

JOURNAL OF APPLIED SCIENCES RESEARCH

JOURNAL home page: <http://www.aensiweb.com/jasr.html>

2013 Special, 9(12) pages: 6204-6210

Published Online: 15 January 2014.

Research Article

Building a Sustainable Peace: Narratives of Violence in early Twentieth-Century Korea

Dr. Franklin RAUSCH

Lander University, Department of History and Philosophy, Greenwood (South Carolina), United States of America

Received: 12 November 2013; Revised: 14 December, 2013; Accepted: 20 December 2013.

© 2013 AENSI PUBLISHER All rights reserved

ABSTRACT

On October 26, 1909, An Chunggün (1879-1910), shot Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909), the former resident-general of Korea, who had led the Japanese colonization of Korea, at a railway station in Harbin, Manchuria. An, through his participation in the Catholic community, Confucian education, and reading of Classical Chinese and Korean-language newspapers and books, came to believe in a Social-Darwinist world in which racial conflict engendered by the forgetting of morality by the white empires perverted the fruits of civilization and enlightenment thought and threatened East-Asian peace, Korean independence, and the well-being of the yellow race. In response to this terrible situation, he became convinced that a righteous God had chosen him to kill Itō in order to show the Japanese emperor that the former resident-general of Korea had lied when he said that Koreans welcomed the Japanese protectorate. An believed that the emperor would then change Japan's policy in Korea, restoring independence and peace. However, the narrative An constructed to justify violence blinded him to the fact that Itō was a popular Japanese statesman and confidant of the emperor who was carrying out a policy that had wide support within Japan. Thus, when An killed him, rather than convincing the Japanese emperor and people that Japan's colonization of Korea was wrong, the assassination became one more justification for the extension of Japanese power on the peninsula. At the same time, the narrative the proponents of the Japanese colonial project created to justify violence against An and to legitimize their empire in Korea blinded them to the very real grievances that An and other Koreans had against Japan. This blindness played an important role in convincing the Japanese government that the establishment of an empire on the Asian mainland would resolve its security problems, when in fact, the annexation of Korea in 1910, which An was trying to prevent, led eventually to the invasion of China, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the use of nuclear weapons against Japan, and Japan's occupation by the United States. I will therefore argue in this paper that the narratives created to justify violence blind people to the realities they face, making violence appear to be a more effective means of solving their problems than it really is and that therefore in order to build a sustainable peace, it is necessary to transcend such narratives and understand the true roots of conflict.

Key words: Peace, Violence, An Chunggün, Itō Hirobumi

INTRODUCTION

Typically when we think of sustainability, we think in terms of the relationship between human beings and our natural environment. Therefore, when the wonderful opportunity arose to present at this conference, I was not quite sure what I, a historian of East Asia, particularly Korea, who specializes in religion and violence, should talk about. However, upon reflection, I realized that violent conflict between people can undo the work of many years in an amazingly short amount of time, with a consequent high cost not only in human lives and suffering, but in terms of environmental destruction. It therefore occurred to me that I should address the issue of building a sustainable peace by examining the issue of violent conflict and its resolution.

It is very easy for people outside of a conflict to wonder why those within the conflict itself cannot

simply forgive each other, lay down their arms, and embrace peace. However, for those who choose to continue to fight, there must be something about what they themselves as fighting for, and what they understand themselves to be fighting against, that makes it seem worthwhile to them to risk their own lives and to attempt to kill their enemies. I would argue that, to this end, human beings create narratives, stories that we tell that emphasize our own good intentions and purposes while minimizing or ignoring those possessed by our adversaries. The more we feel that violence is necessary, the more black-and-white these narratives must become and the more evil are enemies must appear to be. These narratives are extremely difficult to penetrate and overturn as we are quite adept at re-channeling any challenge to them into one more reason for accepting them.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Franklin RAUSCH, Lander University, Department of History and Philosophy, Greenwood (South Carolina), United States of America.
E-mail: frausch@lander.edu

I am speaking in a rather abstract fashion and I believe a concrete example is necessary to make my point. I will not provide one from our present age for two reasons. The first is that I am a historian and my expertise lays not in the current day, but in the past. The second reason transforms this weakness into a strength. One technique peacemakers use to attempt to bridge this chasm is to encourage those within a conflict to analyze a conflict far removed from them, in hopes that by understanding why those people entered into and continued an otherwise avoidable fight they might better be able to take a fresh look at their situation and through reflection, see the perspective of their enemy and find a way to compromise and build peace among themselves. I will therefore examine a conflict in my presentation today that is far removed chronologically, and, to a certain extent geographically, from twenty-first-century Thailand—early twentieth-century Korea.

The episode of violence I will examine is the killing of Itō Hirobumi on October 26, 1909, at a railway station in Harbin, China, by a Korean independence activist, An Chunggān. [1] If we wish to understand why Itō was targeted, we need to understand who he was. Itō, a young man during the Meiji Restoration and proponent of Western-style reform, quickly rose through the ranks of the Meiji government, which was dedicated to the modernization of Japan. A close adviser to the Meiji Emperor (and known for his ability to make the emperor laugh), Itō, in addition to being a proponent of modernization, served as the framer of the Japanese constitution and was prime minister when Japan won its decisive victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, leading Japan to be seen as the dominant power of Asia. Moreover, he played an important role in the attempt to avert the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. Itō was therefore viewed by many in the West as a moderate, a peacemaker, a liberal dedicated to constitutional democracy, and a statesman friendly to the West who one could work with.

Many Koreans saw Itō rather differently. Both the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars had been fought over who would be the dominant power on the Korean peninsula. In the aftermath of Japan's victory against Russia, Itō forced Korea to accept a treaty that signed away a good deal of its sovereignty. He was subsequently appointed to be Resident-General of Korea, a position that accorded him the authority and power to intervene in Korea's government, ostensibly to encourage reform, but also to expand Japanese power. When the Korean monarch, King Kojong, attempted to challenge the legality of the treaty at The Hague peace conference in 1907, Itō used his protest as a pretext to force him to abdicate, push through another treaty that destroyed the last vestiges of Korea's sovereignty, and disbanded what little remained of the Korean army.

What did Itō and his Japanese compatriots understand what their government was doing in Japan? At this time, Japan was very concerned about its own security. The state was nationalist, meaning that it saw its own independence as the highest good, and, by and large, most Japanese saw the world as a Social-Darwinist jungle in which the "elite eat and the weak are meat." Because Korea's "weakness" meant that it could fall under the sway of another, more powerful country and thereby threaten Japan, owing to its geographic proximity, most Japanese people saw themselves as perfectly justified expanding into Korea to prevent it from falling under someone else's control. The Japanese government therefore understood its expansion into Korea as an act of self-defense brought on by Korea's weakness. Not only would expanding into Korea help Japan better protect its own borders, but it would give Japan access to Korean markets and resources, enriching its treasury and thereby further strengthening the country. At the same time, many Japanese did not see themselves as simply acting for their own benefit, but, having to a large degree successfully adopted the political, social, and scientific revolutions that had made the Western empires so powerful, they believed that they could spread "advanced civilization" to Korea. This would benefit the Koreans by giving them the advantages brought by modernity, such as more productive methods of farming and medical vaccines, but would also transform Korea into a strong, independent state, friendly to Japan, ending the threat to Japan's security. In the end, the Japanese government would give up on these efforts, annex Korea, and rule the country directly until Japan's defeat in World War Two.

At first glance, this does seem like a good deal—everyone was supposed to win. And yet, many Koreans resisted the Japanese expansion of power. For some, independence was more important than "advanced civilization," but even among those who embraced modernity, and hoped that Japan could serve as a model and ally in their own attempts at reform, many objected to what they saw as Japan's high-handed tactics in its policy towards Korea, such as the assassination of Queen Min in 1896 and the intimidation of her husband King Kojong, and were fearful that Japan's civilizing mission was simply an empty pretext justifying Japanese imperialism. From the Japanese perspective, such tactics were believed to be necessary, as they saw the Koreans as tradition bound, backwards, and hopelessly divided by factions. By blaming Koreans, the proponents of Japanese colonization were able to ignore such complaints and to avoid reflecting on what they were doing in Korea, blinding them to the legitimate concerns of Koreans.

As we shall see, one of the chief reasons why An killed Itō was to air Korean grievances (or as he understood it, to "remonstrate") in such a spectacular

fashion that Japan would change its policy in Korea. However, the Japanese reactions remained constrained by their own narrative. For instance, the *Seoul Press*, an English-language newspaper essentially run by the Japanese government in Korea stated that “[The] greatest of our statesmen and the best friend of Korea and her people died a martyr to the cause of humanity and civilization in a foreign land.” It went on to refer to Itō as the veritable edifice of peace in these parts of the world and his removal at the very time when the situation in the Far East needs so much his great wisdom and ripe experience to maintain peace and order, cannot but shake the very foundations of the world’s peace and disastrously affect the welfare and interest of all nations both politically and economically. [2]

The editorial went on to say that Itō loved Korea “with the love of a father” and had also “befriended the Koreans to such an extent that he was very frequently denounced by his own countrymen as having the welfare of the Koreans more at heart than that of the Japanese.”

By this time, the Korean government was under the complete control of Japan. Thus, the same paper reported that, upon “receipt of the sad news concerning Prince Itō at Harbin H.M. the Korean Emperor burst into tears of deep grief and took but little food on the day the accident took place.” The paper also covered the dispatch of an official Korean delegation to Itō’s funeral in Japan and its holding of services for him in Korea, that schools were closed for three days and no public musical performances were allowed as a sign of respect to Itō, and that the Korean court had given 100,000 yen to Itō’s widow. The Korean Emperor’s rescript praised Itō for the services he had offered to Korea and his work for peace while criticizing the assassin as “mad and misled.” Finally, the newspaper also reported that Koreans were seeking to raise money to set up a bronze statue of Itō. [3]

Japanese officials themselves were not challenged by the assassination to rethink who Itō was and what the Japanese were doing in Korea. Theoretically, Western powers might have reacted differently, by pushing Japan to recognize the real grievances of Koreans, even if only for self-interested reasons of power politics. However, Western newspapers and public officials largely decried the assassination of Itō and in fact praised him for what he had done in Korea. For instance, an editorial in the *New York Times* stated that “the great expansion and progress [of Japan] shown in every line of activity during the last two decades has been accomplished largely through his (Itō’s) efforts.” Similarly, it praised Itō, stating that, “The achievement above all others with which Prince Itō’s name has been associated in the minds of Occidentals was the framing of the imperial constitution by virtue of which Japan took her place for the first time in the rank of modern civilized

states.” [4] American government officials reacted in much the same way. Similarly, the *Toronto Globe*, a Canadian newspaper, discussed Itō’s actions in Korea, stating that “Japan had to bring about a better state of government [in Korea] in the interest of the peace of the world, and that as soon as that was accomplished Japan was ready to withdraw any protectorate or interference with the government of the country.” [5] Itō was praised as moderate as he urged the “utmost clemency being shown to the insurgents, and his policy was that only those caught engaged in actual murder should be punished with the extreme penalty of the law, and that their associates should only be subjected to moderate terms of imprisonment. Many Koreans owe their lives to Itō’s personal intervention.” The editorial also stated that Itō desired most to die “shedding his blood in the cause of peace” and was “always willing to lay down his life for the sake of the progress and prosperity of Koreans,” comparing him favorably to the Koreans, who, by killing him, had killed their “best friend.”

AnChunggūn was arrested immediately after killing Itō and then quickly transferred to Japanese custody. His identity was therefore not immediately known to Western papers, leading to speculation about who he was and why he killed Itō. Thus, the *Globe* reported that “The assassin, while claiming to have been inspired by a patriotic motive and to believe that Japan’s wrongs to Koreans justified his act, admitted, under examination, that he had a personal grudge against the Japanese statesman, who, while Resident-General in Korea, caused the execution of several of the murderer’s friends.” [6] Similarly, the *New York Times* reported that It is well known that Korea, under its former Government, was infested by corruption, favoritism, and oppression of the mass to an extent difficult for Occidental minds to grasp. Much of the opposition to Japan was undoubtedly due to the stern suppression of abuses by which the favored class grew rich and the people were exploited. That the method and the manner of the Japanese were severe and even cruel is generally reported, though not undisputed. It may very well be that the assassin of Prince Itō belonged to the privileged class. [7]

An was thus depicted as killing Itō for entirely selfish reasons, rather than as someone reacting to real injustices. It is no surprise that the Western empires should lionize Itō, who was praised the most for being like them, while criticizing An, since they themselves possessed empires and sought to delegitimize any violence that threatened them and of course. Moreover, Canada maintained ties to the British Empire, which had been in an alliance with Japan since 1902, and the United States had made an agreement to recognize Japan’s interests in Korea in exchange for Japanese recognition of the American position in the Philippines. Therefore, rather than encouraging Japan to reflect on why An might have

utilized violence, Western newspapers provided speculations that (in addition to being false, as we shall see) justified Japanese imperialism in Korea by presenting An as representative of the Korean governing class, one that was barbaric, against reform, and willing to use violence against those good individuals who sought to help Korea. Thus, Westerners would not successfully challenge, or even attempt to challenge, Japan's colonial project in Korea.

Koreans living in Hawaii, then a territory of the United States, did try and present their own perspective. However, they were very limited in what they could do. An English letter written by representatives of one Korean association criticized Japan's actions in Korea, but stated that "the better class of the Koreans in this community, while they can not [*sic*] mourn over the death of Itō, do not believe in acts of individual violence...[Such violence would not] alleviate their burdens..." The letter went on to say that while the authors were willing to "sacrifice our lives...for the independence of the country....[We do not]...advocate assassination." [8] A Korean version of this same letter printed in a Korean newspaper, however, justified the assassination in no uncertain terms. [9] The reason for this variation is quite simple: foreigners who publicly justified acts of violence against a government were liable to deportation. Koreans were therefore coerced by American law into publicly accepting the basic de-legitimization of An's use of violence, meaning that they would not be able to effectively challenge the legitimacy of Western or Japanese empire or to penetrate the Japanese narrative justifying its expansion into Korea.

An's identity would not remain secret forever, as it would come out at his trial. His killing of Itō was an international incident that could harm the Japanese colonial project in Korea if it led world opinion to question its legitimacy. Moreover, in the realm of politics, Itō had stopped in Harbin in part to meet with a high Russian official. This caused concern, particularly in the United States, that Japan would go back on its promises made at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War to maintain an "Open Door" on trade in that part of Manchuria it controlled. Moreover, if Japan failed to give An at least an apparently fair trial, then it might be criticized as an "uncivilized" country, harming Japan's public image and making it more difficult to justify Japan's expansion into Korea as part of a civilizing mission. At the same time, if An was given full freedom to express his views, that would also hurt Japan's image and might call into question its civilizing mission in Korea. However, at the same time, if Japan was able to provide a trial that world opinion accepted as fair, then its image as a civilized country would be that much stronger, as would its claim to be civilizing to Korea. In particular, if the trial went well, Japan would be one step closer to convincing Western

countries to give up their extraterritoriality to Japanese-reformed courts in Korea, as they had so recently done in Japan itself.

Therefore, the Japanese government sought to give an apparently fair trial while making sure that An was not allowed to speak freely and thereby challenge the legitimacy of Japan's colonial project in Korea. Thus, while forbidding British and Russian lawyers to represent An (an act in accordance with Japanese law) who might have given An the sort of defense he wanted, the court assigned An two Japanese defense lawyers, who, while giving a reasonably able defense, made sure not to say anything that would threaten Japan's colonial project in Korea. Similarly, An was only provided with limited interpretation during the trial, which was held in Japanese. Even when An was directly involved in the trial, any time he attempted to explain why he killed Itō, he was pressured to hurry (the judge's urgings do not appear in the official transcripts, but do appear in the shorthand notes taken by a Japanese journalist who viewed the trial). The trial therefore lasted only a few days, taking even less time in part because the verdict had already been decided before it had even begun. While most western coverage of the newspaper only mentioned the trial's verdict, at least one British journal, and multiple English-language newspapers based in Asia, praised the trial as being completely fair and the verdict as just. The Japanese gambit was therefore a success, though at the price of silencing a voice that might have led Japanese people to reflect on the colonial project in Korea and prevent the terrible ramifications that project would lead to.

After the trial, the *Seoul Press* continued to portray Japan as a civilized and civilizing country with its coverage on An's accomplices, who were described as "rather joyously, if it ever could be so, serving their sentences." [10] Two of them were "sewing European clothes" and another was "making paper cigarette cases" and they were described as "fairly industrious and are reported to have declared that on their return to the world they will strive to make a livelihood of the occupations they have adopted in prison." One stated that "I mean to work hard...[and] behave myself like a good boy, just to please the Warden. He is so good to me that I have come to look up to him as a great friend of mine." All three of them expressed an interest in learning conversational Japanese, and they were promised textbooks to help them in their goal.

An, however, was more difficult to deal with. He had consistently shown himself to be unrepentant, and it would therefore be difficult to present him as having reformed. However, an opportunity to present An as having rejected his own use of violence, thereby justifying the colonial project, would arise. An Chunggūn was a Catholic, and he therefore wanted to partake in the sacrament of confession, in which he would confess his sins to a priest and

receive forgiveness, and take Holy Communion, before he died. The priest who had baptized him, Father Joseph Wilhelm, went to visit An in prison to do just that. According to the *Seoul Press*, the priest said to An that

The assassination of Prince Itō was a most dastardly crime committed without the slightest provocation or justification. The Japanese Government which you have thereby deprived of its greatest and best servant has given you every chance for a fair trial, has treated you with exceptional consideration and has now permitted you to take the Lord's Supper at my hand. I believe that the Japanese Government has done by you more generously than you really deserve. Now, I charge you in the name of the On High to tell me how you take it yourself.[11]

According to that same *Seoul Press* article, An then responded:

I have now brought myself to agree with you in your condemnation of me and also in the appreciation for the special favours done me by the Japanese Government which I have wronged so irrecoverably. What I have done I repent thereof but [the killing] is beyond recall. The only thing left for me to do is to pay with my own life the wages of my crime. The Lord will hearken to my humble prayer to forgive and save my soul. This is my faith, and to this faith I will hold on as the last and only hope for my salvation.

By presenting An as repenting of his killing of Itō, declaring it a "crime," the *Seoul Press* was able to portray An as de-legitimizing resistance against the Japanese colonial state, which he now accepted as working for the good of Korea. In fact, this newspaper article is a complete fabrication. A reading of the official Japanese report on An's meetings with Father Wilhelm reveals that An never said what the *Seoul Press* claimed he did. In fact, Father Wilhelm attempted, but failed to convince An to repudiate his killing of Itō. Moreover, a reading of An's prison writings shows that he maintained a belief that his killing of Itō was justified. In other words, An did not repent of this killing, but instead thought it was completely justified. Falsehood was thus used in order to defend the narrative that justified the colonization of Korea, meaning that the proponents of the Japanese colonial project in Korea were willing to ignore reality, or perhaps it would be better said to seek to create their own reality, rather than to reflect and see where things had gone wrong in Korea and acknowledge An's grievances.

We have seen thus far how the proponents of the Japanese colonial project created a narrative justifying expansion into Korea by appealing to concepts of nationalism, social-Darwinism, and civilization, and that when An tried to challenge this narrative through the killing of Itō, that same narrative was deployed to deflect his challenge, preventing An from convincing the Japanese

government to reflect on its actions in Korea and take seriously Korean grievances. It is now time to turn to An, and look at the narrative he constructed to justify violence. To do that, we need to first consider who he was. An was not, as some Western newspapers thought, someone who was acting selfishly. He was in fact a member of the country gentry in Korea, and while from a family that was relatively wealthy on the local level, was not part of the "privileged class" that actually governed Korea. Rather, as a family consisting of marginal scholars and intellectuals, An, and his father, supported Western-style reform, and were in fact so friendly to the West that they were willing to convert to Catholicism. An had even hoped that the Catholic Church could establish a university in Korea, for the good of the church and the country, though in the end his plans did not come to fruition. While nationalist, An's thought was deeply colored by pan-Asianism, meaning that he was not anti-Japanese. Instead, An hoped that Japan would work with Korea and China so that together they could stand up to Western imperialism. An hoped that by killing Itō, he could show that he had lied when he claimed that the Koreans supported the protectorate. Knowing that he had been misled, the Japanese emperor would then change his country's policy towards Korea, respecting its independence and acting to establish peace in the East. To this end, after killing Itō, at the behest of the Japanese prosecutor who was interrogating him, An prepared a list of fifteen reasons for why he had killed the former resident-general:

- 1) The crime of killing Empress Min
- 2) The crime of forcing the Emperor of Korea to abdicate
- 3) The crime of forcing the conclusion of the five- and seven-article treaties
- 4) The crime of slaughtering innocent Koreans
- 5) The crime of forcibly seizing political power
- 6) The crime of seizing railroads, mines, and land
- 7) The crime of forcing the use of the paper money issued by the First Bank
- 8) The crime of disbanding the Korean army
- 9) The crime of obstructing education
- 10) The crime of preventing Koreans from being educated overseas
- 11) The crime of confiscating and burning textbooks
- 12) The crime of deceiving the world by saying that Korea wanted to be protected by Japan
- 13) The crime of tricking the emperor [of Japan] into thinking that things in Korea are peaceful and without incident when in fact between Korea and Japan there is no end of war and slaughter
- 14) The crime of destroying peace in the East
- 15) The crime of killing His Highness the Japanese Emperor's father, the former emperor [12]

While some of these accusations, such as the charge that Itō was behind the assassination of Queen Min and the death of the Japanese emperor's father, were inaccurate, the remainder did present an essentially correct description of what happened in Korea. An thus attempted, through killing Itō, to bring Korean grievances to the Japanese emperor's attention so that the policy towards Korea could be reformed. An saw his act as an unselfish attempt to right tremendous wrongs and restore peace, writing in his autobiography that, "From ancient times, there have been many loyal and righteous patriots who sacrificed themselves in order to remonstrate and the future has always proved them right. [13].

In hindsight, we know that An's plan was doomed to failure. An, however, did not know any Western languages or Japanese. He did not know of the close relationship between the Japanese emperor and Itō or that imperialism in Japan had immense popular support. Thus, while he did recognize the serious difficulties Japan faced, particularly in terms of its security and economy, and turned to pan-Asianism in an attempt to resolve them, his misunderstanding of the world situation made violence appear more effective than it really was. In addition, his negative portrayal of Itō was so distant from the image of him held by those people he was trying to convince that it had little chance of being accepted, especially since his means of attracting attention involved killing Itō. People were able to dismiss An and his message because of his use of violence. Thus, even if An had been able to communicate effectively at his trial, and even if his prison writings had been made available for public consumption, many still would have refused to listen to what he had to say.

It is important to stress that, as he made known during his interrogation, An's use of violence was a reaction to the feeling that he was silenced. Since all avenues of public dissent to the Japanese colonial project had effectively been crushed, An felt he had to turn to violence to bring attention to Korea's situation. However, this attempt to challenge Japan's narrative justifying the colonization of Korea was deflected. In fact, the narrative itself transformed An's challenge into one more reason to colonize Korea by presenting Itō as an innocent victim killed by a violent barbarian, allowing the Japanese government to argue that Koreans needed to be civilized by the Japanese. In the end, Japan would not listen to An's challenge and would go on to annex Korea in 1910, months after An was executed. Fighting between Korean guerillas and Japanese soldiers would kill 14,000 Korean combatants, and numerous Japanese and Korean civilians, as well as Japanese soldiers.

This narrative of nationalism, social-Darwinism, and civilization would prevent Japan from taking the concerns of other Asians seriously as it established its empire in Korea and expanded it into China.

Insulated from criticism that could challenge this narrative, empire seemed an effective way for Japan to obtain its goals of national security, leading it first to take Korea, then Manchuria, and finally to invade China. The empire floundered in China, leading Japan to attack Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States. Unable to withstand the combined might of these countries, Japan suffered aerial bombardment, in the form of conventional bombs, fire bombs, and atomic bombs, until it at last surrendered and endured occupation by American forces. In other words, the empire, meant to preserve the security of Japan had not only failed, it played an important part in bringing about the occupation of Japan by a foreign power. And the narrative that justified that empire had prevented Japan from listening to An, and others like him, and taking into account their interests and grievances. Had Japan listened, much human suffering could have been avoided.

It must be stressed that the purpose of this paper is not to attack Japan or to lay all blame for the Pacific War on its shoulders alone. In many ways, Japan was only acting as other empires were acting, and if the great imperial powers of the day, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States, had acted differently, had not helped create a Social-Darwinist world, then Japan would have acted differently as well. Rather, the purpose of my talk was to show in a time and place far distant from us how we human beings develop narratives to justify our own actions and that these narratives make it difficult to listen to those who disagree with us. Violence in opposition to these narratives, designed to challenge them, can, in the end make it even more difficult to penetrate them, for the means can poison the message. At the same time, these narratives can easily make violence appear to be a more effective means than it really is, for in neither of the cases we examined did violence do what it was hoped it would. Instead, violence actually seems to have harmed the causes of both of the parties we have discussed today. Thus, in order to overcome conflict and establish a sustainable peace, it is necessary to engage in true dialogue and to listen to our adversaries. To do so, however, is costly and painful, for it means reflecting on ourselves and asking, and answering tough questions. The question I would then end my paper with is, are we willing to pay this cost?

References

1. I explore themes examined in this paper in the following works: "Conversion and Moral Ambiguity: An Chunggŏn, Nationalism, and the Catholic Church in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Korea," in *Asia in the Making of Christianity*, ed. Richard Fox Young (Leiden: Brill, 2013); "Visions of Violence, Dreams of Peace: Religion, Race, and Nation in

- An Chunggŭn's *A Treatise on Peace in the East*," *Acta Koreana* 15, no. 2 (December 2012): 263-91; "Saving Knowledge: Catholic Educational Policy in the late Chŏn Dynasty," *Acta Koreana* 11, no. 3 (December 2008): 47-85.
2. The assassination of Prince Ito," *Seoul Press*, October 28, 1909.
 3. The Korean Imperial Court in grief," *Seoul Press*, October 29, 1909; "The memorial service by Koreans," *Seoul Press*, November 6, 1909; "Funeral of the late Prince Ito," *Seoul Press*; November 11, 1909. "Korean government's expression of regret," *Seoul Press*, October 29, 1909; "The late Prince Ito," *Seoul Press*, November 11, 1909.
 4. Prince Ito assassinated," *New York Times*, October 26, 1909.
 5. Emperor forbids change," *Globe* (Toronto), October 28, 1909.
 6. Korean assassin shot Prince Ito," *Globe* (Toronto), October 27, 1909. I could find no reference in any of An's own writings or his interrogation reports that An was motivated to kill Itō out of a desire to avenge friends executed by him.
 7. The murder of Prince Ito," *New York Times*, October 27, 1909.
 8. Where local Koreans stand," *Honolulu Hawaiian Gazette*, November 2, 1909.
 9. T'oil noso [Words conquering Japan]," *Sinhan kukbo* (Honolulu), November 9, 1909.
 10. An Chungkeun in prison," *Seoul Press*, March 4, 1910.
 11. The repentance of the assassin," *Seoul Press*, March 18, 1910.
 12. See Yun Pŏngsŏk, ed., *An Chunggŭn chŏn'gi chŏnjip* [The collected biographies of An Chunggŭn] (Seoul: Kukka Pohunchŏ, 1999), 174-175.
 13. Yun Pŏngsŏk, ed., *An Chunggŭn chŏn'gi chŏnjip*, 180.