pro-Japanese policemen and soldiers in the puppet Manchurian army) and so-called Korean nationalists (who had been members of the Manchurian Concordia Association, a pro-Japanese government organization, or had been foremen in the military police), who exacerbated and goaded this ethnic conflict that had begun

under Japanese colonial rule. This historical reality is well reflected in Yun Il-san's *The Roaring Mudan River*. The novel depicts the resentment harbored by Wu Wanlin, formerly a pro-Japanese Chinese policeman. This resentment begins as a personal grudge against the Judiciary Chief Police and the police henchmen for taking land, but as he rises to the level of leader of the public safety corps (*zhiandui* 治安隊), the novel describes how "his sense of vengeance expanded malignantly and became a desire for vengeance against all Koreans." Over time, his "ambition also grew without bounds," and he established a goal of using this opportunity to "drive out all Koreans and plunder all their lands and property" (Yun Il-san 1986, 63). Wu Wanlin's provocative propaganda flyers read: "Gaoli 高麗 (Koreans) should leave for Korea and leave all their property! Chinese, rise up in unity! The KMT army is coming!" (64). These statements showcase how the ethnic conflict between Chinese and Koreans in Northeast China grew out of the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree and how formerly pro-Japanese reactionary forces used this to their advantage.

Another pro-Japanese character, Paek Ho-nam, formerly of the Manchurian Concordia Association, sets up an ethnic Korean "comitia" in Dongjingcheng that is described as "inciting all able-bodied Koreans in Dongjingcheng to take up arms, as the Chinese are trying to massacre the Koreans," and furthermore "ordering the Self-Defense Army to form blockades to seal the contact zones between Korean and Han Chinese districts" (64). Similarly, Pak Tokkaebi, who becomes the leader of the Korean "Self-Defense Army," is depicted as owing a blood debt to the Chinese. This can be traced to his time working as a foreman for a Japanese military supply base. At that time, he responded particularly sensitively to Chinese movements. The novel provides a critical portrayal of those who took charge by declaring Korean nationalism and arguing for Korean safety, suggesting that these people actually worked as active agents for Japanese colonizing forces by oppressing and abusing the local Chinese. Indeed, their ultimate goal was not the protection of Korean life and property. Rather, they were more concerned with self-protection against Chinese revenge for their acts during the colonial period, and their efforts were an attempt to make a profit during a time of confusion.

The local rebel (and former puppet Manchurian army officer) Ma Xishan also uses this historic conflict between Koreans and Chinese to attract Northeast Han Chinese to his cause: "Ma Xishan was a man who, when the time came, would not hesitate to hang not just one or two people but all the Koreans in Lüdu. If this massacre could bring the Han Chinese—who were the overwhelming majority—under his control, that was all that mattered" (168). This passage reveals the objective of the local rebels who conducted indiscriminate attacks, plundered, and murdered in ethnic Korean settlements in Northern Manchuria following the end of World War II. For example, Ma Xishan, "in order to stop or persuade the Han masses from joining the Communist Party," does not hesitate to "fabricate evil plans to make the Korean military forces murder Han crowds" (466). This sentence points to the fallacy and deceit of Ma Xishan's ostensibly nationalist "pro-Han" policies. Like Ma Xishan, the Korean *riho*, formerly a special officer in the Japanese military police (*hōnbyōngdae*, 憲兵隊), does not hesitate to use ethnic conflict to

his advantage, and he has no qualms about murdering and oppressing his fellow Koreans.

In the novel, it is a Korean deputy commander working in the Soviet Red Army Garrison Headquarters in Mudanjiang City who unearths the cause of the ethnic conflict and reveals the plot of both the Chinese local rebels and the Korean “comitia” leaders who have strategized to escalate the conflict:

Everyone, the Koreans and Han Chinese, boasts friendship from time immemorial. . .

When the Japanese illegally annexed Korea and Manchuria, the great sons and daughters of the Korean and Han Chinese joined hands, took to the forests, and conducted a bloody struggle against the well-armed Japanese. . . Why must we two peoples fight? For whom, and for what must we fight? (Yun Il-san 1986, 66)

This speech by the Korean deputy commander in the Soviet Red Army transforms the history of Manchuria under Japanese rule—stained by bloody ethnic conflict—into a bloody resistance struggle waged by the two peoples together. While there were pro-Japanese Korean forces who used Japanese authority to oppress the Chinese, the novel points out that there were also Korean fighters who threw themselves into the anti-Japanese resistance fight in Manchuria. In other words, the two peoples share a history of resistance against the Japanese—a space in which they could join forces. At the same time, the novel exposes how the people who deny the shared history of resistance against the Japanese and instead encourage ethnic conflict are the very people who “yesterday were the dogs of the Japanese, and today are clamoring for nationalism.”

The “Old Eighth Routers”—that is, the Chinese Communist Party members who were dispatched from the Eighth Route Army—also work to expose the scheming of the local rebels and the pro-Japanese reactionaries, through which they hope to resolve the ethnic conflict. Under their active leadership, Yongho—who has lost his family to a pro-Japanese Korean *riho*—finally sees through the plot to aggravate ethnic hostility and awakens. He even volunteers to remain a hostage of the local rebel forces to rescue Zhang Xiaoyun, who has fallen for Ma Xishan’s ruse. Viewing the Koreans as his sworn enemy, he joins the rebel forces. After being rescued, Zhang Xiaoyun manages to leave behind his ethnic hostility and join the army to actively fight. At the same time, he also educates and enlightens the Han masses, who have also been fooled by the scheme to aggravate ethnic conflict. Chōn Se-jun, a former college student and an instructor in the *chaoxianzu* forces in Dongjingcheng, sacrifices his life without hesitation for Zhang Xiaoyun. Thanks to these efforts, the deeply rooted conflict between the Korean and Han Chinese—created by the Japanese and the pro-Japanese reactionary forces in the Northeast region—finds a resolution. This paves the way for the construction of new ethnic relations. Song Weimin is another man who joins the local rebels due to a misunderstanding about Koreans but is later rescued. He sends a letter to Zhang Xiaoyun after being injured in a struggle to weed out the rebels. His letter serves as a reflection on the unfair violence and oppression inflicted on the Korean

people by the misled Han Chinese after liberation and provides an affirmation of the *chaoxianzu* contribution to the Northeast Liberation War. It is significant that this reflection and affirmation comes from a Han fighter, who formerly viewed the Koreans with such animosity and hatred that he became a local rebel. In particular, Song Weimin writes:

The commanders worried that the Korean forces might retaliate. And many of the Koreans had homes in Dong'anxian City. If the Koreans had retaliated, it would have soon become an ethnic battle—as desired by Xie Wendong's thugs; the ethnic conflict would have overtaken the class conflict, and the situation would have become untenable. . . . But we vastly underestimated our Korean comrades. When they returned to Dong'anxian City a few days later, they beat their chests and wept, but they did not hurt a hair on Chinese heads. Though they were fierce like tigers on the battlefield, they also knew how to strictly abide by revolutionary regulations. (Yun Il-san 1986, 541)

This excerpt effectively portrays how hard the *chaoxianzu* worked to construct new ethnic relations, and how they were able to leave behind the shadow of ethnic conflict, misunderstanding, and bigotry that had historically been placed upon them by the Japanese.

*The Roaring Mudan River* boldly discusses the deeply rooted ethnic conflict between the lower-class Koreans and Han Chinese. This theme, which emphasizes the friendship between the two groups, has been avoided or forgotten in other literary works. The novel treats the Land Expropriation Decree as the root of the problem. Through the reconstruction of memory, it argues that the Land Expropriation Decree's essential aim was to encourage conflict and hostility between the two ethnic groups; it also forecasts a new construction of ethnic relations through the *chaoxianzu* role in the Chinese Revolution. Through the recollection, exposure, and reconstruction of these repressed memories, the novel executes a thorough investigation and settlement of historical controversies. It was only at this moment in the 1980s that the work of true decolonization—unpacking the Japanese colonial period—on the part of the *chaoxianzu* who remained in China following liberation could, move forward.

### **The Historical Particularities of Northeast Asia and the Revolutionary Continuity of Ethnic Koreans**

In *The Roaring Mudan River*, we see the problem of historically developed ethnic conflict and the confusion and complexity of the power vacuum that appeared in Northeast China following liberation:

It was August 17 when the Soviet Red Army appeared in Ning'an Prefecture. . .

At the time, neither the CCP nor the KMT had organizations in Ning'an. Public order was extremely low. The establishment of a temporary government in this transitional period became a key problem. (Yun Il-san 1986, 45)

At this point, the Northeast had existed as the puppet state Manchukuo for fourteen years. In 1939, the region predictably succeeded in suppressing “bandits” thanks to the cooperation of the Japanese and Manchurian armies. The last armed anti-Japanese resistance, the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army (*Dongbei kangri lianjun*, 東北抗日聯軍), was chased to the Korea-Manchuria border in the winter of 1939 and nearly annihilated (Han Sök-chöng 2009, 80). The two leaders of the army, Zhou Baozhong 周保中 and the future North Korean leader, Kim Il-sung, survived and escaped into Soviet territory. The Northeast was freed by the Soviet Red Army at liberation. As an area where neither the CCP nor the KMT had influence, it became a political vacuum. The Soviets were unable to establish a new governing power, due to their own principles of non-intervention and their limited understanding of local politics. At the same time, various pro-Japanese reactionary forces and pro-Japanese Korean nationalist forces were in competition to form organizations. This aggravated the ethnic conflict between the Koreans and Chinese. In response, Kang Ch’an-hyök—an underground communications officer for the Fifth Anti-Japanese United Army—created the Korean People’s Democratic Great Alliance (Minzhu Da Tongmeng, 民主大同盟), fighting against pro-Japanese Korean nationalist forces. The alliance had three sets of leaders: leaders of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army who had returned with the Soviet Red Army; the Communist Party leaders who had been sent by the Northeast chapter of the Chinese Communist Party; and the Communist Party leaders formerly of the Eighth Route Army who had been sent by the CCP Central Committee. These leaders used Kang’s Korean People’s Democratic Great Alliance and the Korean armed Koryö Police Force to establish a foundation for governance in the Northeast. Doing so expanded the Communist Party’s capabilities and ability to recruit troops. In *The Roaring Mudan River*, this political situation is portrayed in three excerpts:

- (1) At the same time when Comrade Kang Chin-gang was dispatched to Ning’anxian City, officers from the original Fifth Anti-Japanese United Army, among them To Ok-pong, arrived in Mudanjiang City. When the Officers came to Mudanjiang City, there was already an organization called the Korean People’s Democratic Great Alliance there. Most ethnic Koreans above the age of eighteen were in the organization, and they had their own armed forces, the Koryö Police Squad.  
The officer comrades actively developed their party structure by getting involved in the Korean Democratic Great Alliance as soon as they arrived, and leaders in the Alliance joined the Chinese Communist Party one by one. Therefore the Democratic Great Alliance became a firm exterior branch of the CCP. (Yun Il-san 1986, 123–24)
- (2) Once a temporary provincial committee was established, the first order of business was the building of armed forces and the seizure of power. They reorganized and expanded the Koryö Police Squad into a Military Command Guard Association, and also established the title Mudanjiang Military Command Headquarters. (124)
- (3) “I have heard a detailed report from Comrade Kang Chin-gang about the comrades’ work. It surely cannot have been easy to have self-organized and established a governing body, even forming a People’s Army, when there was no party organization to lean on.” (125–26)

The excerpts above realistically convey the process through which the CCP and the Eighth Route Army, which had little influence in the Northeast region, used the Korean People's Democratic Great Alliance to establish a foothold in the Northeast and expand their reach. Excerpt (1) shows how—even before the arrival of the officers from the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, the CCP Central Committee, and the Eighth Route Army—the Korean People's Democratic Great Alliance had already been organized by Korean revolutionaries. Its members included most Koreans over the age of eighteen and it had its own armed unit. Excerpt (2) shows how the CCP and the Eighth Route Army used the Koryŏ Police Squad, organized by Korean revolutionaries, to recruit still more troops. Excerpt (3) shows the high praise that the CCP and the Eighth Route Army had for the Korean revolutionaries' efforts to establish a foundation for Communist Party control, which meant voluntarily participating in revolutionary work independent of CCP resources. Such descriptions contradict historical records' and literary works' portrayal of this work as having been undertaken “under the Chinese Communist Party's leadership.” The traditional record characterizes the process as one in which *chaoxianzu* passively accepted the changes brought about by the CCP and the Eighth Route Army. A key example of the “passive” characterization can be seen in the first 1962 edition and the 1986 revised edition of Yi Kŭn-jŏn's novel *Tiger Cliff*. The novel discusses the acceptance of CCP leadership on the part of Koreans during the Liberation War in the Northeast region, as well as the Koreans' contribution to the revolution. Both editions describe a unilateral CCP assumption of leadership and the passive *chaoxianzu* acceptance of the same. Of course, *The Roaring Mudan River*—like other literary works—also characterizes the CCP-*chaoxianzu* relationship as one of parent and child, in which the CCP displays model behavior and the *chaoxianzu* learn from it. Nevertheless, *The Roaring Mudan River* also emphasizes the active contribution of Korean revolutionaries to the Northeast region's Liberation War, focusing on their agency and spontaneity.

Moreover, *The Roaring Mudan River* sharply emphasizes the backwardness of the Han masses, in contrast with the revolutionary fervor of the Koreans. It also depicts the historical rupture between the Han Chinese in Guannei China (North Heartland China) and the Han Chinese in Northeast China. Two examples illustrate this:

(1) Indeed, it is a tragedy! The people here do not know us well. And furthermore, the Japanese have pitted different peoples against each other for so long that Ma Xishan's propaganda slogan of “for the Chinese People” was easy to fall for. The fact that Ma Xishan was able to amass such a large military force and launch an attack proves this. (Yun Il-san 1986, 214)

(2) “If you are also Chinese, back away from the “*gaoli*!”  
 “. . .”  
 If this were Guannei, and it were a kerfuffle between Chinese only, the words would have provoked a reaction. But this is not Guannei. The enemy had fallen for Ma Xishan's deception and thought Koreans to be abhorrent enemies, so Instructor Cho's words fell on deaf ears. (219)

Because of the weakness of the CCP in the Northeast region, the long years of Japanese governance, and the reactionary propaganda of the local rebels, most Han Chinese in the area in the early period of liberation displayed an ignorance of the Communist Party and its policies. Excerpt (2) shows the historical rupture between Guannei Han Chinese and Northeast Han Chinese. By portraying the opposition of the CCP, the Eighth Route Army, and the *chaoxianzu* to the KMT, the local rebels, and the Northeast Han Chinese, the novel shows how the CCP and the Eighth Route Army relied heavily on the revolutionary fervor and enthusiasm of the *chaoxianzu* in the early period of the Liberation War of the Northeast region. Because it showcases the revolutionary vigor and friendship between the *chaoxianzu* and the Han, this is also a section that differentiates the novel from other works. The novel locates the source of this revolutionary vigor, agency, and voluntarism in the revolutionary continuity of the *chaoxianzu*, their special position, and the different policies of the KMT and the CCP toward them.

First, the novel treats the *chaoxianzu*'s revolutionary vigor and agency as rooted in their people's history of participation in revolution, which means that another revolution is inevitable:

The work for the expansion of *chaoxianzu* troops went very smoothly in not only Comrade Kang Ch'an-hyök's villages, but other villages as well. No, it is perhaps more accurate to say it was the case in all *chaoxianzu* villages in the entire Northeast. The *chaoxianzu* masses, who had wandered long and far to finally settle in the Northeast, nearly all harbored anti-Japanese sentiment, as they had been forced to cross the Tumen or Yalu due to Japanese oppression. The pioneers had already set a wondrous precedent for the entire world in their work to defeat the Japanese and achieve national independence. Pioneers such as the great martyr An Chung-gün, who had shot the invading monster Itō Hirobumi at Harbin Station and stood on his body to declare "Hurrah for Korean Independence!" is a good example. Yun Pong-gil, who had thrown a flask bomb at a Japanese gathering in Shanghai's Hongqu Park celebrating the Japanese emperor's birthday and the capture of Shanghai, thereby immediately killing General Shirakawa, is another good example. Especially in the 1930s, the *chaoxianzu* people rose up in revolutionary struggle against the Japanese under the leadership of the CCP, the people behind continuing the fight that the people in front had died for, and therefore became an essential force for the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army. Most fell valiantly due to the beastly oppression of the Japanese, the difference in military capabilities, and the damage taken by the socialist route, but the embers of revolution that they planted survived within the *chaoxianzu* people. With the fall of the Japanese, the bells of freedom and liberation rang out across the vast expanse of the Northeast, and the revolutionary fervor of the *chaoxianzu* people rose to unprecedented heights. (Yun Il-san 1986, 129–30)

The excerpt above recounts various historical events: the relocation of Koreans to the Chinese Northeast region due to Japanese invasion, the best-known instances of anti-Japanese resistance that occurred within Chinese territory (by Yun Pong-gil and An Chung-gün), the bloody anti-Japanese resistance waged by Koreans in the Northeast under the guidance of the CCP in 1930s China, and so on. It shows that the *chaoxianzu* of the Northeast have an inherent enthusiasm for revolution, thanks

to their experience of forced relocation by Japanese colonization and exploitation, as well as the long tradition of anti-Japanese resistance. It is particularly significant that the *chaoxianzu* people actively participated in the 1930s Northeast Anti-Japanese resistance under the CCP, and that it was the *chaoxianzu* who constituted the core of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army.<sup>18</sup>

The actions of Kang Ch'an-hyök, the man who created the Korean People's Democratic Great Alliance before the CCP and the Eighth Route Army had established a foothold of influence in the Northeast, deserve special notice. Kang Ch'an-hyök created the Korean People's Democratic Great Alliance as an outside chapter of the Communist Party in defiance of pro-Japanese reactionary forces. He even formed an armed squad, and he was also "an underground communications officer for the Fifth Anti-Japanese United Army" (Yun Il-san 1986, 19). Indeed, "after the Fifth Army and other military troops left for faraway lands, (he) hid his occupation and spent his days here as a tenant farmer, thirsting for the day that the brave fighters would return waving their red flag" (19). In the novel, Kang's presence gives the *chaoxianzu* of the Northeast a link to the Fifth Anti-Japanese United Army. Because of his actions, the *chaoxianzu* can lay claim to a revolutionary heritage. The Fifth Anti-Japanese United Army was an anti-Japanese military squad created in 1935 by Zhou Baozhong, the Chinese Communist Manchurian Military Commission Secretary, and the central force of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army that resisted to the very end (Liu Wenxin 2005). Three of Kang's younger siblings were in the Fifth Army. General Zhou Baozhong, the commander-in-chief of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, immediately sought out Kang once he entered the Northeast region by way of the Soviet Union following the end of World War II (Yun Il-san 1986, 83). These facts, all emphasized in the novel, indicate the integral role that Korean revolutionaries played in the Northeast region. Their presence was central to the CCP's resistance, and solidified the *chaoxianzu* people's revolutionary heritage and the inevitability of further revolution.

In *The Roaring Mudan River*, the work of the *chaoxianzu* masses moves forward quickly and smoothly. Due to Ma Xishan's push for ethnic hostility, the *chaoxianzu* people know they need to work hard for self-preservation, and indeed do so. The wicked, undesirable elements have long since fled to South Korea. Once the comitia they had organized is destroyed at the hands of Kang Ch'an-hyök, there is no more organized scheming on their part. The enlightenment of the people, thanks to vigorous work by men such as Kang, improves at wondrous speed. As a result, the *chaoxianzu* people become fully motivated not only in Dongjingcheng City but also in peripheral villages (Yun Il-san 1986, 436–37).

The enthusiasm and agency of Koreans in the Chinese Northeast in agreeing with Communist policies and principles were the unavoidable consequence of both their instinct for self-preservation in their particular circumstances and the differences between KMT and CCP policies toward *chaoxianzu*. Thus, the

<sup>18</sup> This group fought the Japanese to the last. Its constitution reflects the blood ties between the CCP and the *chaoxianzu*. It solidified the *chaoxianzu* position by accepting Communist principles in the Northeast Liberation War, and ultimately decided to side with the Communist Party.

Korean peoples' cooperation with the CCP and their fervor for revolution are less ideological than a question of survival. The instinct to survive, which is intertwined with revolution, is also at the heart of the KMT and the CCP's different policies toward *chaoxianzu*:

How is it that the Korean people are your sworn enemy? The overwhelming majority of them have starved and suffered just like you these past years. Tens of thousands of good Korean sons and daughters died valiantly in the battle to defeat the invaders. Your true sworn enemies are the handful of national traitors that are scattered among both Koreans and the Han Chinese. . . . Their chatter about "being for the Chinese people" and "rooting out the Koreans" is their scheme to create their own heaven and use you all as bullet shields. (Yun Il-san 1986, 183)

This educational lecture is provided by the Eighth Route Army instructor Cho, who has been dispatched from the heartland. It effectively shows the CCP's policy toward Koreans in the Northeast following liberation. Here, the CCP includes the majority of Koreans in the category of the proletariat, the people who can organize, and differentiates between the majority and those who act as pseudo-colonialists using Japanese authority. It also affirms the valiant revolutionary spirit of the Koreans who died in the fight against Japan, and it acknowledges their contribution to the anti-Japanese resistance. Indeed, many powers focused on the question of whether the Korean people would return to Korea or stay in the Chinese Northeast (due to the strategic importance of the region), including the Allied powers, such as the US, as well as the KMT and the CCP, which were facing the onset of the Chinese Civil War. The US and the CCP actively encouraged Koreans in the Northeast to remain in the area. The Northeast chapter of the CCP Central Committee announced in September 1945 that "the Korean people of the Northeast region, aside from those in the volunteer army engaging in resistance in the Huabei area, must be recognized as an ethnic minority in China and thereby provided equal rights and duties as the Han Chinese."<sup>19</sup> In contrast, the KMT's policy was that Koreans were not to be particularly differentiated from the "enemy people" (the Japanese), and would all be returned. The KMT announced that in terms of dealing with Korean property and industries, they would differentiate between those who had been pro-Japanese and those who had not. In practice, the regional offices did not make any distinctions between the Koreans and the Japanese. It categorized them all as either enemy aliens or captives (Chang Sök-hüng 2011, 56–57; Li Haiying 2015a, 289). This policy difference toward the Koreans on the part of the CCP and the KMT had direct consequences for the majority of the Korean peasantry in the Northeast. These people had already suffered indiscriminate attacks, looting, and murder at the hands of local rebels following liberation and were fighting to survive. Naturally, their desperation led them to side with the CCP. Later, the Korean people's acquisition of land under the CCP's land reform

<sup>19</sup> Because specific regulations were not established following this announcement, each region experienced various kinds of ethnic conflict (Kim Ch'un-sön 2011, 33; Li Haiying 2015a, 295).

policies—which were carried out to solidify the support of the Koreans who had chosen to remain in the Northeast during the Northeast Liberation War—further cemented their choice to follow the CCP.

### Conclusion

Using Yun Il-san's *The Roaring Mudan River* as a focus, this paper has examined the characteristics of 1980s revolutionary narratives and their objectives. It also analyzes why so many revolutionary narratives appeared at this time, even though this type of narrative could be seen as anachronistic during the era of Chinese economic reform.

Before the writing of Yun Il-san's novel, the relationship between Han Chinese and the *chaoxianzu* had only been characterized as one of unity and friendship. In *The Roaring Mudan River*, their deep-rooted ethnic conflict is revealed. Moreover, the novel identifies the source of the conflict as the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree. But the novel does not present the Decree as merely part of a larger immigration policy to assimilate colonial Koreans into the Japanese empire or into Manchukuo. Rather, it portrays the Decree as a deliberate attempt to sow strife between the Chinese and Korean peasantry in Manchukuo. The solution for overcoming such alienating tactics was to emphasize the shared historical experience of anti-Japanese resistance, the leadership of the CCP and the Eighth Route Army, and the *chaoxianzu* people's brave participation in the Northeast Liberation War, all of which helped to surmount historical misunderstandings and prejudice. In the novel, the recollection, unearthing, and reconstruction of repressed memories provide a confirmation and assessment of past historical issues about ethnic identity. These issues from the past continued to live on in the crisis of *chaoxianzu* national identity, and carried out more thoroughly the work of decolonization after the period of Japanese occupation in Manchuria on the part of the *chaoxianzu* who remained in China following liberation.

With the resolution of these historical issues, *The Roaring Mudan River* exhibits the historical specificities of the Northeast region and the revolutionary agency, voluntarism, and continuity of the Korean people of this area. Moreover, it brings into focus the importance of the CCP and the Eighth Route Army's reliance on Korean revolutionary spirit and fervor in establishing their foothold. Thanks to the active and enthusiastic participation of Koreans in the resistance, the CCP and the Eighth Route Army (from the Chinese heartland) were able to overcome the historical rupture that existed between Guannei Han Chinese and Northeast Han Chinese and the consequent weakness of CCP influence in the Northeast. The source of Korean enthusiasm for revolution could be found in the continued revolutionary presence of Koreans as a core contingent in the Fifth Anti-Japanese United Army, the special circumstances that *chaoxianzu* found themselves in when they came face to face with local rebels' dominance, and the difference between the policies of the KMT and the CCP toward the *chaoxianzu* people. All of these elements diverge from prior historical and literary narratives that describe the CCP's and Eighth Route Army's authority as unilateral and passively obeyed by the *chaoxianzu*.

In this way, *The Roaring Mudan River* deals with the very familiar topic of the role of Northeast *chaoxianzu* in the Liberation War. Yet it also recalls not only the repressed memories of the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree but also the ethnic conflict between the poor Han Chinese and the Korean peasantry. Moreover, it rediscovers the historical specificity of the Northeast region in terms of the historical rupture between the heartland Han Chinese and the Northeast Han Chinese. In so doing, it features the agency and voluntarism of the Northeast *chaoxianzu* as cooperators and an early base of support for the CCP and the Eighth Route Army. In this way, the novel escapes the formulaic framework of “under the Chinese Communist Party’s leadership.” Therefore, 1980s Chinese *chaoxianzu* revolutionary literary narratives, as exemplified by *The Roaring Mudan River*, should not be viewed as narratives of “assimilation,” like the *chaoxianzu* revolutionary narratives of the 1950s and 60s, nor as rewritings of “pseudo-nation building” or as a rehashing of actions taken “under the Chinese Communist Party’s leadership.” Rather, they are effective literary responses to the serious crisis in national identity that reappeared among the *chaoxianzu* during the Cultural Revolution. The National Rectification Movement and the Cultural Revolution showed the *chaoxianzu* people that the question of Han Chinese and *chaoxianzu* ethnic conflict and the history of the Japanese Land Expropriation Decree were issues that needed to be resolved to affirm *chaoxianzu* as Chinese citizens. That is, thanks to *The Roaring Mudan River*, *chaoxianzu* could trace their history back to its very beginning. Once there, they could finally meet their true selves. Only then were *chaoxianzu* able to properly face their own history and escape the stranglehold of past problems. In this sense, 1980s *chaoxianzu* revolutionary narratives sought to reconstruct *chaoxianzu* national identity at the moment of its crisis by rediscovering and rebuilding these repressed memories. By expanding ethnic consciousness as broadly as possible, the narratives paradoxically worked to reconstruct a more whole and robust sense of national identity than ever before.

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