

Status and Characteristics of the Korean March- First Independence Activists Imprisoned at Seodaemun Prison*

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I. Introduction

The prison service cards (hereafter, the PS cards) analyzed in this paper are records of individual prisoners who were classified as “thought criminals” during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). This collection of PS cards also included cards for those prisoners who were wanted and needed to be carefully watched. A piece of paper 15 centimeters wide and 10 centimeters long, the PS card carries photographs, personal information, and sentences on the front and back sides.

In the late 1980s, the Compilation Committee for National History took over the collection of the original PS cards stored in the Public Security Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. From 1991 to 1993, the collection was photocopied and published in the *Addendum to Historical Materials of Korean Independence Movement* (nine volumes) for research purposes and public perusal. The preface mentions a total of 6,264 card pieces that had been handed over from the Security Department; however, upon reexamination of the image files of the original PS cards, the total of correct cards are 6,259 pieces. The number of prisoners recorded on the PS cards totals 4,837 persons, including 180 women, after removing the additional cards for overlapped offenders. A majority of the cards belong to

people imprisoned in Seodaemun Prison.¹

Each PS card was serialized based on the number attached to the original photo of each prisoner. There were two kinds of original photo film—small size and medium size—yet the serial number of the PS card did not duplicate itself. It is estimated that an original total of 65,193 PS cards were made, starting from serial number 1 (of Park Jang-nok) and going to serial number 65,193 (of Han Geum-dol). The existing 6,259 PS cards remain part of this mother collection. There is no way to tell, for now, whether parts of entire collection of PS cards were missing in the course of archiving or whether only some parts of the whole collection were extracted and preserved.

The information recorded on these PS cards serves as a useful reference for understanding the characteristics of Korean independence activists who were imprisoned for their deed during the Japanese colonial period. There is no doubt that the collection remains an invaluable source for the study of Korean independence movement history. As a matter of fact, a few recent studies based on the whole or partial collection of 6,259 cards have been attempted to show the historical value of the collection as well as the overall status and characteristics of the prisoners involved in it.² However, detailed study of the independence activities by individual prisoners still awaits further research.

By using part of the collection, this paper will analyze the data and

^{*} This paper is a shortened revision of Park Gyeong-mok's "Status and characteristics of the prisoners of the March First Movement imprisoned at the Seodaemun Prison," *Inmungwahak Yeongu* 26 (2018).

¹ The name of Seodaemun hyeongmuso (Seodaemun Prison) has been changed over time; Gyeongseong gamok (1908), Seodaemun gamok (1912), Seodaemun hyeongmuso (1923), Seoul hyeongmuso (1945), and Seoul gyodoso (1948). This paper uses its most common name, Seodaemun hyeongmuso (Seodaemun Prison).

² Park Gyeong-mok, "Ilje gangjeomgi Seodaemun hyeongmuso yeosugamja hyeonghwang gwa teukjing," [Status and characteristics of the female prisoners at the Seodaemun Prison during the forced Japanese occupation period] *Hanguk geunhyeondaesa yeongu* 68 (2014); Park Gyeong-mok, "Ilje gangjeomgi Seodaemun hyeongmuso sugamja hyeonghwang gwa teukjing," [Status and characteristics of the prisoners at the Seodaemun Prison during the forced Japanese occupation period] *Hanguk geunhyeondaesa yeongu* 78 (Hankuk geunhyeondaesa hakhoe, 2016).

information provided by the PS cards of those who were imprisoned in Seodaemun Prison for their participation in the March First Movement (hereafter, the MFM). First, the time at which the card was recorded and the card's format will be examined. Then, the prisoner's number, age, social status, and occupation will be examined to understand the person's social status as a whole. Last, the prisoner's crime, prison sentence, and connection with other prisoners will be examined to illustrate his/her characteristics as an MFM independence activist.

The PS card database for this study was constructed using the following methods: Out of the entire collection of 6,259 PS cards, the 1,013 PS cards of the MFM participants were selected.³ The information extracted from these selected PS cards was sorted out and integrated into a large database for analysis. The time period of the selected PS cards spans from the outbreak of the MFM in 1919 to the time of the subsequent court verdict in 1920.

II. Prison Service Card

1. Card Creation Date and Entries

The time at which a PS card was created can be estimated on the basis of such details as the date of the photo, the date of the court verdict, and the date of imprisonment. The date of the photo means the date when the photo of the individual prisoner was taken to be attached to his/her PS card, the date of the court verdict means the date when the individual prisoner received his/her prison sentence, and the date of imprisonment means the date when the individual prisoner was put into his/her prison cell.

Based on the date of the photo, the earliest PS cards were those of Lee Jeong-no and Lee Il-yeong, on which were written “[photo] taken June in the second year of Taishō era (i.e., 1913).” Both were arrested while acting as members of the Independence Righteous Army, organized in 1912 as

³ The full list of 1,013 prisoners can be found in the author's article above, “3.1 undong gwallyeon Seodaemun hyeongmuso sugamja hyeonhwang gwa teukjing.” [Status and characteristics of the prisoners of the March First Movement imprisoned at the Seodaemun Prison].

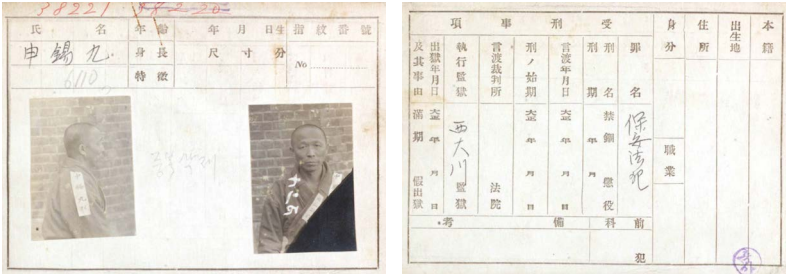
a Korean independence activist group. Lee Jeong-no was sentenced to six months in prison by the Gyeongseong District Court. Lee Il-yeong's verdict is unknown, but he later joined the MFM in 1919 and received a sentence of one year with a suspension of five years. The next PS card was that of Kim Wuk-je, photographed on May 18, 1918. He was arrested while acting as the member of the Cheongnim Religion, organized as a religious group of Korean independence activists, and he was sentenced to ninety strokes by the Gyeongseong Appellate Court on June 26, 1918.

Apart from the above three cards, however, all the rest of the PS cards in this study were compiled after the outbreak of the MFM in 1919. Using the date of the court verdict and the date of imprisonment, the cards compiled in 1919 total 625, while the cards compiled in 1920 total 146. The remaining 239 cards carry only the photo and entries on name, crime, and assigned prison. Nevertheless, the identical card format used for the prisoner and the identical crime of "violating against the security preservation law" that was applied to these prisoners indicate that they belonged to the same group of MFM participants.

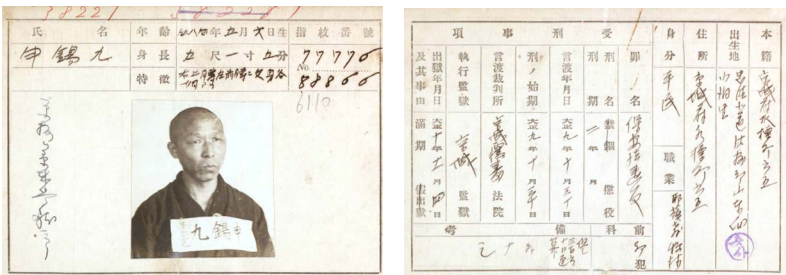
Included among these cards are those for some of the thirty-three national representatives who signed the Declaration of Independence announced on March 1, 1919: Kweon Dong-jin, Kweon Byeong-deok, Kim Wan-gyu, Kim Chang-jun, Na Yong-hwan, Park Dong-wan, Shin Seok-gu, Lee Pil-ju, Yang Jeon-baek, Yu Yeo-dae, Lee Gap-seong, Lee Myeong-yong, Lee Seung-hun, Lee Jong-il, Im Ye-hwan, Oh Se-chang, Oh Hwa-yeong, Jeong Chun-su, Choi Rin, Han Yong-un, Hong Byeong-gi, and Hong Gi-jo.

The above facts indicate that the PS cards were compiled primarily starting from the onset of the MFM in 1919 for the purpose of keeping records on and maintaining surveillance of Korean independence activists.

The entries on front side include basic personal identification data of each prisoner, such as photo, name, age, and finger print record number. The entries on back side include prison service records, such as crime, prison sentence, ruling court, date of prison entrance, date of release, and as



Only the prisoner's name, crime, and assigned prison are completed.



All entries are fully completed.

(Kept at the National History Compilation Committee)

Figure 1. Card of Sin Seok-gu⁴

signed prison. The PS card entries vary slightly from one form to another, yet those used at the time of the MFM are as follows. The front side has five entries for the identification of each prisoner:

- ① Family name and given name: Real name and alias, if any
- ② Age: Date of birth in the format year, month, and day (The birth year is written with the era name, such as “Gwangmu,” “Gaeguk,” or “Meiji”)
- ③ Height: Measured in East Asian length units, such as “*cheok*

⁴ The PS cards can be accessed online at the homepage of the Compilation Committee for National History (<http://db.history.go.kr/item/level.do?itemId=ia>).

(foot),” “*chon* (inch),” and “*bun*” (one-tenth inch)”

- ④ Special physical features: Personal features, such as facial features and scars
- ⑤ Fingerprint number: Five fingerprints each of left hand and right hand

The back side has fourteen entries for the prisoner’s location, occupation, and prison service records:

- ① Permanent address
- ② Place of birth
- ③ Current address
- ④ Social status as *yangban* (nobility) or commoner
- ⑤ Occupation just before the imprisonment

Prison service records are as follows:

- ⑥ Name of crime either convicted of or indicted for
- ⑦ Type of penalty, either custody or imprisonment, and duration of penalty, in the form of year and month
- ⑧ Date of court verdict, in the form of Taishō year, month, and day
- ⑨ Beginning date of penalty period, in the form of Taishō year, month, and day
- ⑩ Name of the ruling court
- ⑪ Prison assigned
- ⑫ Date of release, in the form of Taishō year, month, and day, and reason for release
- ⑬ Previous records of crime, in the form of type and number of offenses
- ⑭ Remarks, such as place for return after serving prison term

Among the above entries, the following six entries were reserved only for the convicts whose crime had been already determined by court decision: ⑦ type of penalty, ⑧ date of court verdict, ⑨ beginning date of penalty period, ⑩ name of ruling court, ⑫ date of release, and ⑬ previous record of crime.

Since the work of compiling a PS card was a clerical duty based on recording hard facts, there is basically no need to question the accuracy of their data and information. One caveat is the need to check for clerical errors. The entry of the date of release is the case in question because the release date could be calculated from the time of the court decision and was thusly recorded on the PS card. However, there was a possibility of the prison term being altered or even the prisoner dying in the course of his/her prison service, leaving the entry date unmatched to the actual date of release. Thus, it is possible that the prisoner might well have been released earlier or even met death prior to the recorded date of release on the PS card.

The case of Yu Gwan-sun is a telling example. On her card, the date of release was written as January 2, 1921. However, she had already died at the prison on September 28, 1920 from injuries sustained under torture. Her official record is misleading. If one depends only on that record, one would be misinformed that Yu Gwan-sun was released on January 2, 1921.



The release date was wrongly written as January 2, 1921.

Figure 2. Card of Yu Gwan-sun

2. Change of Format

The PS card format can be divided into four categories according to the change of entries over time. For the sake of convenience, this paper distinguishes them as types A, B, C, and D. The Type A card, carrying a total of nineteen entries was widely used in 1919 and 1920. The front-side entries include the prisoner's photo, name, age, height, physical features, and fin-

gerprint number. The back-side entries include the prisoner's personal information, such as permanent address, date of birth, place of residence, social status, and occupation, as well as the prisoner's service records, such as name of crime, type of penalty and penalty duration, date of court verdict, beginning of penalty, ruling court, assigned prison, date of release, reason for release, previous crime record, and remarks. There are a total of 1,061 Type A cards, only two of which were used in 1921 and the last of which was used in 1923. Therefore, the Type A card was almost exclusively used for keeping the records of MFM participants.

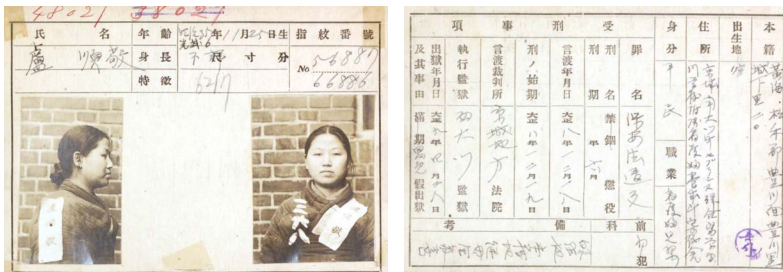
To the Type B card were added ten more entries, such as alias, relation to household head, name of household head, names of parents, types and number of previous crimes, means of crime, name of accomplice, address of residence to return to, and number of original photocopy. Thus, the Type B card represents the effort of the colonial authorities to extend control over the prisoners even after their release by recording their family relations, accomplices, and post-release residence. There are a total of 388 Type B cards, beginning with six from 1923 and continuing until the last use in 1931. Since the Type B card first appeared in 1923 and was used until 1931, there are two era names (Taishō and Shōwa) printed to indicate the year in the entries for date of photo, date of entrance, and date of release.

The Type C card appeared in 1928. There are a total of 673 Type C cards, including 1 in 1928, 62 in 1929, 512 in 1930, 54 in 1931, and 44 in unknown year. In practice, some entries turned out to be difficult to fill in, so the number of entries was reduced from 29 to 22, and new entries, such as categorized number of crime methods, methods of crime, frequent location, and notable characteristic, were added to give more emphasis to the post-imprisonment surveillance of the prisoners.

The Type D card changed its writing style from vertical writing to horizontal writing. It was used from approximately 1930 to the liberation in 1945. For a total of 25 cards, the new category of usual methods of crime was added, in which the prisoner's main activities, ideological characteristics and related persons were recorded. There are a total of 4,137 Type D cards. Notably, some of the prisoners with Type D cards were pho-

tographed in 1919 (25 persons), 1920 (19 persons), 1923 (2 persons), and 1925 (1 person). Those prisoners were photographed when the Type D card was not in use. This means that the Type D card was used to rerecord information on former prisoners.

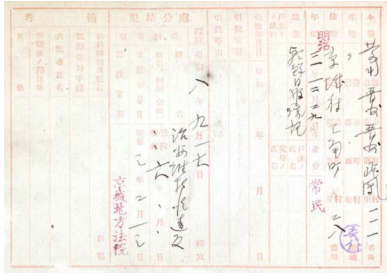
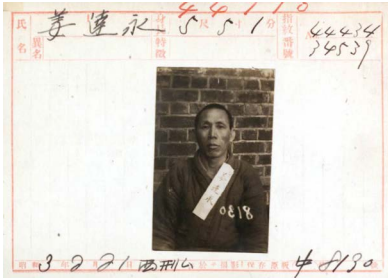
In this regard, it is worth noting that the security preservation law, which had come into effect on April 22, 1925 in Japan, was applied to Korea starting on May 12, 1925. The law signaled more severe punishment for thought criminals. As part of the enforcement of the security law, departments that specialized in thought control were installed in the Japanese police and judicial system from 1928 onwards. With the onset of full-scale thought control from 1928 on, it can be surmised that a review of some former prisoners was conducted and a retrospective compilation of their PS cards was done in support of the tightened control over thought under the colonial authorities.



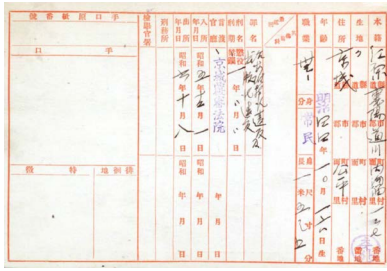
Type A: No Sun-gyeong



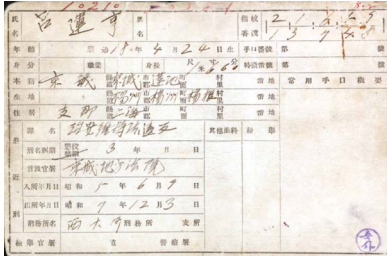
Type B with the era name of Taishō printed: Kim Yeong-heui



Type B with the era name of Shōwa printed: Gang Dal-yeong



Type C: Park Seong-yeo



Type D: Yeo Yun-hyeong

Figure 3. Card Form

It can be assumed that the change of the card format was due to the response of the Korean independence activists to the change in Japanese colonial policy and the increase in the number of prisoners. The change from Type A to Type B was related to the enactment and enforcement of the security preservation law in 1925. In line with this heightened security

concern, the colonial police officers tried to secure more detailed personal information about the prisoners, needed to strengthen the surveillance and control over thought criminals. The change from Type B to Type C was related to the heightened thought control that began in 1928. With the surge in prisoner population and the increase of protesters among the general public, the colonial authorities eliminated some of superfluous entries not necessarily related to security concerns. The change from Type C to Type D reflected the desire of the colonial authorities to conduct more focused and sustained control and surveillance of major prisoners by securing information about their personal relations and their connections with anti-Japanese organizations.

III. Status of the MFM Prisoners

1. Age

This study analyzes the PS cards of 1,013 prisoners selected from the 6,259 PS cards. The selection criteria are 1) name of crime—violation against the security preservation law, disturbance, and violation against the publication law—and 2) date of verdict ranging from 1919 to 1920. The PS card was initially made out right after detainment in the prison. Seodaemun Prison also had the role of keeping in custody those who had yet to be convicted, so it became very crowded from those indicted coming from Seoul and its neighboring Gyeonggi area, as well as those waiting for a second trial at the Gyeongseong (i.e., Seoul) Appellate Court. At the time of the initial recording, only the prisoner's name, crime, and assigned prison were written on his/her PS card, as shown in Figure 4. On one hand, prior to the court verdict, there was no way to write down penalty details. On the other hand, because of the sudden surge in prisoner population in the aftermath of the MFM, the limited prison management personnel could not afford to record all the personal and criminal details of every prisoner.⁵

⁵ Right after the MFM, Seodaemun Prison housed a total of 3,075 prisoners—six times as many as its full capacity of 500 prisoners upon its opening in 1908.



Only the prisoner’s name, crime, and assigned prison were written on some cards.

Figure 4. Card of Han Yong-un

When the crime was confirmed, the PS card was updated in the second round of recording. All 14 entries on the back were filled in. At that time, some prisoners were transferred from Seodaemun Prison to other prisons. They were, by and large, transferred to Gyeongseong Prison. Thus, if “Gyeongseong Prison” was written on the entry of assigned prison, it can be understood that the prisoner had already been detained in Seodaemun Prison. As shown in Table 1, an overwhelming majority of prisoners in this study, 951 out of 1,013 (98.25%), were either assigned to Seodaemun Prison or to Gyeongseong Prison; they were all sent to Seodaemun Prison first after the MFM. The rest were listed as Daegu Prison (14 persons), Pyeongyang Prison (2 persons), and Haeju Prison (1 person). They were transferred, together with their PS cards, from those prisons to Seodaemun Prison while waiting for appeal trials.

Table 1. Assigned Prison⁶

Prison Name	Seodaemun	Gyeong-seong	Daegu	Pyeong-yang	Haeju	Total
Number of Prisoners	680	271	14	2	1	968
Percent	70.25	28.0	1.45	0.21	0.10	100

⁶ Some entries on the 1,013 PS cards are omitted or illegible, causing varying numbers of prisoners for each category.

The ages of the MFM prisoners ranged widely from the teens to the sixties. Out of the 756 PS for which age can be confirmed, the youngest at the time of imprisonment were fifteen years old. There were six of them: Im Gap-deuk (courier), Kim Dong-seok (student), and Son Heung-bok (student) were born in 1904 and imprisoned in 1919; Wang Jong-sun (student), Kim Seong-jae (student), and So Eun-myeong (student) were born in 1905 and imprisoned in 1920. The oldest was Kim Seong-seo (born in 1852), who was sixty-seven years old when he was imprisoned in 1919. Kim was arrested when he joined a demonstration march for Korean independence at Hoengseong-eup, Gwangweon Province. He was sentenced to one year and six months and served until June 17, 1920. The breakdowns of each prisoner's age at the time of imprisonment and his/her birth year are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2. Age Distribution at the Time of Imprisonment

Age Group	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	Total
Number of Prisoners	112	320	166	93	49	16	756
Percent	14.81	42.33	21.96	12.3	6.48	2.12	100

Table 3. Birth Year Distribution

Birth Year	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	Total
Number of Prisoners	16	43	90	172	322	122	765
Percent	2.09	5.62	11.77	22.48	42.09	15.95	100

The prisoners in their twenties were the largest group of participants in the MFM. Those in their thirties, teens, and forties came next, in that order. It can be ascertained that Koreans of all ages joined the MFM. The participation of all age groups can be shown more clearly by comparing the participants' ages with the ages of 4,377 other prisoners, whose ages can be identified on their PS cards, as shown in Table 4.⁷

⁷ Park Gyeong-mok, "Ilje gangjeomgi Seodaemun hyeongmuso yeongu," [Study on the

Table 4. Comparison of Age Groups between the MFM Activists and All Independence Activists

Age Group	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s	Total
MFM Activists (756 persons)	14.81%	42.33%	21.96%	12.3%	6.48%	2.12%	0.00%	100%
All Activists (4,377 persons)	10.56%	57.50%	19.87%	7.59%	3.47%	0.96%	0.05%	100%
Increase & Decrease	+4.25%	-15.17%	+2.09%	+4.71%	+ 3.01%	+1.16%	-0.05%	

According to Table 4, while more than half (57.50 percent) of the independence activists imprisoned in Seodaemun Prison during Japanese colonial rule were in their twenties, less than half (42.33 percent) of the MFM activists were in their twenties. The percentage of MFM participants who were in their twenties was 15.17 percent less than the percentage of all independence activists who were in their twenties, at least among those whose age can be identified by their PS cards. These statistics mean that there was relatively less concentration of participants in their twenties in the MFM, and the ages of MFM participants were spread more widely across other age groups, such as the teens, thirties, forties, and sixties. In other words, the MFM was joined by a relatively broader range of age groups than the Korean independence movement as a whole.

2. Social Status and Occupation

The Japanese colonial authorities initially took interest in identifying the MFM participants' social status. Until around 1919, their social status had been clearly identified on the PS card. In the field titled "social status" on the Type A card, either *yangban* (noble) or commoner status was written. There are 753 persons whose status identity was recorded. The distribution of social status among MFM prisoners recognized by the colonial authori-

 Seodaemun Prison during the forced Japanese occupation period] (Ph. D. diss., Chungnam University, 2015), 100.

ties is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Social Status of the Prisoners

Commoner	<i>Yangban</i>	Total
641 persons	112 persons	753 persons
85.13%	14.87%	100%

By 1919, however, the prisoner's social status had become irrelevant to his/her everyday life and occupation. There were teachers and students among those identified as *yangban*, and many farmers as well. Moreover, some of the *yangban* men had jobs that were hardly congruous to their *yangban* status, such as auxiliary policeman, Buddhist monk, print shop worker, sundry goods seller, or sales clerk. It is known that the breakdown of rigid social status systems that began in late Joseon Korea accelerated with the onset of Japanese colonial rule.

Meanwhile, the occupations of the MFM prisoners show a great variety. A total of seventy occupations were identified. Each occupation was recorded specifically, such as nurse, print shop employee, hired hand, second-hand materials trader, office clerk, sundry goods seller, Presbyterian missionary, Cheondogyo master, and Imje Sect Buddhist monk. The occupational diversity of the MFM participants is shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Occupations of the Prisoners

Category	Number of Prisoners	Percent	Occupations
Agriculture	391	52.98	
Student	104	14.09	
Religious practitioner	46	6.23	Christian (31), Buddhists (2), Cheondogyo (12), Confucian (1)
Merchant	40	5.42	grain dealers (2), confectioners (2), medicine sellers (2), medicine traders (4), fish merchants (2), sundry goods sellers (17), lumber dealer (1), Chinese merchant (1), gold product merchants (3), merchants (3), garment maker (1), tanner (1), pesticide dealer (1)

Teacher	40	5.42	
Unemployed	28	3.80	
Employee	21	2.85	employees (20), shop clerk (1)
Official	15	2.03	subcounty office servant (1), subcounty clerks (6), subcounty chiefs (2), district chiefs (3), auxiliary policeman (1), postman (1), land investigator (1)
Artisan	15	2.03	artisan (1), print shop workers (2), automobile mechanic (1), tobacco makers (2), dressmaker (1), paper artisan (1), tanners (4), washer maker (1), tailors (2)
Self-employed	11	1.49	restaurant (4), sewing (3), textile (1), inn (3)
Manufacturer	7	0.95	porcelain (1), gold and silversmith (1), cotton product (1), painter (1), paper (1), oiled paper (2)
Medical professional	5	0.68	nurses (3), doctor (1), pharmacist (1)
Organization	4	0.54	school clerk (1), office clerk (1), officer of Christian youth association (1), American staff (1)
Other	11	1.49	photographer (1), secondhand goods dealers (4), money lender (1), legal clerk (1), horse-drawn carriage drivers (2), driver (1), daily laborer (1)
Total	738	100	

People from a wide range of specific occupations participated in the MFM, even though overall occupational categories were rather limited at the time. More than half of the participants worked in agriculture (52.98%), followed by students (14.09%), religious practitioners (6.23%), teachers (5.42%) and merchants (5.42%).

Notably, some subcounty (*myeon*) staff and chiefs, as well as district (*ku*) chiefs, played leading roles in the MFM, even though they served at the lowest units of the colonial administration. Song Jae-man, a messenger at the Daehoji Subcounty office of Dangjin County, South Chungcheong Province, played a leading role in the independence demonstrations in his neighborhood on April 4, 1919. Lee In-jeong, the chief of Daehoji Subcounty, succeeded in assembling a mob of 1,000 local residents for the independence demonstration. Sin Sang-myeon, the chief of Yeon Subcounty of Andong County, North Gyeongsang Province, was arrested on the

charge of leading the independence demonstration in his neighborhood.

Meanwhile, some auxiliary policemen of the colonial police also participated in the MFM. For example, Jeong Ho-seok (born in 1886) was sentenced to a one-year imprisonment for violation of the security preservation law at the Gyeongseong Appellate Court on February 27, 1920 and was released on May 29 after serving the full term. As shown in Figure 5, he worked as a police assistant, keeping guard at the Daehan Gate of the Deoksu Palace. On March 5, 1919, he bit one finger of his left hand while in his house and painted a Korean national flag with his blood. He hung the sentimental flag on a bamboo stick and went to Heungyeong School, located at Daeheung-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul, to encourage the students to join the demonstration for Korean independence. He led twenty students on a procession to the nearby Gongdeok-dong, Mapo-gu.⁸



Jeong's occupation was as an auxiliary policemen.

Figure 5. Card of Jeong Ho-seok

The participation of Jeong Ho-seok in the MFM while an employee of the Japanese colonial police indicates that other Korean employees of the colonial administration might well have joined the movement. Immediately after the MFM, the Japanese colonial authorities promoted Korean auxiliary policemen to regular policemen, like their Japanese colleagues, in

⁸ “Jeong Ho-seok Gyeongseong boksīm beopweon pangyeolmun [Jeong Ho-seok’s verdict at Gyeongseong appellate court],” February 27, 1920, kept at Gukga girokweon [National records archive] (CJA0000150).

an attempt to placate them. This measure signifies that a considerable number of Korean employees hired in the colonial administration, especially those at a lower level of the administrative hierarchy, estranged themselves from the alien rule.

IV. Characteristics of the MFM Prisoners

1. Name of Crime and Length of Penalty

The MFM participants were treated as “criminals who violated the so-called the “security preservation law.” The security preservation law was a penal code that applied to thought crime. In the pre-decision phase, the appellation “the security preservation offender” was recorded on the PS card in lieu of the name of crime. When the sentence was confirmed, the names of crimes, such as “violation of the security preservation law,” “violation of the publication law,” “disturbance,” and “crime related to politics,” were used to indicate the MFM participants’ treatment as “thought criminals.” Therefore, the Japanese colonial authorities viewed the MFM participants as ideological subversive activists who attempted to shake the very foundation of the colonial regime.

The name of crimes included not only those mentioned above, which implied thought crime but also those of physical violence, such as robbery, damage to properties, vandalism, violation of the telecommunication law, obstruction of task, obstruction of official work, trespass on housing, and damage to building. A total of 100 such incidents can be identified on the PS cards. In reaction to the brutal Japanese suppression of the demonstration marches, Korean demonstrators began to resort to violent means of protest, such as storming into houses and buildings, inflicting damage to properties and buildings, and attacking Japanese policemen. The distribution of the MFM prisoners by crime is shown in Table 7.

The longest prison sentence found among the 772 PS cards that recorded prison terms was six years. However, this was a clerical error. Choi Hak-gil (born in 1876) was leading his home Yongcheon villagers at the market in Seo Subcounty of Yangyang County, Gangweon Province, before being shot and arrested April 4, 1919. His prison term was recorded as

Table 7. Number of Prisoners by Crime

Crime	Number of Prisoners	Percent
Violation of the security preservation law	940	92.79
Disturbance	40	3.95
Violation of the publication law	29	2.86
Crime related to politics	2	0.2
Intimidation	2	0.2
Total	1,013	100

six years. However, as shown in Figure 6, the date of release was recorded on July 14, 1920 after a full prison service, indicating that his actual prison sentence was not six years but six months. The clerk erroneously entered the number six into the blank space for year instead of that for month.



The number six was erroneously written into the blank space for year.

Figure 6. Card of Choi Hak-gil

The next longest sentence was five years, given to both Jo Su-in (born in 1881) and Song Jae-man (born in 1896). Jo was accused of violation against the security preservation law and disturbance, while Song's additional accusations included theft, injury, trespass on housing, violation against the publication law, and forgery of a document. As the MFM became increasingly violent, they resorted to violent acts such as destroying facilities and attacking the Japanese police.

Those sentenced to four years, such as Lee Gye-yeop, Kim Hyeong-jin, and Kim Gil-hyeon, likewise acted violently. During their first demonstration, some of the participants were arrested. Then, they staged a second demonstration of violent protest, attacking Japanese public buildings and officials.

Among those who received the sentence of three years were Yu Gwan-sun, who was representative of other women participants, and her uncle, Yu Jung-mu. In addition, there were Ham Tae-yeong, Lee Jong-il, Baek Gwang-pil, Yu Yeon-hwa, Lee Jong-rin, and Chang Yang-keon, alongside whom the activities of Ham Tae-yeong and Lee Jong-il can be traced. Ham Tae-yeong, as a Christian and legal expert, was a part of the MFM leadership that planned the peaceful demonstration and reviewed and distributed the Declaration of Independence, thus contributing a great deal to the MFM. Lee Jong-il, of the Cheondogyo religion, was one of the thirty-three national representatives who signed the Declaration of Independence. Thus, Ham and Lee were religious leaders who had a pronounced role in propelling the MFM. The total number of participants who were sentenced to more than two years is seventy-seven (9.97 percent).

The majority of prisoners were sentenced to between one and two years of imprisonment (i.e., 12 months to 23 months) (340 persons, 44.04 percent). The next largest groups were those sentenced to eight months, followed by those sentenced to six months. On the other hand, there were only four prisoners sentenced to less than six months (0.52 percent). Of the 2,796 prisoners detained at Seodaemun Prison whose prison sentence was recorded on the PS card, those sentenced to less than six months account for 4.76 percent.⁹ Thus, the number of MFM prisoners sentenced to less than six months was disproportionately lower than the average number of the total prison population sentenced to less than six months. The reason for this small figure was related to the manner in which the colonial authorities handled the MFM arrests. The MFM erupted simultaneously all

⁹ Park Gyeong-mok, "Ilje gangjeomgi Seodaemun hyeongmuso yeongu [Study on the Seodaemun Prison during the forced Japanese occupation period]," (Ph. D. diss., Chungnam Daehakgyo, 2015), 114.

across the country, involving more than two million people. Since the massive number of MFM arrests far exceeded the prison capacity at the time, those sentenced to less than six months were punished by flogging instead of imprisonment. The number of prisoners by prison sentence is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Number of Prisoners by Prison Term

In	-	5yr.	4yr.	3yr.	2.5yr.	2yr.	Total
Number of People	-	2	3	8	2	61	76
Percent	9.85%						

Term	1yr. 11 mon	1yr. 10 mon	1yr. 8 mon	1yr. 6 mon	1yr. 3 mon	1yr. 2 mon	1yr. 1 mon	1yr.	Total
Number of People	1	3	8	101	4	11	1	211	340
Percent	44.04%								

Term	10 mon	8 mon	7 mon	6 mon	5 mon	3 mon	2 mon	1 mon	Total	
Number of People	87	135	12	118	1	1	1	1	356	
Percent	30.31%			15.80%						

Grand total: 772 persons (100%)

The longest prison sentence recorded on a PS card is five years. However, when their verdict papers are examined, it can be confirmed that some of the prisoners whose prison sentences were not recorded on the PS card received sentences of more than five years. Hong Jun-ok, Mun Sang-ik and Wang Kwang-yeon, who led the protest movement on March 26 and 28, 1919 at Sagang-ri, Songsan-myeon, Hwaseong City, Gyeonggi Province, were sentenced to twelve years. They were accused of conspiring to kill Noguchi Kojo, a Japanese police chief. Kim Myeong-je was sentenced to ten years. Kim Gyo-chang, Min Yong-un, Cheon Do-seon, Hong Gwan-hu, Cha Gyeong-hyeon, Hong Myeong-seon, and Hwang Chil-seong were sentenced to seven years. Oh Gwang-deuk, Lee Yun-sik, and Choi Chun-

bo were sentenced to six years. Likewise, it appears that there are many prisoners who were sentenced to long-term imprisonment, though their records of prison sentence do not appear on the PS card. This will be the subject of future research.

2. Connections between the Prisoners

Following its inception in Seoul, the MFM subsequently spread to local provinces and districts across the country. Many MFM participants shared regional ties, blood relations, and school connections, which united them together in their collective action for the cause of Korean independence. These regional, blood, and school ties can be borne out by the analysis of the personal data of the MFM prisoners at Seodaemun Prison.

First, blood relation was one factor that mediated the participation in the MFM. A total of nine cases show blood relation of the prisoners in family units as in Table 9. Except for the case of Yu Gwan-sun, in all eight cases, the prisoners had the same permanent address, birth place, and current address and were born within a ten-year span. Therefore, they can be regarded as having a familial relationship.

Table 9. Blood Relationship of the MFM Prisoners

	Permanent address <i>do/gun/myeon/ri</i>	Name (Birth year)	Verdict date	Release date	Prison term	Crime against	Relationship
1	Gangweon-do, Yanggu-gun, Dong-myeon, Pallang	Jang Homyeon (1868) Jang Hongdo (1874)	08/14/1919	04/05/1920	8 mon	security law	brothers
2	Gangweon-do, Hongcheon-gun, Hongcheon-eup, Sinjangdae-ri	Cha Bongcheol (1897) Cha Bongan (1900)	07/23/1919 10/02/1919	07/01/1920 04/02/1920	6 mon 1 yr. 6 mon	security law	brothers
3	Gyeonggi-do, Gapyeong-gun, Buk-myeon, Mokdong-ri	Cheong Seonggyo (1894) Cheong Heunggyo (1900)	07/14/1919 07/14/1919	06/24/1920 09/24/1920	6 mon 2 yr.	security law	brothers

4	Gyeonggi-do, Gimpo-gun, Yangcheon- myeon, Nusan-ri	Park Seungman (1896) Park Seunggak (1897)	06/26/1919 09/04/1919	04/28/1919	1 yr.	security law	brothers
5	Gyeonggi-do Yeoncheon-gun, Baekhak-myeon, Duil-ri	Kim Munyu (1894) Kim Bokdong (1889)	09/16/1919 07/07/1919	09/16/1919 09/18/1919	1 yr. 1 yr. 6 mon	public order security law	brothers
6	Gyeongbuk-do Andong-gun, Imha-myeon, Odaedong-ri	Kim Gubeong (1878) Kim Yongmun (1888)	05/24/1919	04/27/1920	1 yr.	public order, security law	brothers
7	Gyeongseong (Seoul) Jungnim-dong	Kim Gongno (1897) Kim Gongu (1902)	05/08/1919 06/23/1919	07/30/1919 03/02/1921	6 mon 1 yr. 6 mon	security law	brothers
8	Pyeongnam-do, Anju-gun, Anju- eup, Namcheon-ri	Kim Byeongje (1894) Kim Byeonggeon (1895)	06/05/1919	04/26/1920	1 yr. 6 mon	security law	brothers
9	Chungnam-do, Cheonan-gun, Dong-myeon, Yongdu-ri Chungnam-do, Cheonan-gun, Dong-myeon, Yongdu-ri	Yu Jungmu (1875) Yu Gwansun (1902)	07/04/1919 07/02/1919	01/02/1921 03/10/1921	3 yr.	public order, security law	uncle and niece

Among those listed above, the demonstration activities of the following persons can be traced:¹⁰ Jang Ho-myeon and Jang Heung-do, followers of the Cheondogyo religion, joined a demonstration march in April 1919 at the town of Yanggu County, Gangweon Province; Cha Bong-cheol, after witnessing demonstration marches in Seoul on the occasion of the funeral ceremony of Emperor Kojong, returned to his home village of Sinjangdae-ri, Hongcheon County, Gwangweon Province, and started a demonstration

¹⁰ See the list of merits at the website of the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs (http://www.mpva.go.kr/narasarang/gonghun_list.asp).

march together with his brother Cha Bong-an on April 1; Jung Seong-gyo and Jung Heung-gyo started a demonstration march on March 15 in Gapyeong County, Gyeonggi Province; Jung Heung-gyo, carrying a circular calling for people to join the demonstration march, assembled sympathizers at the neighboring villages of Jeokmok-ri, Dannyeong-ri, Gwadae-ri, and Baekbi-ri; Park Seung-man and Park Seung-gak returned to their home village after participating in demonstration marches in Seoul, spread news to their neighbors, and conducted a demonstration march on March 23 at the Yanggok market of Yangcheon Subcounty, Kimpo County, Gyeonggi Province; two Christians, Kim Pyeong-je and Kim Pyeong-geon, joined the demonstration march planned by the priest Kim Chan-seong; in the afternoon, on the same day, they distributed the Declaration of Independence among the crowd before being arrested; as has been well known, Yu Gwan-sun and her uncle, Yu Jung-mu, led the demonstrators on April 1 at the Aunae market of Cheonan County. All the above people were proactive from the initial planning stages of the demonstration rallies held at their respective sites. Their blood relations afforded them the confidentiality, mutual commitment, and solidarity needed for such proactive acts.

Second, regional ties were another important factor that mediated participation in the MFM. Those prisoners sharing the same permanent address and successive serial numbers on the original photos mean that they originated from the same location and joined the same demonstration. The regional groups in which more than five prisoners shared the same permanent address (i.e., the same village community) are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Regional Connection of the MFM Prisoners

	Permanent address (Demonstration date & site)	Number of People	Name
1	Gyeonggi-do Gapyeong-gun Buk-myeon Mokdong-ri (March 15 to 16, Buk-myeon)	8	Lee Man-seok, Lee Yun-seok, Jang Ho-hyeong, Jeong Seong-gyo, Jeong Heung-gyo, Jang Sun- hyeon, Jang Ho-ri, Lee Hong-bok
2	Gangweon-do Hongcheon-gun Hongcheon-eup Sinjangdae-ri (April 1, Hongcheon-myeon)	6	Kim Gi-hyeon, Lee Hong-geun, Yim Yun-hang, Jang Il-gyu, Cha Bong-eon, Cha Bong-cheol
3	Gangweon-do Hwacheon-gun Hwacheon-myeon Sin Eup-ri (March 23, Hwacheon)	5	Gang Seok-dae, Park Seong-nok, Kim Yong-gu, Kim Chang-eui, Kim Han-sik

4	Gyeonggi-do Gaeseng-gun Sangdo-myeon Pungcheon-ri (March 29, Sangdo-myeon & Daeseong-myeon)	5	Kim Sun-heung, Yu Gi-yun, Jang Gyeong-beom, Jang Seung-hwa, Jang Tae-su
5	Gyeonggi-do Gaeseong-gun Songdo-myeon Nambonjeong-ri (March 26, Yeongnam-myeon)	5	Kim Se-jung, Kim Hyeong-yeol, Kim Heun, Lee Hyeong-go, Lee Hyeong-sun
6	Gyeonggi-do Goyang-gun Hanji-myeon Hawangsi-ri	5	No Su-cheon, Kim In-sik, Lee Gwang-cheon, Lee Pil-ju, No Su-cheon
7	Gyeonggi-do Suweon-gun Songsan-myeon Sagang-ri (March 25 to 26 & 28, Sagang-ri)	6	Kim Do-jeong, Kim Seong-sil, Lee Jeong-jip, Hong Bok-yong, Hong Seong-mak, Hong Tae-geun
8	Gyeonggi-do Anseong-gun Yijuk-myeon (April 1 to 2, Yangseong & Weongok)	9	Kim Yong-gyu, Mun Jae-hong, Park Gwang-sun, Yang Nam-ok, Yun Gyu-heui, Yun Sang-gu, Lee Gi-hun, Choe Chang-dal, Choe Chang-hyeok
9	Gyeonggi-do Yangju-gun Wabu-eup Songcheon-ri (March 14 to 15, Wabu-myeon)	7	Kim Deok-yeo, Kim Deok-o, Kim Yun-gyeong, Kim Hyeon-yu, Park Gyeong-sik, O Seong-jun, Jeong Il-seong
10	Gyeonggi-do Yeoncheon-gun Baekhak-myeon Duil-ri (March 21, Baekhak-myeon & Misan-myeon)	5	Gu Geum-yong, Kim Mun-yu, Kim Bok-dong, Baek Cheon-gi, Hong Sun-gyeom
11	Gyeongbuk-do Yeongil-gun Songna-myeon Daejeon-ri (March 22, Deokseong-ri)	7	An Deok-hwan, An Sang-jong, An Seok-jong, An Cheon-jong, Yun Yeong-bok, Lee Yeong-seop, Lee Jun-seok
12	Pyeongnam-do Yonggang-gun Seohwa-myeon Jukbon-ri (March 6, Seohwa-myeon)	5	Kim Dae-yeop, Kim Dae-hyeok, Kim Du-weon, Kim Hong-se, Jang Byeong-sam
13	Pyeongnam-do Yonggang-gun Jiun-myeon Jinji-ri (March 3, Jiun-myeon)	7	Kim Gwan-sin, Kim Mong-han, Kim Byeong-ro, Kim Seung-il, Song In-seok, Lee Jeong-gyu, Jeong Hae-weon
14	Chungnam-do Seosan-gun Daehoji-myeon (April 4, Daehoji & Jeongmi)	5	Kim Yang-chil, Nam Seong-u, Song Jae-man, Lee In-jeong, Han Un-seok
Total		85	

The fourteen regional groups of 85 prisoners were connected through identical regional ties. If we lower the number included in the same regional group to two prisoners, then eighty-nine regional groups of 284 prisoners shared regional ties. The percentage of prisoners who shared regional ties amounts to 35.86 percent of the 789 prisoners whose permanent addresses can be verified on the PS cards.

The people in the fourteenth group in Table 10 were the core mem-

bers of the independence march conducted in Daehoji Subcounty of Dangjin County, and they were connected through teacher-student relations at the school of Dohoeusuk and through companionship at the subcounty office. The regional ties of Daehoji County brought them together with their neighbors at the initial rally in Daehoji Subcounty. Then, they marched approximately seven kilometers to the neighboring market town of Jeongmi Subcounty, recruiting more regional sympathizers along the way.

In the rapid spreading of the MFM to provinces, one typical pattern was that certain local men who witnessed or experienced the MFM in Seoul returned to their hometowns in the countryside and stimulated the local residents into action by transmitting the news from Seoul and making initial plans for demonstrations. It is unmistakable that having a regional bond was a potent conduit along which the MFM spread rapidly across the country.

Third, school connection was yet another important factor that mediated participation in the MFM. Such instances can be found mainly in the Seoul area. Nursing students at the medical college of Severance Hospital at Namdaemun (the South Gate of Seoul), No Sun-gyeong, Kim Sun-ho (alias Kim Hyo-sun), and Lee Sin-do (alias Lee Do-sin) were school mates who joined the demonstration march together. On their PS cards, their place of residence was recorded as “Dormitory of the Nursing School Attached to the Medical College, Namdaemun-*chō* (district), Gyeongseong.”

On December 2, 1919, these students participated in the demonstration rally in front of the Royal Ancestral Shrine, Hunjeong-*dong* of Jongno-*gu* of Seoul. They made one Korean national flag and another flag with “Long Live Korean Independence” written in red before heading to the site in the evening. Arriving there, they cried out for Korean independence together with a crowd of 20 people. No Sun-gyeong waved the Korean flag and Kim Sun-ho waved the other flag of Korean independence, encouraging the crowd.¹¹ Three female school companions were arrested by the Jap-

¹¹ “No Sun-gyeong, Lee Do-sin, Kim Hyo-sun, Park Deok-hye Gyeongseong jibang beopweon pangyeolmun [Verdicts for No Sun-gyeong, Lee Do-sin, Kim Hyo-sun, and Park Deok-hye at Gyeongseong local court],” December 18, 1919, kept at Gukga girokweon [National records archive] (CJA0000417).

anese police and sentenced to six months in prison by the Gyeongseong District Court for violation of the security preservation law on December 18, 1919.

A group of female students at the Baehwa Girls' High School also ventured to demonstration meetings, shouting for Korean independence around the school campus (at the hill behind the dormitory and at the front playground) on the morning of March 1, 1920. Twenty-four female students, as listed below, were arrested and put into Seodaemun Prison, *en masse*.

Lee Su-heui, Kim Gyeong-hwa, Son Yeong-seon, Han Su-ja, Lee Sin-cheon, Kim Maria, An Heui-gyeong, An Ok-ja, Yun Gyeong-ok, Park Ha-gyeong, Mun Sang-ok, Kim Seong-jae, Kim Eui-sun, Lee Yong-yeo, So Eun-suk, Ji Eun-weon, Park Sin-sam, Choe Ran-ssi, So Eun-myeong, Park Yang-sun, Park Kyeong-ja, Seong Hye-ja, Wang Jong-sun, and Lee Nam-gye.

(In the order of serial number on the original photo films)

Little is known about this incident involving twenty-four female demonstrators. However, their extant PS cards inform us that they were imprisoned at Seodaemun Prison. On the cards, their current residences were all recorded as "the dormitory of the Baehwa Girls' School, Gyeongseong," except for So Eun-myeong, So Eun-suk, and Ji Eun-weon. Living together at the same school, they planned and carried out the demonstration rallies as school companions.

In the meantime, some of the Baehwa school demonstrators came from the same regions. So Eun-suk and So Eun-myeong shared the same permanent address and birthplace at Namgye-ri (their homesteads numbered 102nd and 109th, respectively), Gunnae-myeon, Yeoncheon-gun, Gyeonggi-do. Moreover, they shared the character "Eun" in their names, signifying that they belonged to the same generation of sisters. An Heui-gyeong and An Ok-ja also shared the same permanent address and birthplace at Yidonggyo-ri (their homesteads numbered 140th and 203rd, respectively), So Heul-myeon, Pocheon-gun, Gyeonggi-do. Son Yeong-seon,

Lee Sin-cheon, and Lee Yong-nyeo also shared the same permanent address and birthplace at Taetan-ri (their homesteads numbered 6th, 8th, and 22nd, respectively), Sokdal-*myeon*, Jangyeon-*gun*, Hwanghae-*do*. Thus, their independence demonstrations on March 1, 1920 were carried out with reinforced cohesion based on their regional and school ties.

All twenty-four demonstrators were indicted of violation against the security preservation law (Article 7 of the Security Preservation Act and Article 42 of the Korean Penal Code, to be specific). The main actors, Lee Su-heui and Kim Gyeong-hwa, were sentenced to one year in prison and a three-year suspension, while the remaining twenty-two participants were sentenced to six months in prison and a two-year suspension.¹² Their punishments were harsh, considering their young ages of fifteen and sixteen and the limited scope of their demonstrations that were confined within the school compound.

V. Conclusion

This paper has examined the status and characteristics of the MFM prisoners imprisoned at Seodaemun Prison by using their PS cards. The Japanese colonial authorities, facing nationwide Korean protests, began compiling PS cards in earnest right after the MFM in order to bring the Korean independence movement under their firm control and to impose surveillance over Korean independence activists by keeping records of their PS cards. Out of a total of the 6,259 PS cards, the PS cards of the 1,013 MFM prisoners were selected for analysis of their entries in this study. As a result, the following conclusions can be drawn.

First, the MFM participants came from all age groups, from teenagers to those in their sixties. Those in their twenties made up the largest group (42 percent), yet their proportion was 15.17 percent less than the

¹² “Lee Su-heui deung Gyeongseong jibang beopweon pangyeolmun [Verdicts for Lee Su-heui and others at Gyeongseong local court],” April 5, 1919, kept at Gukga girokweon [National records archive] (CJA0000403); *Maeil sinbo* [Daily newspaper], April 6, 1920; *Sinhan minbo* [New Koreans newspaper], May 7, 1920.

overall percentage of all independence activists who were in their twenties at Seodaemun Prison. This means that in the MFM, age groups other than people in their twenties were relatively active compared to the age groups of the participants in other independence-related activities.

Second, the MFM was joined by Korean people from all walks of life, including both those with high and low social status. A total of approximately seventy occupational categories can be found among the MFM participants, such as students, teachers, and religion followers, who can be regarded as intellectuals, as well as farmers, merchants, self-employed tradesmen, and laborers from lower classes. Participants joined the MFM in their respective localities throughout the country. Remarkably, those working at the lowest hierarchy of the colonial administration, such as sub-county office chiefs and clerks and auxiliary policemen, also joined the MFM, further enforcing the fact that the MFM was joined by Koreans from all walks of life.

Third, the MFM prisoners were classified as “thought criminals” and indicted for violating the security preservation law. Therefore, they were convicted of violations against the security preservation law or disturbance of public order—criminal charges commonly applied to thought crimes. Almost all of them (99 percent) received a prison term longer than six months, and one was sentenced to as long as twelve years. Hence, heavier penalties were imposed on them than on other types of criminal offenders. This harsh treatment of the MFM prisoners reveals that the Japanese colonial authorities regarded the MFM as a politically subversive movement intending to overturn the colonial status quo, not as a collection of simple criminal acts.

Fourth, the solidarity and community based on blood, region, or school ties provided a strong impetus for joining the MFM. As a result of tracking the connections between the MFM prisoners, it is confirmed that many prisoners were connected through family relations, regional affiliation, or school associations. Therefore, it can be argued that participation in the MFM was effectively mediated by social connections based on blood, region, or school ties and that those who shared such ties acted as agents in spreading the MFM across the country.

Taken as a whole, the MFM was of profound political nature, joined by Korean people from all walks of life and united behind the aim of national independence by ending the Japanese colonial regime—going beyond a simple protest movement against the colonial regime.

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