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MRL collection on the Korean independence outbreak6354208

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Description is written in: English.

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Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

3041 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

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burke@library.columbia.edu

URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	Missionary Research Library (New York, N.Y.)
Title:	MRL collection on the Korean independence outbreak
ID:	6354208
Date [inclusive]:	circa 1919 -- 1920
Physical Description:	0.25 linear feet 0.25 linear feet; 1 box
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	This collection contains materials compiled by the Missionary Research Library on the Korean Independence Movement of March 1, 1919. Included are mimeographed reports of the outbreak, organized into a ten-part series, and a pamphlet containing black and white photos.

Preferred Citation

Item description, MRL8: MRL collection on the Korean independence outbreak, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biographical / Historical

Commonly referred to as the Samil Movement (literally "three one") for its historical date on March 1, 1919, the Korean Independence Movement was one of the earliest and most significant displays of nonviolent demonstration against repressive Japanese imperial power in Korea. On that historical date, thirty-three Korean religious leaders came together to sign a "Proclamation of Independence," which they read that day before a large crowd in Seoul. Men, women, and children led by a group of young students, most of whom were Christian, peacefully protested at Pagoda Park in Seoul, displaying national unity against Japanese forces in their country. Armed with no weapons of any kind, the protestors chanted in unison "mansei" ("long live Korea"), voicing their hope for Korea to be freed from foreign occupation marked by severe hostility and oppression. The movement spread quickly to surrounding

cities and towns, resulting in more than 1,500 demonstrations within the following year, with nearly 2 million people in total participating in the independence movement. In their efforts to end the movement, the Japanese committed brutal atrocities against the peaceful Korean demonstrators, injuring even women and children and murdering innocent victims. Records indicate the Japanese police killed about 7,500 Koreans, wounded nearly 16,000, and arrested 45,000. The Japanese continued their policy of massacre in order to prevent further outbreaks of protest. Any Korean participating in the independence resistance was imprisoned and branded as a criminal. All thirty-three signers of the Declaration of Korean Independence were placed on trial, including forty-eight others who helped organize the independence movement. Since 1949, March 1st has been celebrated as a national holiday.

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Biographical / Historical

The Missionary Research Library was created by John R. Mott in 1914 after the World Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910. It was created in order to be both a resource for missionaries, and a means to document the missionary movement. With funding from John D. Rockefeller, Mott stated, "We are now ready to...secure the most complete and serviceable missionary library and archives in the world. I desire it to be thoroughly interdenominational, ecumenical and international. It should be made preeminently rich in source material." It was located at the Madison Avenue headquarters of the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America. By the 1920s, funding was becoming scarce; therefore it was moved to the Brown Tower of the Union Theological Seminary, New York City in 1929. The Library was an important center of information and research. Active missionaries would consult the material of the Missionary Research Library while on furlough. Much of the Library's success was due to the director and librarian, Charles H. Fahs. Upon his retirement in 1948, the MRL's financial difficulties continued until it was integrated with the Burke Library's collections in 1976. In 2004, the Burke Library was fully integrated with the Columbia University Library system.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains materials compiled by the Missionary Research Library on the Korean Independence Movement of March 1, 1919. Included are mimeographed reports of the outbreak, organized into a ten-part series, and a pamphlet containing black and white photos.

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Arrangement

This collection is unarranged.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2026-01-08

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Formerly part of the independent Missionary Research Library (MRL), these records were accessioned by the Burke Library at the time of the MRL's closure in 1976. The rare pamphlet was received by Charles Fahs, director of MRL, from Mr. J.W. Crofoot in Shanghai possibly in the 1930s.

Existence and Location of Copies

The collection has been scanned and turned into an online exhibit, which can be viewed online here: <https://exhibitions.cul.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio>.

Processing Information

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. The finding aid was created by Aram Bae in 2007, updated by Brigitte Kamsler in 2014 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2026.

Conditions Governing Use

Some material in this collection may be protected by copyright and other rights. Information concerning copyright, fair use, and reproduction requests can be consulted at Columbia's Copyright Advisory Office.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Korea -- History -- Independence movement, 1919 -- Archives
- Korea -- Politics and government -- 1910-1945 -- Archives

Burke Library record group:

Missionary Research Library Archives: MRL8, Korea

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
The Korean Independence Movement: pamphlet with photos, circa 1920	box 1	folder 1
<u>Existence and Location of Copies:</u> Existence and Location of Copies		
https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/pamphlet		
Part I: The beginning of the Korean Independence Uprising, March 1 – 5 , 1919	box 1	folder 2

Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part1

Part 2: The Origin and Cause, 1919	box 1	folder 3
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Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part2

Part 3: Conferences between Officials and Foreigners, 1919	box 1	folder 4
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Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part3

Part 4: Second Stage of the Movement, March 6 – 31, 1919	box 1	folder 5
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Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part4

Part 5: The Continuous of the Korean Independence Movement on April 1, 1919	box 1	folder 6
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Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part5

Part 6: Relation of the Foreign Missionaries to the Independence Uprising, 1919	box 1	folder 7
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Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part6

Part 7: Policy of Force: Japan Sending More Troops to Korea to Suppress the Independence Movement, 1919	box 1	folder 8
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Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part7

Part 8: How the Korean Shops were Reopened, 1919	box 1	folder 9
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Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part8

Part 9: The Terrible Outrages and Atrocities of the Barbarious [sic] Troops of his Majesty's Government of Japan occurred in Suwon and its Neighboring Villages, 1919 box 1 folder 10

Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part9

Part 10: Demonstrations in Seoul and Other Various Places; The Grievances of the Koreans under Japanese Iron Rule; The Torture of the Girls in Prison, 1919 box 1 folder 11

Existence and Location of Copies:

Existence and Location of Copies

https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/kio/outbreak_part10