

## Local Authorities and Elementary School Education in the Colonial Days of Korea

Jaeho Kang

### ABSTRACT

In administering Korean elementary education, the Chosen Government-general (Chosen sotokufu, established in 1910) followed a unique colonial policy by segregating Korean school children from Japanese school children. Under such a segregation policy, Japanese and Korean pupils had separate classrooms, and the education budgets were also funded separately. In other words, Japanese and Koreans provided for the education of their children with their own respective resources. Such a practice started in 1876 when Japanese merchants first came to reside in Korea. The then Japanese Colony Councils in Chosen/Korea, including Kyoryumindan and Nihonjin-kai, raised their own funds to provide education for Japanese school children throughout Korea. This kind of unique education system was not to be seen in Taiwan, Sakhalin or Manchuria.

Japanese School Councils (Gakkokumiai) were composed of Japanese residents who managed their schools autonomously and provided faculty, books, and other essential services for their elementary pupils. On the other hand, the School Funds (Gakkohi) were composed of native Koreans, who administered and provided generally poor services for the Korean children until the end of the Japanese colonial rule. A substantial number of Korean children missed elementary school education due primarily to the insufficient funds and also because of the lack of autonomy. Constant interferences by such special local authorities as cities (fu), towns (yu) and villages (men) tended to weaken the effectiveness of general education.

**Keywords:** the Government-general of Chosen, elementary school education, the Japanese Colony Council, the special local authorities.