An Chunggūn is frequently portrayed as having killed Itō Hirobumi primarily out of a sense of wounded nationalism. However, in this article I argue through a close reading of An's unfinished prison essay, *A Treatise on Peace in the East*, and relevant court records, that in addition to nationalism, Catholicism, Confucianism and Asianism played an important role in shaping An's worldview and convincing him that killing Itō was not only justified, but practical, as it would put into motion events that would lead to peace in the East and the restoration of Korean independence. Moreover, I contend that these worldviews are not easily isolated variables within An's thought, but rather interacted with and shaped each other, with religion acting as an ethical foundation, as seen in the fact that An's Confucian-Catholic morality led him to absolutize Asianism into a religious principle equivalent to obedience to Heaven. I therefore argue that An killed Itō in part because his essentially religious worldview made it appear to be a more effective means of obtaining Korean independence and peace in the East than it really was. At the same time, I show that An's universal, religious morality prevented him from adopting a xenophobic form of Asianism and led him to search for a solution that would benefit all human beings as he sought not only East Asian, but world peace.

Keywords: An Chunggūn, *Peace in the East*, social Darwinism, Asianism, nationalism

INTRODUCTION

A typical treatment of An Chunggūn in English-language textbooks on Japanese or Korean history is usually limited to something like this: “On October 26, 1909, An Chunggūn (1879–1910), a Korean independence activist, shot and killed Itō
Hirobumi (1841–1909), a former Japanese prime minister and resident-general of Korea, at a railway station in Harbin, Manchuria. While the facts mentioned in this hypothetical example are correct, nationalism, while certainly important, is usually emphasized at the expense of Asianism, a Confucian-tinged Catholicism, and social Darwinism—all worldviews that played a role in An’s thought. Moreover, while such treatments often imply that An killed Itō primarily for revenge, as I show in this article, An believed that through the assassination he could convince the Japanese government to change its policy in Korea, restoring his country’s independence and peace in the East. However, An misjudged Japanese reactions to the killing of Itō. The assassination, rather than obtaining An’s goals, led to him being labeled a barbarous murderer in newspapers, to being found guilty of murder by a Japanese court, and to his execution on March 26, 1910. His assassination of Itō was even used to justify Korea’s colonization.

In this article, I show, primarily through a reconstruction and close reading of An’s unfinished prison essay, A Treatise on Peace in the East and the court records of his conversation with a Japanese judge on that subject, the important role the mixture of nationalism, Catholicism, Confucianism, and Asianism played in shaping An’s worldview so that the assassination of Itō appeared to not only be legitimate, but to be a more effective means of obtaining Korean independence and peace in the East than it really was. Exploring An’s uncommon, idiosyncratic worldview is not only significant in its own right, but useful in that it complicates

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1 An important exception that gives a good deal of attention to An is Donald Keene, Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852–1912 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 662–667.
2 I presented a draft of this article at the 2012 annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies. Don Baker and Sean Kim, as well as audience members, provided invaluable comments that I have sought to incorporate.
the nationalist vision of history—one that in fact shapes most work on An—by showing how non-nationalist worldviews mixed with, transformed, and even at times trumped nationalism. An’s worldview is especially important as it shows that aspects of the traditional Korean Confucian worldview could continue within a modern nationalist, in this case, through the vehicle of Catholicism. This is in itself significant because Catholicism, unlike Protestant Christianity, is not typically connected with the nationalism or the calls for progressive reform present during the waning days of the Chosŏn dynasty. An’s use of Catholicism illustrates how the religion could shape the adoption of the new, modern ideas that were then flowing into Korea.

AN CHUNGGÛN’S INTELLECTUAL WORLD
AND THE ASSASSINATION

An Chunggûn was born in 1879 into a yangban family in Hwanghae Province.7 As befitting his family’s position as local notables, An received a traditional education, exposing him to Confucian thought, history, and culture, as well as Classical Chinese, the language in which he wrote *A Treatise on Peace in the East*. His education imparted to him the basic Confucian belief that the universe is governed by a moral Heaven and that human beings had a responsibility to act ethically. An’s later conversion to Catholicism did not lead him to reject this belief, as that religion had long been cast in a Confucian mold. For instance, the Confucian term for Heaven, Ch’ŏn (天), had been incorporated into the Catholic word for God, Ch’ŏnju (天主). This allowed An to easily move from the Confucian concept of obedience to Heaven to obedience to God, which, in good Confucian fashion, he described in moral terms as something like filial piety to parents and loyalty to the king, but of a higher order.8

6 For a representative study of such connections made by Buddhist and Protestant thinkers, see Vladimir Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea: The Beginnings (1880s–1910s)—Survival as an Ideology of Korean Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
7 For an overview of An’s family, see O Yongso̧p, “Ŭlsa choyak ijŏn An T’aeun ŭi saengae wa hwaltong [An T’aeun’s life and activities before the 1905 treaty],” in *An Chunggûn kwa kŭ iidae*, ed. An Chunggûn ŭisa Kinyŏm Saŏphoe (Seoul: Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 2009), 79–89.
8 See An Chunggûn’s autobiography *An ŭngeh’il yŏksa* [The history of An Ŭngeh’il] in Yun Pyŏngsŏk, ed. and trans., *An Chunggûn chŏn’gi chŏnhyŏp* [The collected biographies of An Chunggûn] (Seoul: Kukka Pohunch’ŏ, 1999), 137–41. There are many editions of An’s autobiography and *A Treatise on Peace in the East* (Tongyang p’yŏngkhawon), which is also included in Yun’s collection. Yun’s
The shift from the Confucian Heaven to the Catholic God did contain one important change—An was more likely than the typical Confucian to believe in direct, supernatural intervention. Not only did An affirm belief in the healing miracles of Jesus and Catholic doctrines such as the Incarnation and Resurrection, he also believed that his baptism had healed him from a serious illness and that it was the intercession of the Catholic Church that had cured one of his sons. When we compare these private statements with his autobiography, in which An credits “Heaven” with preserving his life when his guerrilla army was destroyed, we can see that by Heaven, he meant God. He had chosen that term to better suit his Japanese audience, which would have been much more comfortable with Confucian, rather than Catholic, terminology. An’s belief in the power of Heaven is reflected in an anecdote he recorded in his autobiography in which he urged a former Korean official, Yi Pŏmyun (1856–1940), who had once sought to assert Korean sovereignty in Kando (C. Jiandao, J. Kantō), to form a guerrilla army. An told him that if they responded “to the will of Heaven” and “followed the desires of the people,” they would succeed. By this, An meant that God would intervene on their behalf if they did what they were supposed to. An thus believed in a universe in which God responded to human obedience to His will with divine intervention, making success possible.

Catholicism also influenced An through the person of Father Joseph Wilhelm (1860–1938), the priest who had baptized him. Not only did the cleric teach An about Catholicism, he also exposed him to nationalism and “civilization and
enlightenment” thought (J. bunmei kaika, K. munmyŏng kaehwa / 文明開化). These two ideologies were closely connected, as it was believed that the modern reforms brought by true civilization would strengthen a nation-state, enabling it to maintain its independence. An, believing in the essential unity of Catholicism, civilization and enlightenment thought, and nationalism, suggested to Father Wilhelm that the church establish a Catholic university in Korea staffed by Western missionaries who would educate promising young Koreans for the good of the faith and the country. However, a rejection by Bishop Gustave Mutel (1854–1933) on the grounds that modern knowledge would cause Catholics to become indifferent to their faith ended those plans. Frustrated by this response, An declared he could no longer trust foreigners and gave up learning French from Father Wilhelm, a language that would have given him firsthand access to Western ideas. However, he still believed in the veracity of Catholicism. Moreover, he would go on to look to Catholic priests for guidance, including seeking advice regarding Korea’s political situation. Thus, despite some conflict, close relationships with white clergy would make it impossible for An to be as anti-Western as other Asianists.

While An still likely held to his nationalist ideas, the relative freedom from foreign domination Korea enjoyed from 1897 to 1904, as well as conflict between Catholics and the central government, meant that An would concentrate more on local affairs, rather than the fate of the nation. The Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) changed this. An described in his autobiography how after the war broke out Father Wilhelm explained to him that the victor would dominate Korea. This revelation inspired him to read newspapers and history books in an effort to understand what the future would bring, leading to an increased sense of national crisis and the need to take action soon to avert it. It was likely at this time that An also learned more about Asianism and social Darwinism, the application of

11 For an overview of these new ideologies and their impact on Korea, see Schmid.
13 See Franklin Rausch, “Saving Knowledge: Catholic Educational Policy in the late Chosŏn Dynasty,” Acta Koreana 11, no. 3 (December 2008): 65–76. For An’s description of these events see Yun Pyōngsŏk, An Êngb’il yŏksa, 141–142.
14 Yun Pyōngsŏk, An Êngb’il yŏksa, 154–156.
15 For instance, An concentrated on the conflict between Catholics and the Chosŏn government that was occurring in Hwanghae Province. See Pak Ch’ansik, Han’guk kŭndae Ch’ŏnjugyohe wa hyangb’on saboe [The modern Korean Catholic Church and local society] (Seoul: Han’guk Kyohoeja Yŏngguso, 2007), 175–210.
16 Yun Pyōngsŏk, An Êngb’il yŏksa, 152.
Charles Darwin’s ideas about natural selection to human society. Social Darwinism held that one should be guided, not by universal moral concerns, but rather, by what benefitted the human community one belonged to, determined by either ethnicity or race. Morality did not demand that the weak be protected. If they suffered they had only themselves to blame. They had failed to adapt and so invited domination or destruction at the hands of the strong, who themselves could not be criticized as behaving immorally since they were simply acting in accordance with the scientific laws of the universe.17

One reaction to social-Darwinist visions of a world locked in eternal and bloody struggle was Asianism. According to this ideology, the people of Asia needed to unite to defend themselves against Western imperialism. Japan was often held up as a leader and educator of other Asian countries, as it was the first one to successfully establish a modern nation-state. Chinese and Koreans who subscribed to Asianism hoped that Japan would act as a benevolent leader of Asia and help them modernize without infringing on their sovereignty. At the same time, Asianism could be used as a means of justifying Japanese imperialism.18 Thus, Korean nationalists such as Sŏ Chaep’il (1864–1951) were wary of Asianism, while others, such as Sin Ch’aeho (1880–1936), criticized it in no uncertain terms.19 As we shall see, An was influenced heavily by both social Darwinism and Asianism, seeing the former as accurately describing the sorry state the world was in, and embracing the latter as a moral principle that would bring peace and security.

Japan’s victory over Russia allowed it to dominate Korea and force it to accept what was essentially a protectorate treaty in 1905, with Itō Hirobumi as its first resident-general. Itō was one of the most important political figures in Meiji Japan. He framed the Japanese constitution of 1889, played an important role in the formation of the Japanese banking system, and served as Prime Minister multiple times, including when Japan won its decisive victory in the Sino-Japanese War.20

As resident-general, Itō, unlike many of his cohorts in the Japanese government, did not take a racist view towards Koreans, instead believing that with proper support, guidance, and a bit of cajoling, they could reform themselves as the Japanese did, making Korea into a friendly, independent nation-state capable of defending itself, thereby securing Japan’s strategic interests on the cheap.

Unfortunately, the win-win scenario Itō envisioned would not come to pass. While sympathetic to Koreans, Itō was still primarily concerned with Japanese interests, and would not sacrifice them on behalf of those of Korea. Many Koreans, distrustful of Japanese designs, were not willing to cooperate with him when his reforms seemed to threaten their country’s diminishing independence and challenged cherished ideas or entrenched interests. Itō would, in turn, use pressure and coercion to push his reforms through, creating even more conflict with Koreans, who saw such actions as a threat to Korean sovereignty. Thus, as the Japanese colonial government tightened its grip in Korea in order to enact reform, Korean opposition grew, leading to increasingly forceful methods by the Japanese, and subsequently to even more resistance by the Koreans.21

Matters came to a head in 1907 when the Korean emperor, Kojong (r. 1863–1907), secretly dispatched representatives to the peace talks being held at The Hague. As Korea had been forced to sign away its right to diplomatic representation in the 1905 treaty, Itō used this act as a pretext to force the abdication of Kojong, leading to the ascension of his much more pliable son Sunjong (r. 1907–1910). He in turn signed another treaty giving Japan even more power over the country. In addition, Itō had what remained of the Korean army disbanded. The now unemployed soldiers took their arms and fled, forming guerilla armies (ŭibyŏng) to violently oppose Japan. The rise of armed resistance, and the deteriorating national situation convinced An that peaceful means were no longer sufficient, leading him to flee Korea in 1907 for Manchuria. There, he helped establish a guerilla army which returned to the country in 1908. While enjoying initial success, An’s army was destroyed later that year. Though he escaped with his life, he was not sure what to do, and spent his time wandering through Manchuria.22

Itō Hirobumi faced his own difficulties. His policy had not won the necessary Korean support for Japan and the reforms he sponsored were proving, in a large part due to violent Korean opposition, to be just as expensive as direct rule without the advantages. He resigned his position in June, 1909 and was succeeded by Sone Arasuke (1849–1910). In July of that year, at a secret government

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meeting, high Japanese officials decided that it was necessary to annex Korea at an opportune time. Itō made no objection. At the same time, the situation in Manchuria deteriorated as calls for Japan to honor its promises of the open door increased. Realizing the need to settle differences with Russia in order to work together to protect their respective spheres of influence in Manchuria from interference by other countries, Itō was sent on a trip to Manchuria in the fall to discuss matters with the Russians, and with the Chinese government, which officially held sovereignty over Manchuria. While An was in Vladivostok, he heard news of Itō’s visit and, resolving to kill him, traveled to Harbin, Manchuria. On the morning of October 26, Itō’s train pulled into the Harbin railroad station where he met the Russian finance minister. Itō then disembarked to greet a crowd that had come to welcome him. Suddenly, at 9:30 A.M., An stepped forward and shot him three times. Itō died twenty minutes later.

An hoped that his assassination of Itō would show that the former resident-general had been lying when he claimed that Koreans were happy with colonial rule, convincing the Meiji Emperor to change his government’s policy in Korea. When the hoped-for changes did not materialize, An initially thought that he would be able to make his case at trial, but then becoming convinced that he would not be able to speak freely there, he began to write down his ideas, first in his autobiography, which he finished on March 15, 1910, and then in A Treatise on Peace in the East, which remained unfinished. While the existence of these two documents was reported in 1910, they were not released to the public and were long believed to be lost until they were rediscovered in 1979 by zainichi Professor Kim Chŏngmyŏng in the National Diet Library of Japan. It is therefore impossible to know how his contemporaries would have reacted to it. However, while the Treatise was written with the purpose of persuading his Japanese audience to change its government’s policy when read critically, it can tell us much of An’s worldview and how he sought to navigate the conflicting demands of the nation-state, race, and the Catholic Church.

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25 An shot three other men, Itō’s private secretary, Mori Taijirō; the Harbin consul general, Kawakami Toshihiko; and the director of the South Manchuria Railway, Tanaka Seitarō. All three survived their wounds.
26 Yun Pyŏngsŏk, An Êngel’ŏdk’ŏsa, 175–182.
27 See the introduction to Yun Pyŏngsŏk, 37.
A TREATISE ON PEACE IN THE EAST

An began *A Treatise on Peace in the East* with a preface in which he reflected on the “unchanging principle” (K. イ, C. 理) that “in union there is success and in division there is failure.” The world itself was divided into East and West with “different races struggling with each other” (*injong kaksu* / 人種各殊), leading to conflict that spoiled the promised fruits of civilization and enlightenment thought, for rather than spurring on advances in agriculture and commerce, conflict drove the production of “new inventions like machine guns, airplanes, and submarines,” that had as their purpose “the destruction of life and property.” This struggle caused many young people to go off to war, and the terrible violence of modern weaponry led to the “sacrifice” of “so many of their precious lives” that their blood formed rivers and their dead bodies piled up into “mountains of corpses.”

While the conflict was essentially racial and regional—white Westerners versus yellow Easterners—it had its roots in morality or, rather, the lack thereof. This racial struggle was not the product of an amoral law of the jungle or any inherent biological difference, but the result of the Europeans “forgetting” about morality (*tonmang todŏk* / 頓忘道德), their embrace of military power, and their “cultivation of contentious hearts completely lacking in scruples.” In contrast, An implied that East Asian peoples (*Tongyang minjok* / 東洋民族), having devoted themselves to cultural pursuits and focusing only on defending their own countries, had remained moral. But An did not present Asians as being inherently more virtuous than white Westerners. In fact, the idea of “forgetting” implied that Westerners had once been virtuous and could be virtuous again. However, because current white immorality threatened the independence of the yellow nations, the unity An called for was among Asians, not Westerners. In other words, the destruction An feared division would cause was not so much that of the human race, but the yellow race. At the same time, the races of the young people sacrificed in war are not made explicit, and in the context of the passage, it would seem that it would include both Westerners and Asians. Thus An was concerned with the deaths of both, and while privileging Asians as the victims of oppression, appears to have been troubled by the deaths of all regardless of race.

To An, the worst of the white empires was Russia, which he described in the

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first chapter of his treatise as virtually unstoppable, even by the European nations, as its attacks on both the West and East were so egregious that it had angered both “God (sin/神) and man.” An’s faith in a moral universe therefore led him to ascribe Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War, not to such mundane issues as the logistical difficulties faced by the Russians, but to a virtuous Heaven that had “favored Japan, a tiny island nation in the East Sea, enabling it to crush the mighty Russian Empire in Manchuria.” Japan won its victory “because it acted in accordance with the principle of humanity (in chi I / 人之理) that even a small and weak nation that obeys Heaven (Ch’ŏn / 天) and obtains the approval of Earth can defeat the great and powerful.” Russia lost because it did not do so.

An’s use of language here is interesting. While drawing upon religious terms, he does not use any specifically Catholic ones. This makes sense, as they would not have had much influence on the largely non-Catholic Japanese audience he was trying to reach. Instead he drew upon the Confucian concepts of Heaven, which, as seen above, was essentially a stand-in for God in An’s thinking, and li (理), principle, that is, the cosmic pattern that governed the universe and determined how people should act. His use of the generic term for deity would have fulfilled the same function. Religious ideas therefore served as the foundation of his thought, with knowledge of, and action in accordance with Heaven and the morality it enjoined upon human beings as being necessary for success.

Heaven did not act alone—Japan was the instrument that cooperated with it, accomplishing its will. Moreover, depending on the situation, An believed that more than a single individual or nation had to cooperate—multiple groups might need to work together for the will of Heaven to be done. Thus, victory in the Russo-Japanese War not only required the cooperation of Japan with Heaven, but the whole of the yellow race, for An argued that if Korea and China had used the Russo-Japanese War as an opportunity to obtain revenge against Japan for its past misdeeds, the island empire would have been defeated. However, the Japanese emperor had asserted in Japan’s declaration of war that his country was fighting for Korean independence and peace in the East. Moved by such lofty aspirations, and seeing the war as one between the white and yellow races (hwang paek injong chi chōnjaeng / 黃白人種之競爭), Chinese and Koreans followed another “principle of humanity,”30 “love of the same race” (ae chongdang / 愛種黨), and actively

30 An wrote “此亦人情之順序.” He therefore used slightly different phrasings (“人情之順序” instead of “人之理”) that I have translated in the same way, as “principle of humanity.” Despite the
supported Japan, enabling it to crush “the vanguard of the white race,” which had behaved so wickedly, a victory they celebrated as if they had won it themselves. Moreover, they also rejoiced at Japan’s “political accomplishments and its system of government,” which An portrayed as “the greatest and most progressive achievements in the world since the beginning of time.”

An thus presented Japan’s victory over Russia not simply as the result of the successful modernization of Japan, though by emphasizing Japan’s political accomplishments he implied that it was one reason, along with the unique characteristics of the Japanese nation. Rather, An attributed Japan’s victory primarily to the willingness of the various representatives of the yellow race to adhere to human moral principles, namely, Japan’s acting in accordance with Heaven’s will and China and Korea’s decision for racial solidarity over revenge. Japan’s victory, in An’s view, was thus not simply national, but racial. Japan, however, had failed to understand the principles behind it. Instead of building upon this racial union, Japan sought to expand its power further into Manchuria, thereby engendering conflict with China, and to “oppress its closest neighbor, Korea, whose people are benevolent and benign, and are of the same race as the Japanese, by forcing it to sign a peace treaty.” Such actions ruined Japan’s international reputation, which became worse than that of Russia overnight. Moreover, they represented a foreign policy that promised disaster for the yellow race, as “even a young child” knew that as Western power expanded, Asians had to unite in self-defense. Yet Japan ignored this obvious fact and “humiliated and grievously injured Korea, its neighbor of the same race.”

An then recounted the proverb that “the fisherman profits from the battle between the mussel and the kingfisher,” meaning that the conflict Japan was sowing between the nations of the yellow race would render them defenseless before the advancing whites. In fact, some Chinese and Koreans, feeling that they had been betrayed by their fellow yellow people, the Japanese, might even ally with the whites against Japan. Since Itō Hirobumi was the primary architect behind this departure from moral law, and thus the author of the terrible consequences it would bring, An killed him, depicting the assassination as the “declaration of a righteous war at Harbin for peace in the East.”

Following his introduction, An included a table of contents and then began his text with the chapter, “Mirror of the Past,” which explains the significance of

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difference here, the fact that he wrote “此亦,” meaning “this also,” indicates that he thought of obedience to Heaven and love of the same race as essentially the same things, that is, as principles of humanity. Further proof that he saw the two as the same sort of principle can be seen in the fact that later on in his manuscript, when referring to the principle of racial solidarity, he connected it to the word "以愛種之義 萬無應從之理矣" (以愛種之義 萬無應從之理矣).
the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, providing the basic historical framework upon which he would develop his own proposal for establishing peace in the East.\textsuperscript{31} An traced the cause of the Sino-Japanese War to the Chinese and Japanese dispatch of troops to Korea to suppress the rebellion in 1894, which led to the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95). An thus implied that the combination of a violation of racial solidarity by Japan and a rebellion against the nation-state by the Tonghak led to war and destruction. He then briefly traced the course of the war, describing it as a tremendous victory that was the most significant event in Japanese history since the Meiji Restoration.

An then explained the reasons for Japan’s victory by focusing on the moral differences between China and Japan. China lost the war, according to An, because it arrogantly looked down on other countries, which it referred to as barbarians, and was disunited, with the great families seizing control over the state and using their power selfishly, turning the Chinese people against each other. The Japanese, in contrast, won the war because despite internal conflict, whenever they faced an external problem they would unite to form “one patriotic party” and work together. Thus, An did not attribute victory to the radical Western-style reforms Japan underwent, as opposed to China’s conservative “self-strengthening,” but the Japanese willingness to put aside selfish interests and unite when faced by external enemies. An was thus urging his Japanese audience to do what it had always done, unite against external threats; but instead of uniting with other Japanese to fight China, they had to unite together with their fellow members of the yellow race to defend Asia from the white menace.

While Japanese unity might have led to victory against China, Japan’s violation of the principle of racial solidarity created new problems. It showed to the world the weakness of China, leading to increased Western pressure. In particular, it paved the way for Russia’s rise in East Asia. Directly after the war, Russia led France and Germany in the so-called Triple Intervention to force Japan to return one of its prizes, the Liaodong peninsula, to China. An cautioned that while this might seem like a just act in accordance with international law, as it represented the return of Chinese territory, it was actually the “clever trick of a sly fox” since shortly afterwards Russia obtained a lease on the peninsula where it established a naval base and built a railroad. Moreover, An also was implying here that since whites acted in accordance with the principle of racial solidarity they had been able to overpower Japan, necessitating that Japan should do the same and work with China and Korea.

An described Russia’s desire to expand in Asia as “blazing hot like a fire and as

\textsuperscript{31} Yun Pyōngsŏk, Tongyong p’yŏnghwaron, 194–199.
unstoppable as the tide.” This desire, and resulting Russian pressure, combined with Japan’s humiliating defeat of China in 1895, led to conflict within that country, the Guangxu Emperor’s reforms, and anti-Japanese and Western movements that culminated in the Boxer Rebellion (1898–1901), the fall of Tianjin and Beijing before the Eight-Nation Alliance made up of Western countries and Japan, and the death of “millions,” a disaster so terrible that there were few like it “in the history of the world.” According to An, “it was not only an indelible disgrace for the people of the East, but also a harbinger that the conflicts and divisions between the yellow and white races would continue endlessly into the future.” Violation of the principle of racial solidarity had led to death and destruction that would only increase in the future, unless Japan changed its policy.

Japanese willingness to wage war against fellow members of the yellow race had weakened China to the extent that it could not defend its own territory, leaving Japan to negotiate the withdrawal of Russian troops who had been stationed in Manchuria under the “pretext” of defending Russia’s railroad. Russian intransigence on this issue eventually led to what An described as a “reckless war,” owing to the logistical problems both nations faced in supplying their troops. An then explained how, while Japan won several battles in a row during the early part of the war, its victory was not yet complete. If Koreans had risen up during that time to seek revenge for the assassination of Queen Min (posthumously known as Empress Myŏngsŏng) in 1895, they would have thrown the Japanese army off balance, allowing for the Russians to regain the initiative by launching surprise counterattacks.32 In turn, the Chinese would also have taken up arms to avenge their previous defeat at the hands of Japan. Attacks on multiple fronts would have split the Japanese army, but An predicted that rather than leading to the immediate defeat of Japan, it would cause a conflict so great that “the winds of war would have blown throughout East Asia for one hundred years” as Britain, France, the United States, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, Greece, and other nations would have moved their forces into Asia and divided it up. However, out of a desire for peace and a commitment to racial solidarity, China and Korea did not seek revenge, but instead acted in strict accordance with the treaties, enabling Japan’s victory and preventing further Western advances into Asia.

Chinese and Korean commitment to peace and racial solidarity enabled Japan to continue the war and win victory after victory against Russian forces, reducing their morale to the extent that “they ran away at the sound of the wind.” If at this

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32 Ito was not directly connected to the assassination of Queen Min. However, because he was prime minister at the time and those responsible went unpunished, An seems to have believed that he had ordered it. For a description of the assassination, see Duus, 108–112.
time Japan had poured all of its strength into the war, it could have seized Vladivostok and Harbin, putting an end to Russian designs on East Asia. However, much to An’s frustration, not only did Japan seek peace talks, it allowed the United States to act as mediator because of its supposed “neutrality.” An, angry that talks were not held in Asia, expressed his frustration in a social-Darwinist idiom, writing, “When animals struggle with each other, there is either a winner or a loser. How much more when people fight?” For An, considering Japan’s great victories, it made no sense to have the talks in a “neutral” country in the West, rather than in Asia, especially as the country in question was the United States, which, as one of the white powers would certainly not be impartial, but instead support Russia. This bias could be seen in the fact that the peace treaty, mediated by President Theodore Roosevelt, did not include an indemnity and awarded Japan only a “part of the island of Sakhalin, a few other scraps of land, the Russian ships Japan had seized during the war, and a railroad.”

While An’s primary focus had been on the particulars of race and nation, at this point, he appealed again to universal morality. An rhetorically asked whether if the roles had been reversed and Japan had been vanquished if it would have escaped without paying an indemnity. The answer An expected, of course, was no. An asserted that there was only one reason for this lenient treatment of Russia: “The ‘justice’ of the world is not just.” What he likely meant by this was that there was, in practice, one standard of justice for whites, and another for yellow people. What made this injustice particularly galling was the fact that Western countries had failed to stand up to Russia when it had attacked them, but once it had been defeated, they united, following the principle of racial solidarity, to prevent a yellow nation from obtaining the just fruits of its victory.

Even more disturbing to An was that despite Korean support, which enabled Japanese victory, and the display of racial solidarity by the white powers, which illustrated the need for yellow people to band together, Japan sought a peace treaty in which it won recognition as having a “paramount position in Korea,” thereby betraying its “neighbors of the same race” despite the fact that “love of [the same] race is a moral duty (愛種之義).” An then predicted that if Japan

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33 It is difficult to gauge how familiar An was with social Darwinism. He did create a work of calligraphy while in prison that said, “弱肉強食 風塵時代” (This is a troubled age in which the weak are meat and the strong eat), showing that he understood its basic teachings. A copy of this work of calligraphy can be found in An Chunggŭn Úisa Sungmohoe, ed., Taehan úi yŏngung An Chunggŭn úisa [The Hero of Korea An Chunggŭn (Seoul: An Chunggŭn Úisa Sungmohoe, 2008), 100. Judging from this work of calligraphy, and An’s writings as explained in this article, while An was certainly aware of social Darwinism and saw it as an accurate description of the world he faced, he did not see it as morally normative.
continued to ignore that duty, the results would be disastrous not only for it, but the whole of the East.

The completed portions of An's *Treatise on Peace in the East* explain the importance of acting in accordance with the human principles of obeying the will of Heaven and adhering to racial solidarity and how Japan had failed to do so. However, An was unable to finish three chapters “The Current Situation,” “Foundations,” and “Questions and Answers.” Fortunately, the notes from An's meeting with the justice of the supreme court of Kwantung to discuss the possibility of an appeal give us some idea of what he would have included in those sections.34

The first section of the notes focuses on An's criticism of Itō and his argument that he killed the former resident-general not out of a private grudge, as he had been accused of doing, but for his country and peace in the East and that he should therefore be tried in accordance with international law. An contended that Itō had forced Korea to accept treaties that deprived that country of its sovereignty and lied to other countries about the real situation there, making it appear as if Koreans accepted the protectorate. His policy therefore caused the violent conflict that was destroying peace in East Asia. Moreover, Itō's policy was a departure from that stated by the emperor in Japan's declaration of war against Russia of strengthening Korea's independence, which had been in accordance with the will of Heaven. An therefore explained to the judge that “if Itō would have been allowed to live it would only have caused harm to peace in the East. As part of the East, I believed it was my duty to remove this evil so I killed him.” This focus on Itō and his policy would likely have been the focus of the second chapter of *A Treatise on Peace in the East*, “The Current Situation.”

After describing Itō's mistaken policy, An explained that “Japan's position in East Asia can be likened to the head of a person,” indicating that he saw Japan as the leader of Asia. While this meant that Japan should be particularly careful about the policies it followed, its rash actions had managed to make enemies of Russia, China, and the United States, all of whom were “waiting for an opportunity to chastise Japan.” If Japan did not change its policy quickly, it would “bear the responsibility for the chaos and destruction of peace in the East that will result from it.” At this point, the judge urged An to explain what policy he believed Japan should take. An's response to this question, described below, is likely roughly congruent to what he would have said in the “Foundations” chapter of *A Treatise on Peace in the East*.

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34 A Korean translation of these handwritten notes, as well as the handwritten Japanese originals, can be found in Kukka Pohunch'o, ed., 21 segye wa “Tongyang p'yŏnghwaron” [The twenty-first century and *A Treatise on Peace in the East*] (Seoul: Kukka Pohunch’o, 1996), 51–71.
After explaining to the judge that he had been thinking about these issues for several years, An stated that if Japan wanted to grasp “hegemony” (p’aekwŏn / 帝權), it would have to do so by extraordinary means, not by simply imitating the policy followed by Westerners of annexing weaker countries. Instead, Japan needed to adopt a strategy that would fulfill three necessary conditions: putting its economy in order, improving its international image, and strengthening its defenses. Ito’s policy had lost it the trust of the world and caused conflict between “Korea, China, and Japan [which] are like brothers in the world and therefore should be closer to each other than to anyone else. However, the relationship between these brothers today is bad, and rather than helping each other, they display their discord for all the world to see.” In order for Japan to reverse this situation, it should return the port of Lüshun, located on the Liaodong peninsula, to China. The city would then be managed jointly by the three countries. This act would restore Asian trust in Japan and improve its international reputation. The port would be returned after a peace conference was held there. This conference would act as a nucleus for a peace association that would be opened throughout East Asia. An believed that hundreds of millions of Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans would pay dues to join this association, raising an enormous sum of money that could be used to establish a bank that would issue a joint currency facilitating trade between the three countries, thereby easing the economic difficulties that were driving Japan’s imperialism and providing capital for Korea and China’s development.

The association would not only have an economic function, but would also bring young Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese together so they could learn each other’s languages and form military units that would defend Asia. The return of Lüshun and the establishment of the association would transform Japan’s image and place in the world:

If Japan showed this attitude [of trustworthiness] to the world, it would be admired, respected, and honored. In this way, even though there are some countries that harbor evil intentions against Japan, it would be difficult for them to have an opportunity [to act upon them]. Japan’s exports would increase greatly, its economy would prosper, and it would become as safe and secure as a great mountain. China and Korea would also both enjoy happiness. This would be a model for the world. And China and Korea, under Japan’s guidance, would be able to plan how to develop their commerce and industry. Therefore, the word “hegemony” would lose its [negative] meaning and troubles like those arising out of the Manchurian railway system could not even be dreamed of. If Japan acted in this way, India, Thailand, Vietnam, and the other countries of Asia would
Rausch: Visions of Violence, Dreams of Peace

each join the peace association as members of their own accord, and Japan, without a fight, would become the hero of Asia.35

An went on to explain that “even the most powerful country could not establish hegemony solely by power. Instead, peaceful means are necessary,” showing his rejection of violent conquest as the way to achieve peace in the East.

An then found a place for his faith, explaining that once the Asian union he had described was established, the Catholic Pope would crown the emperors of China, Japan, and Korea. This would win popular support from the majority of the world (during this meeting An stated, erroneously, that Catholics constituted two-thirds of the earth’s population) and grant immense prestige, and thus, power, to the East Asian countries. Moreover, though not explicitly stated, by also being crowned by the pontiff, the Chinese and Korean emperors would be equal to the Japanese emperor, indicating that while Japan might be head, the other countries in the alliance would be of equal status and maintain their independence. Likewise, An probably thought that Western countries, which he understood as largely under the Pope’s sway, would be hesitant to infringe on the sovereignty of countries recognized by the pontiff in this way. It is also important to point out that An explained that the system of popes crowning monarchs had been in existence in Western Europe until Napoleon had abolished it. In stating this, An was warning Japan that, should it continue to try and expand its power through force as he did, its empire would also fall as did Napoleon’s. Thus, through Catholicism, An was proposing a new international order in which yellow and white, East and West, would enjoy peaceful relations through the pontiff, with Japan standing as hegemon over an Eastern coalition made up of independent, modernized nation-states strong enough to defend the region against any attack, thus ensuring a balance of power that would end violent conflict between states, bringing world peace.36

While An was not able to write the chapter “Questions and Answers,” a section in which he likely would have responded to possible objections to his proposed policy, it is possible to reconstruct the broad outline of what it would have looked like by briefly examining the work of a Japanese Asianist, Tarui

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36 That An had in mind a plan for world peace is supported by the fact that in the third session of An’s trial, February 9, 1910, An argued that an alliance between “Korea, Japan, and China” would be the foundation for enlightened progress that would lead all countries in the world to work together for peace. See Sin Unyong, trans., An Chunggûn, U Tôksun, Cho Toôn, Yu Tongha kong’ûn kirok: An Chunggûn sakkkûn kong’ûn kirok sinmun kirok [The trial records of An Chunggûn, U Tôksun, Cho Toôn, Yu Tongha: the trial records of the An Chunggûn incident] (Seoul: Ch’aeryun, 2010), 97. An’s statements occurred on the third day of his trial, February 9, 1910.
Tōkichi (1850–1922), specifically, his *Arguments on Behalf of the Union of the Great East* (*Daitō gappōron*). In this work, Tarui contends that Japan and Korea should—based on their geographic, cultural, and racial affinity—unite with each other. While written in 1893, and therefore nearly two full decades before *A Treatise on Peace in the East*, the following possible objections to his own plan that Tarui discusses could still have been raised in An’s time:

First, they (those who oppose a Japan-Korea union) argue that Korea is poor and weak. Uniting with Korea would mean loss of wealth and prestige for the Japanese. Second, Korean culture remains underdeveloped: its industry has not thrived, and the education of its people has failed to advance. To form a union with such a country is akin to making friends with an ignorant person. Third, Korea shares a border with Russia and Qing China. Any union with Korea would result in Japan having to pay for the defense of the border regions. Fourth, leading Korea into a state of enlightenment may well benefit the Koreans but will be a thankless burden for the Japanese. Fifth, Korea is cursed with a harsh and unpredictable climate, prone to droughts, flood and poor harvests. Japan will have to provide relief and rescue operations for these annual disasters once the two countries join together. Sixth, there is at present no political order in Korea, and its government is likely to experience a major upheaval in the immediate future; Japan will end up being entangled in it once it has merged with Korea. Seventh, Koreans lack the spirit of independence, and uniting them will introduce elements of weakness into the Japanese character.

In his own response, Tarui essentially argued that the Japanese reform of Korea would solve all of these problems and that while such reforms would incur a short-term expense, in the long run, they would benefit both Korea and Japan. An, who tended to avoid dwelling for too long on the need to reform Korea, likely because doing so could justify its colonization, would likely have argued that Koreans, such as himself, had been trying to reform, but that Itō had obstructed their efforts. Now that he was gone, Koreans, would, thanks to the return of Lüshun, be able to trust and cooperate with Japan, whose guidance and economic support would enable them to build a strong and independent nation-state, enabling Korea to contribute positively to the joint defense and enrichment of

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37 Dudden, 91–99

East Asia with only a minimal expense to Japan; a price certainly less than what the continuation of Ito’s policy would have cost.

ANALYSIS OF AMBIGUITIES IN AN’S THOUGHT

In his *Treatise on Peace in the East*, An contended that ethical action brings true power, that right makes might. He therefore presented his policy of a race-based federation of independent Asian nation-states that would bring both peace in the East and the world as both morally correct and practically effective because it was based on two human moral principles: obedience to Heaven and love of the same race, which, if followed, would bring success. At the same time, An’s attempts to hold together these different goals in an attempt to satisfy the demands of the various worldviews that influenced him led to ambiguities in his thought. One area in particular is his Catholicism. An, a devout Catholic who had formed positive relationships with white priests, could not be wholly anti-Western. He thus traced the causes of Western imperialism to the “forgetting of virtue,” therefore holding out the promise of conversion and reform, and found a way for the pope to contribute to Asian, and even, world peace. However, in his writings An did not recognize that differing Catholic, Confucian, and Shinto cosmologies would have made it difficult for the three East Asian emperors to accept coronation by the pope, as well as the implication that it was from the pope and his God that they received the right to rule. Moreover, if the alliance was to truly be equal, other Asian monarchs would also need to be crowned, and the Thai king, for instance, would, on account of the Buddhist nature of his legitimacy as ruler, not be favorable to coronation by the Catholic pontiff. Similarly, India was a colony with no one reigning indigenous monarch. Would An have supported the restoration of the Mughals (Muslims who would likely be no more favorable to crowning by the Catholic pope than the king of Thailand) or the establishment of a new dynasty? Or would An have developed some way for the pope to grant legitimacy to a republic? Moreover, it is hard to imagine An’s proposed East Asian alliance extending support to India, a British colony, without war.

Further difficulties can be seen in An’s thinking about race. While writing about the “white” and “yellow” people, he says nothing about “black” people, as Africa does not seem to have found a place in his thinking. Similarly, it is not clear what he based Asian identity on. By using the term “yellow people” without giving any cultural or other markers of Asians as a distinct race, An seems to have

understood this term biologically, as simply referring to skin color. However, it is difficult to believe that An would have raised solidarity based solely on skin pigmentation to a human principle equal to obedience to Heaven, especially since he hoped to expand the alliance beyond East Asia. Moreover, while a biological, color-based notion of race might have worked in the case of Vietnam and Thailand, it would be harder to apply to the “brown” race of India. Perhaps, while An explicitly emphasized a racial Asianism, in practical terms, what counted more to him was whether a nation was under threat by the Western powers or not. This is borne out by the fact that he tended to conflate race and region, talking at times about the West, Europe, and white people. Moreover, considering that An was willing to extend the alliance to India, a colony, he may have also been willing to include African colonies and the independent states of Ethiopia and Liberia—transforming the alliance from an Asian one, to an anticolonial one, of the weaker nations against the strongest. However, An’s Catholicism meant that it could not be an explicitly anti-white solidarity. In any case, when theoretical unity regarding the basis of Asianism conflicted with practical concerns, An favored the latter, even at the expense of gutting the moral principle of racial solidarity.

While An might present racial solidarity, in the form of the Asianist alliance he proposed, as a moral obligation, and therefore necessary to assure success, his commitment to morality presented him from doing the same with social Darwinism. Thus, while An believed that he lived in a social-Darwinist world, far from embracing an amoral worldview, he presented racial solidarity (and thus survival) as an ethical norm equal to that of obeying Heaven without doing the same for racial conflict. He therefore accepted the reality of conflict but rejected it as normative, blaming the destruction it brought on as the result of the forgetting of morality. An therefore saw a return to morality as the cure for race-based conflict.

Just as An refrained from making racial conflict a principle of humanity, he also avoided elevating “progress” based upon civilization and enlightenment to the religious level. While accepting Japan’s role as leader of Asia, seemingly because it had modernized successfully and could help China and Korea develop, An said very little specifically about the adoption of Western civilization, nor did he credit Japan’s radical reforms, as opposed to Chinese self-strengthening, with the former’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War. Too much emphasis on Western civilization would have undercut An’s Asianism, for it would recognize that in some ways, Japan was more like the advanced white powers than its underdeveloped yellow neighbors, which would only encourage Japan to colonize

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40 Because this is the only place where An discusses the issue of South and Southeast Asia, this section must remain conjecture.
Korea, rather than benevolently guide it. Finally, crediting victory to such mundane material instruments of power as guns, railroads, and steamships would have challenged An’s argument that it was proper moral action and Heaven that brought success. For An, right made might, rather than might making right. In this sense, An had more in common with traditional Korean Confucians than with those dedicated to radical reform.41

An’s emphasis on morality could also be ambiguous at times, particularly regarding the question of Itô’s motive for his “crimes.” An described Itô as a “wicked man who did great harm to the dignity and honor of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan” and as “not even an inferior man”42 whose “mistaken policy” had made for an East Asia where “the sound of gunfire has not ceased for even a single day.” The only concrete motive An ascribed to Itô was the desire to become wealthy. In other words, An presented Japan’s policy as the product of Itô’s wickedness, which fits in with his primarily moral understanding of human events. Moreover, directly after this sentence, An stated that “There is an old saying, ‘The one who obeys the will of Heaven will succeed and the one who opposes it will perish.’” Thus, An presented Itô as disobeying Heaven, and himself as Heaven’s executioner, through whom Heaven would achieve its righteous will. It logically followed that the policy An suggested was likewise in accord with the will of Heaven. At the same time, during his court interview, An stated that he understood “the difficult situation Prince Itô’s policy arose out of, namely, the fact that Japan is currently undergoing a financial crisis, which it has sought to solve through its policy in China and Korea.” Thus, on one side, An blamed Itô’s mistaken policy on his own innate wickedness, and on the other, recognized it as an understandable, but fundamentally mistaken, response to Japan’s real financial difficulties. It would seem that, while having real grievances against Itô, An also treated him as something of a scapegoat. By placing the blame for Japan’s mistakes squarely on his shoulders, An was able to give the Japanese government a face-saving opportunity to change its policy in East Asia.

The role of nationalism in An’s thought is particularly complex. Chronologically speaking, An was influenced by nationalism before Asianism. An,

41 For instance, compare with Yi Hangno (1792–1868), who saw moral reform as necessary to repel the French invasion of 1866. See Chai-sik Chung, A Korean Confucian Encounter with the Modern World: Yi Hang-no and the West (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1995), 72–80.

42 In the Analects, Confucius often compared the behavior of the “superior man” and the “inferior man,” praising the former and criticizing the latter. For examples, see sections eleven and thirteen of chapter four of the Analects. An, by describing Itô as being even less than an “inferior man,” shows how poorly he thought of him. The quotes in this paragraph are taken from An’s statements recorded in the court notes found in Kukka Pohunch’ŏ, ed., 21 segy, 51–71.
therefore, while profoundly concerned with the issue of peace, approached this issue principally from the perspective of a Korean nationalist, which is one reason why he was so concerned with establishing an alliance that would guarantee both regional and racial security as well as national independence. The relative importance of his goals can be seen in the fact that while his fifteen reasons for killing Itō did include one regarding peace in the East, the other fourteen focused on Korea. He said nothing about China in that list.43

However, it must be noted that An, while a nationalist who saw peace in the East as necessary for the continued independence of Korea, was serious enough about Asianism that he was willing to give in on certain issues that other nationalists would have seen as nonnegotiable. For instance, while it is not clear whether he meant the joint military forces and the shared currency of the East Asian alliance were to entirely replace or coexist with national armies and currencies, either case would have meant a diminishment of the power of the nation-state to a greater or a lesser degree. Moreover, he assumed that China would willingly give up Lushun to international control immediately after Japan returned it. Similarly, An's acceptance of Japanese hegemony, in particular, his depiction of Japan as the head of Asia, showed a willingness to accept it as being, at the very least, a kind of first among equals. An therefore faced the same difficulty as Itō—how to strengthen Korean independence without compromising its sovereignty. In the end, An seems to have hoped that recognizing Japanese leadership in the region and accepting some guidance and help would lead not so much to absolute independence, but enough independence. One can hear echoes of Korea's subordinate relationship with China during the heyday of the Chosŏn dynasty here.

An understood the universe as fundamentally moral, meaning that the practice of virtue, that is, obedience to Heaven (or God), by individuals and groups would earn them Its (His) favor, bringing success. An, by absolutizing Asianism into a principle equal to that of obeying Heaven, therefore believed that actions taken in obedience to Heaven in pursuit of peace in the East would naturally succeed. This fundamentally moral perspective, colored by Asianism, caused him to misunderstand what drove Japan's actions and made the killing of Itō and the arguments put forward in his treatise to appear to him more effective than they really were. This can be seen most clearly in An's understanding of the Russo-Japanese War and the events leading up to it. An did not note that Japan had entered into an alliance with Great Britain in 1902 in part to prevent the diplomatic isolation that had made the Triple Intervention possible, and that this

43 Literally he accused Itō of “the crime of destroying peace in the East.” See Yun Pyŏngsŏk, An Ŭngb’l’yŏksa, 174–175.
strategy had paid dividends during Japan’s conflict with Russia by preventing a third power from intervening against Japan. Similarly, An did not note, and perhaps did not realize, that Japan publicly stressed, in order to calm Western fears of the “yellow peril,” that it was very different from China and that not only was it not interested in developing an Asian alliance, but that doing so was impractical. It was in fact Western help, in particular, loans to fight the war, that were of greater importance than Chinese neutrality (encouraged by Japan) or the assistance of Korea (in a large part coerced).

An’s Asianism, elevated to the status of a religious principle, led him to overemphasize Chinese and Korean contributions to Japan’s victory, and not to recognize the fact that Japan, by working selectively with the white empires, had achieved much more for Japan than it had gained from cooperating with China and Korea. Similarly, this same absolutized Asianism, combined with his failure to recognize the strength of Japanese nationalism, also helped lead An to believe that killing Itō would be an effective way of restoring Korean independence and peace, since, by following this human moral principle, An could, like Japan in its war with Russia, gain the help of Heaven, insuring his success.

It was not only the absolutization of Asianism that caused An to misread the situation, but also the limits of knowledge of the time. For instance, his incredulousness at Japan’s suing for peace matches that of many Japanese people who, like An, did not realize that Japan had to seek terms because it could not continue the war for long, leading many Japanese to riot in the streets when they learned of the terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth. Similarly, the Western powers really were encroaching on Asia, and not knowing the actual reasons why Japan negotiated a peace treaty with Russia or that Roosevelt had favored them, the idea that whites would work together against yellow people, particularly as seen in the Triple Intervention in which three white empires forced a yellow one to give up a piece of territory which a white power then took over without serious protests, was entirely rational. Such facts, viewed through the perspective of Asianism,

44 See Sin Unyong, trans., An Chunggŭn sinmun kirok [The interrogation records of An Chunggŭn] (Seoul: Ch’aeryun, 2010), 204–213. Sin Unyong, trans., An Chunggŭn sinmun kirok [The interrogation records of An Chunggŭn] (Seoul: Ch’aeryun, 2010), 307–321. This was the eighth session of An’s interrogation, which took place on December 20, 1909.
strengthened its explanatory power, illustrating its importance in An's worldview and why he elevated it to the equivalent of the religious principle of obedience to Heaven.

CONCLUSION

Rather than being isolated elements, Asianism, social Darwinism, and a Confucian-tinged Catholicism, along with nationalism, which while important was not wholly dominant, interacted with and shaped each other within An's thought into a world view in which Asianism was elevated to a human principle equal to that of obedience to Heaven—a Heaven that would intervene on behalf of the righteous—convincing An that killing Itō was not only justified, but was an effective means for restoring Korean independence and peace in the East. However, the results were very different from what An had hoped for. Not only did An not achieve his goals, he was executed as a murderer, and the assassination was used to depict Koreans as barbarous savages, justifying Japanese colonization. Someone could therefore argue that An's religious beliefs, his Confucian-tinted Catholicism, which led him to absolutize Asianism into a religious principle, had an entirely negative influence on An, and that had he not been so religious, he would have acted in a more reasonable and less violent way.

While there could be some truth to this assertion, I would argue that the religious influence on An's thought was more complex. The universal morality of Confucianism, reinforced by Catholicism, ensured that An's Asianism did not degenerate into xenophobic racism and led him to try and find solutions to world problems in which everyone would win. While believing in the reality of an ongoing race war, as we have seen, not without reason, An, because of the religious morality he accepted, rejected such conflict as normative, and instead sought a way that all together could enjoy peace by avoiding war. While in some ways impractical, particularly in his proposal involving the Pope, his call for Japan to act morally rather than to follow the way of Western imperialism had much to offer. Though An's belief that the return of Lushun might appear to be unrealistic, in particular in light of his view that it should be given back to China in order to become a city jointly managed by the three East Asian countries, such things did happen, and had the results An hoped for. For instance, only about a decade later, Communist Russia, through the 1919 Karakhan Declaration, unilaterally revoked the unequal treaties its Tsarist predecessor had signed with China. This act won the acclaim of many Chinese radicals and led to their interest in Communism and

the subsequent establishment of the Chinese Communist Party.\textsuperscript{48}

Conversely, An’s Asianist prediction of disaster if Japan continued on its course of pursuing “hegemony” violently, while taking three decades to come true, proved to be largely accurate. As An thought, it was a conflict between members of the “yellow race,” China and Japan, that led it to war with the “white” Allied powers, and the destruction of the Japanese Empire. However, An’s choice of violent means poisoned his message, which was largely ignored, and his writings were lost for decades. While the nature of history is such that counterfactual questions cannot be answered with certainty, one can wonder what would have happened if An’s bishop, instead of rejecting the university proposal, had arranged for him to study overseas, giving him the means and time to think more about the issues he faced, and providing him the equipment to pursue nonviolent means for Korean independence and peace.\textsuperscript{49} What then would the textbooks say of An and his historical significance?

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\textsuperscript{49} For a further analysis of this incident, and Bishop Mutel’s perspective, see Rausch, 69–76.
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