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**SOCIAL MEMORY AND ETHNICITY  
THE AGING OF KOREAN RESIDENTS IN JAPAN**

**by**

**Sandra Soo Jin Lee**

**A dissertation submitted  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**in**

**MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**in the Joint Program**

**of the**

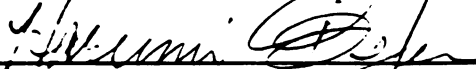
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**SOCIAL MEMORY AND ETHNICITY:  
THE AGING OF KOREAN RESIDENTS IN JAPAN**

**Sandra Soo Jin Lee**

**ABSTRACT**

**Korean residents in Japan, originating in the period of labor migration during Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945, currently number approximately 600,000 and span four generations. From fieldwork conducted in Tokyo, Japan in 1994-1995, this dissertation is a phenomenological study of the aging of first generation Korean elderly and the construction of ethnic identity in modern Japanese society.**

**Utilizing the theoretical framework of social memory developed by Maurice Halbwachs, the project is based on the contention that memories are products of an interpretative process by which historical events are negotiated by individuals. Social memory is inherently subjective and structured by language, collectively held ideas, and experiences shared with others. Constantly responding to changing social conditions, social memory contributes to the creation of community boundaries and the formation of ethnic identification. Using anthropological methods of participant observation, interviews and life histories, this ethnography examines the relationship between competing renditions of personal, community, and national memory for aging Korean residents in Japan.**

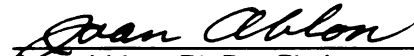
**Shifting memories and diaspora identity are discussed with respect to the body and notions of "homeland". In treating the physical body as a plane of memory signification, this dissertation examines the inscription of colonial memory on the aging bodies of first generation Korean residents and the roles of "bodily memory", gender, and generation in the politics of Korean ethnic identity. The nation, like the body, is conceptualized as a product of memory and amnesia. As the majority of first generation Korean residents**

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Abstract

emigrated from an undivided Korean peninsula, conceptions of "homeland" are suspended in time and space. The gaze "homeward" is discussed with respect to North and South Korean nationalism, resistance to assimilation, and the imaginings of an imminent "homecoming".

This dissertation challenges claims of cultural and racial homogeneity in Japan. In presenting the case of Korean residents, discriminatory practices and attitudinal prejudice in Japanese society are examined, particularly as they effect those in late life. In addition, the manifestations of a Japanese national identity, contingent on notions of racial purity, are discussed with respect to post-colonial Korean ethnicity in contemporary Japanese society.

  
Joan Ablon, Ph.D., Chairperson

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*Dedicated to my parents,  
Drs. Hi Young and Sun Myung Lee*

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## ABSTRACT

Korean residents in Japan, originating in the period of labor migration during Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945, currently number approximately 600,000 and span four generations. From fieldwork conducted in Tokyo, Japan in 1994-1995, this dissertation is a phenomenological study of the aging of first generation Korean elderly and the construction of ethnic identity in modern Japanese society.

Utilizing the theoretical framework of social memory developed by Maurice Halbwachs, this project is based on the contention that memories are products of an interpretative process by which historical events are negotiated by individuals. Social memory is inherently subjective and structured by language, collectively held ideas, and experiences shared with others. Constantly responding to changing social conditions, social memory contributes to the creation of community boundaries and the formation of ethnic identification. Using anthropological methods of participant observation, interviews and life histories, this ethnography examines the relationship between competing renditions of personal, community and national memory for aging Korean residents in Japan.

Shifting memories and diaspora identity are discussed with respect to the body and notions of "homeland". In treating the physical body as a plane of memory signification, this dissertation examines the inscription of colonial memory on the aging bodies of first generation Korean residents and the roles of "bodily memory", gender, and generation in the politics of Korean ethnic identity. The nation, like the body, is conceptualized as a product of memory and amnesia. As the majority of first generation Korean residents

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This dissertation challenges claims of cultural and racial homogeneity in Japan. In presenting the case of Korean residents, discriminatory practices and attitudinal prejudice in Japanese society are examined, particularly as they effect those in late life. In addition, the manifestations of a Japanese national identity, contingent on notions of racial purity, are discussed with respect to post-colonial Korean ethnicity in contemporary Japanese society.

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## PREFACE

On August 15, 1974 regular television programming was interrupted by a special news report. The broadcaster announced that an assassination attempt had been made against South Korean President Park Chung Hee. Showing grainy footage captured by the South Korean media, President Park stood at a podium in the packed National Theater in Seoul. Suddenly, gun shots rang out from the audience. Ducking behind the lectern, President Park escaped the bullets, however, the First Lady, who sitting directly behind him, was fatally wounded in the head.

I watched the footage of the assassination alone in our living room in Spokane, Washington when I was eight years old. Perhaps it was the graphic violence or the tacit knowledge that the shooting had some bearing on my life, but I found tears streaming down my face. Wanting to inform my parents, I walked to their room. However, unable to articulate the news, I could only pull them over to the television. The murder's relevance was confirmed by their unusual silence.

That year my hometown hosted the Exposition World Fair. My parents had made plans to attend a special program which was to be held at the Korean Pavilion at the fairgrounds. It seemed a coincidence that a Korean Cultural Festival had been scheduled on the same day in 1974 as the assassination. It was only later that I realized that August 15 marked the end of Japanese colonialism in Korea, the auspicious date for both the festival and President's Park's Liberation Address at the National Theater.

In preparation for our attendance of the festival, I remember my mother dressing me in the Korean traditional silk garments of a red and green jacket tied with a long sash and a red skirt which my grandmother had sent from Korea. Making our way into the crowded parkway, my parents managed to seat us near a group of "Little Angels", a traditional

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South Korean dance troupe of young girls who were to perform later that evening. President Richard Nixon delivered the keynote address. I was enthralled with these Korean girls my age who were dressed in similar traditional clothes. I tried to listen to the President's speech, but I only remember his few sentences of acknowledgment of the assassination of Yook Young Soo, South Korea's First Lady. It was at this point that I noticed several "Little Angels" begin to weep.

Strangely my memory played a trick of reconfiguring the actual sequence of events during this period of my childhood. As opposed to the Korean consulate who, in reality, gave the keynote address at the festival, my memory had inserted President Nixon in this role. Only after looking photographs and newspaper articles from 1974 did I realize that I had not heard the President on May 4, three months prior, at opening ceremonies of the World Fair and not on the day that South Korea's First Lady was assassinated.

I have often pondered the exact relevance of this cluster of events and why they should reemerge in my memory in this form as often as they have. Perhaps it is the ironic juxtaposition of President Park Chung Hee, whose dictatorship contributed to my parents' fears of returning to South Korea after completion of their medical training in 1966, with President Richard Nixon, whose changing of immigration laws in the 1960's permitted my parents to remain in the United States. Perhaps it was one of my first introspective moments of knowing that I was linked to this faraway place named "Korea" which until then was only distinguished by a splatter of pink paint on our world globe. Whatever the reasons, these images have visited me regularly and have become embedded in my recollections of growing up in the Pacific Northwest.

Only after several years did I learn more about the assailant in the assassination of First Lady Yook Young Soo. It was after I had begun my research on Korean residents in Japan that I came across the name Moon Sae Kwang. A third generation North Korean resident from Osaka, Moon Sae Kwang, was the 23 year old assassin, who, using a



Japanese passport and a .38 revolver allegedly stolen from a Japanese police box, had tried to kill President Park, but had murdered his wife instead.

In the past several years of attempting to explain my path in studying Korean residents in Japan, these images and perceptions have emerged in my responses. It seemed at first paradoxical that one of my earliest revelations of my Korean identity was, in a sense, created by another Korean in diaspora. Although I have little regard for Moon Sae Kwang, he, like me, was born away from the homeland, yet retained a gaze homeward.

By studying Korean residents in Japan I have, perhaps, selfishly, pursued many of the issues which I, as a Korean in the United States, have had to grapple. Beyond the historical and political specificities of Korean migration throughout the world, the dissolution and erection of national and community borders has complicated issues of ethnicity and race which were predicted to become obsolete with modernization. As the twentieth first century approaches, communities in diaspora appear to be on the rise, begging the question: from where is identity constructed?

My focus on memories and their changing nature along the lifecourse reflects my belief that notions of personal past and present are inherent products of one's social and cultural context. Memories are continually reconfigured and bartered in representations of the self. For diaspora peoples convergence and divergence of memory continually influence issues of membership, allegiance, and self-determination. It is from this pervasive and searching everpresent struggle of searching for meaning in memory that identity ultimately emerges.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is difficult to imagine that the intellectual and emotional support which has been so critical to the research and writing of this dissertation could be fully acknowledged in the span of a few pages. What follows certainly does not do justice to the relationships which have nurtured my growth as a graduate student and anthropologist. However, despite these shortcomings, I would like to identify a few of the debts I have incurred over the past several years.

The joint program in medical anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco has offered me the unique opportunity of working with faculty and graduate students at both campuses. I am grateful to Joan Ablon and Linda Mitteness who have been unrelenting in their support and encouragement throughout my graduate education. In particular, I thank Joan for her second year seminar which first ignited my interests in life histories and narrative texts; and Linda for her clarity and guidance in my study of gerontology and for her professional mentorship.

The arrival of Lawrence Cohen to the Berkeley faculty my third year of graduate school was a stroke of serendipity and I have benefited from his critical mind and understanding of the anthropology of aging.

I owe my introduction to Maurice Halbwachs' theories on social memory to sociologist Erhard Stoelting of the University of Potsdam, who was a visiting professor at U.C. Berkeley from 1992 to 1994. I am grateful for his critical tutorials which have proved integral to the writing of this dissertation. To Suh Sung, another visiting scholar to the Berkeley campus, I give special thanks for his patience in answering my novice inquiries and for his model of conviction.

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During my fieldwork experience in Japan, I accumulated a wealth of gifts, the most significant of which were my relationships with the participants of this project. I am forever grateful to the first generation Korean elderly women and men who generously shared their life stories with me and whose courage and perseverance have left an indelible mark on my life. I will cherish them always.

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While in the field, I had the good fortune of meeting Kang Soo Ja who acted as my assistant. I am grateful for her energy and dedication to this project and for her friendship. In addition, I thank Ha Young Sil; Iwata, Sumie; Kim Hong Ja; Kondo Ari; Pyon Ki Ja; Takamatsu, Kuniko; Yamamoto, Kazuo; and Morishima Yukiko; Nakane, Shoichi; and Yi Ryungson for their help throughout the fieldwork period. I would also like to thank Mitake Yumiko for her library assistance and Grace Lee for the map illustrations.

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As true of all my major undertakings, my family has maintained steadfast support. I am particularly grateful to my siblings, Grace and David, for their uncanny ability to provoke laughter at critical junctures in the writing of this dissertation. To my parents, who have taught us the most important lessons in life, I am thankful for their wisdom and strength. It is their depth of spirit to which this dissertation is dedicated. Finally, I thank my husband, John Shon, whose patience, generosity and love have nurtured me unconditionally and who has reminded me of the import of this work.

## NOTES

- ◇ Korean and Japanese names of individuals are written in the indigenous manner of surnames first, followed by given names. However, in the case that an Anglo given name is used, these are written with the given name first, followed by the surname. For example, Grace Lee.
- ◇ Korean and Japanese terms are printed in *italics*, followed by an explanation of their meanings. To distinguish between the languages, Korean terms are followed by "†" and Japanese terms are followed by "\*" when they are initially employed.
- ◇ Throughout the dissertation elderly participants are referred with the Korean titles: *halmoni*, meaning "grandmother", or *harabuji*, meaning "grandfather." For example, Han Eun Jong would be referred to as Han-*halmoni*. In addition, when indicating provinces on the Korean peninsula, the province name is followed by *-do*, meaning "province" in Korean.
- ◇ To protect the anonymity of the participants of this dissertation project and their families, all names used in the following text have been fictionalized and dates and places of birth have been altered.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In the March 1, 1993 edition of the New York Times, a full page ad runs with the emboldened title, "Why does Nissan want to destroy our homes?". Intermingled with the copy are photos of Korean residents of all ages, including one centered underneath the title showing smiling Korean children sitting behind a *buk†*, a traditional Korean drum. Two of the children motion the universal sign of peace with their v-ed fingers to the camera. Underneath the picture is the statement, "An Urgent Plea to the American People from the Korean Residents of Utoro, Japan" followed by the text:

#### UTORO, A VILLAGE BUILT ON HOPE

Utoro was born when Japan's military rulers forced many Korean laborers to build an airplane factory and airport south of Kyoto. After the war the workers were abandoned. We had no home, no jobs, and for many, no way to return to Korea. But we endured, hewing a life out of a small corner of the base. We built homes and a school, and raised our children, and created a community. As we scratched out a living, the Nissan plant which had produced war planes began to make cars. It also continued to own the land around the base, including Utoro.

In 1987, without informing the residents, Nissan cashed in on rising land prices and sold Utoro's 5 acres to a developer. The developer sent demolition crews to destroy Utoro, but we refused to move. We have tried to talk to Nissan, but they ignore us. They cannot ignore the American people who buy their cars and rely on their good name. They say, since they sold the land, they are not responsible. But they can't avoid responsibility for what they have done to the people of Utoro. Mercedes Benz voluntarily gave 20 million DM to foreign workers used as forced labor during World War II. Surely, Nissan, with its vast assets, can afford a small patch of land to help right an historic wrong. (New York Times, March 1, 1993:5).

At the bottom of the page are numbers and addresses for readers who want to demonstrate their support for the campaign to save Utoro for its Korean residents.

The two paragraph excerpt contains a web of information in which several categories of collective memories are intertwined. Although the story of the plight of powerless individuals forced out by corporate developers is all too familiar in today's world, this public plea for intervention attempts to trigger memories of Japanese imperialism in its effort to garner support for its cause. However, while the story of Utoro is explained in detail by the copious copy included in the advertisement, the predicament of Utoro Koreans, couched within the legacy of World War II, seems curiously out place. While most Americans certainly "remember" Japan's role in World War II, mainly as an aggressor in the Pacific, the role of Koreans is not part of the stock memories that this historical period brings to the American mind.

In the American rendition of World War II, Japan is associated with Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Colonized Koreans remain only peripheral players (deferred to the next war beginning in 1950). The obscurity of Korea during World War II is reified in the Pearl Harbor Memorial in Hawaii and in its 1980 US Navy film of the end of the War, a central component of the Memorial's tour. In the film the narrator describes the finale scene of the United States Navy, "the mightiest fleet the world had ever seen," liberating "Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal, the Gilberts, the Marshalls, New Guinea, the Marianas, the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and finally, Japan." Nowhere is there mention in the 23 minute film anything about Korea, the first nation to fall under Japanese rule and occupied for 35 years. Within this context, the Korean people of Utoro attempt to reinsert their own experiences in history n explaining Nissan's role in Japan's war effort and the company's use of conscripted laborers from Korea.

Paradoxically, the public plea by Utoro's residents is made on March 1, 1993, 74 years after the fated March 1st Movement of Korean nationalists in 1919, when hundred of

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thousands of Koreans protested Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula. These efforts included a delegation sent to the United States to garner support against the Japanese which was largely made in vain. Now as then, Koreans attempt to publicize their displacement by the Japanese from a space they have called "home" by appealing to the United States.

The plea for American involvement in the allocation of five acres of Japanese soil is couched in a historical framework in which the collective memories of the United States, Japan and Korea come into conflict. Unlike Germany which has fashioned its modern national memory by "war guilt," the Japanese government has cast itself as more of a victim more than aggressor with its plethora of literature, art and rhetoric focusing on the devastation and loss of human life in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>1</sup> In calling attention to their plight, Utoro's Korean residents engage in a battle of collective memory for which the biggest challenge in changing the future of their position in Japanese society is not only inserting their own identity, but also recasting Japan's understanding of the past.

### **The Politics of Identity and Management of Difference**

Currently, approximately 600,000 ethnic Koreans reside in Japan. This population is Japan's largest ethnic minority group, originating in Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945. During this period, millions of Korean nationals, primarily displaced peasants from southern Korean provinces, migrated to Japan, both voluntarily and under duress, to enter into Japanese labor markets. Those who remained after the end of World War II produced the current population of Korean residents, most of whom are second and third generation. Although this Korean population maintains one of the longest

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<sup>1</sup> This rendition of history is continually being contested by the United States and Japan in the debate of how the past is to be remembered. The cancellation of the 1995 Smithsonian World War II exhibit focusing on the dropping of the atomic bombs in Japan is an indication of the crafting of social memory and/or forgetting.

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histories of Korean communities living outside of the Korea peninsula<sup>2</sup>, little had been known of their origins until the highly publicized issue of forced prostitution of the so-called "comfort women" by the Japanese military had been revealed. However, while this issue has provoked international attention and a reexamination of past war crimes, the association of sex and Korean women has conflated many issues of identity and experience for this population. Although several thousands of Korean women were recruited to work as sexual consorts of the Japanese military, this figure is dwarfed by the excess of two million Korean colonial subjects who worked in other labor sectors.

Attempts to comprehend the complicated position of Korean residents in Japan have often been thwarted by terms indigenous to discussions of race and ethnicity in the United States. While labels such as "minority," "immigrant," and "alien," reveal certain aspects of the political and historical context of the Korean population in Japan, these are not sufficient translations of the status of *zainichi*\*, or "residents of Japan", the Japanese term used to refer to Korean residents of Japan. Rather, the nuances of the position of Korean residents must be explained within the specific historical and cultural context in which they have lived and the cultural categories of differences constructed in Japanese society.

Both Japanese and English literature on Koreans in Japan focus mainly on three areas of research: 1) the historical origins of the Korean population now residing in Japan; 2) the social and psychological difficulties facing Korean youth with respect to acculturation and assimilation; and 3) North and South Korean factionalism. Studies in anthropology have paid particular attention to processes of deviance, acculturation and conflict among younger Koreans (DeVos, 1983; Lee and DeVos, 1981; Rohlen, 1981)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Records of Koreans migrating to Hawaii at the end of the 19th century exist. However, the Korean migration to Japan was more formidable than immigration to the United States even during that period.

<sup>3</sup> Studies have indicated that Korean youth generate negative emotions of self-hate and self-doubt due to four main factors summarized by the following: 1) social discrimination and prejudice against Koreans, and negative stereotyping of Koreans by the Japanese; 2) an unfavorable reality among the Koreans, in consequence of existing social injustice, that is used to justify further prejudice and discrimination; 3) Japanization and de-Koreanization of those Koreans born and raised in Japan; and 4) a Japanese citizenship based upon genealogy, which makes it difficult to acquire the status of naturalized citizen in Japan

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The dissertation contributes to the literature on Korean residents in Japan by focusing on the largely neglected oldest old of this population, specifically, first generation *zainichi*. Drawing upon ethnographic research conducted in Tokyo from 1993 to 1995, this project examines aging with respect to collective memory and ethnic identity. Utilizing the social theory of Maurice Halbwachs, this project is founded on the premise that memories are socially constructed in which the past is often shaped by conditions in the present. The social memory of first generation Korean residents in Japan and the historical context of Japanese colonization and migration are examined in light of Korean ethnic identity in modern Japanese society.

My decision to concentrate on first generation Korean residents is due to my long term interests in ethnicity and aging. In a field as young as gerontology, literature on ethnicity has suffered from a dearth of studies. Although research on the sociometric relationships between class, gender and age have contributed to trends and correlations vis a vis these social measures, little is known of the daily life experiences of the aged in various ethnic groups. Ethnographic studies of the lives of minority elderly addresses these needs.

This project approaches the study of aging from the multi-layered perspectives of minority status, ethnic history and issues of political and economic membership. Focus is given to the intersections between nationality, ethnicity and gender in the negotiation of individual identity. This project concentrates on the phenomenological experiences of elderly Korean residents, contributing to the descriptive components. Applying the classic anthropological approach of participant observation, the study endeavors to understand the everyday lives of elderly Korean residents and their families and to compare their experiences to current conceptualizations of aging and ethnicity in Japan.

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(Wagatsuma, 1981). These factors in turn, have been used to explain the high rates of juvenile delinquency, depression and suicides rates among Korean youth in Japan (Sasaki and Wagatsuma, 1981).

Using life review methodology, the narratives of first generation elderly Korean residents and their families are interpreted in an effort to understand the dominant themes and issues facing this population. Its object is to understand how elderly Koreans think about their lives and their identity in Japanese society within the context of growing old. In so doing, this dissertation discusses the aging of the Korean community as a whole and the role of its elderly, as well as aging of the individual and the evolution of her social identity.

A major aim of this project is to challenge the assertion of alleged homogeneity in Japanese society and to contribute to the sparse, but growing literature on ethnicity in Japan. First, this dissertation focuses on internal categories of "foreigner" and "Japanese native" as elaborated in studies of Japanese cultural identity. Second, this dissertation discusses ethnicity with respect to labor, both in the context of Japanese colonialism and contemporary Japanese society in its continued use of foreign workers. Third, the concept of "assimilation" and its demands are examined in light of issues including national identity and election of citizenship among long term residents of first, second and third generation Koreans in Japan .

The objectives of this dissertation are admittedly bold, as any claims to representation are. While the academy in recent years has fervently disclaimed the ways in which ethnographic writing has asserted an authoritative expertise of the anthropologist on our local communities, it is apparent that prescriptions on avoiding the pitfalls of such writing are far more difficult to generate. In an attempt to embark in the writing of this dissertation heading at least in the right direction, every effort has been made to explain research activities and the community context in which work was conducted. This dissertation does not claim to represent all elderly Korean residents in Japan nor does it seek to present "modal" characterizations. Rather, it is a product of the parameters of the research design and site, self-imposed and otherwise, which is necessarily complicated by the biases and perspectives of the ethnographer herself.

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### **Organization of the Dissertation**

Chapter II offers a general discussion of aging in Japan in order to contextualize issues facing elderly in the general Japanese population and to investigate the ways in which these diverge and converge among elderly Korean residents. Following this preface, a detailed description of the field site is presented as well as a discussion of the approach taken in this project. A brief historical overview of the use of life history methodology in anthropological research is followed by a discussion of the characteristics of the group of participants involved in the project. Methods used in gathering and analyzing life histories are also examined.

In Chapter III, the theoretical framework of social memory is presented. The discussion begins with the evolution of "memory" as a sociological concept, with particular emphasis on Maurice Halbwachs' work. The more recent debates on social memory and its relationship to narration, nationalism and ethnicity are explored as well. This discussion does not focus on the specific situation of Korean residents in Japan, but rather attempts to present the major ideas and concepts of social memory which will be incorporated into analyses of ethnographic data in later chapters.

Integral to this dissertation is the contextualization of Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula at the beginning of this century and the political and economic factors contributing to the migration of Koreans to Japan. In Chapter IV the historical origins of this diaspora population are examined as well as the historical and political events affecting Korean resident lives after colonialism, with particular regard to the emergence of North and South Korean factionalism in Japan.

In Chapter V, the life histories of three Korean residents are presented. Though abbreviated, they are recounted here together in order to reflect various attitudes and life experiences towards elderly Korean residents. These narratives examine the ways in which

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lives are "remembered" and the types of issues with which elderly Korean grapple in everyday life. The life histories also reflect the institutional and attitudinal forms of discrimination levied against Korean residents and their access to familial and community support.

A nursing home catering primarily to elderly Korean residents is examined in Chapter VI of the dissertation. In addition to presenting the lives of elderly participants of the program, an investigation of the institutional structure is discussed in terms of the function it serves for the Korean resident population and the attitudes surrounding its services and care. This information is included to further reflect of the major issues facing many Korean residents in old age and their interaction with institutionalized health care in Japanese society.

Chapter VII focuses on Paul Connerton's term, bodily memory, by discussing corporal memory in late life. In treating the physical body as a plane for memory signification, this chapter examines the inscription of memory on the bodies of first generation Korean residents in which presentations of bodily signs are treated as landmarks of one's past in light of an increasingly unrecognizable modern present. Physical and psychological processes of self-identity are elaborated through the narratives of the elderly Koreans.

In Chapter VIII, Korean residents' notions of "homeland" are investigated. The majority of first generation Korean residents migrated to Japan from an undivided Korean peninsula. As a result, this diaspora population's ethnic affiliations to North and South Korea are founded on ideas of a homeland which are suspended in both time and space. In this chapter treatment of the homeland rests upon the incorporation and rejection of nationalized renditions of the past in the creation of personal history and the imagining of an imminent "homecoming" for these aged overseas citizens.

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A discussion of minority status in Japanese society is offered in Chapter IX. This chapter examines current conceptions of "Japaneseness" and the role of ethnicity in social life in Japan. Of particular importance are concepts derived from blood ideology and notions of purity. Discussion of marginalization includes examination of other minority groups such as the Burakumin, Ainu and Middle Eastern foreign workers as well as Korean residents. This chapter strives to determine how the research presented by this dissertation contributes to current discussions on inter-ethnic relationships and to suggest new directions and additional areas of ethnicity research in Japan.

A conclusion is presented in Chapter X. This discussion focuses on the relationships between space and time and the role of social memory for Korean residents in late life.

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## CHAPTER II

### ORIENTATION: SITE AND APPROACH

The challenges in examining the multivariate factors both dividing and uniting the Korean resident population in Japan are not only reflected in matters of translation, in triplicate from Korean, Japanese and English, but also matters of collective dissonance from the Korean peninsula in both space and time. Fundamentally, this compilation of words and ideas is centered on the project of making noise; noise nuanced by the inflections of layered experience and identity. This noise is tempered by a cache of categories of difference: race, gender and class. However, its strength is derived from the yet unrecognizable interstices between these spheres of discourse. The making of noise is to signify "location" characterized by relations between "others" and the "self" which, although everchanging, charts a meaningful and deliberate course.

From life history narratives of first generation Korean elderly in Japan, this dissertation attempts to understand the formation of ethnic identity in old age. Critical to this endeavor is an understanding of the historical contextualization of Korean life histories with respect to marginalized status in Japanese society. Utilizing the theoretical framework of social memory in which memories are understood as an inherently social medium influenced by experience and perceptions of the present, life history narratives are interpreted as stories; conscious representations of self identity. In analyzing these narratives, this project addresses minority status in Japanese society with respect to aging, history and Japanese categories of difference. The objectives of this project have been pursued through fieldwork conducted among first generation Korean residents and their families living in the Tokyo metropolitan area from January, 1994 to March, 1995.

The goal of this chapter is to orient readers to the field site in which this project has been pursued as well as to discuss the tools utilized in the collection of data. A general

overview of the current state of cross cultural social scientific research on old age in Japan is offered in order to understand aging of Korean residents within this framework, with specific focus on how the issues facing the aged in this ethnic group converge and diverge with the larger society. This will be followed by a detailed description of the fieldsite, a review of life history methodology and the approach used in this project, concluding with a short reflexive discussion on some of the challenges in pursuing this dissertation project.

### **Aging in Japan: Transformations and Conflict**

*From the yuppies crowding Tokyo's department stores to the crisp pace of its factories, Japan seems a nation of unbounded energy and youth. But that's the face the country presents to the outside world: nowadays, the face Japan sees is more apt to be lined with wrinkles (U.S. News and World Report, September 30, 1991: 67).*

In recent decades gerontology, the study of "old age," has emerged as an increasingly important multi-disciplinary field. This new research area has grown in response to an increasing need to understand the role of aging in light of rapid demographic, social and economic change. The growing literature of cross cultural research on differing social experiences of the aged has established competing theories on both the universality and specificity of aging experiences, often directly linking them to changes in the global economies. Anthropological studies have contributed to this body of literature by illuminating experiences of aging which are refracted by cultural values, native beliefs and local history. In the anthropology of aging, the question of how the universal physiological process of aging is manifested in localized settings is examined of symbolic meaning and function.

The case of Japan has occupied a central position in the discourse of international gerontology. The excerpt above reflects the significant changes which are occurring in Japanese society. Much of the attention has been placed on changing notions of the



"honorable elder" and transformations in Japan's gerontocracy, often valorized in western literature of cross-cultural gerontology. Increasingly apocalyptic language has been used to describe demographic shifts in Japan's age structure, warning other greying nations such as the United States that the "aging problem" must be addressed earlier than later.

Japan had always been the focus of attention in gerontology due to the apparent paradox of global economic power combined with traditional values and social structure. For those writing on gerontological issues in Japan, the economic problems associated with old age, considered the necessary effects of modernization<sup>1</sup>, have been consistently juxtaposed to long-standing Confucian ideals of filial piety and deference towards the elderly. This often results in a pattern of two predictions of the future of old age in Japan: the first casts Japan as one of the last bastions of deferential hierarchical treatment towards the elderly; or the second in which Japan becomes another example affirming the convergence theory of aging and modernization.

The central unit of analysis in understanding aging and the lives of the aged in Japanese society is the family. Lifecourse changes send a ripple effect through the basic social unit of the family which must then readjust. Plath, who has studied aging in Japan,

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<sup>1</sup> Modernization theory as applied to aging is founded on the notion that loss of status associated with aging is a universal experience in all cultures in which modernization processes occurs. This paradigm is most thoroughly discussed in the seminal text edited by Daniel Cowgill and Lowell Holmes, Aging and Modernization (1972). Modernization theory is described as founded on certain demographic assumptions, such as:

- 1) all nations endeavor to seek to prolong age;
- 2) all societies have age grading in which a class of old persons is a minority; and
- 3) females will constitute an increasingly larger percentage of the aging population, leading to more widows than widowers. (Cowgill and Homes, 1972)

The four most salient aspects of modernization which influence aging include the development of health technology, economic modernization and development with increasing specialization and training, urbanization leading to increasing economic pressures on the joint household unit and increasing importance of formalized education. All of these, using the modernization paradigm, presumably lead to an increasing generation gap and decreasing economic and social sources for independence and familial support for the elderly population. In addition, modernization theory considers the problem of physical mobility associated with increasing age and the tendency of the elderly for more sedentary than active physical roles.

argues that despite modernization the extended family unit will continue to function cohesively in late life. He writes:

Mass longevity means co-longevity. Not only does the average person live longer, so, too, do those around him. He and they will travel the lifecourse together a greater distance. Thus, nuclear households may be on the increase in post-industrial nations, but so, too, are four generation families, whether or not they happen to live under the same roof. A century ago the average person could anticipate that by the time he was old enough to marry, at least one of his parents would have died. Today the chances are great that both parents will live to witness his wedding-possibly his retirement ceremony as well (Plath 1980: 2).

However, others are not so sure. As reported by Long (1987), in Japan, daughters and daughter-in-laws continue to be the primary caretakers of elderly parents. With increasing financial and housing constraints, Japanese women are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfill their designated responsibilities. As a result, it is not uncommon for elderly parents to move from household to household in order to ease the burden. An alternative enlisted by some Japanese women caretakers is described in Dentzer's article "Graying of Japan" (U.S. News & World Report, Sept. 30, 1991). Dentzer, a senior American economist focusing on Japan, explains three main phenomena occurring in Japan in relation to a growing aged population. Citing increased longevity and decreased birth rates, she reports that the average elderly person may retire at around 65 years of age and continue to live until well into their nineties. However, at the same time, increasing numbers of women in their thirties and forties have been drawn into employment, making caretaking responsibilities of their elderly relatives difficult to fulfill. As a result, Dentzer reports a popular alternative employed by Japanese women which she describes as "social hospitalization" in which elderly parents are often admitted to hospitals for non-descript problems in the morning of each day and then picked up after working hours in the evening. Because of the nationalized health service available to the Japanese, the cost of

this type of daycare amounts to only approximately 500 yen a day, equivalent to about \$5 U.S. dollars. Dentzer reports that once admitted, the elderly relatives are assigned beds where they remain for most of the day (personal communication, April, 1992).

According to Dentzer, social hospitalization is a cost-benefit decision for middle aged children who are faced with the burden of caring for their elderly parents. It is difficult to determine how widespread this phenomena is a records for "social" hospitalization distinct from medically indicated hospitalizations. Nonetheless, this phenomena indicates the rising pressures faced by women in the care of the aged in Japan and forces the question of how these changes may be reconciled into the modern Japanese family unit.

The transfer of elderly parents from household to household and the emergence of social hospitalization indicate that the extended Japanese family unit may not be equipped to handle the growing numbers of elderly parents who are experiencing increased longevity. The fact that women are choosing to take advantage of the subsidized national health service in providing inexpensive supervisory care of their elderly parents represents a tug-of-war between family and state, each wanting the other to take on responsibility for the care of the elderly. The state's reluctance in providing residential care for the elderly is demonstrated by the relatively few nursing home facilities and programs in Japan (Palmore and Maeda, 1981). It has been theorized (Palmore and Maeda, 1981 and Kiefer, 1980) that the lack of such facilities is a result of a strong sense of filial piety. Yet, from sociological data, it is apparent that the issue is much more complicated. Long (1987) found that while the majority of the Japanese elderly (70%) prefer to live with their married children, a minority (45%) of their children desire this arrangement. While it is true that a majority of the elderly in Japan do currently live with their children, there are approximately 900,000 women over the age of 65 who live alone with increasing numbers expected (Burgess, 1986).

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### Korean Resident Status and Aging in Japanese Society

The "greying" of Japan has for the past few years been the focus of attention by policy makers interested in the ways in which Japan would meet the rapid demographic shifts towards an aged society. This interest has spawned a plethora of information presumed to aid our own social and economic coping strategies in caring for the growing numbers of those over the age of 65 years at home. However, while research on aging is on the rise in Japan with respect to Japanese elderly, there lacks a comparative model for non-Japanese elderly living in Japan. Given the monolithic claims of homogeneity in Japan, the dearth of research on minority aging is hardly surprising. Such research would inevitably reveal the disparities in educational and economic resources experienced by marginalized groups in Japanese society. In the case of Korean elderly, cohort effects such as mental and physical abuse endured during Japanese colonialism creates an added impediment to such comparative research given the reluctance of the Japanese government in acknowledging the use of colonized labor.

The gerontological literature in the United States and Europe suffers from a similar paucity in studies. Despite this weakness, there have been a few theoretical orientations that might prove helpful in hypothetical discussions of minority aging in Japan. One such perspective is the "double jeopardy" hypothesis in which ethnicity and age are believed to converge in a disadvantageous combination on the quality of life of the elderly<sup>2</sup>. From this hypothesis, one could predict that elderly Korean residents in Japan would suffer perhaps from "quadruple jeopardy" in which age, ethnicity, gender and class conspire against well being. While this projection helps to distinguish this group from its Japanese counterpart, the explanatory value is limited without further examination of what these categories mean within the localized context of postcolonial, late capitalist Japan.

Ethnicity serves as an expansive umbrella category which includes factors such as immigration, political history, economic stress and psychological and social alienation

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<sup>2</sup> For more on the double jeopardy hypothesis, see Jackson (1984), Dowd et. al (1978) and Ferraro (1989).

which may affect individuals throughout their lifecourse. In the study of aging these forces must be examined in order to better understand the lives of immigrant elderly. While many of the changes in Japanese society with respect to aging have been understood within the context of modernization theory, breakdown of extended family households, greater numbers falling into poverty, and higher incidence in feelings of depression and loneliness among elderly Korean residents may not be so easily explained. Rather, the specific historical and social situation of this population is better understood by the narratives of individual lives than the globalizing explanations of the alleged inevitable downward spiral of the oldest old. In this endeavor, this project utilizes the life review method and relies on the memories of the elderly which are interpreted along with participants' discussion of their present lives to better make sense of aging and personal history of Korean residents.

### **"Kawamachi": Home Factories and Killing Fields**

The choice of Tokyo as the field site deserves some explanation. The largest populations of Korean residents in Japan are in provinces of Osaka, Tokyo, Hyogo, Kyoto, Kanagawa and Aichi in decreasing order (see Appendix A). While the Korean population in the Kansai region is greater than in the Kanto region where Tokyo is located, historically, Tokyo has been an important urban center for Korean residents and offers an interesting contrast to Osaka.

One distinguishing characteristic of the Korean resident populations in Tokyo is that the community is more dispersed than in Osaka where there are dense ethnic enclaves. Although there are parts of Tokyo which have larger numbers of Koreans than others, inhabitants tend to reside and conduct business in smaller clusters. In contrast to the relatively strong interconnectedness of the Korean community in the Kansai region, Koreans in Tokyo live and work throughout the city<sup>3</sup> which produces a contrasting system

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<sup>3</sup> The dispersal of Korean residents and the fairly common practice of using Japanese names made identification of Korean participants difficult: a common problem for urban anthropology where "traditional" networking systems are broken down.

of social support, not based in Korean neighborhoods. My focus on the elderly Korean population made this residential pattern an important factor.

As much of the literature on aging, ethnicity and migration in the United States has indicated, the role of ethnic enclaves within urban centers, such as "Chinatowns", have been instrumental in offering residential social support. This is evident in Osaka's "Korea-towns" such as Kamagasaki where Korean elderly have access to community nursing homes, hospitals and other support organizations. Undoubtedly, had similar research objectives been carried out in Osaka, the product would differ from that presented here. In Tokyo, these support organizations are not generally as clustered in specific neighborhoods nor are there as many as in the Kansai region. In addition, Korean elderly often live alone, separated from a cohesive Korean community. Without the existence of large Korean enclaves, Tokyo presents an interesting site to examine the ways in which ethnic identity is formed in old age in a modern urban center in Japan.

#### "Kawamachi", Arakawa Ward

During the fieldwork period, I lived in Arakawa ward of Tokyo. Arakawa ward is located in the city's northeast corner near the Arakawa River and maintains the largest population of Korean residents of any of the 22 other wards in Tokyo, numbering approximately 7,000<sup>4</sup>. Arakawa ward is located in the area of Tokyo known as *shitamachi*\*, literally translated as "downtown". This should not be confused with contemporary notions of "downtown" as *shitamachi* refers to the part of Tokyo which was formerly the city of Edo during the Tokugawa Period before it evolved into the current capital of Japan during the Meiji Restoration. Modern Tokyo is often described in terms of *shitamachi*, the traditionally culturally rich center of entertainment and the arts; and *yamanote*\*, the rather removed hilly, residential suburbs historically occupied by aristocrats. Edward Seidensticker describes this dichotomy in terms of "low city" and

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<sup>4</sup> Nihon, Somucho Tokeikyoku, 1991.

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"high city," respectfully, and chronicles the changes of the "plebeian flatlands" of shitamachi as a result of the city's expansion into the yamanote areas to encompass what is now known as modern Tokyo (1984: viii)<sup>5</sup>.

In the time of Edo, however, much of what is now known as Arakawa ward was sparsely populated marshland. In fact, even today Arakawa ward continues in relative obscurity among its counterparts as it was not on a few occasions that I had to explain where Arakawa ward was located to bonafide Tokyo-ites. However, despite its lack of notoriety among the general Japanese population, Arakawa ward has figured prominently among those interested in Korean ethnic identity in Japan. Ethnographic data presented in DeVos and Lee's volume, Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation (1980) was collected from Koreans living in Arakawa ward. This was also the case in the more recent fieldwork of anthropologist Sonia Ryang, who has focused on North Korean ideology and education in Japan <sup>6</sup>.

There are several reasons why Arakawa ward lends itself to ethnographic research. In contrast to the highly commercial and sophisticated urban landscapes of Tokyo's more well known wards such as Shibuya and Shinjuku, Arakawa ward's slower pace and neighborhood ambiance is more comparable to outlying provincial suburbs than to Tokyo proper. While the blueprint of the ward maintains a labyrinthine quality consistent with the streets of Tokyo, Arakawa ward is clearly a ward of homes with considerably less through-traffic than other parts of the city. The insularity of the ward appeals to traditional notions of the "field site" and the practicality in carrying out the objectives of anthropological research.

In addition, Arakawa ward has a good representation of Korean resident organizations. The largest North Korean elementary school in Japan is located here. As in

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<sup>5</sup> For more on these low/high distinctions discussed in a thorough architectural ethnography on Tokyo, see Tokyo: a Spatial Anthropology (1995) by Jinnai Hidenobu.

<sup>6</sup> See the Ryang's book, The World of North Koreans in Japan, forthcoming in 1996 from Westview Press.

the majority of the wards in Tokyo, there are local branches of Chosen Soren and Mindan, the North and South Korean resident political organizations. In addition, there are five Korean churches, several family run markets which specialize in Korean groceries and cooking ingredients, numerous Korean barbecue restaurants, a Korean managed health clinic, two branches of North Korean sponsored banks, Korean youth programs, and various other small businesses. The "community" of Korean residents live throughout the ward in its various towns.

The town where I lived and conducted a large portion of my research is one which I will call "Kawamachi". It is typical of most other towns in the ward with its longtime residents and atmosphere of familiarity. The businesses in the town are predominantly small, family owned enterprises. In their 1973 study entitled Socialization for Achievement: Essays on the Cultural Psychology of Japan, DeVos and Wagatsuma examined entrepreneurship among the Japanese lower-urban class in Arakawa ward. One focus of their work was the struggles and frequent economic failures of small family run ventures in the postwar period. The turnover of these types of businesses continue to characterize Kawamachi with many of the homes serving as both abode and small company. The term, "home-factory," was first used by Wagatsuma (1973) to describe these dual purpose spaces.

Home-factories are predominantly small warehouse structures which serve as manufacturing sites as well as living quarters and are found throughout Arakawa ward. They consist primarily of family units in which husbands, wives, children and, in some cases, other relatives work together in producing a single product. Among Korean resident families, it is common that a single component of a high ticket item such as a computer or other electronic good is manufactured in the home-factory and then sold to a larger well known Japanese company. For example, one Korean resident home-factory produced copper wiring used for Japanese video cassette recorders and another produced small rubber pads to be used in keyboards of portable laptop computers. Each family worked



under short term contracts with major Japanese companies. As DeVos and Wagatsuma (1973) reported, the turnover of these small manufacturing units is high, although they have exhibited a certain degree of resilience in adapting to changes in product demands.

The cityscape of Kawamachi is typical of Tokyo's pastiche of low lying wood, steel and concrete buildings of two to three stories. The anomaly is the expansive, recently constructed crematorium which lies in the middle of Kawamachi, taking up a three block area. The modern concrete structure dwarfs the small scale of the town, hiding the numerous tiny homes and businesses in the immediate area. The entire compound is surrounded by a concrete wall and an iron gate. The building encloses its own parking lot and has few windows. The original crematorium, one of four in the Tokyo metropolitan area, was destroyed during its reconstruction five years prior to my arrival to Kawamachi. At that time, the neighborhood coalition protested its encroachment and monolithic design, claiming that because of the crematorium's conspicuousness, the town would only incur greater stigmatization.

One family who was particularly concerned was that of Pak Young Jin who owned a home-factory directly behind the new crematorium, separated only by a narrow street. The Pak's warehouse consists of a fifty year old antiquated wooden structure. Sheets of metal have been affixed in an ad hoc pattern over the years in efforts to repair the decaying walls and leaky roof. Mr. Pak, a sixty four year old first generation South Korean resident, and his eldest son, Jin Ho, manufacture leather handbags which are sold to vendors in South Korea. Mr. Pak lives with his wife, Yang Young Mi, upstairs in the living quarters of the warehouse. Their daughter, Mikiko, was a student at Waseda University and had rented an apartment near campus. It was her recently vacated room that I had the good fortune of renting from the Pak family during my stay in Arakawa ward.

The Pak's warehouse had been passed down from Mr. Pak's father who had acquired the building several years after migrating with his son to Japan in 1936 from Kyongsangnam-do in South Korea. Mr. Pak's mother had stayed behind, passing away

by the time Mr. Pak was ten years old. Soon after Mr. Pak's father remarried a Japanese woman and the family settled in Tokyo. The warehouse went through several transformations in the history of the Paks' various businesses. The Paks had previously produced silk cloth, paper, and ready to wear clothes, although each of these businesses ultimately failed. The faded sign above the warehouse was a testament to this, reminding passerbyers of the Pak's attempt at the restaurant business. In fact, the official maps from the Arakawa ward office continued to label the Pak's building as the "Arakawa Sports Facility", a residual from when the bottom floor of the warehouse was turned into a bowling alley.

The Pak's current leather business occupies the entire first floor and three fourths of the second floor. Although most of the space was used for storage of the innumerable rolls of wholesale leather, there was a work area equipped with sewing machines on the second floor where two Burakumin male employees created most of the handbags. In addition to these two men, the Paks hired a Burakumin couple who helped with the company's administrative and financial responsibilities.

Along with Korean residents, Arakawa ward should be noted for its relatively high population of Burakumin. As both groups are often found in similar areas in the city which are characterized by lower socioeconomic neighborhoods, their mutual presence in Kawamachi is not surprising. The Burakumin consist of a highly stigmatized group and are often referred to as the Japanese equivalent of the caste of "untouchables." Prior to the Meiji period, Burakumin were relegated to occupations associated with blood, death and danger which were inherited from generation to generation. Although this edict has long been withdrawn, the social stigma against the Burakumin continues. The existence of Kawamachi's crematorium and the Pak's leather business are not incidental as even today, many Burakumin are relegated to "polluted" areas of work due in large part to continuing discrimination against them in other areas of employment.

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The "home" of the Pak's home-factory complex takes up the northeast corner of the second floor of the warehouse. Separated only by glass and wood *shoji*, or sliding doors, "going home" for the Pak's means crossing the warehouse and entering into an entirely different living environment from the factory. The kitchen was the central room of the home and was large by Japanese standards. It had been recently renovated at the request of Mrs. Pak and was equipped with a dishwasher, double sinks, new cabinetry and new parquet wood flooring. In the middle of the kitchen was an eight chair dining table where the Paks and I had all of our meals. Next to the kitchen was a traditional *tatami* \* (bamboo matted) room which was used as the T.V. room. There were also three bedrooms, one bathroom, a small laundry/utility room and a narrow balcony which was primarily used to hang laundered clothes. My room was, like the kitchen, an anomaly by Japanese standards though it had tatami matting. It was equipped with a western bed instead of a Japanese futon and two wardrobes, a desk, and two bookshelves. My room in the Pak's home-factory proved to be a fruitful vantage point from which to conduct the project's research.

### Navigation and Networking

One of the difficulties in conducting ethnographic research on specific age cohorts is identifying sites where these individuals may congregate. In studying first generation elderly Korean residents, I discovered quickly that residentially based research was not, by itself, the only path by which to proceed. In many cases, elderly Korean residents, particularly those living alone, were dispersed throughout the city. The discovery of the "sites" at which these older individuals gathered was in itself a process of understanding the kinds of issues facing this age cohort and the characteristics of social networking within the Korean resident communities in Tokyo.

Of the institutions within the Korean resident community, there are three categories of organizations which were the most productive in locating first generation elderly Korean residents. The first of these was the Korean Church. I was introduced to this network of

churches on a previous trip to Japan when I met a young second generation Korean resident pastor who, after attending university and seminary in the United States, was employed by Tokyo's largest and oldest Tokyo Korean Christian Church as a junior clergyman. The Church is a member of the Korean Christian Churches of Japan (KCCJ), an organization which oversees 70 affiliated churches in Japan from Okinawa to Hokkaido. Tokyo Korean Christian Church which is located in central Tokyo was one of five in the metropolitan area. It was established in 1908 under the auspices of the Korean YMCA before formal annexation of Korea by the Japanese government. The congregation was initially meager in size, consisting mostly of *yangban*<sup>7</sup>, or upper-class, Korean students who had come to Japan to study at the universities. Currently, the church's roster has more than three hundred names and holds services in both the Korean and Japanese languages.

At Tokyo Korean Christian Church, as at several of the other Korean churches I visited throughout the fieldwork period, the congregation often shared lunch together after services. The production of these often massive meals were largely orchestrated along certain age groups. Cooking was usually conducted by older married women in their late forties and fifties whereas serving responsibilities were given to younger married women in their twenties and thirties. Men, children and women were separated by either tables or rooms and often elderly Koreans were given a separate dining area and almost always served before the others. Preserving gerontocracy evident in Japan, but even more stringent in traditional Korea, these meal times offer a natural age stratified group setting and were critical periods for dialogue with project participants<sup>7</sup>. The church system was not only helpful in identifying elderly Korean residents, but also presented many opportunities for participant observation of interaction between elderly members as well as offering a forum in which to meet and speak with extended family members.

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<sup>7</sup> As can be expected, my presence in these areas usually reserved for the oldest old was curious to many, particularly to other younger members of the church. Only with time did my presence become a matter of custom to others as well as to myself.

The second institutional category which I utilized in my field research was literacy schools designed for Korean elderly residents who, though able to communicate verbally in Japanese, were unable to read in the language easily. These literacy schools in Tokyo, frequently called *halmoni hakyof*, which translates to "grandmother school", reflects the gender of most of the students who participate in these programs. Although a few men attended the schools, the large majority were widows who either lived alone or with their children's families. The bulk of my research was conducted with students from two literacy schools located in Nakano and Shinjuku wards.

The Nakano literacy school met one evening each week at the Nakano Ward Community building which is available for free use by residents of the ward. At the time of research, the school had been in existence for three years, initiated by a first generation North Korean female activist who continued working weekly with elderly Koreans. There were approximately fifteen students who attended regularly, most of whom were first generation Korean residents in their sixties and seventies. The organizers and teachers at this school were mainly Japanese nationals and second and third generation Korean resident college students, although a few older Korean residents also volunteered as instructors.

The school was structured by levels of literacy with specific goals tempering progression of students. Class time was devoted to both individual and group work, though the levels of the students varied greatly. The room used was set up like a college classroom with rows of chairs and desks. The head instructor would stand at the front of the class, taking attendance and stopping the tutorials for group discussion on common problems in reading or writing. The instructors, many of whom were interested in careers in education, met after every class to discuss students' progress and potential problems in instruction and materials.

The school in Shinjuku ward was a component of a Korean cultural center which provided several programs for Korean residents in Tokyo. The literacy program was in

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their sixth year when I began to participate. Unlike the Nakano school, classes in Shinjuku met daily for two hours each morning and consisted of approximately twenty Korean women in their late sixties, seventies and eighties. The instructors were a heterogeneous group of both Japanese nationals and Korean residents of all ages and generations, yet all but one was female.

The room used by the literacy program doubled as the children's playroom where Korean elderly students would sit at low tables arranged close together on bright pink shag carpet. On the wall hung finger-painting creations by the children next to *halmoni s' katakana*\*<sup>8</sup> manuscripts. Unlike the Nakano school, this program was less regimented, though it met daily. Students were free to bring their own materials and to concentrate on whatever skills they desired. Many of the instructors had been with the program since its inception and had developed long term personal relationships with their students. Instructors tended to work with the same students, though the relaxed atmosphere of the school and the familiarity with which people treated each other indicated that this was not a rigid system.

Although the Nakano and Shinjuku schools diverge in many ways, both served as a meeting place for elderly Korean residents who used their class time as an opportunity for socializing and maintaining networks of friendship with fellow students as well as with instructors. Throughout my six month tenure volunteering at both the Nakano and Shinjuku schools, I conducted formalized interviews for life history narratives as well as engaged in informal dialogue of everyday life events.

The third institution on which I focused for this project was the nursing home. Beginning with Korean resident physicians practicing in Tokyo, I was directed to a nursing home located outside the metropolitan areas but which primarily catered to elderly Korean

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<sup>8</sup> *Katakana* is one of that three written languages used by the Japanese, primarily for foreign words which have been incorporated into the Japanese language. For example, *wodopro*, meaning "word processor" would be spelled in katakana. Most of the elderly Korean residents at the schools were somewhat familiar with *hiragana*, the written characters used phonetically to indicate Japanese words. They experienced greater difficulty using katakana and *kanji*, the Japanese system of Chinese characters.

residents of Tokyo who were unable to continue their living arrangements there. Although I am aware of a large nursing center for Korean elderly under way in Osaka, nursing homes catering to primarily Korean residents are, indeed, anomalies in Japanese society where nursing home care in general, has only recently received greater attention. Thus, by including ethnographic data on this facility, it is not my intention to claim that this particular program is representative of residential care for elderly Koreans in Japan. Rather, this program afforded me the opportunity to further my understanding of life in old age for first generation Korean residents who for a variety of reasons were located in this nursing home outside of Tokyo. The path by which I came to know this place is described in detail in Chapter VII.

In addition to these institutions, the course of my field research was like most anthropological endeavors: a result of serendipity. Though initially a somewhat slow and often frustrating experience, with time and patience my connections within the various Korean communities grew exponentially. These led to interviews of those involved in many other Korean institutions as well as of those who resided in their interstices. In focusing on the oldest old of the Korean population in Japan, it was critical to understand their positions within the context of the current four generation ethnic community whose heterogeneity is cloaked by a group label of "Korean". Numerous informal and formal interviews were conducted with Korean residents of all ages, generations and citizenships in order to highlight some of the contours of this population.

### **The Approach: Life Histories and Analysis**

*No more elegant tool exists to describe the human condition than the personal narrative. Ordinary people living ordinary and not-so-ordinary lives weave their memories and experiences according to the meaning life has for them. These stories are complex, telling of worlds sometimes foreign to us, worlds that sometimes no longer exist. They express modes of thought and culture often different from our own, a challenge to easy understanding. Yet, these stories are also familiar. It is just this tension-the identifiable in endless transformation - that is the currency of personal narratives, as they reveal the complexities and paradoxes of human life (Shostak., 1989: 239)*

Life histories have been used in this project as a critical vehicle by which to understand self-concept. Construction of life histories is an exercise by which individuals are able to maintain a sense of continuity over a lifetime by interpreting events in a personally meaningful way. The life-story construct provides integration of past experiences into the present as well as anticipations of the future and includes self identifying life changes woven into an integrated account of the course of life (see Cohler, 1982; Erikson, 1978). The significance of memory and life review in the maintenance of personal integrity and morale is the foundation on which this project proceeds (see Butler, 1963; Myerhoff, 1979; Kaminsky, 1984).

Several anthropologists have incorporated the life history as either the focus of their research or in supporting material. Watson (1985, 1978, 1976) and Watson-Franke (1985, 1972) have written extensively on the role of life histories in anthropological work and have defined the life history as:

*...any retrospective account by the individual of his life in whole or part, in written or oral form, that has been elicited or prompted by another person (1985: 2).*

They make a distinction between life histories and autobiographies, characterizing the latter as a "self-initiated" retrospective account of one's life which usually takes the written form.

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In addition, a further distinction should be made between the life history and the chronicle or journal. As opposed to the diary entry approach in which events are recorded soon after they have taken place and emotions are captured as they are experienced, the life history is a way in which life experiences are remembered in connection with others at a later stage in life. Watson and Watson-Franke's words are helpful in understand the inherently latent review in the creation of a life history:

...the whole life course is seen from the point of view of the person as he is currently trying to make sense of his relationships to past events, and he may not remember or choose to emphasize the things that were once important (1985:3).

Life histories are thus, a product of selective memory in the pursuit of self-representation.

The construction of a coherent life review among the elderly has been proposed as demonstrating a sense of psychological well-being in late life (Butler, 1963; Munnichs, 1966; Tobin, 1991). For this study, integration of lifetime events such as migration to Japan during the colonial period, decisions to remain in Japan, and selection of national citizenship are examined as having significant influence in life history narrative and maintenance of personal integrity. The manner in which these events have been woven into the personal histories of the respondents are analyzed in relationship to present ethnic identity. Kaufman is helpful in elucidating this interdependence of the past and present:

Personal identity as a phenomenon can be studied only in the present; the researcher cannot know about those themes which have been altered or abandoned, because the integration of experience takes place only through presently existing frameworks of understanding. The analyst cannot separate the past from the present in an oral life story; one can know the meaning of the past only through a person's current interpretation of it. Because of this, the informant's identity (or major aspects of it) is shaped anew in the process of telling the story of his or her life (Kaufman, 1986: 150).

Kaufman's main contention that old age, in and of itself, does not contain meaning divorced from the entire lifecourse is one which is well taken. In conducting research on the oldest old of the Korean diaspora population in Japan, this dissertation does not argue that old age is a privileged vantage point by which to garner life's meaning. Rather, this dissertation focuses on old age as intricately connected to each point of the lifecourse. In addition, this dissertation addresses the aging of the Korean community in Japan as a whole and the ways in which the first generation conceptualizes Korean identity distinct from their children and their children's children.

The life histories are analyzed with particular emphasis on the nature of experiences with the general Japanese population, the coherence of the life story and respondent explanations of the nature and structure of lifetime events. Commonalties in life histories among age cohorts will also be examined in analyzing the social memory and ethnic history of the Korean community residing in Japan.

### Life History in Anthropology

One of the first anthropologists to incorporate the life history into his work was Radin (1926) who captured the life of a Winnebago Native American man in his ethnography, Crashing Thunder. In presenting the case of one individual, Radin believed that the goal of understanding culture should be pursued through the lives of specific individuals rather than a generalized study of group characteristics. Radin effectively utilized biographical material of a single individual in his discussion of Native American culture and society <sup>9</sup>, although the specifics of the methodological approach to life histories was left largely ambiguous.

It was not until Dollard's Criteria for the Life History (1949) that a life history approach was explicitly detailed. Dollard's criteria was highly elaborate and to some,

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<sup>9</sup> This was particularly the case among those studying Native Indians. See Clews Parsons (1922); Neihardt (1932) and Fee (1936). Also, in sociology, see Thomas and Znaniecki's (1927) biographical work on Polish peasants in the United States and Europe.

highly arbitrary. However, Dollard's contribution was one of distinguishing the life history method as used in social scientific research from the literary and impressionistic frameworks of previous publications. Influenced by psychoanalytic theory and the culture and personality school in anthropology, Dollard emphasized the importance of life histories as cultural texts rather than individualized psychological testimonials. He valorized work such as Dubois' The People of Alor (1944) in which life history material from individuals was used to develop a theory of group personality structure.

In his life history of Don Talyesva, a Hopi Indian which was published under the title, Sun Chief in 1942, Simmons also utilized the analytic tools of personality studies. In examining the life of Talayesva, Simmons focused on the ways in which the individual adjusts to his physical, social, and cultural environment and concludes with a situational analysis of life events.

Life histories declined in popularity in the 1950's and 1960's. An exception to this was the expansive work of Lewis' work on the culture of poverty which includes Five Families (1959) and The Children of Sanchez (1961). These works attest to Lewis' and others development of humanistic and literary style which helped to popularize his ethnographies. One criticism of Lewis, however, was his weak explanation of his methodological approach and framework of analyses.

In contrast to Lewis, Mandelbaum (1973) in his reconstruction of the life of Ghandi, devised an analytic model in which three categories: dimensions, turnings, and adaptations were used in interpreting life histories. Dimensions were separated into four categories: biological, cultural, social and psycho-social. Within these spheres, turnings, defined as periods of major change, and adaptations, defined as changes and continuities elected in adjustment to new conditions, are examined with respect to one another. Freeman used Mandelbaum's scheme in his life story of Muli, an Indian Untouchable published in 1979.

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During this time, Watson (1976) made an important contribution to the use and study of life histories by incorporating a phenomenological perspective in which the act of gathering a life history was to be examined in light of subjective phenomenon. In so doing, Watson helps to re-inscribe interaction implicit in a life history project and increase sensitivity to emic and etic perspectives. Watson advocates a hermeneutic approach in the interpretation of the life history narrative. This framework is realized explicitly in the experimental work of Crapanzano (1980) in his Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan. In this life history, Crapanzano attempts to suspend his own "rendition of reality" in understanding Tuhami. He also reinserts the role of the ethnographer into the finished work by claiming that the process of exchange between anthropologist and participant is a process of negotiation reflected in the resulting narrative. Sensitivity to the issue of participant and ethnographer "voices" in the compilation of the life history is also evident in the Shostak's Nisa: the Life and Works of a !Kung Woman (1981) in which she fully incorporates her presence into the Nisa's narratives and her own fieldwork experience, thus situating both participant and researcher.

The work of Meyerhoff has been particularly important for life history work, in general, and this dissertation, in particular. Meyerhoff is best known for her ethnography of Jewish elderly associated with a senior center in Los Angeles published as Number Our Days (1979), however her first life history can be found in her work with Huichol shaman, Ramon Medina Silva, in Peyote Hunt (1974). It is through her relationship with Silva that Meyerhoff understands the religious and cultural symbols used by the Huichol, a Mexican Indian group. Utilizing narrative of Silva's life course and her experiences in the field, Meyerhoff resonates of Radin in examining culture through the specificities of individual life.

In Number Our Days Meyerhoff skillfully uses the words of her informants and their life experiences in presenting Jewish culture with respect to immigrant status. Meyerhoff examines how cultural values and attitudes act adaptively in individual lives and

the ways in which the life review incorporates the past in ways meaningful in the present.

She writes:

To signify this special type of recollection, the term, "re-membering" may be used, calling attention to the reaggregation of members, the figures who belong to one's life story, one's own prior selves, as well as significant others who are part of the story. Re-membering, then, is a purposive, significant unification, quite different from the passive, continuous fragmentary flickerings of images and feelings that accompany other activities in the normal flow of consciousness. The focused unification provided by re-membering is requisite to sense and ordering. A life is given a shape that extends back in the past and forward into the future. It becomes a tidy edited tale (Meyerhoff, 1992: 240)

While her statements on the reconfiguration of the past in the attempt for cohesiveness is well taken, Meyerhoff has been criticized for her defense of narrative closure. Her last sentence of recollection becoming a "tidy edited tale" warns of the danger of over-interpretation of life history narrative. Remembering often results in a collage of experiences in which cohesiveness is not always evident.

A major contribution of Meyerhoff's work is in the area of reflexivity. Like Crapanzano, Meyerhoff has used her own technique in incorporating her presence in the dialogical exchange with her participants. She recognized that the context of speaker and audience was fundamental to the process of creating meaning. In this way there is the "double frame" of the life story in which both the speaker and listener collaboratively fashion the narrative.

Reflexiveness does not leave the subject lost in its own concerns; it pulls one toward the Other and away from isolated attentiveness toward oneself. Reflexiveness requires subject and object, breaking the thrall of self-concern by its very drive toward self-knowledge that inevitably takes into account a surrounding world of events, people, and places (Meyerhoff and Ruby, 1982: 311).

Like Crapanzano, Meyerhoff has argued that the reflexive framework of ethnographic research relies on explicitness in which the method employed by the researcher is made known. Meyerhoff and Ruby write:

The anthropologist, as a data-generating instrument who must also make explicit the process by which he or she gathers data, is an integral part of the final product: The ethnography. The anthropologist must take his or her behavior into account as data (Meyerhoff and Ruby, 1982: 324).

In pursuit of this goal, the following is a description of my approach in the field in the collection of life history narratives of first generation Korean elderly in understanding Korean ethnic identity in Japanese society.

#### Nuts and Bolts: Pursuing Life Histories

The dissertation project was explained to participants in broad terms as an anthropological study of elderly Korean residents' lives in Japan. In addition to traditional tools of participant observation, extensive interviews were conducted with those who consented. Anonymity was promised and all participants' names in the dissertation are pseudonyms. In addition, details of participants' origins from Korea and of home locations in Japan have been altered in cases where these facts would jeopardize confidentiality.

While the project includes formal and informal interviews of first, second, third, and fourth generation Korean residents, the core consists of twenty one full length life histories of first generation Korean residents over the age of 60, all of whom live in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Life history interviews consisted of three to seven formal interview sessions in which participants were asked to describe their lives. Interview protocols were used although participants were free to deviate from these (Appendix A). In

addition family members, friends and neighbors were interviewed whenever possible in conjunction with each elderly participant.

Participants were selected from those who I became acquainted during my research in Arakawa ward, at the various Korean resident organizations described above and through introductions from other Korean residents in Tokyo. Of the twenty one core participants, seventeen are female and four are male. The large number of females may be explained by several factors. The first is due to the demographic phenomena of longer life expectancy for women than men. This is reflected by the high number of widows in the participant set. Second, the organizations on which I focused, for example, the literacy schools and churches, were largely made up of women. Third, the demands of the life history method requires not only long periods of close contact during interview sessions, but also discussion of intimate details of one's life. As a woman researcher, the opportunities for such experiences were greater among Korean women than men. However, in supporting interviews with family members and others, this gender balance was not as apparent.

For the most part, interviews were carried out privately in participants' homes. Although participants' were free to speak in either Korean or Japanese, most spoke in both languages, at times in a single sentence. Analysis of these choices are discussed later in greater detail in Chapter VII. The time spent with each participant included not only designated periods for interviewing, but also a great deal of "socializing," as well as other everyday activities which occurred in and out of private homes, such as shopping, cooking, and eating. Ethnographic data from these activities as well as interactions with others (neighbors, family, peers) contribute to this dissertation.

In capturing interview data, a tape recorder was used when consented to by the participant. The disadvantages in using a recording device (unreliability and over-reliance on taped narrative, interference with flow of dialogue, among others) were outweighed by the long hours of many of these interview sessions. Notes were also taken in conjunction

with the use of the tapes. An assistant, a bilingual second generation Korean resident from Kawasaki City who attended university in Tokyo, was also hired to help with interviews as well as the transcription of interview tapes.

In the matter of reciprocation for participants' valuable time and energy spent in relaying their life histories for this project, gifts were usually given at every interview interaction. As opposed to Sally Falk Moore's prescription to offer cash to informants<sup>10</sup>, I did not find it appropriate to offer money for my participants' time. The cultural context and social rules governing age related exchanges did not make this a welcome gesture. Rather, I offered small gifts of fruits, sweets, and other foods which, although consistently protested against, were ultimately accepted in acts of generosity towards me.

Utilizing "grounded theory" as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), ethnographic data was coded for internal themes. The work of Kaufman in The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning In Late Life (1986) was particularly helpful in examining data in terms of "themes" and "values" with respect to the aging process. She distinguishes the two concepts in the following excerpt:

Themes identify the person, idiosyncratic ways of experiencing and communicating meaning in the individual life—the ways in which people interpret experience so as to give unique internal continuity and structure to the self...Values on the hand, emphasize the individual's conformity to shared and fairly explicit indices of social worth. As such, values clearly fix the individual in a historical cultural cohort, that is in a group with common ideals derived from common experiences (Kaufman, 1986: 115).

By examining the narrative data for their themes and values, the life experiences, attitudes and emotions of individual life histories (themes) were connected to the generational particularities (values) which distinguish this age cohort from younger generations of Korean residents.

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<sup>10</sup> 10/23/95 Lecture, Department of Anthropology, The University of Chicago.



### **The Intricacies of Trust**

Of late, reflexivity in anthropological writing has been read with caution by those who fear that the academy's newest members will produce ethnographies which function as little more than exercises in narcissism. There is a growing fear that the participants of anthropological inquiry will be slighted by inordinate concentration on the anthropologist herself. While sensitive to these postmodern pitfalls, I find it difficult not to describe some of the challenges I confronted in my fieldwork among Korean residents in Japan, many of which were unexpected. My navigation of Japanese society and reception by Korean residents influenced the paths my research took and often the questions which I posed in pursuing my goals. My field experience was a continual process of negotiation which deserves to be described, at least in part.

As a single, twenty seven year old (twenty eight, according to both the Koreans and Japanese systems of determining age<sup>11</sup>) Korean American woman, it was as if "deviance" had been written on my forehead, particularly when meeting first generation elderly Korean women who expressed tremendous concern at my relatively "old" age and unmarried state. In fact, by my second week in Tokyo I had grown accustomed to the ritualized interrogation of who I was, commencing with the question of whether I was married, followed by a more animated, why not? While my Korean American heritage should have inured me to the quite familiar string of queries, I had not anticipated the extent to which my marital status would further entrench me in an ambiguous, liminal state of being between an adolescent and an adult.

My birth in the United States also influenced my reception with many Koreans residents in Japan. Although less important to later generations, first generation Korean residents were often curious about my origins and my family's hometown in South Korea.

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<sup>11</sup> Both the Japanese and Koreans count the nine months of gestation when determining someone's age. Also, on the lunar new year's day, everyone gains one year regardless of when your actual birthday is.

The fact that my parents had immigrated to the United States in the mid 1960's was interpreted by Korean elderly differently. As would be expected, many North Korean residents were uncomfortable upon discovering that I was an American citizen. It was made known to me on numerous occasions, both directly and indirectly, that my project was suspect and that my identity as a graduate student was merely a rouse devised by the United States Government. I was accused as being an American spy working in collaboration with the South Korean government. By the same token, perhaps due to my initial contacts with left leaning academics in the Korean resident community, several South Korean residents initially kept their distance from me believing that my research was being sponsored by Chosen Soren, the North Korean resident organization, or even by the North Korean government directly.

Suspicion surrounding my intentions and affiliations was particularly strong during my first few months in Japan. However, with more time in the field and a growing circle of introductions and friendships, these doubts waned as more familiar faces could validate my comparatively mundane project of writing a dissertation. In some respects, the life history method of extended interviews and long term contact worked in my favor in sloughing off some of these preconceived notions of who I was and what I was doing there in their backyard. While disconcerting at times, this experience, however, proves to be important in the understanding of Korean ethnicity as discussed in later chapters.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY

*"...the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" (Kundera[1979] 1986: 3).*

#### **Theoretical Origins of Social Memory**

As on countless occasions throughout my life, I was recently asked to describe myself to someone I did not know. Although this ritual of introduction was not unfamiliar to me, I experienced a momentary pause of anxiety as I searched my mind for something to say that would adequately respond to the question of who I am? In response, as was the case in each of my former experiences, I began to relay where I was born, where I had grown up and who my family members were; I began to relay my memories. In this way, my past experiences defined who I was in a way that would be comprehensible and informative to my new acquaintance. It was a validation of the statement that "we are what we remember" (Fentress and Wickham, 1992). Taking on the perspective of memory as social knowledge, this statement is based on the idea that "the way we present ourselves in our memories, the way we define our personal and collective identities through our memories, the way we order and structure our ideas in our memories and the way we transmit these memories to others - is a study of the way we are (Fentress and Wickham, 1992:7)."

In this chapter, theories of social memory are discussed. The major debates on the role of memory with respect to narration, nationalism and ethnicity are discussed in an effort to provide the framework used in this dissertation in examining the lives of first generation elderly Korean residents in Japan. Ethnographic data utilizing this framework is

presented in later chapters. In this first section, the influential work of Maurice Halbwachs on collective memory is investigated in conjunction with the work of contemporary social scientists researching this topic.

The idea of memory as a social medium has been primarily discussed as experiences of the individual in which the past of each person is treated as uniquely bounded in the physical substrates of the mind. While students of psychology have investigated the process of memory from within a framework of physiology, cognition, and emotion, sociologists have conceptualized memory as a collective process by which social values and communication are maintained. The connections between thinking of memory as an individual experience to viewing memory as a group phenomenon is essentially interdisciplinary, traversing the fields of philosophy, psychology and sociology.

Mary Warnock (1987) offers a philosophical overview discussing memory in terms of Cartesian duality of mind and body. Citing memory as an essential tool in the learning process, a feature distinguishing human life from others, the definition of memory becomes entrenched in ideas of signs, symbols and experience. Historically, memory has been viewed as a collection of temporally contiguous images (as in Locke's writing) which are attached to "feelings of familiarity" and "feelings of pastness" in which the "first leads us to trust our memories, the second to assign places to them in the time order" (1987:21; see also Bernard Russell). Countering this construction of memory as image and feeling is Wittgenstein's conception of memory as a source of knowledge in which the past functions as a reference containing events which are constantly interpreted by the individual remembering.

The fusion of individualistic notions of memory and that which defines it as a collective experience is seen in the work of Paul Connerton (1989). His statement that "images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order" (1989:3) implies that the past must be viewed similarly by members of a society and that these images of the past

serve as the basis for social cohesion of the group. He further explains his point by stating that individuals are “seeking to exchange a socially legitimate currency of memories” (1989:3) whereby memories become the vocabulary of social communication. From this framework of a collective memory emerges the question of how the past is constructed and commonly legitimated within the group. Like others, Connerton clings to a socio-temporal view of memory in stating that “we experience our present in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present” (1989:2).

### Maurice Halbwachs

The thesis that the past shapes the present which in turn shapes the future, however, is challenged by sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs, who turns this logic on its head by offering a version of collective memory in which the needs and concerns of the present reshape and reinterpret what is believed to be the past. The work of Halbwachs, long been considered part of the Durkheimian school of the turn of the century, must also be recognized significantly influenced by Henri Bergson, particularly in Halbwachs' earlier formulations. Bergson, who taught Halbwachs at the Lycee Henri IV, is noted for encouraging Halbwachs' abandonment of the Cartesian and Kantian orientations to philosophy by which knowledge was only accessible through rationalism and empiricism. Rather, Bergson promoted the importance of intuition, personal experience, and inner contemplation in recognition of truth. Opposed to the duality of mind and body, Bergson situated memory between an alternate duality consisting of the mind, symbolizing the practical world; and the spirit, the vehicle of the intuitive realm. He distinguished between “pure memory” which he stated only occurred during the dream state when defenses are down, allowing interaction with the spiritual world, and “ordinary memory” which he defined as informing habits, essential to survival and ordinary perception and recognition

(Warnock, 1987). In addition, Bergson defined time in terms of space in which time is understood through the knowledge of physical objects and movement (Bergson, 1991).

Although Halbwachs clearly breaks with Bergson in his transition from philosophy to sociology, the redefinition of time as a spatial concept is one which resonates in his work on collective memory. However, rather than rooting time and memory in the physical objects and movement of Bergsonian individuated knowledge, Halbwachs anchors memory in the social groups of society, claiming that not only are the content of memories necessarily social, but, more specifically, that these are also manipulated and reconstructed in order to maintain social cohesion. This conception of social memory should not be confused, however, as simply the sum or combination of individual memory. Rather, it is individual memory which is informed by an entity of knowledge considered the collective memory. Halbwachs states the "(c)ollective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thought of the society "(Halbwachs, [1941], 1992:40).

In defining what memory is, Halbwachs, like others, incorporates the role of dreams. He states that "in order to remember, one must be capable of reasoning and comparing and of feeling in contact with a human society that can guarantee the integrity of our memory." He continues, stating that "(a)ll these are conditions that are obviously not fulfilled when we dream" ([1941], 1992:41). Halbwachs states that "(i)t is not in memory but in the dream that the mind is most removed from society" and that the "dream is based only upon itself, whereas our recollection depends on those of all our fellows, and on the great frameworks of the memory of society" ((1941), 1992:42). By disqualifying dreams from the process of memory, Halbwachs circumvents the problem of distinguishing between memory of an objectively real past and that of the human imagination. If the content of dreams were also considered part of one's memory then one would be pressed to

discount the individualistic nature of remembering and the idea of social memory as a collective experience would be undermined.

However, Halbwachs' exemption of dreams as products of social memory is problematic. While it is true that, during a dream experience, the dreamer is not conscious of his environment and is not free to communicate with others, to say that dreams themselves are not connected to a dreamer's memory is debatable. The question which naturally follows this reasoning is where does dream content come from if not from stock memories of past images, experiences, perceptions? While surely dreams do not commonly replicate past events in absolute detail, dreams may be defined as manifestations of thoughts and emotions in one's past and the present, albeit in collage form. While it may appear that dreams "establish only random relations among each other-relations based on disordered play of corporal modifications" (Halbwachs [1941], 1992:42), the images within dreams may act as sign and symbols of one's life experience and, by definition, one's relationship to others in society. Halbwachs, however, is concerned with social norms. His words are that:

"the condition of the dream seems to be such that the dreamer, while observing the rules which determine the meaning of worlds as well as the meaning of objects and images considered in isolation, no longer remembers the conventions that establish the relative position in space and in the social milieu of places and events as well as of persons, and does not conform to these convention" ([1941], 1992:42).

In disqualifying dreams as memories, Halbwachs defines memory as that which must be understood and reconciled by the rememberer and the audience. However, this is not say that dreams do not qualify as memory, rather, they are not, as such, collectively "owned". This sets up what Halbwachs does not address, but what others allude to: a division between personal and social memory.

While being critical of psychologist Endel Tulving's schema of dividing memory into 1) semantic memory, rationally organized via symbols, and 2) episodic memory consisting of personal experience, Fentress and Wickham (1992) distinguish "personal memory" from "propositional knowledge" and "skill knowledge" which assumes standardization of "real truth" (1992:17; see also Connerton, 1989). Echoing Bergson's conception of "pure memory," personal memory is defined by that knowledge which has been garnered directly through individual experience. However, cautioning that these categories are not rigid, Fentress and Wickham (1992:25) maintain that "(m)emory is fluid." Thus, personal memory may become social memory if it functions as a source of knowledge for the group in its formation of identity by being socially "validated in and through actual practice" (1992:24).

The practice of memory is addressed by Halbwachs. Rather than constructing memory as a collection of past events organized linearly through time, Halbwachs redefines memories as discrete, which may be independent of fixed temporal positioning and may be reorganized according to changing needs. He states,

The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory. In other words, the various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past. But, as we have seen, they most frequently distort that past in the act of reconstructing it. There are surely many facts, and many details of certain facts, that the individual would forget if others did not keep their memory alive for him. But, on the other hand, society can live only if there is a sufficient unity of outlooks among the individuals and groups comprising it ([1941], 1992:182).

For Halbwachs the family unit is the central social group by which memories are organized. Institutions of kinship and marriage determines the experiences making up memories rather than individual knowledge and preferences (Halbwachs, (1941) 1992:55). Thus, the rules and customs of the family unit are the organizing principles of memories and it is according to these that memories are summarized and "ideal types of life are

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reconstructed" ([1941], 1992:60). This allusion to reconstructed memories is the basis of Halbwachs view of the function of memories and the way in which they are continually interpreted and recreated. For Halbwachs an objective truth is not relevant. rather, what becomes important is what is believed to be the truth which continually changes in response to what is needed to be the truth. He states that

(w)hereas in our present society we occupy a definite position and are subject to the constraints that go with it, memory gives us the illusion of living in the midst of groups which do not imprison us, which impose themselves on us only so far and so long as we accept them. If certain memories are inconvenient or burden us, we can always oppose to them the sense of reality inseparable from our present life" ([1941], 1992:50).

He summarizes: "(i)n short, the most painful aspects of yesterday's society are forgotten because constraints are felt only so long as they operate and because, by definition a past constraint has ceased to be operative" ([1941], 1992:51).

Halbwachs continues in his treatise to reveal the reconstruction of religious collective memory in which the Church is forced to rewrite history in order to reconcile problems of the present. However, rather than acts of clear manipulation, these changes in history are explained in terms of a better understanding of the past. Halbwachs writes,

the Church does not acknowledge that these data are really new; it prefers to conjecture that the full content of the early revelation was not immediately perceived. In this sense the Church completes and illuminates its earlier remembrances through representations which, even though they have only recently attracted its attention, are themselves also remembrances. In this way, although religious memory attempts to isolate itself from temporal society, it obeys the same laws as every collective memory; it does not preserve the past but reconstructs it with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past, and with the aid moreover of recent psychological and social data, that is to say, with the present ([1941]. 1992:119).

In this way, Halbwachs explains the transition from versions of history to contemporary ideas, thus, explaining the fluidity of ideas and "traditions".

The role of collective memory with respect to social classes and the role of tradition is also used to illustrate Halbwachs theory of a rejuvenated past as constructed by the present. Using the principle of production of commodities and accumulation of wealth, tradition or, rather, history is recreated in terms of the present's needs. He states,

Technique represents those parts of its activity that society leaves temporarily to mechanisms. But, on the other hand, however technical they may be, functions presuppose, at least on the part of some of those who perform them, qualities that can emerge and develop only in the heart of society, for on this condition alone can they become specialized without losing contact with society. Just as with everything that is social and presented in a personal form, society is interested in the acts and the persons who display these qualities; it fixes its attention on them and retains them ([1941], 1992:166).

While Halbwachs explains ways in which the present dictates beliefs about the past and how throughout time these beliefs may change, many have argued he does not adequately address the issue of how continuity is maintained in conjunction with a changing past. Barry Schwartz (1991), has been particularly critical of what he labels as Halbwach's "presentist approach" in which the past is moulded by the present. Schwartz claims that this theory creates a picture of history which is discontinuous. He states that

Halbwach's argument is circular because it conceives the makeup of society in terms of the very memories that society is supposed to shape and maintain. 'By definition,' he explains, collective memory 'does not exceed the boundaries of the group' (Halbwachs 1980:80). When these boundaries are violated, when 'men composing the same group in two periods are...otherwise unconnected' and 'touch [only] at their extremities' (1980:80), then 'historical memory,' or the recalling of earlier generations whose way of life a group does not share, replaces 'collective memory,' which involves the contemplation of earlier generations whose way of life a group carries on (1980: 78-83). This analytic

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distinction allows Halbwachs to skirt the problem of how collective memory is preserved in the context of fundamental changes in society (Schwartz, 1991:233).

Critiquing Halbwachs as one who maintains a history entirely dictated by the agenda of the present, Schwartz states that:

(g)iven the constraints of a recorded history, the past cannot be literally constructed; it can only be selectively exploited. Moreover, the basis of the exploitation cannot be arbitrary. The events selected for commemoration must have some factual significance to begin with in order to qualify for this purpose. This same internal significance is presupposed by their perpetuation (1982:396).

In search of a response to this criticism in Halbwachs' writing, the following passage may be used in his debate:

The frameworks of memory exist both within the passage of time and outside it. External to the passage of time, they communicate to the images and concrete recollections of which they are made a bit of their stability and generality. But these frameworks are in part captivated by the course of time. They are like those wood-floats that descend along a waterway so slowly that one can easily move from one to the other, but which nevertheless are not immobile and go forward. And to it is in regard to frameworks of memory: while following them we can pass as easily from one notion to another, both of which are general and outside of time, through a series of reflections and arguments, as we can go up and down the course of time from one recollection to another. Or, to put it more exactly, depending on the direction we have chosen to travel, whether we go upstream or pass from one riverbank to the other, the same representations seem to be at times recollections, at times notions or general ideas ([1941], 1992:182).

Rather, than discounting an objective reality, Halbwachs takes memories out of the context of time and retrenches them in social groups which use them to help them understand the present. In so doing, Halbwachs allow for continuity of historical events which are passed down from generations to generations. Schwartz's thesis of an accumulated history which

is also modified resonates in the metaphor described above by Halbwachs: the river, representing historical events and maintaining its integrity but also accessible to navigation and orientation. While the metaphor alludes to this process, Schwartz may be warranted in demanding a clearer delineation of the transmission of memories throughout time and an analysis of occasions in which the collective memories of groups are in conflict with another and how these contradictions are resolved.

The difficulty in reconciling historical continuity in an understanding of the past and a conceptualization of a past repeatedly regenerated by the demands of the present is a central issue in the dissertation project. In understanding diaspora Korean identity in Japan in which the majority of the population are second and third generation residents who are generally monolingual in Japanese and have sparse experience on the Korean peninsula, the issue of ethnic history and memory is increasingly complicated. Focus on the ways in which first generation elderly Korean residents view the past with respect to Korea's colonization and their subsequent lives in Japanese society is integral to a rendition of a personal and collective history which present an alternative to the dominant discourse of this marginalized population in Japanese society.

An obvious question which Schwartz' criticism of Halbwachs raises is how first generation memories of the past have changed to address the conditions facing Korean elderly in the present? No doubt the most effective way of studying these hypotheses is by conducting longitudinal research of age cohorts to chart continuity and change in memories of the past over time. However, given the constraints of this research design, life history narratives in which elderly recount their pasts are examined in light of the significant issues they face as aging minority in Japanese society. In this way, we seek to understand the relationship between memory and conceptions of self in late life.

In the following section of this chapter, memory is discussed with respect to anthropological research with particular attention to the relationship between the discipline

and history. This is offered here to frame theoretical inquiry on social memory within the field and to elucidate the evolution of some of the major debates on its conceptualization.

### **Anthropology, History and Memory**

In examining the relationship between anthropology and history it is important to identify the dialogue between the disciplines. Questions which arise in this examination are: what are the objectives of the historian and the anthropologist and how do these converge and diverge? what are the methods by which these objectives are fulfilled? and how are the results made meaningful? In an attempt to answer these questions, a discussion of theoretical dissonance and collaboration since the turn of the century is offered as well as an examination of the way in which an anthrohistorical approach may prove beneficial in anthropological fieldwork and ethnographic writing.

#### History Transformed

While often referred to as a collective, the Annales Group denotes an ensemble of social scientists who participated in the publication of the journal, Annales: Economies, Societies, Civilizations, founded in 1929 by French historians, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch. The work of those associated with the Annales precipitated what Peter Burke (1993) defines as the "Annales movement." Burke identifies three major changes with this movement.

The first component of the Annales movement was a substitution of a "problem-oriented analytical history" for the traditional narrative of events associated with the work of 18th century historians, most notably, Leonald von Ranke. The second paradigm shift was a broadening of history to include the whole range of human activities as opposed to a predominantly political history. Karl Lamprecht affirmed this change by describing political history as focusing on specific individuals contrasted with cultural or economic

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history which was of the "people." In creating what has become known as the Lamprecht Controversy, he redefined history as "primarily a socio-psychological science" (Burke, 1993). The third shift was a collaboration with other disciplines such as geography, sociology, psychology, economics, linguistics and social anthropology.

While Febvre and Bloch concentrated on historical psychology and comparative history, Fernand Braudel, who succeeded Febvre and led the second generation of the Annales Group in the 1960's and 1970's, shifted the course of the school. Heavily influenced by Levi-Strauss, Braudel's particular contribution to the Annales paradigm as described by Hunt (1986) was his three-tiered conception of historical time which consisted of *structure* (the long term), *conjuncture* (periods of ten to fifty years) and *evenement* (the event of the short term).

The first tier of structure combined aspects of climate, biology and demography in what Braudel considered immobile history. The second tier of conjuncture centered on social relationships and economic and social fluctuations and the third tier, evenement, consisted of political and cultural expressions which produced histories of mentalites and civilizations. In his book, The Mediteranean, Braudel (1949) discusses structure, conjuncture and evenement with respect to geological, social and individual history in the region. Within this scheme, Braudel's development of his geohistorical idea of structure and the *longue duree* is considered the most influential (in contrast to his denigration of the "event").

It is Braudel's idea of *longue duree* and structure which is used by Marshall Sahlins in his refashioning of ahistorical structural anthropology to an historical anthropology. In Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom (1981) and Islands of History (1985), Sahlins equates Braudel's term "longue duree" with Levi-Strauss' idea of "structure". In his writings, Sahlins traces the arrival of Captain Cook's on the Hawaiian islands to his demise in 1779. In defining

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structure, Sahlins, using Saussure's conception of structural linguistics, refers to cultural categories organized as a conceptual grid. These categories make up a system of differences such as social status and indigenous orders of religious entities. The question which Sahlins poses is how do historical events such as the landing of Captain Cook and company alter these categories and systems? In answering the question of social and cultural change and resolution of conflict, Sahlins introduces the concepts of reproduction and transformation and contends that the main project of anthropology is to determine not only how events are ordered by culture, but also to analyze the process in which culture is itself reordered.

In Sahlins study he describes how Captain Cook, upon arriving on the Hawaiian Islands is classified as the Hawaiian fertility god, Lono, who returns annually from Kahiki, the divine heavens, to be celebrated in the Makahiki rituals. According to Sahlins, the Hawaiians absorbed the potentially ontological, disruptive historical event of culture contact as a "historical form" of a cultural category in mythical reality (1985: 50). Sahlins thus, reaffirms the position of the structuralist by restating the deterministic relationship between structure and event, thus, illustrating "reproduction."

However, Sahlins continues to discuss the concept of "transformation" which focuses on the new components introduced with the arrival of the Europeans. One important change which occurred as a result of Captain Cook's arrival is the effect on chiefly "kapu" or taboo. Sahlins describes that prior to contact with the Europeans, a strong kinship system existed in which the chief was considered head of household. With such position and status, among other duties and privileges, chiefs controlled the accumulation of surplus in order to exercise redistribution throughout the community. These disbursements were orchestrated, in part, by the exercise of taboos on certain trade goods. However, with the advent of Captain Cook, a change in the kinship ethic was witnessed with desegregation and the collaboration between commoner men and women,

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strengthening horizontal bonds and weakening the vertical bonds. As a result of this change in kinship ethic, Sahlins contends that the Hawaiian chiefs pursued their own interests at the expense of those of the commoners and deployed taboos for personal gain (1985: 44).

Class formation and the origin of the state are the transformations identified by Sahlins as resulting from the novelty of the historical events. Sahlins calls this "structure of the conjuncture" which he defines as a "set of historical relationships what at once reproduce the traditional cultural categories and give them new values out of the pragmatic context" (1985: 125). Sahlins describes more specifically what he means by structural transformation in the following:

The complex of exchanges that developed between Hawaiians and Europeans, the structure of the conjuncture, brought the former into uncharacteristic conditions of internal conflict and contradiction. Their differential connections with Europeans thereby endowed their own relationships to each other with novel functional content. This is structural transformation. The values acquired in practice return to structure as new relationships between its categories (1981: 50).

Transformation, so defined, may apply to the work of Roger Bastide, ethnologist and contemporary of Halbwach's, who examined the collective memory of African Americans in the United States and the reconstruction of the African ethnic group. Bastide notes that African Americans would take what they could from individuals' memories of African culture in the form of myths and rites and reestablish them within the existing group. Bastide emphasizes however, that it is the structural dimension of the group which determines the nature of the emergent collective memory. However, in the case of African Americans, many gaps in the collective memory exist which are however, reconciled. This resolution is analyzed by Bastide who invokes Levi-Strauss' concept of "bricolage" in which "Afro-American society concentrates on looking elsewhere for new images with

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which to fill in gaps in the structure of the scenario, thus restoring meaning that comes not from the addition of simple elements, but from the way in which they are organized" (Bastide, 1970: 85). This is reiterated in the words of Nathan Wachtel, who concludes that the "'do-it-yourself construction' explains not only the facts of conservation and lapses of memory, but also the transformations of collective recollections" (1986: 216). He and Bastide affirm Sahlins conclusion in which he recasts history into structuralism and reaffirms the analytical resolution of change by stating that the

dialectics of history, then, are structural throughout. Powered by disconformities between conventional values and intentional values, between intersubjective meanings and subjective interests, between symbolic sense and symbolic reference, the historical process unfolds as a continuous and reciprocal movement between the practice of the structure and the structure of the practice (1981: 72).

Sahlins's discussion of values affirms the importance in understanding the "reciprocal" relationship between Japanese categories of difference and ethnic identity in Japanese society. Memories as relayed in life histories of elderly Korean residents are not viewed in isolation, but echoing Halbwachs', are in dialogue with conditions of the present. By examining first how Japanese view themselves and secondly, how this self-concept influence perceptions and treatment of non-Japanese, an understanding of Korean ethnicity is better understood.

### Les Lieux de Memoire

In her research of a French village of Minot in an area called le Chatillonnais in northern Burgundy, Francoise Zonabend and her research assistants set out to "build up an ethnology of this village in its many facets and try, as in a hall of mirrors, to catch the future of the community by looking at its present and its past" (1986: viii). Her use of the metaphor of the mirror is significant for two reasons. First, it is particularly useful for it

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implies attempts at both reflectivity (in light of the present) as well as objectivity. With respect to the latter point, instead of looking directly at the past, Zonabend identifies the need for a refractive medium which offers some distance from the image<sup>1</sup>.

The second reason is that the mirror is a reference to the spatial quality of the past and the way past events are inscribed onto memory sites. This, as well as the first point, are discussed by Pierre Nora in his theoretical introduction to his voluminous work on the national memory of France entitled, Les Lieux de Memoire (1989). The term "lieu de memoire" while not translated by Nora, originates in the work of Frances Yates' The Art of Memory (1966) in which he traces the tradition of mnemonics. In his discussion of the classical art of memory as codified by Cicero and Quintilian, Yates explains how orators were taught to remember their speeches by disassociating their topics into physical spaces of the building in which they would be speaking, for example the columns, atrium, furniture, and so on. From this emerged the concept of lieux de memoire.

Nora describes his interest in the lieux de memoire as places "where memory crystallizes and secretes itself" and "has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the scene that memory has been torn - but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists" (1989: 7). Nora divides memory into three areas: archival memory, duty memory and distance memory.

Modern memory is described as archival in that it relies on the "materiality of the trace" which is stored in numerous ways such as photos, writing and tape recordings. Nora's discussion of duty memory refers to the need to 'capture' and 'store' memory in protecting identity. He states that "when memory is no longer everywhere, it will not be

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<sup>1</sup> This process may be allegorized by artists in the examination of their own work. For example, the use of both mirrors and photographs of his sculpture allowed a sense of impartiality and required distance in the assessment and subsequent modification of Rodin's work.

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anywhere unless one takes the responsibility to recapture it though individual means" (1989: 16). Distant memory which is alluded to in the discussion of Zonabend's metaphorical use of mirrors refers to the process of separation from the past. Through the "panoramic distance" and "artificial hyper-realization of the past" a "definitive estrangement" occurs and a more lucid understanding of the past is possible (1989: 18).

Lieux de memoire, according to Nora, have three dimensions: material, symbolic and functional. However, the symbolic nature of the lieux de memoire emerges as the critical component in relation to the material and the functional because it is only when the material, such as the archive, or the functional, such as the ritual of the classroom manual, do these become truly lieux de memoire (1989: 19). An example of lieux de memoire is the body which acts as a medium of memory onto which the past, collective and individuals, is inscribed. John and Jean Comaroff in their collection of essays entitled Ethnography and the Historical Imagination (1992) and in Jean Comaroff's The Body of Resistance (1987), the body is discussed as a template for historical practice. Referring to Bourdieu (1977), the Comaroffs discuss the process of bodily reform and the "retraining of memory" on "new subjects as the bearers of new worlds" (1992: 70). They describe the body as the mediating role between self and society

which accounts for its privileged place in one widespread, yet poorly understood mode of historical practice: namely, "untheorized" collective action. By this we mean action that, while concerted, is never explicated, action whose logic seems vested in corporeal signs in conceptual categories (1992: 71).

Their fieldwork among South African Zionists offers examples of bodily reform in the Zionist rites in which initiates are baptized in transformative water, shedding them of their prior identities and social skin. In this way, "the alienated were reanimated, barriers transgressed, and margins redrawn. And to the substance of the body of Zion was secured" (1992: 81). The practice of bodily reform in the case of the South African

Zionists illustrates Nora's primary charge in the creation of lieux de memoire which is the "will to remember" (1989: 19). In chapter seven, the body as a template of memory is discussed further in which the aging bodies of elderly Korean residents are inscribed by memories of the colonial past.

For anthropologists, Nora's concept of lieux de memoire offers a rich way in which to conceptualize the intersection of history and culture. In particular, the ethnographic record is a clear example of lieux de memoire. In many ways anthropology is a discipline which emerges at the point where culture seems to be disappearing. In "doing anthropology," anthropologists rely heavily on the memories of their informants and must be able to critically examine not only content, but also the meaning of the processes of remembering and forgetting. If Halbwachs' original claim that memory is a collective experience is to be accepted, then the role of social memory is one which may not be ignored.

### **Narration and Memory**

The nature of narration and its role in the project of history has engaged not only historians and literary theorists, but also psychologists, anthropologists and philosophers. In this section, the major issues of historical narration will be discussed in an effort to evaluate current thinking of its value and importance in the pursuit of historical "fact." The central issues focus on epistemological validity of narration in the production of a historical reality and the essential elements in the creation of the narrative and their relationships with the writer, reader, as well as to past events.

The narrative in historical writing is primarily a modern convention, deviating from the chronicles and annals found in antiquity and the middle ages (Le Goff, 1992; White, 1981). In contrast to previous forms of recording past events, narration, while structured in a chronological fashion, assumes a self consciousness or ego through which events are

presented in a wholistic, cohesive manner. The problem with this form of historical writing however, emerges when, according to Hayden White, narration attempts "to give to real events the form of a story. It is because real events do not offer themselves as stories that their narrativization is so difficult" (1981: 4).

The special requirements defining narrative renders versions of reality suspicious. Psychiatrist Jerome Bruner in his article, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," defines the narrative as a "conventional form, transmitted culturally and constrained by each individual's level of mastery and by his conglomerate of prosthetic devices, colleges and mentors" (1991:4). He goes on to state that narratives "are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and 'narrative necessity' rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness although ironically we have no compunction about calling stories true or false" (1991: 5).

According to Bruner (1991) a narrative consists of ten features: 1) narrative diachronicity; 2) particularity or story archetypes; 3) intentional state entailment; 4) hermeneutic composability; 5) canonicity and breach; 6) referentiality; 7) genericness; 8) normativeness; 9) context sensitivity and negotiability; and 10) narrative accrual. Bruner's discussion emphasizes the feature of hermeneutic composability of which he describes the importance of the historical text or narrative to be understood in conjunction with other texts. No text may stand alone and either explicitly or implicitly, texts are in dialogue with one another. In this dialogue the recognition of existing renditions of the past must occur and interpretative negotiation must ensue.

An illustration is offered in The Great War and Modern Memory (1975), in which Paul Fussell examines the ways in which World War I is remembered. By focusing on this *historical* event, Fussell's analysis of narratives of the war reveals less of the exact *historical* facts per se, but more on reflections of society during that period as well as the *evolving* of historical memory. He states that,

the Great War was perhaps the last to be conceived as taking place within a seamless, purposeful "history" involving a coherent stream of time running from past through present to future. The shrewd recruiting poster depicting a worried father of the future being asked by his children, "Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?" assumes a future whose moral and social pressures are identical with those of the past. Today, when each day's experience seems notably ad hoc, no such appeal would shame the most stupid to the recruiting office. But the Great War took place in what was, compared with ours, a static world, where the values appeared stable and where the meaning of abstractions seemed permanent and reliable (1975:21).

The narration of history is as Fussell indicates, a "moral obligation" (1975: 327) and it is in this way that it functions.

In addition to textual dialogue, is the essential dialogue between narrator and reader. It is the belief of many historians that history must be uncovered and written about by isolating the past from the present in effort to maintain objectivity. The subjectivity of narration, however, recognizes the present as well as presumptions of the future in understanding of the past. The narrator, in being able to tell any story, assumes the passage of time and a retrospective in relaying his tale. The narrator also must consider the collective experience of the present and be sensitive to the conceptualization of the past in terms of the present in order to claim any version of the collective past. The past as experience can not be considered as discrete, but, rather, time and events must be treated as a continuum.

The central question of the narrative is whether it can truly represent past events accurately or whether its nature inherently distorts its product. According to critical theorist and historian, Hayden White (1984), four groups of historians and philosophers have delineated themselves in discussion of historical truth and narration. These are Anglo-American analytical philosophers as represented by Gardiner, Morton, White, Danto and Mink who seek to establish the epistemological importance of narration in historical

explanation; the French Annales group originated by Lefebvre, Bloch, and Braudel and continued by Le Goff and Ladurie who reject narration for not satisfying scientific rigour; literary theorists and philosophers Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva and Eco who accept narration as one of many coded forms of historical representations; and lastly hermeneutic theorists, Ricoeur and Gadamer, who view the narrative as merely a manifestation in discourse of the structure of time itself.

The presupposition in arguments presented by members of the Annales groups such as Le Goff is that history is the telling of historical facts which may be objectively real. Le Goff states: "Narrative is thus only a preliminary phase, even if it has required prolonged preliminary work on the part of the historian. But this recognition of an indispensable rhetoric of history must not lead us to deny the scientific character of history" (1992:117). His predisposition in making history a scientific endeavor, reflective of the Annales school, in general, is evident when he continues by questioning:

But as a science of time, history is an indispensable component of any activity in time. Rather than being so unconsciously, in the form of manipulated or distorted memory, isn't it better that it should be so in the form of knowledge-even if fallible, imperfect, debatable, and never perfectly innocent-and that its norm of truth and the professional conditions under which it can be developed and exercised allow us to call it scientific? (1992: 214).

Le Goff critiques White's book Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe (1973) in which White discusses the writings of eight men: Michelet, Ranke, Tocqueville, Burckhardt, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche and Croce and concludes that while each of the writers adopted a certain style evident in their narration of historical events, the content of their writings is, in general, in congruence with each other. White (1973) concludes that narration represents stylistic choices in form rather than constituting an epistemological issue, rendering the debate on the scientific merit of narrative a mere imposition of particular preferences by the discipline. However, Le Goff

argues that history cannot be equated to that of art or philosophy, but, rather, history is bound to scientific specifications. In fact, Le Goff dismisses the narrative by stating,

Never mind the fact that a narrative, whether historical or not, is a construction, and underneath its honest and objective appearance, a whole series of implicit choices are operative. Every conception of history that identifies it with narrative seems to me unacceptable today" (1992: 117). These sentiments are echoed in the work of Maurice Mandelbaum who states that historical narratives "ensure explanatory incompleteness and gross distortion of the subject matter (1967: 414).

White contends, however, that it is not narrativization of history which is problematized, but that past events are able to be narrativized which challenges narrations' authenticity. He makes the point that history is necessarily founded on the quest for fact as preserved in memory and states that the "reality of these (real) events does not consist in the fact that they occurred, but that, first of all, they were remembered and, second, that they are capable of finding a place in a chronologically ordered sequence" (1981: 19). White's vision of history focuses on the arbitration between versions of past events. He states

In order to qualify as "historical," an event must be susceptible to at least two narrations of its occurrence. Unless at least two versions of the same set of events can be imagined, there is no reason for the historian to take upon himself the authority of giving the true account of what really happened. The authority of the historical narrative is the authority of reality itself; the historical account endows this reality with form and thereby makes it desirable, imposing upon its processes the formal coherency that only stories possess (1981: 19).

This emphasis on the authority of the historian in the "making" of history has labeled White as an "impositionalist" (Norman, 1991) in which there is an imposition in the form of interpretation on the structure of the historical narrative. The crafting of the historical narrative begins with the selection of facts used by the historian, continues in the



presentation of essential contest or conflict without which there would be no narrative as argued by White.

Since there is no "contest," there is nothing to narrativize, no need for them to "speak themselves" or be represented as if they could "tell their own story." It is necessary only to record them in the order that they come to notice, for since there is no contest, there is no story to tell (1981: 18).

This process ends with the production of "artificial closure." Norman (1991) describes this theory of imposition as signifying activity "wherein criteria of relevance are applied, closure is attained, and coherence and unity are created- a process, in cohort, that generates an emplotted account of the past" (1991: 121). The implication of falsity or at least, distortion is evident.

Defending the validity of narration in the presentation of real facts is the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and David Carr. MacIntyre (1979) argues for the existence of a "narrative structure of human life" which is independent of the narration of historians. Rather, humans have enacted narratives. This is similar to Carr's (1979) idea of the narrative structure of human experience, although Carr continues to argue that individual historical events may exist in coherence as discovered in the historian's relaying of past, events. While these theories may not be totally discounted, they cling to an idea of objective truth and do not address the role of imagination and its validity in the creation of narrative history.

Barthes, as well as other semiological theorists, have offered another way in which to view historical narrative by immediately discounting the "realism" of the narrative form. He states:

Claims concerning the "realism" of narrative are therefore to be discounted...The function of narrative is not to "represent," it is to constitute a spectacle...Narrative does not show, does not imitate..." What takes place" in a

narrative is from the referential (reality) point of view literally nothing; "what happens" is language alone, the adventure of language, the unceasing celebration of its coming (1966: 17).

For Barthes and other communication theorists, the importance of narrative stems from its value in the relaying of messages. This approach views the narrative as a form of discourse which may or may not contain truth-value informational content, but rather, acts like another system of code.

Thus, if one were to dismiss the truth-value of narrational content, where does its value as history come into play? This is best answered by White who states that the "narrative account is always a figurative account, an allegory" (1984: 24). He continues,

To leave this figurative element out of consideration in the analysis of a narrative is not only to miss its aspect as allegory; it is also to miss the performance in language by which a chronicle is transformed into a narrative (1984: 25).

The analysis of narration as allegory is extremely useful and in conjunction with the "spectacle" inherent in narrative as stated by Barthes, this perspective is important in understanding narrations as also performative. While the quest for validity in the precise recounting of "real" historical fact is not necessarily incumbent in the narrative form, the narrative form is founded on a conception of time in fluctuation, a interactive network of time, space, and experience. The value of relaying historical information in the form of narrative is linked to the crafting of "plot" by the narrator. In order for a story to be worth telling, there must be some recognition of a breach in normativeness. This recognition is founded on the question of what exactly makes history, history? In order for history to come into being, past events must be evaluated as worth remembering as well as worth retelling. Thus, the questions which follow is who is the storyteller(s) and who is the audience? The final questio, then, is what is the message?

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The narrative has been problematized in its relationship between that of the narrator and the narrativized subject. This has been addressed by Rosaldo (1985) who, while viewing the narrative form as valuable in anthropology, questions the perspective and assumptions inherent in narratives of the "other." Rosaldo offers a short description of the debate in the use of narrative in historical writing and cites White (1972) in the recognition that the choice of a particular form of discourse as opposed to others shapes historical knowledge in its inherent selection of the "facts" of the past. In contrast to the previous debate of the past as "objective reality" vs. "historical imagination," Rosaldo is concerned with the congruence between ethnographic narrative and the narrative of the anthropological subject, real or imagined.

Citing Victor Turner's work of the Ndembu of what was then Northern Rhodesia, Rosaldo describes the diachronic case study approach, characteristic of the Manchester School of post World War II British social anthropologists in which ethnography is guided by the emergence of "social dramas." Prefacing his comments on Turner's work with a reiteration of anthropology's focus on the "native point of view," Rosaldo writes that:

(c)uriously enough, Turner defines the processual form of his case histories without reference to Ndembu cultural conceptions. In their own narratives, do the protagonists think of events as having climaxes, turning points, or crises? Do Ndembu stories, which both describe and shape action, coincide with Turner's definition of the social drama's universal processual form? Do Turner and the protagonists agree about what constitutes the social drama's chain of events? (1985: 141).

For Rosaldo, the question of narrative analysis is whether the stories presented by the writer are, indeed, the same for the characters?

The relationship between memory and narration is particularly important in this ethnographic study of first generation Korean elderly as it relies on life history narrative in an attempt to understand the Japanese colonial period in relationship to the present. This

project addresses the central questions evident in the debate of historical narrative. In the analysis of both life history data as well as historical documents in the forms of history texts, newspaper, and art work, stories of the past are studied for convergence as well as divergence. Of particular importance are the specific social and political changes occurring during the past century which have influenced the product of history in its many forms. In addition, a critical assessment of the performative value of narrative is evaluated in terms of the relationships between narrator, text and readership.

### **Social Memory and Ethnicity**

The conceptual framework of this project builds upon the notion of "social memory." This abstraction is based on the position that memories are not objective truths of the past, but rather, are products of an interpretative process by which historical events are negotiated by individuals. Social memory is subjective, "structured by language, by teaching and observing, by collectively held ideas, and by experiences shared with others" (Fentress and Wickham, 1992: 7). From these tenets, the model of social memory evolves as memories are believed to serve as a basis for the creation of community boundaries and the formation of ethnic identification.

Memory may be treated as mediated thought which is inherently biased. The process of remembering is fluid, constantly responding to changing social conditions and personal experiences. To remember is to choose: a process of selection. However, this selective process of remembering is one which is not purely interior, but is influenced by the external events experienced by individuals. In retrenching individuals within social groups, that of the family, community and the nation, this project concurs with Halbwachs ([1942], 1992) in stating that memories are intricately linked to the social unit and that the individual "conforms to the group's conventions, which supply his thoughts as they supply the thoughts of others (1992; 168)." In addition to "group conventions" are the historical

and events experienced in common as the memories of the same generation within a community coincide in a way not found among individuals from another generation.

The fusion of the individualistic notion of memory as a collective experience is seen in the work of Paul Connerton (1989). His statement that "images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order" (1989:3) implies that the past must be viewed similarly by members of a society and serve as the basis for social cohesion of the group. He further explains his point by stating that individuals are 'seeking to exchange a socially legitimate currency of memories' (1989:3) whereby memories become the vocabulary for social communication. From this framework of a collective memory the question emerges of how the past is constructed and 'commonly legitimated' within the group.

An illustration of these ideas of social memory are seen in the resurrection of the battle of Masada. After thousands of years of obscurity, the battle of Masada, believed to have occurred in 73 A.D. between the Jewish people and the Roman army, was recently propelled into historical significance and commemorated with the rise of Zionism. Stating that "historical events are worth remembering only when contemporary society is motivated to define them as such" (1986:149), Schwartz et al. (1986) explain the importance of Masada as the recovery of an image in which the memory of the event's function was not so much to promote or reduce the hopes and worries of the present as to "express them." In "this specific sense that the recovery of Masada was more a way of understanding the present than of understanding the past" (1986:160). In this example, social memory realizes a new present and "occasions new memories, whose implication for future action undermine the very condition under which these memories." It "becomes a significant force in the dialectic of social change" (1986:160).

Social memory functions in the framework of this project in concert with the use of life histories. This project strives towards understanding of the experiences of Korean elderly residents living in Japan by analyzing their life histories as constructed through

narrative data. It is in this way that the abstraction of ethnicity is approached in its relevance in the existential meaning of memories in late life for elderly Koreans in Japan.

### Ethnicity and Nationalism

Implicit in the concept of ethnicity and the project of nationalism is an understanding of the past. However, while acknowledging that an understanding exists, this is not to say that the past "is an entity which remains constant throughout time or even maintains its integrity within the same temporal dimension for various groups. Rather, the past is a commodity which is produced, bartered and consumed according to the demands of the so called "present." This section focuses on the relationship between collective memory and the delineation of the nation-state as well as the collective identity of the ethnic group. In this discussion, the role of historiography as a vehicle in the realization of these relationships is considered.

Patrick H. Hutton, in his discussion "The Role of Memory in the Historiography of the French Revolution" (1991) discusses the work of Michelet, Aluward, Furet and Nora in the relationship between memory and the historical event of the French Revolution. In his analysis Hutton critiques the distinctions made between memorialists and historians in which the former structures emotive renditions of the past in concert with the social status of the present and the latter attempts to discover an objective, dispassionate past founded upon empirical facts. In critiquing Halbwachs' categorization of memory vs. history, Hutton makes the point that the historical product is not one which is unchanged by the vision and thus, distortions of historians but rather, that "the relationship between memory and history becomes dialogical, not mutually exclusive" (1991: 59).

Hutton's analysis of the four writers' work reveals the evolution of historiography, in general, from Michelet's emotive account of the French Revolution in which memory serves as inspiration towards action to Nora's "deconstructionist" approach in which the

present becomes the starting point for a "backward" search for historical meaning. Furet's essay "Penser la Revolution francaise" prompts Hutton's critique in which he accuses Furet of selective forgetting in the reinforcement of political strategizing in historical writing.

Hutton states:

The politics of memory, conceived as the power of habits of mind issuing from the past to influence the present, is ignored in favor of the politics of memory reconceived as a self-conscious strategy for projecting images of the past into projects for the future. In analyzing the historiography emanating from the Revolutionary tradition in terms of its rhetoric, Furet discards consideration of the ideals that the Revolution bequeather to posterity and so contributes to an amnesia about the meaning of the event (1990:60).

The selectivity of memory may be better understood by what Eric Hobsbawm defines as "invented tradition." He describes this as a "set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (1983:1). Distinguishing tradition from similarly used terms such as custom and convention, Hobsbawm states that whereas custom allows for changes and innovation and whereas convention may have only incidental ritual or symbolic role, tradition is believed to be fixed and borne of functional significance rather than habit.

Hobsbawm delineates three overlapping types of invented tradition which are: "a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour" (1983: 9). The political usage of "invented tradition" would seem evident. In the formation of nationalism, reinvention of the past allows for the creation of a collective past which feeds the idea of a collective experience as Hobsbawm illustrates with several historical examples including the French Revolution.

Benedict Anderson's discussion in his book, Imagined Communities (1983) complements Hobsbawm's discussion. Whereas Hobsbawm is more general in his analysis of "traditions," Anderson emphasizes the importance of print languages in the emergence of national consciousness. He identifies print languages as 1) allowing the proliferation of spoken vernaculars; 2) leading to print capitalism which bestowed a "new fixity" to language upon which national images could be built; and 3) creating "languages-of-power" which could be consciously exploited for political ends (1983: 44-45). In focusing on the colonizing campaigns of the 18th and 19th centuries, Anderson describes how the proliferation of print languages and print capitalism facilitated the incorporation of colonized persons under the guise of citizenry and nationalism of European states while maintaining hierchical organization in the exclusion of the periphery from participation and authority.

Anderson describes the case of Japan during the Meiji period and her colonizing efforts as an example of the nationalistic character of imperialism. Anderson identifies three reasons for the largely successful imperialist efforts of the Japanese: 1) the relatively ethnic and cultural homogeneity allowed for the development of mass literacy; 2) the single dynasty monarchy; and 3) threat of the Western barbarians against which mobilized campaigns of "self defense." Through the use of the Japanese language and the vehicle of the school system, Japan was largely successful in the expansion of the "national" empire. This imperialist character lent itself to the nationalistic and thus, moral fervor of the Japanese state during Pacific colonization. As Anderson states:

Dying for one's country, which usually one does not choose assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or perhaps even Amnesty International can not rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at easy will. Dying for the revolution also draws its grandeur from the degree to which it is felt to be something fundamentally pure (1983: 144).



As described above, Japan was and continues to be largely ethnically homogenous and thus, is able to attach ethnicity to the notion of national purity. However, attached to this notion is the burgeoning of racism founded on notions of racial, and ethnic superiority. This is contested by Anderson who argues that racism and nationalism are separate processes. Anderson makes the distinction by equating nationalism with historical destinies whereas racism is founded on the notion of eternal contaminations, "transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history" (1983: 149).

Hobsbawm offers a similar argument of the separation of ethnicity from nationalism. While acknowledging the usefulness of Anderson's concept of the "imagined community," Hobsbawm asks the question of why, in the absence of real human communities, does the need for imagined ones emerge? Hobsbawm answers his own question with his concept of "proto-nationalism" which is founded on the filling of an emotional void in which states and national movements "mobilize certain variants of feelings of collective belonging which already existed and which could operate, as it were, potentially on the macro-political scale which could fit in with modern states and nations" (1990: 46).

The role of ethnicity in the emergence of proto-nationalism is not, according to Hobsbawm linked to conceptions of ethnicity. While identifying "kinship" and "blood" as essential in the bonding of members of an ethnic group and while concurring with Frederik Barth's notion of ethnicity (1969) as a basis for social organization, Hobsbawm argues that ethnicity has had no historic relationship to the formation of the nation-state (1990: 64). Hobsbawm however, does offer a caveat by stating that "visible ethnicity" which he reduces to physiological differences tends to be "negative" as it is used to define "the other" and thus, gives rise to the role of racial stereotypes. He continues to state that "negative

ethnicity" is virtually always irrelevant to proto-nationalism except "perhaps in China, Korea, and Japan, which are indeed among the extremely rare examples of historic states composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogenous" (1990: 66). Hobsbawm concludes that the "most obvious ethnic differences have played a rather small part in the genesis of modern nationalism" and that he knows of no case where this has led to a nationalist movement" (1990: 67).

While it is unclear as to what Hobsbawm means by "obvious ethnic differences," his previous discussion of ethnicity as defined largely by physiological differences would indicate that he accords relatively insignificant ethnic differences between groups such as the Chinese, Korean and the Japanese. However, these groups, particularly the case of Korea under Japanese imperialism, offer a challenge to Hobsbawm's contentions on the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism.

Hobsbawm sums the maintenance of such a high level of ethnic homogeneity in Korea and Japan as a product of "their historic frontiers" (1990: 66; see endnote 37), however, the continuation of this phenomenon may be better understood by the fusion of notions of ethnic heritage with national identity. During the Japanese occupation of Korea, officially beginning in 1911 and ending in 1945, Japanization campaigns were centrally orchestrated. The use of the Korean language was prohibited, newspapers were controlled by the Japanese state, schools replaced Korean history with Japanese and all Koreans were ordered to register Japanese names. In response, Koreans organized national movements in which, in addition, to the staging of massive political protest against the Japanese state, arose a rejuvenated interest in Korean history and folklore. It was during this period that Korean scholars and students attempted to write down for the first time living histories and cultural fables and to celebrate the genesis of the Korean state as historically distinct and separate from the Japanese empire. Since her independence from Japan at the end of World War II, Korea has continued to "remember" her period of Japanese subjugation and has

continued to memorialize the importance of ethnic distinction and self-determination. Thus, in the case of Korea, ethnicity acts as the organizing principle in the efforts of nationalism.

In Japan as well, ethnic separation is fundamental to the concept of Japanese citizenry. To be a Japanese national, one must be of Japanese descent. While legal pathways may exist to naturalized citizenship in Japan, the social separation between "true Japanese" and others is represented in the continuing separatist treatment of the Ainu, Barakumin and Koreans living in Japan. Anderson makes the point himself when he states that he had been

informed by scholars of Japan that recent excavations of the earliest royal tombs suggest strongly that the family may originally have been- horrors!- Korean. The Japanese government has strongly discouraged further research on these sites (1983: 96, see endnote 29).

To disregard ethnicity in the formation of nationalism, at least in the case of Japan, is to deny a fundamental crux by which the Japanese and Koreans see themselves, others and the historical past.

Understanding the relationship between ethnicity, religion and rather, lack of nation is benefited from discussion of Jewish historiography and memory by Yerushalmi (1982). Yerushalmi states that memory and modern historiography are by nature very different in relation with the past. In fact, modern historiography does not attempt to restore memory but rather, brings to light events and processes which were never fully integrated into the collective memory. In so doing, the historian does not "replenish gaps in memory," instead, she "constantly challenges even those memories that have survived intact" (1982: 94).

Rather than evolving from prior Jewish historical writing or historical thought, modern Jewish historiography, according to Yerushalmi, "began precipitously out of that assimilation from without and collapse from within which characterized the sudden

emergence of Jews out of the ghetto" (1982: 85). He continues to state that rather than originating out of scholarly inquiry, it functioned as ideology for the struggle for Jewish emancipation. Yerushalmi contrasts Jewish historiography with that of Europe during the nineteenth century when the latter effectively drew upon the historian in the bolstering of nationalism. Yerushalmi argues that at the same time "Europe was demanding of the Jews alone that, as a condition for their emancipation, they cease to regard themselves as a nation and redefine themselves in purely religious terms" (1982: 88). Yerushalmi continues to state that the Jewish past as a source of national identification was suppressed as well as the idea of a national language.

Complementing Yerushalmi's discussion is the work of Lucette Valensi. In her study of collective memory among North African Jews who have emigrated to France in the 1960's, Valensi discusses what she has termed the "policy of memory" in which traditional memory is negotiated for local contextual meaning. This is produced by a "dialogue between sacred history, Jewish historiography and collective memory" (1986: 291). According to Valensi, the position of sacred memory in the maintenance of Jewish tradition described as ortho-memory is common to all Jews. Thus, with the diaspora of Jewish communities, sacred memory is "constantly readjusting itself to the local surroundings and experiences, to a policy of memory" which can only be organized along "the paradigms of religious tradition" (1986: 291).

In Valensi's analysis of the life histories of North African Jews living in France, she states a universal characteristic (not specific to Jews) of the application of genealogical construction, the enumeration of generations or the designation of a symbolic place of birth as expressions of a political concern to claim authenticity, legitimacy or nobility. Valensi concludes that individual memory as demonstrated in her population of North African Jews in France is founded on religious memory and that "the only way they could find to express their recent destiny was to recite in a new language the lessons learned from

Jewish tradition" (1986:303). Implicit in this conclusion is the notion of an immutable entity known as sacred or religious history. Thus, Valensi constructs a theory of ethnic memory which is unidirectional. However, in consideration of Hobsbawm's (1990, 1983) notion of the "invention of tradition," ethnic memory would be an interactive process by which histories of the past modified according to the localized need. In the case of the Jewish culture, however, the sacred history, transcribed and disseminated in print presents an interesting case in which the locus of power over the traditional past is decentralized and thus, less mutable.

In many ways, there are similarities between Korean residents in Japan and the Jewish people in diaspora. With most Koreans in Japan not knowing the Korean language and unable to return to North or South Korea, feelings of nationalism and ethnicity are necessarily complicated and confused. The intersection between histories as presented by Japanese institutions such as the school system and that which is presented in the Korean family unit must be understood in terms of individual and collective negotiation. In addition, an investigation of other vehicles of social memory must be followed.

In conducting this project, memory of past events must be coupled with an analysis of the process of forgetting as well. In an address delivered at a seminar on "The Uses of Forgetting" at the Colloque de Royaumont 1987, Yerushalmi makes the distinction between memory (mneme) and recollection (anamnesis) in which the former is described as "that which is essentially unbroken, continuous" and the latter as "the recollection of that which has been forgotten." In the case of Koreans in Japan where Japanization may be equated to de-Koreanization, that which is absent from the collective memory is as revealing as that which is present.

In Yerushalmi's statement that forgetting "in a collective sense occurs when human groups **fail** (emphasis added)-whether purposely or passively, out of rebellion, indifference, or indolence, or as the result of some disruptive historical catastrophe- to

transmit what they know out of the past to their posterity" (1987), exists a implicit moral imperative not to forget. A basic question in this project would be whether such a moral imperative exists for Koreans in Japan and if so, how this is realized within Japanese society?

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## CHAPTER IV

### COLONIALISM AND KOREAN MIGRATION TO JAPAN

#### *Soul-Sellers*<sup>1</sup>

*Eight percent servile spirit and the rest is gall.  
From the times of fathers, grandfathers,  
Great-grandfathers, great-great-grandfathers,  
North, south, east, west,  
You kowtowed, bowed, beseeched on your knees,  
Gold, silver, ginseng, pine seeds, tigerskins, virgins,  
What's more, blood and sweat,  
What's more, blood and sweat,  
Even your kin, ancestors, and brothers,  
Even your kin, ancestors, and brothers,  
You sold them to Chinks, Japs, Ruskies, Big-noses,*

*Toadyism, but among your kind ferocious as wild beasts,  
Biting and killing one another, ruined from exhaustion.  
Damn it, damn it!  
In a land of beautiful sky and earth,  
You repeat rotten examples,  
Throwing away your souls and gall,  
"Korean in the world," "First-class backward nation,"  
You sold your souls to south, north, east, west,  
Your housekeeping is dirty as a dog's,  
Heaven fold upon fold, earth layer upon layer  
Wail with tears of blood.*

*-Pak Tu-jin*

Korean migration to Japan has been chronicled by a small but distinguished group of historians and political scientists who have elaborated on Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula and the origins of the Korean resident community in Japan. In thinking about the final product of this thesis on first generation Korean elderly living in Japan, I have described this chapter as one containing "background information", one which is

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<sup>1</sup> This poem was published as part of a collection entitled, *The Sun*, published in 1949. It is translated by Peter H. Lee and Sammy E. Solberg.

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intended to inform readers of the historical context of the Korean diaspora population in Japan. However, by using these referents, I have conflated, perhaps knowingly, the complexity of crafting a body of historical facts from which to understand the position of my project's participants. Fundamentally, the conflict arises from the seemingly straight forward task of writing history.

The first difficulty is in defining what constitutes History: its boundaries and essence in writing a scheme which translates cause and effect relationships to a chronological sequence of events. The second, equally challenging hurdle, is establishing the relationship between History and the life narratives on which this work focuses. In particular, this relationship is one of varying audiences, concerns, and degrees of authority. In problematizing History, the stories of the same spatial and temporal dimensions are placed on one plane to be compared and analyzed.

However, this is not to state that what follows is a new cultural history of Korean migration to Japan. This would certainly demand its own dissertation. Instead, I have attempted to write critically of the past events which have been consumed as History and which are of import in understanding Korean residents in Japan. After first proceeding with the "background information" which I hope will prove useful to readers in understanding the place of Korean residents in Japan, I will endeavor to show History's fallibility in capturing the multiple stories of Korean colonial experience.

### **Annexation of the Korean Peninsula**

Prior to Japan's occupation of the Korean peninsula and eventual annexation in the first decade of the twentieth century, the two nations had adopted a hermetic posture to neighboring nations, a position which was only strengthened by the escalating threat of western imperialism. Japan was initially successful in eradicating attempts by the Spanish, Portuguese, and British in infiltrating the islands in the 17th century. However, the now

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virtually mythic black steamships of American Commodore M.C. Perry's expedition ended Japan's illusion of reclusiveness. Having been forced into diplomatic relations with the United States, Japan recognized her vulnerability and focused her attention on the rapidly changing configuration of the East Asian sphere. The recognition of western military strength motivated Japan's reexamination of her position vis a vis Korea and China.

As neighboring nations separated only by the narrow Sea of Japan, Korea had been well aware of Japan's presence and potential threat. The plundering of Hideyoshi Toyotomi during the Tokugawa period between 1592 and 1598 had been imprinted on the collective memory of the Korean people and contributed to the suspicion with which Korea regarded Japan. However, Korea's position had weakened due to the growing instability of the Yi Dynasty after two centuries of successful rule. Prior to Japanese colonialism, Korea had maintained a centralized bureaucracy which privileged the aristocracy and landed class. However, widespread corruption and ineffectual local administration contributed to the demise of Korea's ruling family and hence, the Korean state which spurred by power struggles within the aristocracy for diminishing surplus as well as unsuppressable peasant rebellions in the kingdom's periphery.<sup>2</sup>

The reasons for Japan's interest in Korea have been argued as deriving from a quest for economic and political leverage. Although opinions differ on these matters, most agree that the encroachment of Western imperialism into Asia contributed to Japan's emergence from self-imposed isolation. Whether from a position of imitative capitalist aggression, or as a defensive measure to the threat of western infiltration, the Korean peninsula, served strategic importance for the Japanese. However, in addition to the European and American powers, Japan's ambitions were initially also impeded by the Russian state which by the end of the 19th century had moved into Manchuria. Usurping Korea meant confronting the

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<sup>2</sup> See James B. Palais' *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea* (1975) for detailed historical analysis on the Yi Dynasty and events leading up to Japanese colonial rule. In particular, Palais emphasizes the reliance of the ruling classes on not only bureaucracy, but on Confucian values and tradition of social hierarchy to maintain stability amidst growing unrest and dissent.

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formidable Russian military. After extended negotiations, however, the conflict was briefly resolved with an agreement between Japan and Russia in 1903 which designated Korea for the former and Manchuria for the latter.

Nonetheless, in early 1904 due to the continued conflicts over the terms of the 1903 treaty, the Russo-Japanese War began. This act provoked the invasion of Korea, resulting in Korea's coercive alliance with Japan and the establishment of a "modified" protectorate which allowed free reign on the peninsula by the Japanese military. With mounting success over the Russians, Japan pried Korea's door open and ensured the complicity of western nations "to look the other way". The tacit international promise to leave Korea to Japan was established by the Katsura Treaties of 1905 created by Prime Minister Katsura Taro and his cabinet and signed by the United States and Great Britain. Russia finally admitted defeat the same year and acquiesced to Japanese interests in Korea.

Having eliminated foreign opposition, Japan appointed Resident General Ito Hirobumi to preside in Seoul in November, 1905, ostensibly to advise Korean King Kojung. However, in 1907 Kojung was forced to abdicate the throne and Korea became a full protectorate of Japan, officially annexed on August 22, 1910.

#### **Assimilation: Subordination in the Name of Brotherhood**

In explaining Japan's twentieth century military aggression in the Pacific, it is often claimed that Japan, proving her worth as a great imitator, followed, albeit belatedly, the lead of Western colonialism. However, unlike the French, Germans, British and Americans, Japan moved into what was perceived as her own backyard. Japan deviated from "Western masters" not only by usurping land in proximity, but also, by attempting to integrate a people with whom she shared racial and cultural origins. This has led Peattie (1984) to elaborate on Japan's paradoxical approaches to colonial rule. He writes that on

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the one hand, Japan, like the West, attempted to maintain distinct and separate spheres between colonial subjects and the metropole. However, Japan also, emphasized shared origins and values in support of incorporation of the Korean people as Japanese subjects<sup>3</sup>. In the pursuit of the latter, Japan maintained a "kin folk" analogy to her occupation of the Korean peninsula. Weiner (1995) points out that attitudes of "incorporation" of Koreans into the Imperial "family" emerged, paradoxically, from inherently racist stereotypes validating Japan's unequal and often, brutal treatment of the colony. In the execution of *chosen seisaku*\*, or Japan's "Korean policy", Koreans were deemed as fundamentally undisciplined as reflected in their inability to maintain sovereignty. The argument followed that Koreans therefore, needed "guidance" by Japan in ushering their country into the twentieth century and encouraging modern development. Evoking images "of a civilizing mission and the assimilation of the Korean younger brother through policies founded upon imperial benevolence" (Weiner, 1994:40), Korea's subordinate position was naturalized.

With the inception of Japanese colonization of Korea in 1910, General Terauchi Masatake was appointed as the first Governor General of the Korean colony. Terauchi practiced *budan seiji*\*, or rule by military, in executing coercive assimilation policies coupled with strict surveillance practices on the peninsula. Mandatory use of the Japanese language and Japanese names as well as eradication Korean cultural institutions which were to be replaced by Japanese counterparts were ordered and enforced. In addition, Korean political parties were dissolved, the Korean press was censored, the education system was reformed, commercial activities were constrained and the agricultural system was transfigured. These measures were enacted in the name of assimilation to Japanese culture and society, however, Koreans realized that assimilation was merely a code word for subservience.

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<sup>3</sup> Bruce Cummings (1984) borrows Hechter's discussion of "internal colonialism" to describe Japan's colonial relationship to Korea. He draws a similarity to the relationships between England and Ireland as well as Germany and Poland.

*Doka Seisaku\** (assimilation policies) informed a variety of not always complementary agenda, even in its most benign form. Assimilation hinted at no less than the elimination of Korean culture and its replacement by a subordinate and colonial identity. As the inheritors of a political and cultural tradition which was regarded as irretrievably corrupt, the Korean was conceived of as an unruly child whose future welfare depended upon the intervention and guidance which only Japan could provide (Weiner, 1994: 90).

The role of the Korean people was confined to providing administrative assistance to the Japanese resident government, such as in the police force, and to encouraging the economic development of the burgeoning Japanese empire. In particular, Korea was to absorb Japanese settlers in the colonial project of enlarging the living space of the Japanese people. Most importantly, Korea was to provide indigenous human labor, resulting in massive migration of Koreans to Japan. In addition, Korea was to be an outlet for Japanese goods and through the agriculture, specifically, rice production, was reduced to Japan's *bento\**, or lunch, box.

#### Agricultural Reform and Peasant Migration

A landlord-tenant system had been in place in Korea when the Japanese gained control in 1910. Japan maintained the system, yet added a rent and taxation program which funneled crops to the Japanese government and thus, to the Japanese people. Utilizing the existing structure of local control by the landed class in Korea, Japan established a system of incentives to increase the production of rice. However, peasants working the land did not receive these economic rewards and were forced to bear the brunt of ever rising rents and taxes on diminishing plots of land. The result of the Japanese reform was an increase in rice productivity in concert with dramatic decreases in per capita consumption of rice in Korea which reflected the routing of rice to the metropole, relegating Koreans to eat what were believed to be inferior grains such as barley and millet.

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Agricultural reforms on the continent explain the reasons why over 90% of the current Korean resident population in Japan originated from the southern regions of the Korean peninsula. Provinces such as Cholla and Kyongsang contained the richest land for rice production. Attesting to this is that 80-90% of this area's population were crop tenants (Weiner, 1994: 44). (See Appendix C for more detailed information on the birthplaces of Korean residents in Japan as of 1938)

Enforcement of Japanese colonial agricultural policy in Korea resulted in a concentration of land holdings which, coupled with Korea's population growth, resulted in disadvantage for Korean peasants who were easily replaced when unable to pay rents and taxes to landlords. The tenuous position of peasants, due to the heavy burden of rent added to the high interest rates exacted by money lenders and the unavailability of employment opportunities outside of agriculture, conspired together to push Koreans to search for more favorable circumstances in Japan. According to Weiner (1994), factors which coerce laborers from the colonial periphery to the metropolitan core were in place with the fulfillment of six conditions: 1. impoverishment; 2. high taxation and expropriation; 3. low levels of industrialization; 4. lack of capital investment; 5. high levels of unemployment; and 6. military and authoritative political control (1994: 45). During Japan's 1920's rice increasing program, several thousands of Korean peasants migrated to work in areas such as mines, factories, mills and construction companies in Japan to decrease their financial difficulties.

#### Difficult, Dirty and Dangerous

To claim that prior to formal annexation of Korea, Japan did not have any foreign residents is misleading. While maintaining diplomatic isolation, Japan did utilize foreign workers, mainly Chinese in the 19th century. Although Koreans also lived in Japan before colonization, they consisted predominantly of students, members of the diplomatic

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establishment, political exiles, and small numbers of laborers and peddlers (Weiner, 1994). The students, in particular, came to Japan to pursue higher learning, a trend which carried prestige and status in their own country. The number of Korean students who attended Japanese universities increased during the colonial period, producing a forceful pro-nationalist voice among Korean intellectuals. However, the majority of those migrating from Korea during the colonial period and indeed, those who remained after the end of the War, were peasants who left their homes in search of work.

Korean workers in Japan did not escape their plight in Korea to awake to a land of untempered opportunity. In reality, Korean laborers in Japan were paid half the wages of their Japanese counterparts. In addition, they were expected to work longer hours and were subject to various forms of abuse and discrimination. As colonial labor they were consigned to the most loathsome of jobs characterized as *kitsui\**, *kitanai\**, and *kiken\**, or difficult, dirty and dangerous, and were used in areas which were often shunned by Japanese workers. The major companies hiring Koreans during the colonial period included Fukushima Cotton Spinning, Hokutan ( a coal mining enterprise in Hokkaido), Toyohashi Silk Reeling, Mitsubishi Coal, and Fuji Paper of Hokkaido (Weiner, 1994). Verbal and physical abuse of Korean laborers in Japanese mines, factories and mills are believed to account for the high rates of work related injuries and turnover. The Japanese government, however, noting the relatively short tenure of its Korean workers, chose to see this as a reaffirmation of the stereotype of Koreans as unintelligent and indolent, validating their assignment to the most lowly of jobs.

The drudgery of their labor was only embittered by difficulties suffered by Korean migrants in adjusting to life in Japan and the discrimination which they withstood. In the area of housing, landlords would often prohibit Koreans from applying for rental properties. Because Koreans were rarely employed as permanent workers by Japanese companies, they were not provided with lodging and were forced to live in tenements or

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flop houses in extremely crowded conditions. The temporary status of Korean migrant workers nullified assimilation measures analogous to those discussed in the Korean colony.

To a great extent this was due to the perception of the Korean immigrant as a temporary sojourner who would return to the peninsula once his labor was no longer required. As such, there was little expectation that the immigrants would derive their own ethnic organizations and institutions or attempt to enter into mainstream political and economic structures. To this was added, as we have seen, the perception of impoverished newcomers as cultural and racial antagonists - an alien influx which threatened to dilute the national stock and corrupt the moral foundations of civic life (Weiner, 1994: 156).

#### Nationalism on the Left

On March 1, 1919 over one million Korean protesters staged an independence demonstration, demanding that the Japanese relinquish control of the Korean peninsula. While initially the demonstration proved to be peaceful, violent retaliatory measures by the Japanese military resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries. In response to the event, the Japanese government installed a new Governor General by the name of Saito Makota whose ascension ended the era of *budan seiji* and commenced *bunka seiji*\*, or cultural rule.

The architect for the new policy was Prime Minister Hara Kei who believed that the Korean people did not want independence as much as equal treatment. In purported support of this goal, Hara through Saito, promised several reforms. These included reducing censorship of the Korean press; creation of a civilian police force; reforms in local administration in order to increase Korean participation in politics; increased access to education; and greater investment in industrial development (Peattie, 1984). While these

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new policies were said to have been officially executed, no real changes occurred, particularly after the assassination of Hara in 1921.

By the 1920's, Korean migrants in Japan is estimated at 300,000 (Homusho nyukoku kanrikyoku hen, 1964). Due to the migration and housing patterns of the population, Koreans tended to live clustered in various areas in great density in the neighborhoods of Osaka and Tokyo. A result of the transformation of Korean peasants to laborers in Japan was the emergence of decidedly proletarian class of foreign workers who were sympathetic to the radical wing of the Japanese trade union and nascent communist groups in Japan. In addition, Korean university students in Tokyo became interested in these organizations. In 1922 Korean students organized *Hokuseikai\**, or North Star Society, to study socialism and eventually merged with *Kitakazekai\**, or the North Wind Society. The *Tokyo Chosen Musan Seinen Domeikai\**, Tokyo Korean Proletarian Youth League was also formed at this time (Mitchell, 1967).

Organizations such as *Dai Nippon Rodokumiai Sodomei Yuukai\**, Grand Japan Federation of Labor Unions Fraternal Association; *Nippon Rodo Hyogikai\**, Japan Labor Union Council; and *Rodo Nointo\**, Labor Farmer Party, brought both Koreans and Japanese together in the goals for equal treatment of foreign workers (Mitchell, 1967). While the poor living and working conditions in Japan had induced the formation of pro-left groups, the aftermath of the *Kanto Dai Shinsai\**, the Great Kanto Earthquake, hastened Korean participation in the Communist movement.

On September 1, 1923 at 11:58 am, a major earthquake in the Kanto region of Japan caused destruction of Tokyo and the death of over 100,000 people. In the confusion of the earthquake's devastation, a rumor was ignited that Koreans, aided by Japanese anarchists, were burning houses, stealing money and property and dropping arsenic into the well water. The Tokyo police, giving tacit approval, did not intervene as hundreds of Japanese army reservists and civilian volunteers hunted down Koreans, killing several

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thousands. In the days that followed, Korean residents were raped and murdered by Japanese police and civilians. The following is a personal account of the massacre as told by a Korean woman who was able to escape to Beijing:

*“Jikeidan* (vigilantes) were looking for Koreans day and night. When they captured one, they shouted, “Korean!” Many Japanese rushed to the scene, surrounding the victim. They tied him on a telephone pole, scooped out his eyes, cut off his nose, chopped open his stomach, and pulled out his internal organs. Sometimes they tied a Korean’s neck to a car and dragged him around until he choked to death. They also captured women, grabbed their legs, pulled them in opposite directions, and tore their bodies. The Koreans resisted till the last moment, begging and insisting on their innocence. But the crowd never listened. The Korean women and children were screaming and crying for mercy in vain. The massacre continued for six days and nights.”  
(Lee and De Vos, 1981)

Spurred by the increasing hostility towards Korean residents, the formerly independent Korean Communist movement merged with the Japanese Communist Party. The Korean community utilized the *Nippon Rodo Kumiai Zenkoku Kyogikai\**, National Conference of Japanese Trade Unions, or *Zenkyo\**, as an operational base to rebuild the communist party in their homeland. However, the new Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi responded with systematic suppression of communism in Japan. In March of 1928 over 1,500 people were arrested in police raids of left wing organizations and in June the Peace Preservation Law was amended to include the death penalty for violators. As a result *Nihonkyosanto\**, the Japanese Communist Party and *Zenkyo* were forced underground (Mitchell, 1967). Such activities continued, although they were sharply curtailed.

In the 1930's the numbers of Korean migrants arriving in Japan dramatically increased to over two million. This was due in part to greater numbers of Koreans electing emigration to Japan, but more significantly, this trend reflected the stage of forcible movement of Koreans workers to Japanese labor markets. In 1931 Japan invaded China, thus creating a demand for colonial labor due to extreme shortages in Japan. Koreans,

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largely peasants, were persuaded and in many cases, forced into working in coal mines and steel factories in support of Japan's expanding war effort. In addition, in this later period of the colonial era, Japan began drafting Korean born subjects into military service (Jo, 1987). (See Appendix D for information of the growth of the Korean population in Japan)

### **From Citizen to Alien: Establishing Boundaries**

On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allied nations ending colonization of Korea. Although transportation of Korean residents living in Japan to Korea was guaranteed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), Koreans were forbidden to take more than 1,000 yen worth of currency (the equivalent cost of a few cartons of cigarettes at the time) and/or personal property out of Japan. In addition to the imposed financial limitations, reports of the devastating economic situation in Korea influenced many Koreans to remain in Japan. Thus, as of March 18, 1946, only 132,897 Koreans had returned to Korea. The remaining Koreans in Japan forfeited their rights to repatriation until their international status vis a vis the new Japanese government.

In 1946 the Japanese government classified Koreans in Japan as aliens under the Alien Registration Act, denying them rights to political membership or participation in Japan. In 1951 the Japanese government passed the Immigration Control Law which stipulated that an alien who was (1) a pauper, vagrant, or disabled person, and had become a charge of the state or any locality or (2) a person who had been subjected to any punishment heavier than imprisonment for violation of the Alien Registration Law were subject to deportation. In addition, aliens above the age of sixteen who remained in Japan for more than one year were required to be fingerprinted for registration cards which were to be carried with them at all times (Utsumi, 1990).

In the 1952 the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty shifted the official status of Koreans from alien residents to that of "foreigners". At the end of the Korean War

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(1950-53), Korean residents were given the choice of registering as North Korean or South Korean citizens. Legally, the default status for Koreans was the category of *chosenjin*\*, a term meaning Korean people surviving from the colonial period and which was used to designate North Korean status. If Korean residents wished to pledge South Korean citizenship, they became *kankokujin*\*. While fluctuating over the years, the numbers of Korean choosing South Korean citizenship compared to North Korean citizenship has been roughly two to one.

#### Formation of Chongryun and Mindan

To the disappointment of Korean residents in Japan, the SCAP government had left the legal status of Korean residents to the authority of the Japanese government after the end of the War. In response, Japan failed to improve the position of its Korean population. The much anticipated victory over the Japanese did not produce the changes hoped for by Korean migrants.

Meanwhile, the prevailing attitude among Koreans at the time was that they were 'liberated' nationals, whereas the Japanese were conquered nationals subject to the Allied Powers. This notion was apparently derived from the Joint Chiefs of Staff directive to General Douglas Mac Arthur that Koreans were to be treated as "liberated" nationals if military security were not involved, as 'enemy' nationals "in case of necessity," since they had been Japanese subjects. A lack of further clarification, however, as to when the Koreans should be treated "liberated" and when as "enemy" nationals seemed to have caused both Korean and Japanese authorities to misconstrue the extent of their legal jurisdiction. The Koreans in Japan believed, therefore, that they were entitled to different treatment from the defeated Japanese (DeVos and Lee, 1981: 64).

In reaction to the poor living conditions in Japan, Korean residents formed *Choryon*†, the Korean Association in Japan, on October 15, 1945. It was initially founded as a nonpolitical organization which endeavored to represent all Korean residents in Japan.

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However, *Choryon* became increasingly oriented to left wing political groups, particularly the Japanese Communist Party (JCP).

In response to the gravitation of *Choryon* to the left, dissidents from the organization united with other anti-communist groups and formed *Choson Konguk Chokchin Chongnyon Dongmeng†*, or *Konchong†*, the Youth League to Expedite the Foundation of Korea. *Konchong* developed into a right wing youth organization and was openly antagonist towards *Choryon*. In addition, another organization entitled, *Shinchosen Konsol Dongmeng†*, or *Kondong†*, the League for the Establishment of a New Korea, was founded on January 2, 1946 and like, *Konchong*, claimed to represent the concerns of all Korean residents of Japan though it reflected a primarily rightist agenda. In October of the same year, *Kondong* dissolved to aid the formation of *Chaeil Hangukin Koryumindan†*, or *Mindan†*, the Korean Resident Association in Japan. This organization promised to remain independent of political ideology and political institutions in the homeland and to concentrate on problems faced by Korean residents in Japan.

While the anti-communist Korean resident groups were vocal in their opposition to *Choryon*, they were not supported by either the Japanese government or the American occupation forces and were not financially solvent, having to rely on funding from black-market activities. *Choryun*, supported by Japanese political groups, dominated in the Korean resident community until 1949 when it was forced by order of the Japanese government to disband for allegedly engaging in terrorist activity (Shinozaki, 1955).

After the outbreak of the Korean War, members of the now defunct *Choryon* aligned themselves with the Japanese Communist Party to form *Chaeil Chosen Tongil Minchu Chonson†*, or *Minchon†*, the United Democratic Front in Japan for the Unification of Korea, in January, 1951. However, having grown disillusioned with Japanese communism in attempts to gain greater representation within Japan, *Minchon* terminated its status under the auspices of the JCP and pursued independence by pledging allegiance to

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North Korea on May 24, 1955. As a symbolic act of this new beginning, *Minchon* was dissolved and *Chaeilbon Chosonin Chongryonhaphoe*<sup>4</sup>, or *Chongryun*<sup>4</sup>, the General Federation of Korean Residents in Japan, was formed. North Korea endorsed *Chongryun* as the exclusive organization in Japan representing Korean resident interests. In response, the South Korean government officially recognized *Mindan*, denying the existence of *Chongryun*.

Though the immediate postwar period reflects instability and a rapid metamorphosis of political groups attempting to represent Korean residents in Japan, the *Chongryun* and *Mindan* have maintained the two loci of power within the Korean resident population, each owing its existence to the mutual antagonism of the two Koreas, allegorized by these organizations in Japan.

#### 1965 Agreement and Loss of Faith

In 1959 the North Korean government presented a formal request to the Japanese government for unconditional repatriation of Korean residents who wished to return to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan agreed to these demands and by 1967, over 100,000 Koreans from Japan repatriated to North Korea (Jo, 1987; Mitchell, 1992)<sup>5</sup>. The numbers of Korean residents migrating to Japan diminished, however, with increasing reports from repatriates of difficult living conditions in the North.

In 1965 the "Agreement on Legal Status and Treatment of Nationals of the Republic of Korea Residing in Japan" was signed by South Korea and Japan in this normalization treaty between the two countries. This treaty gave Koreans who had resided in Japan prior

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<sup>4</sup> *Chongryun* is used interchangeably with *Chosen Soren*, in this dissertation.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that although thousands did decide to repatriate to North Korea, only 2.4 percent of Koreans in Japan were originally from North Korean territories with 96.6 percent from South Korea (Lee and DeVos, 1981).

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to August 1945 permanent resident status which was also extended to their descendants. Those who qualified for this status were those residing in Japan continuously since August 15, 1945; those who were born in Japan since that date; and children born after 1971 of parents who had received permanent residence status under the preceding categories (Jo, 1987). However, those who left Japan after August 15, 1945 and returned were disqualified. Under the stipulations of the treaty, those who were not given citizenship by the South Korean government were not eligible for permanent residence in Japan. Those who were considered North Korean continued to be excluded, becoming legally "stateless", temporary residents since Pyongyang had no diplomatic relations with Tokyo. However, the "Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act" signed in 1981 gave "treaty based permanent residency" for those with North Korean citizenship (Komai, 1995).

The South Korean government has been often criticized for not demanding more equitable treatment for Korean residents in Japan in the 1965 Agreement. South Korea has been accused in retrospect of being more concerned in obtaining war reparations from Japan in order to rebuild the country's deteriorating economy than improving the legal question of Korean residents. Recently, the treaty has come under increasing scrutiny in the demand for compensation for Korean born "comfort women" who were forced by the Japanese military to perform sexual services during the colonial period. According to the Japanese government, any war reparations deserved by these women were reconciled by the 1965 Treaty and collected by the South Korean government who apparently agreed to close discussions on war crime issues and forego any additional compensation for acts committed during colonization.

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### **Legacy of Discrimination**

While the legal standing of Korean residents in Japan improved with the special category of permanent residence, they continue without basic civil rights, such as the right to vote in either local or national elections, though they are required to pay the same taxes as Japanese citizens. Although these privileges are available to foreigners who become naturalized citizens, this process has not been an easy or inviting one for Koreans. Until recently, procedures for naturalization resonated of the colonial era policies of assimilation, requiring that foreigners forfeit their given names by adopting Japanese titles. However, this was only one of the several obstacles in the maze-like course in attaining citizenship in which investigations of genealogy and life history and the payment of various fees were standard practices.

Despite this arduous process, increasing numbers of second, third, and fourth generation Korean residents have successfully changed their citizenship. As of 1988, 145,000 Koreans had become naturalized Japanese citizens (Komai, 1995). This may be due in part to an easing of citizenship requirements. For example, until the early 1980's, patrilineage determined Japanese nationality in which the offspring of international marriages between Korean women and Japanese men became Japanese nationals. However, the Japanese Nationality Act signed in 1984 voided gender specificity by including matrilineal qualification to Japanese citizenship.

While these changes indicate important gains for Korean residents who wish to obtain Japanese citizenship, for those who wish to maintain their Korean nationality, there continues a legacy of discriminatory practices which emerge in many facets of the life.

### **Anti-Fingerprinting Campaign**

Under the Alien Registration Law of 1952, aliens residing in Japan are required to register with the Japanese government. Aliens who are above the age of sixteen who stay

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in Japan for more than one year must have had fingerprints of their left index digits placed on a registration card, a registration certificate, and a fingerprint card. Inside the pass book, under the bearer's photograph, is a large square where the print is made. A print is also made on official records which are kept at the local government offices as well as on registers sent to the Justice Ministry for filing (Utsumi, 1990). Aliens are required to renew their registrations every five years. If they refuse to be fingerprinted, they can be imprisoned up to one year and be required to pay a fine of 200,000 yen. While this requirement continues for foreigners in Japan like myself, fingerprinting of Korean residents has been terminated. This change is recent passing in 1992 and has occurred due to protests within the Korean resident community.

It is important to note the historical background of fingerprinting as a practice in Japan in order to give the social context in which Korean residents are currently treated. Fingerprinting in Japan was introduced in 1908 when the criminal code was revised. It was a method for identifying recidivist offenders. Due to its long history of use in identifying criminals, fingerprinting has been automatically associated with criminality and delinquents. As a result, fingerprinting reinforced negative stereotypes of Korean residents in Japan and the history of colonial subjugation. Koreans in Japan protested against fingerprinting as an unfair method in light of Japan's forced labor campaigns and colonial occupation of Korea which precipitated their living in Japan.

Since 1980 a significant number of resident aliens in Japan, most of whom were Korean, have refused to be fingerprinted. Legal suits were filed based on claims that fingerprinting is a violation of human rights. In 1984, the Yokohama and Tokyo District courts found guilty three Koreans and one American in their refusal to be fingerprinted. This again occurred in 1985 in Fukuoka. Those who refused to be fingerprinted argued that fingerprinting violates Article 13 of the Japanese Constitution in disregarding the "respect of individuals"; Article 7 and the Civil and Political Covenant as "degrading

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treatment"; Article 14 of the Constitution and Articles 2(1) and 26 of the Civil and Political Covenant as "discrimination against aliens"; and Article 31 of the Constitution as disregard of "due process" because the law imposes unnecessarily heavy penalties (Iwasawa, 1986). In response to these arguments, the Tokyo District Court did agree that fingerprinting activity does violate the tenets of the Constitution in the following way:

To compel fingerprinting without just cause or need would violate Article 13 of the Constitution in the sense that it would injure the respect as individuals, and depending upon the means or methods of compulsion, there could also be a case in which it would fall under the "degrading treatment" stipulated in Article 7 of the Civil and Political Covenant...Not only Japanese nationals but also aliens can enjoy this right...If they were accorded discriminatory treatment without reasonable cause in this respect, it would violate Article 14 of the Constitution and Article 26 of the Civil and Political Covenant. (Tokyo District Court Minutes, 1984)

Although the Tokyo District Court initially agreed that fingerprinting may be "discriminatory treatment", the court went on to conclude that the fingerprinting system for aliens in Japan did not violate Article 13 of the Constitution because there was sufficient "reasonable cause and substantial need". The Tokyo Court also rejected the argument that fingerprinting violated Article 7 of the Civil and Political Covenant because it compelled compliance with penalties instead of physical force. However, these "penalties" included the threat of extradition. Without securing reentry permits from Japanese immigration offices, Korean residents are barred from re-entering Japan. During the anti-fingerprinting campaign, refusal of reentry permits were used as sanction against Korean residents participating in the protest (Komai, 1995).

The Yokohama District Court, while recognizing the language of "degrading treatment" in the Covenant, interpreted the term as "humiliating treatment," which was defined as treatment which considerably impairs the dignity of man, corresponding to

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'torture, or cruel or inhuman treatment.'" The court concluded that fingerprinting of aliens did not consist of this type of treatment (Iwasawa, 1986).

Although the courts consistently refused to deem the practice of fingerprinting of alien residents as unlawful, Koreans in Japan continued to campaign against the practice. In January of 1981, a fifteen year old girl by the name of Choe Songhei, a third generation Korean resident refused to have her first fingerprint taken. She was arrested and detained for a short period and her family was fined 200,000 yen. However, the publicity around surrounding her case spread internationally and is believed to have precipitated the United Nations' response in March of the same year in which Choe was asked to testify at a session in Geneva entitled, "The Infringement of the Human Rights of Koreans in Japan." By November of 1981, the Ministry of Justice of Japan recorded 7,103 Korean residents who refused to be fingerprinted.

Church organizations also played a large role in the resistance of fingerprinting in Japan. A letter writing campaign was initiated by the Council of Christian Churches in which church organizers protested the fingerprinting of Koreans in Japan by sending statements to the Japanese Justice Ministry. In June of 1984, the church based protest expanded into North America with 5,295 letters of protest coming from overseas. In 1985, over 1,000 Koreans in Japan demonstrated by gathering at the Osaka Girl's School and demanded the complete abolition of fingerprinting of permanent residents.

In 1985 the Justice Ministry of Japan announced it would deport long-term residents without permanent resident status who persisted in refusing fingerprinting. However, in the midst of growing protest against the fingerprinting requirement and increasing attention from overseas, the Japanese government relented and eliminated fingerprinting of long term foreign residents. It announced in May of 1992 that the fingerprinting requirement would be gradually phased out by 1998.

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This change in policy indicates a shift in the Japanese government's position on ethnic relations, largely due to the efforts of Korean resident groups who continue to protest discriminatory practices in Japan. Korean groups in Japan are currently involved in efforts which include obtaining pension benefits for Korean elderly, eliminating the requirement of carrying registration cards, eliminating the use of genealogical records in hiring practices and easing the requirements for naturalized citizenship.

### Continuing Discrimination

The anti-fingerprinting campaign initiated by Korean residents in Japan reflects the institutionalized forms of discrimination levied against foreigners. However, unlike temporary residents, these structural barriers present increasing difficulties for long term residents who attempt to support themselves and their children in Japan. As in the colonial era, discrimination against Koreans has pervaded all aspects of daily life.

In 1970, a second generation male Korean resident sued Hitachi Company for racial discrimination. He claimed that after passing the mandatory company examination and interviews, he was offered a position of employment. However, this offer was subsequently rescinded when the company investigated his family registry and discovered that he was of Korean ancestry. After a prolonged dispute, the court upheld the claim of discrimination, fining Hitachi and demanding that the company re-extend their offer of employment (Komai, 1995).

The use of the genealogical record or *koseki*\*, is common practice in Japan, particularly in the forging of social relationships. For example, the *koseki* has been used by private investigators hired by the families of prospective brides and grooms to determine "suitable" family backgrounds. In addition, recruiters for companies routinely check the *koseki* when making hiring decisions. As a family registry, the *koseki* may be used to extend back as far back as four generations to confirm "pure" Japanese lineage, without

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which employers often find convenient excuses to reject company applicants at early stages of the hiring process.

The covert practices of private companies, however, only mimic the National Personnel Authority's legal prohibition of Korean residents and other non-Japanese in civil service positions, running the gamut from post office clerk to elected official. While these restrictions have not waned at the national level, recent changes have occurred at the local bureaucratic level. The first appeared in Amagasaki City which abolished legislation against foreigners in 1974. This was followed by similar action in Hyogo Prefecture and in Osaka Prefecture as well as in all 27 cities in the capital metropolis. Osaka City issued the first ordinance which allowed non-nationals to perform university level clerical work which was followed by Kobe, Yokohama, and Kawasaki. Kawanishi City in Hyogo Prefecture was the first city to employ a foreigner in a city managerial position.

One area which the national government has relaxed its employment eligibility guidelines is in the area of nursing. In 1986, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a directive to allow employment of foreign nationals as nurses, an area where Japan suffers a severe shortage. While this appears to be a significant step towards more equitable employment practices for Korean residents, Japan's legacy of using non-Japanese labor in times of shortage during the colonial era is a warning against mistaking these legislative adjustments as a transformed Japanese outlook on foreigners. Rather, continued systemic discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, and education outweigh these exceptional measures.

Currently, Koreans continue to experience difficulty in renting housing. Although discriminatory practices are not as overt as in the pre-War period, landlords will often refuse prospective Korean tenants by falsely claiming that properties have been rented. Koreans have also reported that real estate agencies will often show them less favorable properties or refuse to serve them without the security of a Japanese national guarantor who

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will volunteer responsibility for rent default. Numerous Koreans have elected to adopt Japanese in order to circumvent discriminatory housing policies, at least temporarily. However, recent reports of landlords examining carefully researching prospective tenants' backgrounds, has made this increasingly difficult. As would be expected, this is a significant problem for first generation elderly Koreans who are often less able to hide their non-Japanese status. These forms of social discrimination are insidiously difficult to prove and, leaving Koreans and other foreigners powerless.

As a result of institutionalized discrimination against Koreans residents, the Korean community has responded by erecting many of their own organizations and institutions. This is most evident in the area of education. Currently, there are over 66 kindergartens, 83 primary schools, 56 middle schools, 12 high schools and one university under the auspices of North or South Korea (Komai, 1995). However, these ethnic institutions are not without their costs. While these institutions fulfill the needs of ethnic education by providing Korean language instruction and courses in Korean history and culture, Japan does not recognize these schools and thus, they are not eligible for government private school subsidies nor are Korean school students eligible for student privileges such as significant discounts for student railway passes. In addition, only a few public universities allow graduates of Korean high schools to take their examinations.

The specific forms of discrimination confronting elderly Korean residents will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters. The purpose of this short discussion of current discriminatory practices is to frame the kinds of challenges confronting Korean residents in Japan and to reveal the degree of continuity between colonial policies with current attitudes and practices in modern Japanese society. For first generation Korean migrants, the legacy of colonialism is significant in not only how they are treated within Japanese social structure, but also how this historical era has influenced their own perception of their

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position in their host nation and their choices in both assimilation and resistance to categories of difference.

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## CHAPTER V

### OLD AGE AND IDENTITY IN LIFE NARRATIVES

*Call me to the one among your moments  
That stands against you, ineluctably:  
intimate as a dog's imploring glance  
but, again, forever, turned away*

*when you think you've captured it at last.  
What seems so far from you is most your own.  
We are already free, and were dismissed  
where we thought we soon would be at home.*

*Anxious, we keeping longing for a foothold-  
we, at times too young for what is old  
and too old for what has never been;*

*doing justice only where we praise,  
because we are the branch, the iron blade,  
and sweet danger, ripening from within.*

*-Rainer Maria Rilke<sup>1</sup>*

Any attempt to represent an individual life is, indeed, an ambitious and formidable task. The challenge of representation is often thwarted by its inability to satisfy the multitude of perspectives which take claim on a particular facet of individual identity. Not only is failure from the inclusion and/or exclusion of content subject to dispute, but in the representation of one's life history, organization and/or structure of narratives, in and of themselves, present epistemological dilemmas, often producing a paralyzing effect on how information is to be conveyed.

The following is, nonetheless, an attempt to relay the lives of three septuagenarian Korean residents in Japan. Utilizing the methodological tools of life history, these "life stories" have been written to reveal the intersections of age, gender and ethnicity on the templates of experience for these first generation Koreans who migrated from the Korean

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<sup>1</sup> From the Sonnets to Orpheus II, 23.

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peninsula to Japan during the Japanese colonial era and who have remained to build their lives in a foreign land. This chapter is intended not only to establish the reader's relationship with the individuals central to this ethnography, but also to understand the maps by which Korean residents navigate their lives in Japanese society in old age.

The three individuals depicted here are whole, in that, rather than a conglomeration of modal participants of this project, the experiences attributed to each individual represent singular lives and retain the integrity of three life histories of three distinct individuals. As such, in telling these stories, it is not my intention to claim universality in Korean resident experiences in Japanese society. Rather, it is through the specificities of these life histories that I endeavor to glean the attitudes and structures in place in Japanese society and culture with which Korean residents engage, maneuver and in some cases, transform.

Considering the wealth of stories which were gathered during fieldwork, the choice of these three individuals and these particular set of narratives deserves explanation. As described earlier in chapter two, twenty one life histories were collected of which the overwhelming majority were from the lives of women.

Resonance in the style of these life stories with the work of the late Barbara Meyerhoff is noted by the rather unconventional presence of the ethnographer in the collection and telling of life histories. Recognizing the inherent dialogic relationship between storyteller and listener, this chapter is informed by Meyerhoff's work in its attempt to relay a more accurate depiction of the context in which these stories were gathered.

### **Han Eun Jong: The Ripening of Persimmons**

Emerging from Mikawashima subway station in Arakawa ward, I rushed to the nearby *kudamono*\* (fruit) shop to select my weekly present for Han-*halmoni*, a 75 year old widow who lives alone a few blocks from the subway station. Han-*halmoni* had consented to my probing questions of her life for several hours during our weekly visits the past few months and although I asked repetitively to be able to compensate her for her time,

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she adamantly refused. Instead, I had developed the habit of bringing her various gifts of fruit, meat and vegetables which she graciously accepted. Remembering that she particularly enjoyed persimmons as she could chew them with relative ease despite her missing molars, I chose four and the same number of kiwi fruit. With offering in hand, I began the short walk to Han-*halmoni*'s apartment building.

### The Fall of 1994

When I first met Han-*halmoni*, I was accompanied by Pastor Lee Ki Ju of the Korean Christian Church in Idabashi. He had agreed to take me along on his monthly visits of elderly members in his congregation who were either ill or physically unable to attend Sunday services. Although the proportion of elderly at the church was relatively small compared to the number of young families, the elderly were the majority of those whom Pastor Lee visited.

When Pastor Lee and I arrived at Han-*halmoni*'s apartment, we found the door unlocked. We proceeded in, while simultaneously announcing our arrival. In the bedroom, a weary voice asked, "Who is it?" and Pastor Lee quickly announced himself. Walking into the far tatami room, we saw that Han-*halmoni* was lying on her side in a hospital bed. She was an extremely diminutive woman who looked to weigh no more than 85 pounds. Her thin body was cloaked in a faded pink floral print housecoat too big for her. Her hair consisted of feathery white threads, through which her pale scalp was exposed. Her cheeks were sunken, accentuating her large, moist eyes which shone bright and belied her wasted body.

On the bed were several thin blankets drawn around her legs and two flat pillows underneath her head. Propped up between one of the pillows and the head railing was a small clock radio which was softly playing classical music. I discovered later that Han-*halmoni* relied on the radio for company throughout the day and night during the period she was bedridden. She said it was her best friend. Next to the bed was a high night stand

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on which were several packets of powdery medicine and a half full glass of water. Besides these few items, the room contained only one chair and one large window.

Upon seeing the two of us, Han-*halmoni* smiled and attempted to get up, but Pastor Lee told her to remain lying down. She invited us to obtain a chair from the kitchen and to be seated. After doing so, Pastor Lee introduced me to Han-*halmoni* as a second generation Korean American student who was studying anthropology. He explained that I wanted to study the lives of old Korean residents in Japan. Hearing this, a soft smile re-emerged on Han-*halmoni*'s thin lips and rhetorically, she asked me,

"Why do you want to study old people? You are so young. You don't want to bother with us, grandmothers. We are practically dead. All we have is a few more years. At your age you should spend your time with other young people."

Smiling at the numerous times these sentiments had been expressed to me by others who had been told of my research interests, I began to explain my reasons in the same manner I had on several occasions before.

"I have always been interested in the lives of *halmoni*'s and *harabuji*'s. My father is a doctor and most of his patients are elderly. As a young child, he would take me along with him on Saturday mornings and I would visit with them. I benefited from their company and I have a lot to learn from elderly people. I am doing this project to learn about how it is to age in Japan as a Korean resident."

To this Han-*halmoni* smiled again and remarked that I had come such a long way to talk with old people and that my parents must be worried about me.

Shifting to Pastor Lee, she thanked him for coming to visit her. She said that she had thought she might be able to attend church services the following week, but that her injury was not improving. Pastor Lee told her that everyone at the church had been asking about her and that the congregation was praying for her speedy recovery. He then opened his Bible and reading two verses, fell into prayer, asking that Han-*halmoni*'s energy be

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restored. Before leaving, *Han-halmoni* reached out her hands and grasping mine, she thanked me for coming to visit her.

I later learned of the circumstances of her injury from Pastor Lee and subsequent interviews with *Han-halmoni* . During the middle of a spring night the previous year, *Han-halmoni* had risen to use the bathroom. However, becoming dizzy, she fell onto her bathroom floor unconscious. Awaking several hours later in great pain, she managed to slide herself across the floor to the phone to call for help. The ambulance took her to a nearby hospital where she remained for two months. She was diagnosed with a broken hip and ribcage, in addition to a serious case of bronchitis.

During *Han-halmoni* 's stay in the hospital, she was visited by several members of the Korean Church. Although she had two daughters, they were both married and the eldest lived in Pusan, South Korea. Fifteen years ago, after marrying another second generation Korean resident from Japan, *Han-halmoni* 's eldest daughter left with her new husband for South Korea. Her younger daughter, who was married to a Japanese national, lived in Sendai far from Tokyo and arrived only the last week of *Han-halmoni* 's hospitalization.

After being released from the hospital, *Han-halmoni* was ordered to remain in bed for the subsequent few months. Her doctor was able to secure the hospital bed which was moved into her apartment and prevented her from falling out during the night. He had also solicited the services of a nurse who came in during the day to prepare meals and to attend to *Han-halmoni* 's bathing and toilet needs. During this period *Han-halmoni* 's younger daughter applied for welfare assistance on her mother's behalf which, when added to the modest supplement provided by both of her daughters, paid for the home care services and her living expenses. Three weeks after *Han-halmoni* 's release from the hospital, *Han-halmoni* 's younger daughter returned to Sendai.

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Balancing the plastic sack of fruit in one hand and my bag containing my tape recorder, pads of paper and books in the other, I approached Han-*halmoni*'s apartment building. The rather drab three story concrete structure was unremarkable from the thousands of others like it that dotted Tokyo. This particular building had served as Han-*halmoni*'s home for the past four years. Although the stairs to her second floor apartment caused her increasing difficulty, she often remarked on how fortunate she was to have a place of her own. Indeed, the first time I had visited Han-*halmoni*, I had been surprised at the relative large size of her home. With two rooms the size of six tatami mats, a large kitchen, and a bathroom equipped with a small washing machine, the space would have easily housed a family of four in Tokyo. She had blushed in embarrassment when I exclaimed how spacious her apartment was and only remarked that God had taken care of her after the death of her husband.

Quickly climbing the stairs to Han-*halmoni*'s apartment, I knocked on her door. From inside she called out in familiar soft voice that she was coming. Several seconds later she was at the side window having drawn the drapes, peering out at me. "Ah, Sandora-*chan*," she acknowledged. After she unlocked and opened her door, I greeted her by presenting the persimmons and kiwi. After removing my shoes, I entered the kitchen where I met a smiling woman who looked to be in her forties. Han-*halmoni* quickly introduced me to her Japanese neighbor, Kaneko-*san*, a mother of two young children who lived upstairs. We exchanged greetings and Han-*halmoni* reminded me that Kaneko-*san* was the one who had been very helpful the preceding year when Han-*halmoni* was bedridden.

As Han-*halmoni*'s health had improved last year after her fall, she decreased the service of the home care nurse to every other day. She explained that she did not want to burden her daughters any longer with the added cost of her care. However, she recalls that she began to think that she had been too confident in her rebound from her fall and began to worry that she would not be able to care for herself the days that the nurse was not there.

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To her benefit, it was at that time that her upstairs neighbor, Kaneko-san , began to visit her.

In the past, Han-halmoni had often greeted Kaneko-san as they passed each other on the stairs. She had met Kaneko-san 's two young sons, Yutaro and Hiroshi, who would always greet her happily. Kaneko-san had asked Han-halmoni several times if she needed any assistance from her, and until Han-halmoni 's fall, she had always cheerfully declined. When Kaneko-san came to inquire again, a relieved Han-halmoni accepted her offer. On the days that the nurse did not come, Kaneko-san diligently brought a small dinner to Han-halmoni in the late afternoon and returned to check on her in the evening before she fell asleep. This continued until Han-halmoni was able to regain mobility. She explained that even though she was beginning to be able to cook for herself again and that she had acquired the services of a "house helper" through an agency designed to provide services to the elderly, Kaneko-san maintained regular visits. Han-halmoni , in her typically optimistic manner, remarked how even in the pain of her injury, God had given her a wonderful gift of a new friend.

### Trying Harder

After Han-halmoni 's brief introduction during which she explained that I was a Korean American studying *jinruigaku*, or anthropology, Kaneko-san smiled and remarked, "*You were born in America to Korean parents and now you are in Japan studying. You are very fashionable.*" We all laughed at her comment. After a few minutes, Kaneko-san excused herself by saying that she had to make her daily trip to the supermarket in preparation for her family's meal before her husband returned home from work. She explained that he was a travel agent and because of the off-season, he was coming home earlier than usual. With a teasing smirk, she said that she hoped that the recession would end soon so her daily schedule would not be disrupted by her husband's disruptive presence in the house.

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After Kaneko-san left, Han-halmoni asked sheepishly whether I would help her with a few household chores before we settled down for our snack of fruit. Happy to be able to serve some useful function, I jumped at my chance. Heading for the bathroom, Han-halmoni brought out a small bag of laundry. Embarrassed once again, Han-halmoni explained that they were her undergarments and although her house helper did most of the laundry, she could not let her wash these private items. She wanted to have them done before the house helper's visit the next day. Because her washing machine had broken down a few months before, Han-halmoni washed everything by hand. She had the most difficulty with wringing her clothes dry due to her severe arthritis. Having completed the washing, we made our way to the small, narrow balcony where we hung her clothes on the clothesline.

After finishing, I washed some dishes in the sink which remained from Han-halmoni's lunch and then we sat at the small kitchen table on which Han-halmoni had prepared the fruit. Wanting to be able to give back to Han-halmoni who had allowed me to visit her every week for the past several months, I offered to do the household chores for her so that she would be able to save the money she was spending on the househelper. To this, Han-halmoni vigorously shook her head and said,

"Oh, no. I could not have you help me. If I let go of my househelper, I would not qualify for the financial assistance that I am now receiving from the Arakawa Ward Office. It is because they think I am so poor that they have sent this person to help me. Also, they give me a supplement of about 10,000 yen (approximately \$100) each month to help me with my expenses. If I told them that I no longer needed a helper, I am afraid that I would lose my supplement. It is not much. Only 10,000 yen. But I don't eat that much and I can make it stretch a long time. No, no. Thank you. I couldn't possibly let go of my helper."

Although Han-halmoni did not want to apply for financial assistance, she agreed with her younger daughter that her recent fall had made her vulnerable. However, it was not the

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first time that *Han-halmoni* had applied for assistance. She and her husband had filled out the same application ten years ago when they had been living in a very small house in another section of the ward. Although her husband worked for Nippon Kokan during the Japanese War and had continued as a laborer for a short time afterwards, he failed to receive employment pension. His injury had prevented him from engaging in physical work shortly after the end of the Korean War. This, coupled with *Han-halmoni*'s declining condition, depleted their meager savings. Unlike elderly Japanese citizens, *Han-halmoni* and her husband, both holding South Korean citizenship, were ineligible for old age pension. Although recently there had been revisions in the legislation due to demonstration and campaigns against the government by *zainichi* organizations. These changes failed to include the majority of first generation Korean residents had migrated to Japan in search of work. The only public assistance available to this group was that reserved for the extremely poor. Although it hurt her husband's pride, *Han-halmoni* remembers, he made his way to the Ward office to apply for poverty assistance.

Several weeks after filling out the application, the Ward Office sent an inspector to investigate their living conditions. A week later they received a letter declining their application. *Han-halmoni* recalls how bewildered she and her husband were that they decided to ask for an explanation for their rejection. She remembers that the officer handling their application was an older woman. They were invited into her office and after several moments, during which the woman reviewed their file, the officer stated that they lived in a home surrounded by a narrow strip of yard enclosed by a deteriorating stone wall. She continued by chastising them that the assistance program was designed for people who were suffering from greater needs than them. Astonished, *Han-halmoni* explained that they had been living in the house for many years and that any current move to a smaller apartment would be more costly than living in the home. To this, *Han-halmoni* recalls, her mouth hardening, that the woman responded disrespectfully, saying:

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"You must try harder. These funds are for people who have come to us as their last option. This is not a program that just gives away money to people who have not worked and expect to be dependent on Japanese taxpayers. Why don't you try selling the stones of your gate? In Tokyo, those would be worth a great deal. After you have tried everything, you may, of course, return to our office and apply again."

*Han-halmoni* and her husband were enraged and felt humiliated. Her husband vowed that he would never ask for help from the Japanese government again. However, still faced with their financial problems, *Han-halmoni* found a job cleaning office buildings through a friend from her church. In addition, although in secret, so as not to anger her husband, *Han-halmoni* sent a letter to her daughters asking whether they would be able to send some money to help them meet some immediate expenses. Although the daughters sent the funds immediately, *Han-halmoni* believes that these requests only strained the ties between she and her daughters.

Although she remembers this hurtful episode with the Ward office vividly, *Han-halmoni*'s fall and subsequent hospitalization influenced her to give in to the advice of her daughter. She chuckles, however, that she was expecting to see the same woman track her down at her new apartment and deny her application on the basis that her home was too large. But, in the end, no one came and she soon received a letter granting her a supplement of 10,000 yen each month.

### Coming to the Promised Land

*Han-halmoni* was born in 1920 in Kyongsangnam-do, South Korea. She was the seventh of eight children raised by her parents who grew rice on a small plot of land outside their village. She remembers attending the local school until the age of nine after which time she helped her parents and siblings in the fields. When she was fifteen, she was married to her husband, Yi Geon Soo, then a 16 year old boy from a neighboring village. Although, Yi's family was of a similar background to that of *Han-halmoni*, she



recalls how surprised she was by the feast they prepared for her wedding day at which a cow was slaughtered to feed her husband's entire village.

"I was very excited on my wedding day. Of course, I was curious about who my husband was and what he would be like after we were married. I did not know him very well, although we had spoken some. However, in truth, I was more enthralled by the feast that was being prepared for our marriage. I was astonished that they [her husband's family] were actually killing a cow. I am not ashamed to admit that I was very poor. I had not eaten *bulgogi*<sup>2</sup> very often in my life and so when I saw the cow, I cried. I thought I was the luckiest girl alive. All I could think about was that none of my brothers or sisters had a cow killed for their wedding day."

*Han-halmoni* lived with her husband for only one year when she said that an "official looking man" came with several others to her village, telling everyone of work and better wages in Japan. The man claimed that there were already thousands of Koreans who were working in various sectors in Japan after having received training to work in Japanese companies. The man claimed that in Japan food and work were plentiful, encouraging young men to enter into a three year contract in order to help their parents at home who were too old to make the trip. Although *Han-halmoni* had heard rumors of Koreans leaving for Japan, she emphasized that her "heart" did feel at peace with these recruiters. The man said that he would be returning within a month and that he would coordinate the passage and placement of any workers who wanted to "improve their situation."

*Han-halmoni* recalled that she did not want her husband to leave for Japan. Although conditions were worsening in their village, she could not imagine leaving Korea. Although she had no first hand experiences, she had grown up hearing countless stories of the ill treatment of Koreans by the Japanese. She remembered trying to convince her husband to remain for several weeks, but he had already decided to make the trip. Her only consolation was that she believed their stay in Japan would be temporary.

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<sup>2</sup> "Bulgogi" is marinated, broiled beef and a traditional Korean dish.

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As promised the unknown man came back to their village one month later and both Han and Yi told him that they wanted to sign up for work in Japan. However, the man stated that Han-*halmoni* would have to wait until her husband was settled before she would be able to join him. Han-*halmoni* said that she pleaded with Yi to change his mind because she was afraid of what would happen to him. The man intervened and tried to reassure Han-*halmoni* that she would be able to go to Japan after a few months and that he would personally assist her with her passage. The next day, Yi left with seven other young men.

It was several months before Han-*halmoni* heard from her husband. Yi had managed to have someone write a short letter explaining that he was now working in coal mines in Hokkaido after a short stay in Shizuoka. Although the letter did not indicate any details of his working conditions, Han-*halmoni* remembers feeling that her husband was doing poorly. Although she was desperate to join her husband, the man who had originally taken he and the others away had not since returned to her village. After a year, she became very disheartened. However, through a neighbor she heard that Koreans were traveling to Japan on cargo ships leaving from Pusan for Shimonoseki.

Explaining her news to her mother-in-law, Yi's mother gave Han-*halmoni* money that she had been saving and told her to join Yi in Japan. Han-*halmoni* immediately took the train to Pusan and found the port where the supposed ships were anchored. This was Han-*halmoni*'s first time venturing from the country side. She recalls vividly how afraid she was walking in the port area as she became the object of unwanted attention from the men who were working on the docks. She approached a ship she believed was one headed for Japan and she was met by a middle aged Korean man. She explained that she needed to join her husband who was working in Hokkaido and that she had money for her passage. When the man asked whether she had the proper papers to travel to Japan, she realized that she had been foolish. However, the man whispered that he would sneak her

onto the ship, but that she had to return in the middle of the night when she would not be seen.

Believing she had no other options, she returned to the port the same evening. The man ushered her to a wooden box and told her to climb in. The crate afforded only enough space for her to crouch, cross-legged with her shoulders pressed up against the edges of the walls. There she sat for two days during which time the man would bring her a small bowl of rice and cups of water. She recalls,

"I could not stretch my legs. My knees were pinned up against the walls of that tiny space. It was completely dark and there was an awful smell. I could hear the rats crawling around the area at night searching for food. I remember that I, too, was so hungry, but I was afraid to utter a word in fear that what that man threatened would be true and that I would be thrown into the sea upon discovery. I was not sure whether there were others like me stowed away on the ship. I did not hear anything, but I felt as if I was not the only one suffering in that dark place."

Finally, the ship landed in Japan. *Han-halmoni* said that she could hear movement off the ship, but the man had whispered that she would have to remain where she was until night fall when she could disembark unnoticed. The following night the man returned and *Han-halmoni* first set foot in Japan. Although she had the address of her husband's place of lodging, she was unable to read the signs and was very disoriented. The man reasoned that she would not be able to go anywhere until morning and that she should come with him to find a place to rest for the night. Although she was reluctant, she agreed, thinking that the man was being benevolent. However, soon she realized that the man intended for them to spend the night together in a hotel and though she admitted that she felt indebted to him, she was deeply ashamed at his suggestion. Being denied, he became violent, however, after a struggle, *Han-halmoni* escaped and ran into the street.

### The Japanese War

Han-*halmoni* is unable to describe in detail the journey she made from Shimonoseki to Hokkaido and only states repetitively that it was a miracle. She says that it was only because of the goodness of several people's hearts that she found her husband. The exact sequence of events however, eludes her or she does not find them compelling to tell. Her only concern was that she was reunited with her husband.

By the time Han-*halmoni* was reunited with her husband, Yi had suffered a serious back injury and was in the hospital recovering. It was clear from his injuries that further work in the coal mines would not be possible. Fortunately, through the help of another Korean laborer's cousin, they moved south to Tokyo. In the crude city outskirts of Arakawa ward they shared the home of their acquaintance, his wife and their two small children.

Han-*halmoni* and Yi joined the young couple in making homemade spirits. Using left over rice, they would produce *soju*<sup>†</sup>, a crude Korean liquor. They would then sell the alcohol to nearby restaurants and stores. Han-*halmoni* describes her new found business in this manner:

"*Soju*. Do you know what *soju* is? Have you tried it? It is made with rice which is fermented. It is strong...much stronger than *sake* - just as the Koreans are stronger than the Japanese. Of course, this was all illegal, but we were never bothered by the police. We would make as much *soju* as we could afford rice and sell it secretly to the bars in the neighborhood. We would actually eat *boribap* <sup>†3</sup>and save the rice for the alcohol. The Japanese would buy it from us at a very low price...too low, but at that time, we were desperate to stay alive. Even when I became pregnant, I would carry the jars of *soju* from establishment to establishment. I had to work for the two of us because my husband was still aching from his injuries from the coal mines. The work was too difficult though. I miscarried twice before I gave birth to my eldest daughter."

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<sup>3</sup> *Boribap* is a type of barley meal used in place of rice.

The end of the War came suddenly for Han-*halmoni*. Although there were many rumors that Japan was losing at the hands of the Americans, daily life for Han-*halmoni* did not deviate significantly. However, on a warm summer day, the thirteen year old son of a friend of Han-*halmoni* came running into their small house. She remembers him yelling that the War was over and that the Emperor had announced Japan's defeat on the radio. Although her husband jumped up from the floor in excitement, Han-*halmoni* remembers thinking that the young boy had been tricked. She could not believe that the Emperor would publicly declare Japan's defeat. It was only after she followed her husband outside and her Korean neighbors were dancing around her that she began to believe that the War was actually over. Han-*halmoni* was twenty-five years old.

### Learning to Help Yourself

The period immediately following the War, Han-*halmoni* remembers, was a time of great uncertainty. Although she desperately wanted to return home, her husband was reluctant. They had received word from their relatives that the situation in Korea was unstable and conditions were extremely poor. Han-*halmoni*'s husband believed that his family was faring relatively better in Japan. Han-*halmoni* pleaded with her husband for them to return to Korea, but he wanted to wait until conditions improved. Han-*halmoni* says that he and many other Koreans believed that the arrival of the American soldiers in Japan meant that their lives would be better. She scorns this thinking which she identifies now as false hope.

"At that time, America was our savior. We were always in awe of her strength in the world, but that she had defeated Japan and ended the War was a miracle to us. We had very high expectations of all these white men walking in the streets. I admit that I, too, couldn't help but admire them. They were so tall and strong and all the Japanese were scared of them. We were stupid though. They looked down at us like we were Japanese. They didn't care whether we were Korean, or Chinese, or Japanese. We were all poor,

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Eastern people. Inferior. We learned in the end that the Americans would not help us "*chosenjin* <sup>4</sup>."

*Han-halmoni* goes on to explain that as Korean residents began to recognize that their predicament in Japan was not improving, they established their own organizations to help themselves. It was around the period that the Korean War had broken out that she and her husband began to become more involved in *Mindan*, the Korean resident political organization working in concert with the South Korea government.

Han explains that her husband would often hold meetings in their small house during which she and several other wives would cook and serve food to the men discussed issues such as the direction that *Mindan* should take. She remembers that although, initially, the meetings seemed helpful and that there was a general excitement about the organization, after time the meetings became volatile as opinions clashed often in anger. After holding several such gatherings, she asked her husband to refrain from volunteering their house for the meetings. Although at first he laughed, he became angry at her for not being more supportive and for not understanding that the organization was the only way to improve their lives in Japan. *Han-halmoni* smirks when telling of fights which ensued between she and her husband.

"My husband became a very stern man. He rarely spoke when we were alone. He would sit on one side of the room, reading a book and I would sit on other, either sewing or making food and we would spend hours without saying anything. After his working in the coal mines up north in that cold place, he became so silent. I don't think that many people knew just how miserable I was, not even our children. When I could not find work and he was at home because of his back pain, we would sit in our room and not say more than ten words all day. This is why I was so surprised when he became so animated during those *Mindan* meetings. He had never been so emotional. At first, I was

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<sup>4</sup> Han uses the term "chosenjin" sardonically as the label which Japanese commonly used to indicate persons of Korean descent before and during the colonial period. Among Koreans, the term, suffused with derision, recalls the colonial period of discrimination and oppression. However, the term is also employed by North Korean residents in Japan who use the term to identify themselves, a practice which has been met with criticism by other Korean residents in Japan.

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actually happy to see him in this new state of mind. But his anger during the meetings stayed with us after everyone left. It was then that I actually yearned for the silence of before."

However, by 1966, Han-*halmoni*'s husband had become disillusioned with *Mindan* and had withdrawn completely from the organization. Han-*halmoni* said that when this happened, she was quite happy. She felt that the organization was placing too much pressure on her and her husband. The coup d'etat of President Park Chung Hee in South Korea had increased their dissatisfaction with *Mindan*. In her criticism, Han-*halmoni* remarked,

"*Mindan* made everyone work so hard without giving very much in return. The South Korean government was not really interested in Korean residents here. After the Korean War the country was in such disarray that helping us here in Japan was not a high priority. In fact, it was the opposite. We were supposed to help South Korea. But, how? We are basically powerless. It was only after protest began that South Korea began to take us seriously. The kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung and the dictatorship in South Korea changed how we felt about South Korea. It is then that all the protest and demonstrations began. Now, South Korea became afraid of us. And then there was all this fear in *Mindan* of spies who were supposedly working for the government. Any government - South Korean, North Korean, Japanese, American. Everyone was suspicious. It became too much. By that time, my husband and I were so tired. We didn't want to participate in the politics."

Han-*halmoni* says that after the involvement with *Mindan*, her husband reverted to his old ways and that their days were spent merely trying to get by. It was only after her first daughter married and moved to South Korea that she began again to think about her country of origin.

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From her picture, Mi Hee's resemblance to her mother was much more striking than her older sister's. Like *Han-halmoni* she was petite and bore an oval face with a delicate chin. In contrast to her sister, her face lit up in a full smile.

*Han-halmoni* explained that Soo Hyun was now living in Pusan with her husband. When Soo Hyun had finished high school, she went to work as a clerk in the local grocery store owned by the Kanai's<sup>5</sup>, another *zainichi* family attending the same church. *Han-halmoni* explains that after a few months, the owner, Kanai Yutaka, recognized that Soo Hyun was very good with numbers and asked her to help out in the office with the accounting books. Happy with her new responsibilities, *Han-halmoni* remembers how her daughter's temperament had improved. However, *Han-halmoni* says that she did not realize the full cause of this change until one day when another woman, Kim Gae Won, pulled her into the kitchen after church service. She remembers,

"That woman is a real busy body. I knew that she was not going to tell me something good and I was right. She said that she had seen Soo Hyun and a boy, Park Dong Hoon, together in a park when she had been baby-sitting her grandchild in Nakano ward. You know where Nakano Ward is, don't you? She said that Soo Hyun looked very embarrassed and that she did not come over to greet her. Mrs. Kim said she thought I should know what was going on with my daughter. I knew, though, that I would not be the only one hearing this from her. She is such a gossip. Other people's ears would also burn from this news."

*Han-halmoni* said that she did not tell her husband of this incident because she was afraid of his reaction. Rather, she confronted Soo Hyun directly. Her daughter confessed that she and Park Dong Hoon were in love and that they wanted to be married. She said that Park Dong Hoon delivered groceries to the Kanai's store and that they had been secretly

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<sup>5</sup> "Kanai" is a common surname among Korean residents in Japan. During the colonial period, the Japanese government required that all Koreans adopt Japanese names. Wanting to retain the original Chinese character for the common Korean surname "Kim", many Koreans with this name, changed theirs to "Kanai" which also used the Chinese character for "gold". Along with "Kanai", "Kanda" is also frequently used by those originally holding the Korean name "Kim".

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meeting each other for several months. *Han-halmoni* laughs as she remembers her then 18 year old daughter pleading her case to marry her 22 year old boyfriend. Her daughter told her that they were planning to move back to South Korea where Park's uncle had promised him a job in their small fishing cannery. *Han-halmoni* remembers how ludicrous she thought her daughter was at the time and how she tried to reason with her.

"I asked her how she could trust this boy, Park? If he were honorable, he would not be sneaking around with her and promising her things that were not realistic. I asked her who his parents were and how they could allow their son to behave so recklessly. Of course, I was angry. She was so young and didn't know anything about how awful people could be. I only wanted to protect her, but she was too stubborn, just like her father. They were married after a few months and just like he said, they left Japan for Pusan. They live there now with my two grandchildren. Two little girls. "

*Han-halmoni* had not displayed a great deal of emotion during the course of our interviews, however, in telling this story of her first daughter, she became overcome with sadness. She described her daughter's move to South Korea as one of loss of her daughter who had never returned to Tokyo. Only twice had *Han-halmoni* seen Soo Hyun and her family when she had visited Pusan. Her daughter had paid for her trips, however, *Han-halmoni* said she was aware that she was a burden to her daughter and that she felt uncomfortable when visiting her in South Korea for extended periods of time.

Her second daughter, Mi Hee, who had come to visit *Han-halmoni* when she had her fall last year, was married a Japanese classmate from high school who worked as a machinist. *Han-halmoni* describes her daughter's marriage to a Japanese national as inevitable. She said that although she had tried to introduce Mi Hee to young boys at the church, Mi Hee had her own group of school friends and often refused to attend the services. *Han-halmoni* said that she was not surprised when Mi Hee said that she wanted to marry a Japanese man.

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"I warned Mi Hee that her husband's parents would not like that she is Korean. Although she never admitted it, I know that it was a problem between she and him. He is a second son, though, so he could run away with her to Sendai more easily. I suppose it was a kind of escape for both of them. I feel that Mi Hee just wanted to get away from me and her father."

Han-*halmoni* said that she sees Mi Hee and her family once a year and sometimes more frequently when they want to visit Tokyo.

### Living Alone

Having finished perusing through Han-*halmoni*'s albums, she brought me over to a faded black and white framed photograph of her husband which sat on a low table in the corner of the room. He was a tall man topped with a flurry of white hair, dressed in a modest western style suit. Han-*halmoni* explained that while she grew weary of this introverted nature, she admired his stamina and endurance. In her words, her husband, "*always managed to eat even the most bitter of things.*"

When describing her life in old age, Han-*halmoni* says that it is one of being alone. However, Han-*halmoni* says that she has grown accustomed to herself. Having spent her life serving her husband and her daughters, she suffered a period of depression when they left her. Han-*halmoni* explains that it was only with time that she became accustomed to her own tastes and grew comfortable with her life of solitude. It has been during this time that her Christian faith has also developed. When her husband was alive, he would not join her at church which made Han-*halmoni* feel guilty for leaving him at home. However, since his death, she has found solace in attending services and maintaining ties with other Korean women her age. She believes, in many ways, her becoming older and living alone has given her a better understanding of the series of events in her life and her position in Japan. She says that the anger she carried with her for so many years has largely dissipated.

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Her most serious concern is her body. She feels that she can not rely on its function and having experienced its breakdown, she fears being bedridden again.

"My entire life is carved into this old body. Even though I feel more at peace now than, perhaps, in my entire life, my body does not belie the past. It (the past) has seeped into my wrinkled skin and my bones and has made me weak. Soon, I imagine, I will be released from this cage. Maybe then the past will not matter so much."

### **Kim Min Ah: Life as Suffering**

After several months in Tokyo, I had the good fortune of meeting a young Japanese woman who told me about a literacy school where she taught which was attended by numerous elderly Korean residents. My friend, Yamaguchi Hiromi, was a woman in her early forties whose grown up children had left her with a great deal of free time. She had heard about the literacy school in Shinjuku Ward through a friend of a friend who was also an instructor there. Yamaguchi-san was kind enough to introduce me to the supervisor of the literacy program, Kim Eun Ho, who gave me his consent to sit in on the classes and to talk with participants. However, the first few weeks of my participant observation of the literacy school, the teachers, particularly those who were Korean residents and many of the students were quite wary of me. However, with time, this close knit group grew accustomed to my presence.

The third week I attended the school, Kim Min Ah, an elderly Korean woman, sat down at the low sitting table at which I had positioned myself. She had short, neat hair cut in a simple, yet stylish manner which looked to be tinted with reddish highlights. On the first day I met her, she wore small, squarish glasses and was dressed in a simple rose heather sweater and brown pants which, after numerous subsequent visits, I realized was her uniform for the literacy class. Before beginning her hour and a half session of learning

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*kanji* , she said hello to me in a natural yet, firm manner and asked me who I was. I introduced myself, explaining my project and my interests in the school and its participants.

She continued to ask me numerous questions including where my parents were born and how old they were, where I was born, whether I was married, why I was not, whether I could speak English and where I was living in Tokyo? After answering her exhaustive list of inquiries, she chuckled and leaned over to the *halmoni* next to her and said, "*This one is very cosmopolitan, huh?*" To this the whole table broke out in laughter. This bit of humor at my expense seemed to have broken the ice. Asking her permission to ask questions about herself, Kim-*halmoni* responded by saying, "*Sure. Ask me anything. Whatever you think "Yankees" will find interesting.*" This provoked another round of laughter. Having been given the green light, I began by asking how old she was.

"I was born in let's see, during Showa, so, when would that be?....(making small calculations in the margin of her workbook) If I was born in Showa 9... what year is that using the western calendar?"

She yells this to the teacher sitting at the end of the table. The teacher laughs and asks another teacher for her diary. In a small bounded plastic covered book, she looks in the back and finds the year and tells Kim, "1919."

"Yes, then, I was born on April 18, 1919 in Kyonsangnam-do, South Korea."

The teacher at the end of the table, asks me, obviously for Kim's benefit, "*She's young, isn't she?*" I nod vigorously, however, Kim-*halmoni* frowns, saying, "*I'm not young. Whoever heard of a young 75 year old ?*" Saying this, she looks down at her *kanji* workbook and begins imitating the strokes of several characters. It became apparent later, that Kim-*halmoni* was actually literate in Japanese. However, she enjoyed spending time at the literacy school, saying that she looked forward to the sessions the entire week as they were the few times she was able to gather with other Korean women. She asks me ,

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"Where were you born again?" Answering, "Ohio State", Kim-halmoni again breaks into laughter, saying,

"Ohio State? That sounds like 'ohaiyo'\* (good morning).  
Do you mean that you were born in the state of "good morning"?

Overhearing this, the whole table laughs again. Kim's fluctuation between smiles and frowns and her rather candid, at times, sarcastic manner, prevented me from being able to gauge her temperament readily. In fact, my own anxiety prompted me to ask her several times during our interview if she felt uncomfortable with the questions I was asking and assured her that she did not have to answer anything that she did not want to. Each time however, she reassured me that I need not worry and simply added, "What else would you like to ask?" after any pause thereafter. I gradually found that Kim-halmoni was rather enthusiastic about the questions I was asking and later wanted to continue the interview, inviting me to her home to look at pictures taken in her early days in Japan.

### My Son, the Doctor

Before getting on the bus towards Kim-halmoni's house, we stopped by a bakery and bought some sweets: two pieces of melon cake and, my favorite, creme caramel with whip cream and fresh fruit on top. Afterwards, we took the bus to the stop right before Shinjuku station. Kim Halmoni had parked her bicycle on the sidewalk near the bus stop and we walked it to her house which was six blocks down a rather narrow side street. On the way we saw many adult only establishments with nude pictures of Asian women on billboards as well as on vehicles apparently used in advertising the bars and hotels in the area. I asked Kim-halmoni if she felt safe in the area at night. Kim-halmoni nodded vigorously and said that she has been living in the area for the past thirty years.

We stumbled upon Kim-halmoni's home, a recently renovated three story house in which she, alone, lives. I was quite taken aback at its relative luxury. It had a waist high

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iron gate in front. The foyer led to a steep set of stairs to the second floor where the main living quarters were. There was a cathedral ceiling with stairs leading to the third floor bedrooms. The kitchen was modern with a counter top and a set of three bar stools. She had a large tatami room on the second floor which she used as her own bedroom next to a living room area with a *kotatsu*\* , a gas heater, underneath a low table where we sat for our interview and ate our lunch.

Not heeding my protests, *Kim-halmoni* prepared an eclectic meal which consisted of rice, *shi-kimchee*† (spinach marinated in soy sauce and sesame oil), *gak-tu-gee*† (spicy fermented white radish), green tea, instant coffee, and our desserts. During lunch we discussed *Kim-halmoni*'s children and whether they were able to visit her often.

*Kim-halmoni* : "My children are all scattered in Japan. One is in Hokkaido, another in Fukuoka, another in Tokyo, another in Nagoya. The ones who are far away do not visit often. My doctor son though, he comes to visit quite often. He is the one who lives in Tokyo. Actually, he will be coming tonight because he is meeting someone nearby for business, so he'll be staying over."

S: "Does he stay over often?"

*Kim-halmoni* : "No, not really. If he stayed over often, his wife would begin to complain. I suppose he has to think about his own family (she said this with a smile). No, he doesn't stay over often, but he comes here every once in a while. He's coming at 8:00 tonight... You think this house is nice? Yes, well we renovated it about ten years ago. I've lived here though for thirty years. I don't think that it is a fashionable as the houses in America though."

Assuring her that her home was beautiful by anybody's standards, *Kim-halmoni* gave a slight smile as she drank her soup. Suddenly, looking up, she asked:

"Say, did you interview Kim Durl Ae last week. She is the woman who was sitting behind me today in class? (I nod) She and all the others in the class are of the thinking of *Chosen Soren* . Did you know that? They are not actually North Korean these days. They have all switched their citizenship to South Korea but, when they were young, they worked for North Korea and for *Chosen Soren* . That is

more typical of us, first generation Koreans residents here. Did she tell you that all her daughter and grandchildren are living in North Korea now? Yes, they are. She probably doesn't want to tell you this because it is a bit shameful. It is true. They decided to go to North Korea in the 1960's. It was a very popular thing then. But, now, look at what has happened. North Korea is not the paradise that they all said it was. My son, I mentioned him to you? He's a doctor. Did I tell you that already? Yes, he's a doctor. He graduated from Yonsei University<sup>6</sup> in Seoul.

She showed me a picture of her son in his graduation robes. *Kim-halmoni* was standing next to him, a broad smile across her face.

### Going to Japan

Kim Min Ah had accompanied her parents to Japan in 1930 when she was 11 years old. At that time her father worked for an export company which had the tacit support of the Japanese government. *Kim-halmoni* remembered her father being away for long periods of time during which he would travel to and from Tokyo and Pusan. Finally, it was decided that her family would move to Japan. *Kim-halmoni* remembers the day she was supposed to leave as one of sadness.

"My grandparents (her father's parents) had to remain in Korea. They were too old to make the trip to Japan. I had lived with them all my life and I didn't want to leave them behind. I told my mother that I wanted to stay with them. I remember hugging my grandmother's waist, refusing to let go. My grandmother and my mother started crying and I started screaming. I held on so tight that only my father could pull me away by prying open my fingers."

*Kim-halmoni* says that her memories of the trip to Japan are dim, but that she recalls a large ship on which many Korean men worked. They seemed to proffer deference on to her father and mother, although she was not sure of her father's exact position on the ship.

<sup>6</sup> Yonsei University is a private institution first established by the Presbyterian Church. It ranks as one of South Korea's elite universities. The medical school curriculum is conducted in English with a high percentage of Korean physicians immigrating to the United States and Canada.

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After landing in Shimonoseki, she and her parents took the train to Tokyo where they lived in a small house in the Ueno Park area. During this initial period, *Kim-halmoni* remembers being very lonely for her grandparents and for their relatively large house where she was free to roam and play. In Japan she felt restricted by the small size of their living quarters. Her mother forbade her from going outside, although she doubts she would have ventured far from their home on her own anyhow since her inability to understand the Japanese language made her afraid.

After enrolling in a Japanese school, she was placed in the third grade. *Kim-halmoni* remembers her first two years in the Japanese school as one of the most tortuous of her childhood. Stunted by her limited Japanese, she was unable to defend herself against the denigrating remarks that the other students would cast at her. She said that she did not understand most of what was being said to her, but that the word, "*chosenjin*" was one that was often pilloried at her. She told her father, who was fluent in Japanese, that her classmates were calling her "*chosenjin*" and asked him what it meant. *Kim-halmoni* remembered her father pausing briefly from eating his dinner and, without looking at her, answered, "*It means Koreans.*"

Unsatisfied with his answer and not understanding that the term "Korean" could, in of itself, be slander, she asked her mother why her classmates hated Koreans. *Kim-halmoni* remembers her mother taking her by the shoulders and telling her not to listen to the children and to learn Japanese as quickly as possible. Her mother said that only after she had mastery of the language would she be able to fight back.

Although *Kim-halmoni* did learn Japanese quickly, the death of her mother three years later ended her education. In a whisper, *Kim-halmoni* states that her mother died of tuberculosis. Her father was away on business for several months before her mother's death and had to be notified to return. However, much to Kim's anger, he did not arrive before her mother passed away.

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"My father came home several hours after my mother had departed. He rushed in and seeing that she was dead, he collapsed on her body and began to cry. I had never seen my father cry before. He was always so stern and cold, like the statue I played with in the park. I felt sorry for him because he arrived too late to save himself. You see, he was crying from guilt, not despair. My father had a secret mistress and this was the reason he would stay away from us for such long periods of time. My mother knew, of course, and this time she refused to wait for him."

### Returning to Japan

After her mother was cremated, *Kim-halmoni* brought her mother's ashes back to Korea and remained with her grandparents. After one year she met Soh Jun Ok, then a twenty five year old man who was born in Pusan. Soh, fluent in Japanese, had attended college at Waseda University<sup>7</sup> in Tokyo. Through the connections of a college classmate, Soh planned to work for the *Mainichi Shimbun*, a daily Japanese newspaper in Tokyo. In 1936, *Kim-halmoni* and Soh were married and *Kim-halmoni* returned to Japan with her new husband at the age of 17.

After a year, however, Soh was fired from the *Mainichi Shimbun* along with all other Korean writers. In response, Soh wanted to establish an underground Korean resident newspaper in collaboration with the others who had been let go from their jobs. *Kim-halmoni* remembers Soh holding meetings for the budding journal in their cramped house in Kawasaki City. *Kim-halmoni* tried to help her husband with the newspaper, however, because of the interruptions in her education, she was neither proficiently literate in Korean nor Japanese. She was not exactly sure what type of articles were being published in the newspaper, but she knew that the tone was critical of the Japanese

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<sup>7</sup> Waseda University is one of Japan's elite institutions of higher education. During the colonial period and continuing into the present, Korean nationals have studied at Japanese universities as *ryugakusei*, or visiting foreign students, with most returning to their country after graduation. During the colonial period, the Japanese government provided scholarships for promising Korean national students. These members of the intellectual elite were instrumental in resistance efforts against the Japanese colonial empire, however, many Korean students who attended Waseda and other Japanese universities were criticized after the end of colonialism for alleged complicity with the Japanese government.

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government and its increasing militarization in Asia. She began to attend Japanese school to help her with her written skills, however, after becoming pregnant with her first child, she spent most of her time at home, mainly cooking for the growing newspaper staff.

Several months after the birth of her son, Jin Suk, *Kim-halmoni* recalls her husband receiving anonymous threats to his family's safety if he did not discontinue the production of his newspaper. One evening after *Kim-halmoni* and her husband were visiting a friend's home, they arrived to find that a small fire had broken out in their living room where most of the newspapers and materials were being stored. Fortunately, a neighbor had seen flames as he passed by on his way home and had notified the fire department. *Kim-halmoni* said that it was only because of his early detection that the rest of the house was saved. *Kim-halmoni* said that the fire was set by members of the Japanese government. She remembers the incident in this way:

"My husband was very shaken up by the fire. By that time we had not only our son, but our daughter as well and although I had not yet told my husband at that time, I was pregnant with our third child. Because of the damage to the house, my husband could not afford to continue to work on the newspaper. He resigned the next day and the paper continued only for a few weeks afterward because without his leadership, the rest of them did not know how to run the business. Instead, my husband began working in a small home factory run by another Korean family in our neighborhood. They produced handbags which were exported mainly to South Korea."

### The Great Park Chung Hee

While Kim's husband continued his work in the home factory, *Kim-halmoni* remained at home to raise their now four young children. During periods of particular financial hardship, she would work as a clerk in the neighborhood bowling alley run by another Korean family. When I asked her about the period during the Korean War, *Kim-halmoni* responded that although she would hear news about the suffering in Korea, she did not think about it as much as she did of their own difficulties in Japan. It was not until

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the early 1960's that she and her husband turned their attention once again to the Korean peninsula.

During this period of time, her husband frequently attended *Mindan* meetings. He was concerned by the instability in relations between North and South Korea. Kim-*halmoni* also would attend the meetings with her husband. She, however, was much more skeptical of what could be accomplished by *Mindan*. After the coup d'etat by Park Chung Hee in May, 1961, the nascent democratic government initiated by Syngman Rhee turned into a dictatorship under Park's leadership which officially began in March, 1962 when he replaced Yun Po Sun. The reaction among Korean residents in Japan towards Park's regime grew increasingly critical, particularly after the arrest of opposition leader Kim Dae Jung<sup>8</sup> and later, his notorious kidnapping. *Mindan*, however, became divided among those who were staunchly support of the South Korean government and those who wanted to levy protests against the Park regime. This division was paralleled in Kim's household.

"I used to argue with my husband. He worked with the others in *Mindan* to criticize President Park Chung Hee. I did not agree with him. Look at South Korea now. It can now compete with Japan because of the leadership of President Park. I know that his [Park's] measures were often too strict, but the times called for harsh treatment. Who knew what Kim Il Sung was planning? I think that President Park Chung Hee was a great man. I still think so."

However, Kim's husband became more involved in the campaign of protest against the dictatorship of President Park Chung Hee and finally left *Mindan*. Although Kim-*halmoni* continued to be sympathetic of the South Korean government, she also stopped attending

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<sup>8</sup> Kim Dae Jung, originally from Cholla-do, South Korea maintained a strong political base in Japan during the 1960's and 1970's. Along with Kim Young Sam, Kim Dae Jung protested against the late President Park Chung Hee's military government. In August of 1973, Kim flew to Tokyo to organize a protest movement among Korean residents against the South Korean government. However, he was kidnapped from his room at the Grand Palace Hotel allegedly by South Korean agents (a subsequent South Korean investigation disputes this). After threatening to drown Kim, his captors released him. Kim has continued to maintain a political base in the Korean resident community in Japan.

MINDAN

*Mindan* meetings. She said that when her husband dropped out, there was no question that she would also withdraw.

As her husband became more involved in the politics of Kim Dae Jung, Kim was expected to take on more work to make up for her husband's diversions in politics. She took on extra hours in the Korean restaurant. Although she says that she understands that the political work was important to her husband, she has become cynical of the efforts of Korean residents like her husband who tried to change the political situation in South Korea.

"My husband worked very hard to get Kim Dae Jung out of jail. He believed that Mr. Kim was going to be President of South Korea. Because Korean residents in Japan had supported Mr. Kim and had worked so hard for him, they had expectations that Mr. Kim would help our situation here. It did not seem foolish at the time. Mr. Kim is fluent in Japanese and is well connected with Japanese leaders. We thought he truly understood our situation here. But, all our energy was for nothing. Mr. Kim has forgotten about us poor Koreans in Japan. My husband and others worked hard for his opposition party based in Japan, but when he was finally released and Park Chung Hee was assassinated, he never recognized the Koreans here who helped him. I heard he is coming to Japan to get some kind of award from Chuo University next month. Now he is accepting awards from the Japanese? Why? The Japanese helped Park Chung Hee kidnap him! He is just like every other politician. You can not trust them. You can not trust the government. You can not trust *Mindan* or *Chosen Soren*. I have seen how hard people work and in the end nothing changes. Nothing ever changes."

*Kim-halmoni* had described her feelings about politics on several occasions during our weeks of meeting together. Consistently scowling at any news of events concerning the South Korean government, she would become animated in her derision of the political "monkeys," as she had coined politicians.

However, despite her vitriolic stance against politics, *Kim-halmoni* could be relied upon for the latest news on happenings on the peninsula. In fact, she would often begin

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our visits with a report of developments between the two Koreas, Japan and the United States. I asked her why she was so disciplined in her knowledge of current events. She laughed and said that it was probably out of habit, having married a man who loved the newspaper business. However, becoming more serious she asked,

"Since you have been in Japan, you listen to news about America with keen interest, don't you? If there is a tragedy in America, you become sad or if there is good news, you become happy, right? It is the same for me. I really don't care if Japan has good relations with other countries or if there is an end to this so called recession. It is not that I have no interest. I live in this country so what happens in Japan affects me to some extent. But my heart is not here. I mean, it is over across the water in that poor, miserable land. So, I can not help but wonder how it is doing. I can not help myself."

### My Biggest Failure

Getting up after the several hours of talking, we began to clear away the dishes. *Kim-halmoni* reminded me that her son would be arriving in a few hours, after he finished seeing his patients. She wanted to prepare a meal for him as she knew that he would be quite hungry. I offered to help *Kim-halmoni* with their dinner before I left and after much protest, she finally relented. She asked me if I had ever made *kimchee jigae*<sup>9</sup>, a Korean spicy stew, before and when I nodded, she exclaimed that I must be a "true Korean". As if to test me, she pulled out a jar of fermented soybean paste and opening it up, asked me what it was called. When I answered, "*daeng jang*†," she began to laugh, apparently amused that an American born Korean would know the names of staples of Korean cuisine. Explaining her surprise, *Kim-halmoni* said,

"My own children do not know simple Korean words like *daeng jang*. I tried to teach them at one point, but they always say *miso* instead<sup>9</sup>. They used to complain about the smell of *kimchee jigae*. I used to make much more Japanese

<sup>9</sup> *Miso* is the Japanese name for fermented soybean paste similar to Korean *daeng jang*, although many claim that *daeng jang* is much stronger in flavor and aroma. Each are used as soup base.

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food when the children were at home. But as I have gotten older, I find myself eating the food I like. I am an old woman now. I should enjoy some things in life."

All four of Kim's children married Japanese nationals. On several occasions, Kim-*halmoni* has expressed dismay at these international marriages and speaks of it as her biggest failure in life.

"The young people these days do not know even the amount of one finger-tip the suffering we went through when we were their age. I watch the television and there are commercials for all kinds of cat food. When I see those commercials, it makes my eyes fill with tears. I think that dogs and cats eat better than we did during the War. My children have no idea of our suffering."

Kim-*halmoni* states that she can not rely on her family for assistance. Her biggest worry is that she will become ill and that there will be no one to help her. This is why, she says, she remains as active as possible. She fears becoming so ill that she is bedridden because she does not know who would help her.

"I have always taken care of myself. I learned from my mother's suffering with my father that you can not rely on others because they will disappoint you. Everyone knows that Korean women are strong. We laugh about how strong Korean women are, especially when we are working for their family. Now, though, my family is gone. I don't mind living alone. I am lucky because I have enough money and I have this house. I can walk to the literacy school. I have had a full life and when I die, I will not be afraid. My only hope is that the time when I can no longer take care of myself will pass quickly."

### Life is Suffering

Several months after Kim-*halmoni* I had finished our series of interviews, she invited me to lunch with her at a local Chinese restaurant near her house in Kabuki-*cho* in Shinjuku ward. When greeting her, I noticed that she walked with a slight limp. After ordering our food, I asked her what had happened to her leg. She explained that she and

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another women from the literacy school had joined a campaign to demand old age pension from the Japanese government. Carrying protest signs, they had gone to the municipal office and marched outside the building. *Kim-halmoni* said that the protest was peaceful and although there were a few television reporters talking with some of the women, she did not think that it was a major disturbance.

After the group decided to disband, *Kim-halmoni* decided to walk through the adjoining park on her way home. She stopped by a drinking fountain as all the chanting at the demonstration had given her a dry throat. As she bent down to sip the water, she had noticed a person behind her, but she did not give it much thought. She said the water tasted so good that she took a long drink. All of a sudden she heard the angry voice of a man behind her. He was telling her to hurry up and that she was taking too long. She looked up and the man, who looked to be in his thirties, began yelling at her, calling her "*chosenjin*" and telling her that Japan was not her country. His voice became increasingly loud and finally, before *Kim-halmoni* knew what was happening, he pushed her and she fell to the ground. She started to yell and the man ran away. *Kim-halmoni* said that although there were several people in the park who had witnessed the entire episode, no one said a word or assisted her.

In the fall, *Kim-halmoni* had sprained her ankle and suffered a few bruises, however, she assured me that these were healing. She told me this story in an even tone and although she expressed anger at the incident, she did not indicate that she was surprised by it. Noting my surprise at her manner, *Kim-halmoni* scowled, saying that I was naive to be shocked by such incidents. She said that changing the legal system was easier than changing people's feelings. Evoking the Korean word, *kosaeng*, a term meaning "suffering" which she resurrected throughout her narrative, she summed up the event in the park as another episode of her fate.

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### **Pak Durl Ae: A Place Called Home**

As I mention earlier in this dissertation, prior to beginning fieldwork in Japan, my explanations of my project to fellow Korean Americans was often met with initial interest which transformed into sincere concern. Not on a few occasions was I told that what I wanted to accomplish in Japan was dangerous and that I should be careful with whom I spoke to in Japan. This level of consternation was mirrored in Japan among numerous Korean residents to whom I explained my project. One such Korean resident was Pak Durl Ae who for several months refused to offer more than the minimum niceties of conversation. Through mutual friends, I was told that Pak believed that I was working for the United States government in connection to the KCIA, or Korean Central Intelligence Agency, to spy on Korean residents having connections to North Korea. Upon hearing this, I tried in vain to prove my much lesser role as a Ph.D. student which, to my dismay, only cast my motives into more ambiguity. The thaw between Pak and I began only after I developed a friendship with her son's classmate, Kang Min Ja, a woman who Pak had known since birth. Although I am still unclear why this connection gave sufficient assurance to Pak, she eventually agreed to be interviewed. In addition her husband also joined us for several sessions.

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#### Traveling to Japan

Pak was born in 1918 in Chungchong-do in South Korea . She lives in Nishi Nippori with her Korean born husband, Lee Wun Soon, who was 78 years old at the time of research. Pak was the third child of six children. Her parents were peasants without formal education. Pak attended school for only one year and then dropped out to attend to her younger siblings. Although she remembers that her family was very poor, she believes that her childhood was a happy one. She recalls that her parents were optimistic people who tried to make their children happy. Pak remembers being especially close to her sister

who was two years younger. Together, they would make up games to play with the other children while her parents were working in the fields.

Pak's husband, Lee, was originally from Kyongsang-do and was the last of four children. While he has a similar background to his wife's, unlike Pak, he remembers his childhood as being extremely harsh. He explains the type of poverty they both experienced as one in which they lived "*a little better than animals.*"

"My father had died when I was five years old so my mother had a very difficult time supporting her four children. I remember we worked in an area where there were many Japanese soldiers. My mother worked with several other women as a cook for these men. In addition to evening meals, she would prepare their box lunches which another boy and I would deliver to them. I remember always wanting to take one of them for myself, but my mother threatened that the soldiers would hurt me if I did. One day I delivered the lunches to the Japanese soldiers when one soldier opened up his box and scowled, saying that there was no rice and dumped the food on the ground. I was shocked. The soldiers would not eat the *boribap* which we, Koreans, were forced to eat. I experienced so much anger, I wanted to attack the man. All over the countryside, poor Koreans were practically eating leaves off the trees to survive and he dumped my mother's food on the ground."

Incidentally, Pak and Lee left their village for Japan at approximately the same time period. When Pak was 14 years old she and another girl traveled to Japan to work for an electric company. She remembers her parents both crying the day she had to leave the village. Although Pak was terrified of what was going to happen to her, she was resolute in her goal of helping her parents. She had heard that other girls who had gone to work in Japan had sent their families large amounts of money from their earnings. Pak recollects that she never thought that she was leaving her home permanently. Her plan was to stay for the three year contract that was promised to her and then by the age of 17 she planned return to Korea.

The exact details of her emigration to Japan are not given by Pak. She could not remember the exact name of the company, but she says that she worked there until she was

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19 years old. During this time, the company claimed to have withheld her earnings to be sent directly to her parents in Korea. It was not until much later that she realized that her parents never received these funds. Pak said that when her contract ended, she continued for two more years, thinking that she would be able to earn more money. She does not describe her experience at the company in detail except to say that the Korean girls were placed together in both the factory and in the dormitories. Although she said she made many friends, she has lost all ties since.

### Ikegami-cho

After working for the electric company, Pak met Lee, who was working for a steel company in Kawasaki city. She became pregnant with her first child soon after and they were married immediately. They lived in a small house in Ikegami-cho, a district of Kawasaki city that still remains predominantly a Korean area. On a trip that we took to this area together, Pak and I toured the narrow streets and alleyways of her neighborhood of 45 years ago. The area is bounded by a sprawling railway overpass and Tokyo Bay. It is an industrial area with many warehouses and small dilapidated buildings. As we walked past various houses, Pak told me the names of the Korean residents who lived in them when she was younger. In several cases, her neighbors were still living in the same houses.

"As you can see it is very industrial here and not a very popular place to live. I hear that taxi's will not drive to Ikegami-cho at night, even today. All this was empty space before. There was just the steel factory and some other businesses. The government didn't offer any help for people to live here. It was a very undeveloped place. The factories did not look as good as these in those days (pointing to small buildings covered with sheet metal). Before the end of the war, many Koreans who originally were living in Kyushu came to this area of Kawasaki City. The reason was that this was a good place for jobs as the government needed factory workers in the nearby steel company. Many first generation Korean residents settled in this area."

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As we passed by a few houses, Pak turned to me and asked,

"Do you see the doors here? You know that when I lived here Korean houses did not have wooden doors like the Japanese. You know what we used? Straw!"

Pak explained that where many of the newer buildings had been erected where there had been only a large pond, muddy fields and frogs. Many of the families in the area raised pigs in the outlying areas. Pak recalls that occasionally a pig would be slaughtered and the meat would be distributed among the neighbors. She remembers that for days afterwards, the meat would be hung outdoors to dry. Pak stopped and scraped her shoe against the rocky unpaved ground which lay between the two houses where we were walking. Pointing to a cement trough full of rain water, mud, and garbage, she said that she remembers all of Ikegami-cho overflowing with waste. She said that the city sewage system did not extend into Ikegami-cho and that in the months of rainy weather, the entire area would reek of human and animal excrement. There also was no hydraulic system causing houses flood often. She said that it had only been within the last seven years that the area had improved.

Pak took me to the house where they had raised their children. It was an old wooden single story building built in a traditional style. The sheet metal which now covered the roof was an addition by the new inhabitants, but besides this detail, Pak-halmoni said it looked the same. Pak and Lee had three children: two daughters and one son. While living in Ikegami-cho her children attended the local Japanese school. She explained that the district had a reputation of not only poverty, but also criminal activity.

"Well, many people living in this area did not have jobs. Actually, there were quite a few Korean young men who were unemployed and were very poor. They would take on short term outdoor jobs when they could, but when they could not find work, they would turn to crime. I hear that Ikegami-cho still has this reputation except now the crimes

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are related to drug activity. I always knew that many of the neighborhood Korean boys were naughty but, it was mostly because they came from poor families. These children had to go through a lot. At school, not only the other students but the teachers, too, would treat Korean students horribly. My own daughters were yelled at by their teachers. They would say, 'You are Korean! Go back to your own country!' You see, there were not only poor Koreans in this area, but also poor Japanese. The hostility towards Koreans was tremendous."

As we finished our tour and were about to head back to Kawasaki train station, we came upon an old, two story building on which the sign, "North Korean Resident in Japan Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Community Association" hung on the front. Across the narrow street was a smaller building emblazoned with the sign, "South Korean Resident in Japan Republic of Korea (ROK) Community Association." Seeing the buildings, Pak laughed, saying,

"As you can see, even in such a narrow area such as this neighborhood, there are the two associations, *Chosen Soren* and *Mindan*. Coincidentally, it was in this building (pointing to the *Chosen Soren* office) that I decided to take North Korean citizenship. It was shortly after the Korean War. We all were very excited about returning to the peninsula. But, we can talk about this another time. I am too tired to begin this long story."

### Repatriation to North Korea

In 1958 when Pak's oldest daughter was fifteen years old, Pak decided that her children would attend *chosen gakko* as she wanted them to learn Korean language and history. Although the school were much further away, she felt that the long term benefits would outweigh the short term inconvenience. When her eldest daughter, Dong Boon graduated from high school, she began working as a secretary in a North Korean bank in Mikawashima. This was a challenging job for a young woman. Pak explained, however, since Eun Jung had been an excellent student in school, she performed her work well and received laudatory attention from her supervisors.

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During this time, Lee and Pak had become increasingly involved in *Chosen Soren* , the North Korean political organization in Japan. It was the beginning of a massive repatriation campaign for Korean residents to emigrate to North Korea. Pak remembers the excitement at *Chosen Soren* .

"At that time South Korea was in disarray. The Korean war had ended several years earlier and we kept hearing that conditions in North Korea were much better. The leaders of *Chosen Soren* claimed that as Korean residents from Japan, we would have many opportunities in North Korea. We admired the Great Leader, Pak Il Sung, who was such a strong figure. He recognized our situation in Japan and was not afraid to criticize the Japanese. We all believed that North Korea was our sanctuary and we worked very hard at *Chosen Soren* . At that time, Lee and I were both thinking about repatriation, but we still were a little reluctant."

In Eun Jong's second year at the bank, she met a new employee who was named Chung Ki Moon. Mr. Park had recently come from Kyushu and was a second generation North Korean resident like Eun Jong. His father had died soon after the end of the Japanese War, but his mother still lived in Kyushu with his younger sisters. After a year, Mr. Park asked Lee and Pak for permission to marry their daughter. The wedding occurred the following February of 1958. Soon after their marriage, Eun Jong informed her parents that she and her husband wanted to emigrate to North Korea. Although Pak admits that she had expected that her daughter and her new husband had been thinking of repatriating, she was surprised at how quickly the decision had been made. Pak explained that she, too, wanted to go but, in the end, they decided that the young people would emigrate first and they would follow later.

"Ki Moon had mentioned his idea of going to North Korea before, so I was not completely shocked when my daughter told me of their plans. I was worried about Eun Jong, though. I think that she had mixed feelings about going to this unknown place. She did not share her husband's idealism, but she was an obedient girl. I had raised her that way, so when her husband said he wanted to leave, she did not complain. At first, I suggested that the whole family

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repatriate because I did not want to be separated from my daughter. But, my son had just entered high school and he did not want to leave. My husband also wanted to save up more money before we left Japan to ensure our security in North Korea. We decided that within three years, we would join Eun Jong and Ki Moon."

Pak did not hear from her daughter for three months after they left for North Korea. When Pak received her first letter, she was overcome with worry. Although her daughter did not explicitly write that she was having a difficult time, Pak said that she knew that there was something wrong. Although Pak wrote her daughter diligently, Eun Jong's letters in response were sparse, reporting only major news like the births of Pak's two granddaughters. What struck Pak as strange was that Eun Jong did not include details of her life in North Korea or the living conditions there. Pak-*halmoni* states that Dong Boon and her husband were only two of thousands of Korean residents who repatriated to North Korea in the 1960's and that it was only afterward that the reality of North Korea leaked out to the Korean residents who stayed behind in Japan. For Pak, this news caused a long period of depression which continues to haunt her today.

"In truth, I am able to call her on the telephone, but I never do. I tried once, but I wasn't able to reach her. A letter came last year. My daughter asked for money. She wrote that even 10yen would help her family. I didn't send any money, though. I didn't send any money because I think that the North Korean government would just take it. I received several letters in the past. I would send her packages instead of money. The packages were mostly filled with food. My daughter said that they need any kind of meat, so I sent her canned foods like mackerel and other dried meats. I actually sent some money once to my daughter. I did not hear from her for a long time and so, I was worried about whether my money got to her safely. I wrote a letter asking her if she received it. After a while, my daughter did write me back but she did not mention anything about the money. In fact, shortly after this letter, I received another letter from her asking again for money. I now think that she must not have received the money I originally sent and that is why she wrote the other letter. After this I decided not to send her money in this way."

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Not trusting the mail system, Pak approached a neighbor who she knew traveled back and forth from Japan to Pyongyang and asked him to bring her daughter a sum of money on his next trip. Pak said that he agreed to the favor, however several days later he told her that he has stopped traveling between the two countries. Pak says that they both knew that this was untrue and that, in reality, the neighbor did not want to take on the responsibility of delivering the money to her daughter. As another way of sending her daughter money, Pak has maintained ties with *Chosen Soren*, even though she has much anger towards the organization.

"*Chosen Soren* was the source of propaganda. They told us lies about what life would be like in North Korea. Because of this and their unreasonable demands that we work for the organization, my husband and I have changed our citizenship from North Korean to South Korean. We did this many years ago. It is not that I have any faith in the South Korean government either. It is because of my anger towards *Chosen Soren* and the lies. I continue to pay my dues to *Chosen Soren* though. I am afraid that if I stop, my daughter will suffer. But I hold them responsible. Because of the lies, I have lost my daughter and I will never see my granddaughters. Dong Boon is 58 years old now and is probably a completely different person. It is very painful to lose a daughter. I should have never let her go."

#### A Mother's Fault

Pak attends the same literacy school as Pak Min Ah in Shinjuku ward. Her diligence and desire to learn *kanji* brings her to the school an hour early to practice her *kanji* strokes. Like the other women in the school, Pak is able to speak Korean and Japanese but is illiterate in both languages, creating many difficulties in everyday chores such as shopping and traveling on the subway system. The teachers at the literacy school repeatedly remark at Pak's improvement in reading and writing Japanese. Unlike many of her other classmates, Pak appears to come to the school more to learn than to socialize.

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On one morning at the literacy school, however, we began to talk about Pak's 54 year old son, Takahara Kazuo. Kazuo had decided to change his name after high school and although this caused Pak and Lee pain, they allowed him to do this, thinking that it would help him obtain a job.

"Young Jin (Pak continues to call her son by his Korean name) was excellent in high school. He was such a good student that the principal recommended that he go to university. He really wanted him to go. But our family was very poor and we could not afford to send him to the university, so there was no choice, but for him to give up the idea. The principal, however, was convinced of his intelligence that he arranged for 100,000yen to be loaned to my son for continuing his education. Well, that was a lot of money then. My son was overwhelmed by amount of debt he would incur and thought that he would not be able to pay the principal back in his lifetime. He was afraid so, he didn't take the money and completely gave up on going to the university. But, my son was still so smart. After he gave up going to the university, he started working at a Japanese electric company. It was very difficult for a Korean resident to work for a Japanese company. I remember he cried everyday saying that his boss constantly criticized him. However, after three years, no one could deny his talent. He was believed to be better than his own superiors. However, I told him that this is not a good thing for a Korean."

By this time, Kazuo had married a Japanese national and they had two young boys. Pak did not approve of her son marrying a Japanese woman and this had caused many arguments. In the end, however, Kazuo married his Japanese fiancée and Pak said she learned to accept it. Pak said that she thought her son was doing fine until seven years later, when he fell from the fourth floor of a building while on the job. He hit his head which has caused him chronic headaches. He was unable to carry out his work and was denied pension. Pak does not understand why he was denied disability insurance but she suspects that it is because he is Korean. Shortly after he lost his job, his wife left him and filed for divorce. Due to his injury, he currently works as a janitor, cleaning office buildings and schools.

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Talking about her son causes Pak considerably pain. The relationship between Pak and Kazuo has been strained throughout the years and rarely do they see each other. She says that her son blames her for his unlucky life which she accepts as her fault.

"My son was a very bright boy with so much potential. He blames me for his bad luck. I accept that I am responsible. When a child falls down, the parent is always responsible. I only wish I could do something now to save him."

### Housing Problems

Currently, Pak and Lee live in an apartment near Nishi-Nippori train station. They have been living there for fifteen years. Lee, who was injured while working at a construction company, is now confined to a wheelchair. Although he worked for the company for over ten years and despite numerous letters to the head of the company, he does not receive employment pension. Instead, Pak and Lee live on 90000 yen a month which they receive from welfare assistance from the prefecture office and a supplement from their grandson. Although this amount barely covers their housing and food expenses, they have managed to stay afloat.

However, one day when I visited Pak and Lee at their apartment, Pak was noticeably upset. She explained that the building had been sold to a new owner in the last few months. She and the old owner had grown quite friendly over the years, so she and her husband felt secure in their housing arrangement. However, she had just heard that the new landlord had recently evicted a South Korean *ryugakusei*, or foreign student, from the building because he had not paid his rent in time. In addition, the week before, Pak's neighbor, Ms. Chung, a 60 year old Korean resident, had been warned against having overnight guests to her apartment. Pak explained that Ms. Chung had several relatives visiting her from South Korea and that they had stayed in the apartment for a week.

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Pak was worried that the landlord was trying to evict the Korean residents in the building. Lee explained to me that finding housing in Tokyo was extremely difficult for Korean residents and other "foreigners".

"Landlords do not like to have Koreans in their buildings. They will tell realtors not to show their apartments to Korean residents. I have heard landlords say that Koreans are dirty and that they never pay the rent on time. They think that once they let one Korean into a building that soon the whole place will be full of Koreans. It is discrimination. Many Koreans, especially the young people, will use a Japanese name when seeing a realtor. If they get the apartment, they continue to use the name on their mail boxes. I know one couple, though, who was found out and they were evicted the next day. We are powerless when trying to rent housing."

A month later, Pak and Lee were evicted from their apartment. The reason given was that they had left too many electrical appliances on in their home. The landlord, citing their old age, believed that their "forgetfulness" was a potential fire hazard. With only a week's notice, they were unable to locate another apartment. They were, however, invited to move in temporarily with their grandson's family in Saitama prefecture.

### **Lives in Context: Memory and Meanings**

The life history narratives of Han, Kim and Pak presented in this chapter are abbreviated yet, they are presented collectively in order to refract both the concordance and discordance of the memories incorporated into self-descriptions of the lives of first generation elderly Korean women. While certainly the three narratives presented are not meant to fully exhaust the multiplicity of experiences of this age cohort, they do reflect the specific historical and economic conditions under which elderly Korean women in Japan have navigated their lives.

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The framework utilized in the analyses of these life history narratives is derived from three basic relationships. The first is the relationship between the migrant as "newcomer"<sup>10</sup> and the host social environment. As opposed to a unilateral process presumed in models of assimilation, extended contact between the colonized and colonizer; foreign and indigenous; and guest and host interact in a bi-directional process in which each is altered by the other. Life histories mirror this exchange both in content and in narrative form. The second relationship is between the individual and her perception of time in which the past and future are everpresent in the articulation of memories and the dialogic relationship between "storyteller" and listener in which conflicting dimensions of time are negotiated. The third important configuration, inherent in the act of migration, centers on movement through space. Translocation of human bodies as articulated by memories of traversing water and land are interconnected to identity and representations of the self.

In the discussion of narration, memory and identity in chapter three of this dissertation, White (1978) illuminates the "emplotment" of life stories in which memories are necessarily organized in narrative form. As such, the structure of the life story, is as important as the content of what is actually being communicated. The structure of life histories of Han, Kim and Pak-*halmoni* depart from the chronological format often utilized in autobiographical accounts<sup>11</sup>. In contrast to a sequential progression of narratives from birth to death, life histories were relayed by yoking the present to the future to the past and so forth, in an atemporal, self-referential, meaningful pattern.

<sup>10</sup> "Newcomer," pronounced as such in Japanese is an adopted term to describe the influx of immigrants to Japan, for example, short term laborers from Southeast Asia. It has also been used by Robertson (1991) in Native and Newcomer to describe the increasing mobility of the Japanese within Japan and changes in traditional conceptions of "hometown".

<sup>11</sup> The life history methodology employed in this project was met with a certain degree of resistance as described more elaborately in earlier chapters. Beyond the cloud of suspicion my entree into the field generated, the "telling" of one's life is not an exercise which comes naturally to the majority of first generation elderly Korean residents. Although several individuals were eager to speak of their background and life experiences, the structure of a "life history" which presumably follows chronological form, was necessarily abandoned for "free" discussion. This move dispelled artificial constraints on narrative form and proved more fruitful. Focus on narrative structure deserves further investigation in understanding cultural conceptions of time and self-representation which vary from western notions of the autobiography.

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Characteristic of life histories gathered during fieldwork, Han, Kim and Pak describe their lives by spinning either forward and/or backward, often in self-contained explanatory narratives. The temporal connections between life events are forged as both tacitly and explicitly causally linked.

The departure from strict diachronic accounts of one's life leads analysis of the life histories in two ways. In contrast to the work of several others who have employed the life history method to illuminate a "cultural personality", it is used here to examine dynamics of social and cultural context along two axes. The first investigates events which are remembered across the lifecourse from the vantage point of late life. The second focuses on current life as experienced in old age with respect to a personal past. By identifying what earlier has been referred to as themes and values as effectively utilized in Kaufman's work (1980), analysis of the narrative data proceeds along these two veins.

#### Good Mothers and National Reproduction

In the life narratives of Han, Pak and Kim, familial relationships emerge frequently, particularly the dissonance experienced between mothers and their children. Repeatedly in each of the three narratives, mothers speak of their "failure" with respect to the lives of their offspring. The reasons for this assessment differs for each woman. Han blames herself for relying on her daughters and speaks frequently of her guilt and anxiety in becoming a "burden" to them as evidenced in her narration of her injury and subsequent hospitalization. Kim chastises herself for her children's marriages to Japanese nationals, producing her shame and anger. Pak's inability to prevent her son's loss of employment and divorce is incorporated into her self-assessment as a "poor" mother. Even in their seventies and eighties, these women continue to ruminate over the lives of their children, internalizing their children's success and failure into their own sense of self.

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Primary roles of mothers are not unique to Han, Kim and Pak or their age cohort. Contemporary Japanese women continue to be the principal caretakers of their children. While increasing numbers of Japanese women are entering the workforce, women continue to be expected to discontinue their jobs upon marriage to raise families. Though the number of women defying this social expectation has grown in recent years, general attitudes have been slower to transform. The life histories of Korean residents indicate that the bonds between mothers and children are often stronger than those between husbands and wives. Thus, the relative success of children in areas such as education, marriage, and employment are reflected directly onto the performance of their mothers<sup>12</sup> and serve as indices of self-worth among their peers. Kim, for example, levies criticism against Pak in describing her daughter's repatriation to North Korea. Although she does not explicitly censure Pak, she insinuates Pak's responsibility in the loss of her daughter to the North despite the fact that Soo Hyun left willingly with her husband.

The most frequently cited source of anguish for elderly Korean mothers were their children's international marriages with Japanese nationals. Despite their insistence that they tried to expose their children to other Korean residents and impress upon them their values of intra-ethnic marriage, at least one of each of the three women's children had married a Japanese national. For Mi Hee, Han-*halmoni*'s younger daughter who lives in Sendai, conflicting attitude towards Japanese society signalled her alienation from her parents and her Korean resident identity, in general. Unlike her older sister, Mi Hee preferred socializing with other Japanese students at her high school and resisted her mother's urgings to attend Korean resident functions at her mother's church. She claims to have deemphasized her Korean identity throughout her life, stating that "maintaining Japan as your enemy is very tiring." Mi Hee fully acknowledges her parents' disapproval

<sup>12</sup> As testament to this relationship, women with children are referred to by their child's name rather than their own or their husband's name. For example, the mother of a child named "Chul Young" would be referred to as "Chul Young *aumoni*", meaning "Chul Young's mother". If a woman has more than one child, she is always called by the name of her eldest child.

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of her marriage to her husband, Murakami Yukio. However, she states that for her, it was "inevitable." She intimates that the current dissonance between her and her aging mother is one which has existed for most of her life.

"My mother was always worried about my sister and I when we were young. I know that her fear came from her own experiences during the War, but as a child, I wish she had not been so afraid. I remember meeting my friends' parents and wishing they were mine. It is very wicked of me to say this, but as a child, I always wondered why I could not have been born Japanese. I wanted to be strong, not weak."

Mi Hee contends that her mother can not understand her feelings of having been born in Japan. She recognizes that their lives, while intertwined as mother and daughter, are, in reality, separated by gaps of mutual incomprehension, with little hope of closure.

In the case of Kim, all four children married Japanese nationals which she concludes has rendered her life's long suffering meaningless. Although she takes great pride in her eldest son's accomplishments as a physician, his marriage to a Japanese woman fills her with shame. Although she is not explicit in blaming her children's international marriages for her feelings of isolation in old age, she does emphasize that it is not the physical distance which prohibits visits, but the feeling that they have their own lives, presumably ones in which she does not figure prominently.

The incidence rate of marriages between Korean residents and Japanese nationals, has burgeoned to 70% among third and fourth generation Korean residents. Despite this trend, the older women view these marriages as failures in their roles as mothers. Good mothering is not only measured by children's academic and economic success, but most importantly, the maintenance of Korean national purity in interethnic Korean marriages of their children. Marriage between Korean residents and Japanese nationals are infused by the legacy of colonialism for first generation elderly Korean residents who view such international marriages in the context of nationalist discourse and diaspora identity.

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As Kim states,

"Korean children in Japan are becoming just like Japanese kids. They only think about the present moment; they have no foresight. Koreans marrying Japanese seems right now when they are young, but when they become old, they will understand. By marrying Japanese, we all begin to disappear."

Many Korean women whose children have married Japanese nationals believe that they have failed in their assigned roles of reproduction in ensuring the lineage of Korean national "purity". Emphasis on intra-ethnic marriage is certainly not unique to the Korean diaspora population in Japan and is resonated in other immigrant populations throughout the world. The onus placed on mothers in the sphere of reproduction does not only extend to the successful birth of her offspring, but extends to continuity of her lineage in the persons of her children's children and those born thereafter. Thus, as integral players in the overseas nationalist project, women, particularly first generation immigrants, assume responsibility which extends beyond the family unit to reproduction of the nation as a whole. For Korean women such as Han, Kim and Pak, this charge is further colored by the memory of Japanese subjugation and emerges as a serious avenue of national resistance to the obliterating process of assimilation through conjugal ties. For first generation Korean residents, marriage between Korean residents and Japanese nationals serves as an allegory to the historical relationship between the two nations, leading to a usurpation of Korean identity and self-determination.

### Separation of Kin in Diaspora

A direct result of colonial migration of Korean residents and the subsequent civil war on the Korean peninsula is the separation of kin folk. The first separation occurred upon migration of the first generation to Japan as the majority left their parents and

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siblings behind.<sup>13</sup> The second separation of kin has occurred primarily between first and second generation Korean residents. Second generation residents who have been impeded by their subordinate status in Japan and the lack of opportunities available to them, have elected to "return home" despite having no direct experience with life in Korea.

For those electing North Korean citizenship, thousands of Korean resident "repatriated" to North Korea in the the 1960's. During this time, younger, second generation Korean residents migrated first with the intention of their parents to follow soon thereafter. Due to increasing information of poor living conditions in the North, many first generation residents remained in Japan and are separated indefinitely from their children. South Korean migration by younger generations of Korean residents in Japan has occurred throughout the post-colonial period, though with the recent political changes in South Korea, this trend has increased.

Han's eldest daughter, Soo Hyun, left shortly to Pusan, South Korea after her marriage to a fellow Korean resident of Japan. Although Han indicates that she has visited her daughter's family in Pusan, she intimates that Soo Hyun's decision to relocate is continuous with the existing emotional dissonance between her and her daughter. Surprisingly, Han never explicitly states that she feels abandoned by her daughters. Rather, as in her discussion of her financial and medical care needs, she is more likely to speak of her imposition on them. For Pak, her daughter's departure to North Korea has resulted in their separation of thirty five years. Pak continues to work towards sending her daughter aid, however, she understands her daughter's departure as indefinite and considers her "lost".

The return home of second generation Korean residents illuminates the complex bifocal lens of elderly first generation Korean residents who understand their migration and longterm tenure in Japan as the result of political forces beyond their control, yet, who

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<sup>13</sup> Family members of a very small proportion of first generation Korean residents migrated to Japan after the end of the World War II. However, a more common trend was Korean residents returning to their villages of origins immediately following the end of Japanese colonialism.

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continue to suffer personal guilt over their family's separation. For elderly Korean migrants, the liminal position of living of not only outside of the homeland, but within Japanese society accentuates their dubious identity as Korean citizens and patriots. The result is an inconsistent synthesis of beliefs in which life events are accepted as the results of political and historical forces beyond individual control combined with the sincere belief that through suffering and hardship as mothers, the lives of their offspring may be changed. When reviewing their lives in old age, the role of the mother is inextricably linked to the identity of first generation Korean women in their self-assessment in influencing the lives of their children. Pak, for example, is animated in blaming *Chosen Soren* in its alleged propagation of false images of life in North Korea which she claims seduced her daughter and her son-in-law into repatriating. However, in the end she blames herself for allowing her daughter to go. Interpretations of the lives of their children are indelibly imbued by their actions as mothers within the social system of discrimination in Japan.

#### Aged Bodies: Planes of Ethnic Identity

Throughout the narratives of the life histories of first generation elderly Korean residents are allusions to the "aging body." The weakening of the body is the most significant threat among elderly Koreans who worry that their isolation in old age will turn deadly if they are not able to care for themselves. The thrust of physical failure expose the real yet, often unnoticed tenuous social predicaments which have resulted from the accumulative effects of prejudicial treatment in Japanese society and persist in old age.

The "fall of 1994" for Han-*halmoni* was a significant event in her life as her vulnerability during this incident illuminates her position within her network of social connections and the types of resources available to her. As a widow who lives alone, Han's family network is small, having two daughters who are largely unavailable due to both physical and emotional distance, as discussed previously. Han's feelings of guilt

and fear of "burdening" her daughters financially is echoed throughout her life narrative and reemerges during her hospitalization. However, during her recovery period at home, Han is surprised to be aided by her upstairs Japanese neighbor. Han explains later that throughout her life she has rarely solicited help from Japanese acquaintances and that she accepts the help from her neighbor *Kaneko-san* as a gift from God.

However, Han's need for a home nurse and househelper are occasions when her minority status becomes most pronounced with respect to the Japanese social welfare system. A history of health problems, beginning with her husband's injuries from his work in the coal mines in Hokkaido, contributed to the strain placed on Han and her husband in raising their four children. Coupled with Han's husband's ineligibility for employment pension and later, their denial of welfare funds, their financial hardships continued. Although Han was able to retain housing, her exclusion from national "old age" pension programs perpetuated her dependency on her daughters' financial assistance, a precarious situation in the event that her health become compromised.

The threat of financial insolvency has increased also for *Pak-halmoni* and her husband in old age. Of particular concern is their vulnerability to discrimination in the housing sector. Their extended experience in Japan alerts them to the possibility of expulsion from their home, yet, knowledge of this risk does not prevent its ultimate occurrence. The reason cited by the landlord for the termination of their housing agreement was the risk of fire due to the elderly couple's alleged forgetfulness. Explaining that previously another Korean tenant from their building had been evicted, Pak is certain that their Korean identity and all that it connotes is the real reason for their plight. By using the more palatable reason of age, Pak is convinced the landlord cloaks her anti-Korean sentiments. Feeling that her and her husband had no recourse, the elderly couple moved in with their grandson. However, this arrangement is temporary and Pak knows that soon she and her husband must locate affordable housing of their own.

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Financial constraints are less of an immediate concern for Kim-*halmoni*. In contrast to Han and Pak, Kim's parents were not peasants, but merchants. Having married a Waseda University educated Korean who later worked on a Japanese newspaper, Kim's socio-economic status supercedes that of both her peers. However, despite these differences, Kim's greatest concern in old age is the same as the others. Kim states plainly that she is afraid that if she were to become ill, there would be no one to help her. Although her son is a practicing physician in relative proximity, Kim expresses her worries that she might be left alone. Like Han, Kim does not express fear of death, but a fear of needing the help of another individual and not receiving it.

For Han, Kim and Pak, the body in old age emerges as a central plane on which issues of race, gender, and class intersect. It is the physical record of the lives of these women; one which is referred to in explaining the challenges faced in living in Japanese society. It is a *lieu de memoire*, a space in which life experiences are kept and made meaningful. In old age, the failures of the body reveal the social history of each individual and maps her connections and her position vis a vis her social group. The physical vulnerabilities associated with old age expose the life long manifestations of ethnic identity. Thus, for first generation elderly Koreans, old age is discussed as continuous with conceptualizations of one's life in Japanese society. In this way, the "aged body" can not be separated from the "foreign body". Prejudicial treatment towards the Korean in both institutional and attitudinal forms are articulated by memories, however, their effect is recognizable in the physical dimensions of old age. It is as Han-*halmoni* describes, her "life is carved into this old body" in which the past is retained.

### Memory and Amnesia

The life histories presented by Han, Kim and Pak illuminate a focus on post-migration events. Although there are scattered stories of life in Korea, these tend to be occasional vignettes. Rather, the majority of the life histories concentrate on life in Japan

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and the hardships which elderly Korean residents have encountered. It may be argued that this apparent "amnesia" of life in Korea is the result of the natural fading of long term memory of individuals in their seventies and eighties. However, in the context of the life story in which memories are not merely isolated kernels of information, but relational artifacts of one's life, pre-migration memories may be superseded by post-migration due to the latter's more powerful representation of one's understanding of his or her life.

The memories which emerge most significantly for Korean residents are from the period of migration to Japan and the subsequent challenges of surviving in Japanese society. It is a theme which continues throughout descriptions of the lifecourse into old age. Life histories weave memories of struggles with the Japanese language, attempts to "pass" as Japanese, finding employment, and securing housing. A important theme in the life narratives is the consistent reference to the colonial period in postcolonial understandings of social relationships between Korean residents and Japanese society. Although most first generation Korean residents lived only one third of their lives under Japanese colonial rule, the relationship of colonizer and the colonized is embedded in the ways in which the past is remembered and interpreted as well as their values in how they should live their lives in diaspora. This legacy of colonialism is critical for first generation elderly in positioning themselves with respect to Japan and North and South Korea.

Situating their lives within the constraints of historical, political and economic conditions, elderly Korean residents strive to narrate these contexts in describing the course of their experiences. In these narratives, self-determination is a complicated value whereby Korean residents, particularly women, describe not having control over their lives; for example, migrating to Japan against their wishes or losing a daughter to repatriation. However, resistance is made to subvert these predetermined conditions, most notably in the form of nationalism.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter VII of this dissertation.

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Reminiscence in the creation of life histories is contingent on bouts of amnesia. For elderly first generation Korean residents who continue to identify themselves as Korean patriots, tending to memories are critical in carving a Korean identity. An important influence on the nature of maintaining and forgetting memories is a consciousness of their protracted residence in the colonial metropole. Fearful of being consumed by assimilation, first generation elderly often stridently affirm their ethnic difference, often at considerable cost. However, for them, memories are the arsenal against the erasure of identity.

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## CHAPTER VI

### SAKURA ROJIN HOMU: POLITICS OF DEMENTIA

Institutional care for the elderly has emerged as an important issue in Japan, yet ethnographic literature focusing on this topic is sparse<sup>1</sup>. Increased longevity, a result of improved standards of living in Japan and greater use of the medical system has contributed to the growing numbers of those over the age of 65 year old. While 1990 census data indicates that the elderly are 11.6% of the total population<sup>2</sup>, by the year 2000, this figure is projected to explode to 24.6%<sup>3</sup>. Urbanization and economic growth during the post-war period in Japan has contributed to dramatic changes in the traditional family household and the living arrangements of the aged. This, coupled with longer lifespans, has altered the demographic configuration of the elderly in Japan. A by-product of these changes has been the emergence of a variety of retirement institutions, catering to the varying needs of the growing numbers of those over 65 in Japanese society.

Although the government had been warned of the increasing need to address health care for the aged in the 1960's, Japan's Ministry of Health and Welfare did institute interventions, relying instead on the family unit to absorb responsibility of care for the elderly. The result of this inaction revealed itself in the 1970's and 1980's when hospitals were besieged by teeming numbers of "social admissions" of elderly patients due to the lack of family caregivers, lack of home help services and the lack of living space producing increases in the numbers of elderly living alone (Okamoto, 1992). In response, the Ministry of Health and Welfare has attempted to encourage the production of institutional

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<sup>1</sup> An exception is Kinoshita and Kiefer's, Refuge of the Honored, which is an in-depth examination of a Japanese retirement community.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Health and Welfare. Populational Census Report for 1990. Tokyo: Ministry of Health and Welfare. 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Health and Welfare. Annual Report 1994.. Tokyo: Ministry of Health and Welfare. 1995.

care facilities for the elderly. Currently there are three types of facilities: fee charging homes, long term residential homes, and intermediate care institutions.

Fee charging homes tend to be small institutions which provide housing and board services. They are not eligible for government assistance nor regulation. Currently there is little data on the number of fee charging homes in Japan. Amenities at these homes range from those offering basic services to those resembling first class apartments. Residents of fee charging homes are, in general, healthy elderly individuals who are able to function independently, without need of nursing care.

Long term residential homes are institutions for elderly individuals who are judged to be in poor health, either physically or mentally. In these homes, they receive twenty four hour nursing care and may remain at the institution as long as medically indicated. The government pays for a portion of the patient's fees. However, if a patient is able to demonstrate financial need, the government will cover his or her expenses entirely.

The third type of institution focused upon in this chapter, is the geriatric intermediate care facility, or *rojin hoken shisetsu\**, established by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1987. This facility is designed as a short-term residence to help previously hospitalized patients return to their individual homes. The program focuses on rehabilitating elderly patients so that they may live independently without nursing care.<sup>4</sup> According to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, a resident of an intermediate care facility must be at least 65 years old and have persistent physical and/or mental problems that interfere with his/her living at home. Those needing acute care are ineligible for the program. As of December, 1993 there were 836 intermediate care facilities, accounting for 70,549 beds.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Health and Welfare of Japan Health State and Nation, Annual Report, *Kosei Tokei Kyokai*, Tokyo 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Health and Welfare, Japan Monthly Report of Geriatric Intermediate Care Facilities on December 1993. Ministry of Health and Welfare, Tokyo, 1993.

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In the following chapter, Sakura Rojin Homu<sup>6</sup>, a geriatric intermediate care facility, located in the outskirts of Tokyo is examined. SRH is an unusual facility in that it caters to a significant number of Korean born residents as well as Japanese nationals. As in the general Japanese population, the care of the aged has become an important social issue in the Korean resident community, particularly as increasing numbers of first and second generation Koreans have entered late life.<sup>7</sup> In studying the organization of institutional care for elderly Koreans in Japan, the following examination of SRH is a unique opportunity in two respects. First, it is rare chance to investigate the genesis of a program founded and managed by a Korean resident, and second, because of SRH's sizable Korean-born patient population, it is a way to analyze the paths by which Korean residents are placed in an institutionalized care facility.

### The Founding of a Home

Typical of most fieldwork experiences, my introduction to SRH was initiated by a serendipitous encounter which led to a series of subsequent introductions and finally, a meeting with Dr. Yang Young Ho, the program's founder and director. At the request of a colleague of his in Tokyo, Dr. Yang invited me to visit SRH which is located in Koshigaya in Saitama Prefecture, approximately an hour train ride northeast of downtown Tokyo. SRH is one of three programs run by Dr. Yang. The other two consist of Sakura hospital and a fee charging elderly home.

SRH was established in September, 1993 with a seed grant from Japan's Ministry of Health and Welfare. Funding was secured under the intermediate care facility program executed by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in which SRH was to act as an interim

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<sup>6</sup> *Sakura Rojin Homu* is literally translated as Sakura Elderly Home. *Ro-jin* means elderly and *Homu* is "home" spelled in *katakana*, the Japanese alphabet used mainly for foreign words.

<sup>7</sup> At the time of research, SRH was the only nursing home directed by a Korean resident in the Tokyo metropolitan area. In the Kansai region, however, efforts were made to initiate an extensive nursing home program for Korean elderly residents in Osaka.

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institution for elderly individuals released from the hospital who needed rehabilitative care. In addition to extending grants and guaranteeing individual bank loans for the construction of SRH, the Ministry of Health and Welfare provides funding for patient's medical and living expenses while at SRH. Patients usually must supplement government subsidies with their own income. However, for those demonstrating financial needs, the government pays their bills in full.

Prior to the founding of SRH, Sakura hospital was a fledgling outpatient clinic with few patients, catering primarily to the local community. Dr. Yang had moved to Koshigaya in 1980 and was one of three attending physicians at the clinic. In 1990 Dr. Yang approached his two colleagues with an idea of establishing a geriatric care facility. They agreed to support his application for funds, however, since both were expecting to retire within two years, they did not intend to remain on SRH's staff by the time the program began.

When his application to the Ministry of Health and Welfare was accepted, Dr. Yang began construction on SRH and the private retirement house now located behind the hospital. In the interim, he began advertising the openings of two positions for physicians interested in geriatric medicine. After six months he had received only two inquiries: one from Dr. Hong Young Won, a 68 year old internist who had recently retired from his position at a small hospital in Seoul, Korea and the other from Dr. Sohn Jin Ho, a 79 year old South Korean general practitioner who was working at a clinic in Osaka. Dr. Yang extended the positions to each of them after telephone interviews and each accepted without having yet visited the facility.

Upon securing the services of Dr. Hong and Dr. Sohn, Dr. Yang engaged in an advertising campaign to publicize the opening of SRH to prospective patients. Dr. Yang sent out notices to various hospitals and clinics in Saitama Prefecture, as well as in Tokyo, and to members of the Japan Association of Physicians. He also sent personal letters to

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colleagues, inviting them to visit the facility and to send elderly patients who were in need of nursing home care. Dr. Yang targeted the Korean resident population by taking out full page advertisements in several Korean resident magazines and newspapers and contacting their reporters who, in turn, wrote numerous articles about Dr. Yang and SRH. In these, SRH is described as a Korean resident nursing home staffed by bi-lingual Korean nurses and physicians: a home where Korean patients could enjoy 'sensitive medical care'. Within two months of SRH's opening, the nursing home was at capacity with a waiting list of over twenty people.

### The Physicians' Road to SRH

The study of SRH is unique not only due to its inclusion of a significant number of Korean born patients, but also because its founder and two other physicians are also Korean residents in Japan. An examination of the life experiences and paths of Dr. Yang, Dr. Hong and Dr. Sohn to SRH presents an opportunity to understand the impetus for the founding of such a facility and the relative importance of ethnicity in the management of SRH patients.

### YANG YOUNG HO, M.D.

Dr. Yang is a 52 year old second generation Korean resident who grew up in Hokkaido as an only child. His parents were born near Taegu in Kyongsangbuk-do of South Korea and migrated to Japan in 1943. Dr. Yang attended Tsukuba National University and completed medical school there in 1968. In 1969, he married Kim Ho Jung, a third generation Korean resident from Nagoya. After finishing residency in general surgery, Dr. Yang and his family moved to Koshigaya in 1975 where he was an attending physician at two clinics.

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insurance benefits that Japanese citizens automatically receive. Because of discriminatory practices like these, Korean elderly have lived poor and insecure lives which have only worsened in old age when their children are unable to give them adequate care. SRH addresses these problems by giving displaced, sick elderly a comfortable, secure living environment in which they may receive the health care they need."

According to his youngest son, Dr. Yang has become "Koreanized". At a dinner which I attended, Dr. Yang spoke only Korean to his family. His son laughed, saying that he does not understand him in Korean to which Dr. Yang, in a mockingly stern tone, orders him to study more. Throughout the living room there are several scattered Korean language tapes which Dr. Yang's wife explains is the result of a renewed desire in Dr. Yang to improve his language skills. Later she explains that while growing up in Hokkaido, Dr. Yang had not been exposed to many Korean residents. It was not until college that he became aware of the problems that Korean residents face. She explained that it was when Dr. Yang began to personally experience discrimination that he became committed to improve the lives of Korean residents and that the idea of building a health care facility for Korean elderly developed.

"My husband attended Tsukuba University Medical School, no small feat for a Korean resident in Japan. He did very well while in medical school, but he was also very active in the socialist political organizations on campus. Growing up in Hokkaido as an only child was an isolating experience for him. His parents were not well connected with other Koreans in the area and so he grew up knowing very little about Korean culture. It was in college that he had his awakening. After finishing medical school, he applied for a surgical residency in Yokohama. The program is one of the more prestigious ones, however, Dr. Yang had excellent scores and letters of recommendation. In fact, his principle advisor was a friend of one of the attending physicians at the Yokohama program. My husband felt fairly confident, having received assurances from his advisor that he would be accepted to the program. However, in the end he was rejected. He was very upset and asked his advisor what had happened. After a few phone calls, the advisor was told

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unofficially that it was because my husband is Korean that the program had declined his application. This was devastating for him. Of course, this was only one in a sequence of injustices which have occurred. After he finished his surgical residency at another program in Hokkaido, his offer for a position as an attending physician at Tsukuba Medical Center was rescinded at the last minute. Again, he was told it was because of his foreign status. My husband, however, has a great deal of resilience. He channeled his anger into doing something good for other Korean residents."

Ms. Kim assured me that she is proud of her husband's accomplishments and that he has provided a great deal for her children. However, she recognizes her husband's regrets at not being able to use his surgical skills. Although cases requiring surgery do arise at SRH, Ms. Kim believes that her husband's inability to realize this original dream of working in the surgery department of a major research medical center has caused him considerable personal pain.

#### HONG YOUNG WON, M.D.

Walking back to the SRH lobby area one day, Dr. Hong met me in the hallway and asked if I would like to have lunch in the staff dining area with him. The staff dining hall was on the first floor of the hospital and consisted of a small room with two tables and eight chairs. Two women in the kitchen, gave us each a bowl of miso soup, a bowl of rice and a piece of broiled fish. Tea and water were already on the tables. Dr. Hong handed me a pair of disposable chopsticks and reaching into his white coat pocket, he pulled out his own set from a box made to hold them. Noticing that Dr. Hong was observing me, I drank my miso soup with the use of my spoon. To this Dr. Hong chuckled that I was a "true Korean". He explained that unlike the Japanese who bring the soup up to the mouth to drink directly from the bowl, I had used my spoon which revealed my "Koreanness".

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During lunch, Dr. Hong explained that he had worked at SRH for a year and a half having moved to Japan from Seoul and that he was unlike either Dr. Yang or Dr. Sohn because he did not consider himself a Korean resident in Japan. He said that he travels frequently between Seoul, where he maintains a home, and Tokyo. He has one daughter who is married and lives in Seoul as well as many relatives.

Dr. Hong was born in 1924 in a small village outside of Pyongyang in North Korea, however, in 1948 his family moved to Seoul. He had graduated from Yonsei University Medical School and received postdoctoral training at Cornell University Medical Center in New York City in the 1950's, returning to South Korea immediately following his program. Until coming to SRH, he had had been employed at Yonsei Medical Center as an attending physician in internal medicine.

When asked the reason he had decided to come to Japan, Dr. Hong explained that his younger brother had moved to Tokyo in the past few years after accepting a position as the senior pastor at a Presbyterian Korean Church in Shinjuku ward. He said that he wanted to help his brother build up his church. His colleagues expected him to retire at Yonsei, yet he wanted to continue to practice medicine. He had heard about SRH through his brother who had read about the program in a Korean resident magazine.

He currently lives in Shinjuku ward with his wife. He commutes to SRH every morning, arriving at 8:40 am and returning on the 6:17 pm train to Tokyo every evening. I asked how he became interested in geriatric medicine to which he candidly admitted that it was not his real interest. Rather, it was the only opportunity to practice medicine that was available to him in Japan.

H: "As a Korean, it would be very difficult for me to gain a position at a typical hospital or clinic, especially since I am old and have no social connections with physicians here. Working with old people is really, one of the only options for me. In Japan and in Korea, geriatric medicine is not as developed as in the United States. I know that it is becoming an important area in America. I try to keep up with the

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medical journals there. Here, though, nobody wants to treat only old people. It is not challenging or interesting. There isn't much that you can do. The young, bright doctors are involved with the more exciting areas of medicine. Only old doctors like me and Dr. Sohn are left with so-called geriatric medicine because nobody else wants the work. That's the truth and I am not too proud to admit it."

I: "But, then there is Dr. Yang."

H: "Yes, Dr. Yang. He is a good man. He, I think, really does want to help elderly patients. But to be honest, Dr. Yang was trained as a surgeon. What kind of surgical practice can he have here? Sure there is the occasional hip fracture, but nothing like the cases he was trained to do. He has suffered as a Korean resident here. Sure, he is trying to give back to the Koreans living here, but he is also limited in options because of who he is. He has a family to support as well."

When asked about the colonial period, Dr. Hong has little to say except that Korea was unstable before the Japanese colonized the peninsula. He, however, does not elaborate.

#### SOHN JIN HO, M.D.

Of the three physicians at SRH, I spent most of my time with Dr. Sohn, who generously explained the details of patients' case histories and medical status to me. In addition, Dr. Sohn and his wife who lived in a small house next to SRH would often invite me to share meals with them. It was during these visits that I learned about Dr. Sohn's life and his path to SRH.

On one early evening, I took the short walk from SRH to the Sohn's house and met Dr. Sohn outside, working in their small vegetable garden. He had pulled up radishes and chrysanthemum leaves which he said his wife had requested for the *sukuyaki*\* dinner she was preparing. He handed me the basket of his vegetables and waved me into the single story house. The house was only one year old and modern with a carpeted living room, small dining room and all all-electric kitchen. It was decorated with dark wood furniture





family had served the Republic of Korea with loyalty and honor. The first was signed by President Park Chung Hee in 1971. The second was signed by President Chun Doo Hwan in 1980. And, the third was recently signed in 1994 by President Kim Young Sam. Mrs. Sohn smirked,

"They each gave my husband their own certificate of honor because they claimed that their administration invalidated the actions of the previous one. Can you believe the hypocrisy? They have made a joke out of my husband's pain."

Later, Dr. Sohn explained that he decided to come to Japan because he did not want to return to South Korea. Sympathizing with North Korea, he preferred to practice medicine in Japan, than to return to South Korea whose leaders he feels have "ruined his country." When I asked him why he would choose to live in Japan given the tragedy of his father and brother, he responded,

"Please do not mistake my residence in Japan as a sign that I have forgotten the past. I will always have anger about what happened in my country sixty years ago. In Japan, there is still so much discrimination against Koreans. When I see this, it only makes me remember more clearly what the Japanese are capable of doing. My role here is simply a doctor. I try to help those who have been beaten down and are sick. My being here is not a disloyal act. It is a way to help my fellow Koreans."

### **Navigation and Organization**

Located in the suburban residential city of Koshigaya, SRH is situated in a quiet neighborhood of scattered single family homes and is close to a local market, two banks and several family run restaurants. For its many commuters, living in Koshigaya provides an attractive alternative to the high prices of Tokyo proper. Although there is one Korean

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family run store near the Koshigaya train station, Korean residents are virtually invisible with the exception of SRH patients and staff members.

SRH is one component of a cluster of three low rise buildings . The original clinic sits nearest to the road and is a three story building painted bright yellow built in the 1970's. As mentioned previously, it now functions as a hospital, catering mainly to elderly in-patients, although outpatient services continue to be available to the local townspeople. At the time of fieldwork, however, all fifty hospital beds were occupied by patients over the age of 65.

Behind the hospital is a newly paved, narrow road which leads to the two other structures built on opposite sides of the street, facing each other. The one on the left is a single story, small building which houses 12 independent apartments. The elderly individuals living in this structure are from various prefectures of Japan. They are fully mobile and do not need medical assistance. Each apartment is equipped with its own bathroom and small kitchen, although there are a dining area and recreation room for communal use. This building is part of a separate retirement program through which elderly are able to live within a group setting, yet retain their privacy. The program is independent from the hospital and SRH and does not receive financial assistance from the Ministry of Health and Welfare for participants' living expenses.

SRH is located on the other side of the road and is a new two story complex. The facility contains 100 beds, a dining hall, a recreation room, six main lavatory and bath areas, offices, nursing stations, and a small outdoor courtyard. Patients share rooms with two or three other patients. Men and women are separated by hallways. Although there are ten nurses and therapists employed at SRH, only one physician, Dr. Sohn, is based full time at the facility. The two other physicians, Dr. Yang and Dr. Hong, are based primarily at the hospital, although they each spend two days a week in a rotating schedule at SRH to attend to patients.

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In addition to the three physicians, two of the ten nurses are of Korean background. They are the 24 year old Kim Myung Soo, a third generation Korean resident from Shinjuku Ward of Tokyo and 25 year old Cho Young Mi, a second generation Korean resident from Ikegami-cho in Kawasaki. Both women hold North Korean citizenship and applied for their positions at SRH after being recruited by Dr. Yang's daughter, who had known the two women from a North Korean youth group. Miss Kim speaks Korean as a second language having attended *chosen gakko* until high school. Miss Cho, who attended Japanese schools, was attending a language school in Tokyo at the time of fieldwork in her efforts to learn Korean.

### Touring SRH

On my first day at SRH, I was given a tour of the building by a nurse named Takahashi Yoshiko, a 28 year old Japanese national. Miss Takahashi was one of the first nurses recruited by Dr. Yang to join the staff at SRH. Before coming to SRH, she had been working in a small private clinic in Omiya where Dr. Yang saw patients once a week. When Dr. Yang approached her, explaining his plans to open a *rojin homu*, she accepted his offer immediately. She said that she had been impressed with Dr. Yang's energy and integrity as a physician and that the idea of being involved in a new program was exciting to her. As a nursing student she had been interested in the relatively new field of geriatric medicine and looked forward to working with elderly patients.

As we walked down the halls, Miss Takahashi greeted various patients who we passed by asking them questions which revealed her intimate knowledge of their daily schedules. She asked one man if he had enjoyed a certain game show on television, another patient if she had finished reading the *Asahi Shimbun*, a Japanese newspaper, that morning, and another if Uchida-san, a nurse, had helped her finish a letter to her

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grandchild. Although only one of the patients acknowledged her inquiries, this did not daunt Miss Takahashi's enthusiasm nor her friendly disposition.

Stopping in front of one of the patient rooms, she pointed to the paper tags on each door which indicated the names of the room's inhabitants. Entering the room of Yi Yun Shil and Kim Yoon Mi, Miss Takahashi greeted the elderly women. *Yi-halmoni* was walking toward her bed with the help of a cane, her hunched back to us. She slowly turned around and giving us a haughty look, asked us what we wanted. Laughing, Miss Takahashi said that I had come all the way from America to visit with them, adding that I was Korean. Puzzled, *Yi-halmoni*, asked in Japanese, whether I was really Korean. Responding in Korean, I introduced myself to both Yi and her roommate, Kim which softened *Yi-halmoni's* expression; however, *Kim-halmoni*, who had been intently observing me, muttered to herself that she wondered what I wanted from them. Before having a chance to answer, a nurse knocked on the door and entered, balancing a tray of cups of water and medication. She announced that it was time for them to take their medication at which Miss Takahashi quickly excused us and we departed.

At the end of the hall we entered an expansive recreation room which was vacant. There was a large television hanging high on the wall in one corner and an upright piano at the other end of the room. On the walls were bulletin boards with calendars indicating different months' events. For the month of October, there were several activities of flower arranging, *kaorake* night, poetry writing and movie viewing. In addition, the patients' birthdays were indicated on the various dates with their individual pictures. There were also photographs of the patients and staff members at different celebrations during the past year.

As we walked through the recreation room, Miss Takahashi explained that most of the patients were getting ready to take a nap as the lunch period had ended. Exiting the recreation room, we walked into the opposite hallway and into a large dining hall which



for the day's events. As the majority of patients are independently mobile, they are free to use the lavatories, dress themselves and make their way to the dining area to have breakfast which is served at 8:00 am every morning. Those who need assistance wait for the nurses to help them.

After breakfast, patients usually return to their rooms and await the nursing staff who administer medication to those who need them. At 10:00 am activities planned for morning take place. This includes exercise time during which patients are led by a member of the nursing staff in various calisthenics exercises. Afterwards, activities in arts and crafts such as *origami*\* and storytelling are planned. However, on the days that activities are not scheduled, residents usually watch television until lunch.

After lunch many patients take naps, although those who do not wish to sleep may gather together in the recreation room to talk. In addition, those who do not need assistance from staff members are free to spend time outdoors in the courtyard. Several patients had started small potted gardens in this area. In the late afternoon, activities are usually planned such as singing songs and playing games. After dinner is served, patients who are scheduled to take baths are bathed while others spend time in their rooms. Lights are out at 9:00pm.

### **Residents of SRH**

There are 100 patients at SRH who range in age from 65 to 95 years old with an average age of 78 years old. Patients originate predominantly from Tokyo although a small minority come from outlying areas of Japan. Over 90% were enrolled in SRH by their daughters or sons while 10% came to the facility by themselves. At the time of fieldwork 78% were women and 22% were male.

Of the 100 participants 25 were of Korean background and the remaining 75 were Japanese nationals. Of the 25 Korean patients, 19 were women and six were men. Those identified as Korean-born were individuals who held either North Korean or South Korean

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citizenship and one patient, who was born on the Korean peninsula, but who had obtained Japanese citizenship after migrating to Japan<sup>9</sup>. Of the twenty-four patients retaining Korean citizenship, four men held North Korean citizenship, 19 women and one man held South Korean citizenship making a ratio of 1:4 North Koreans to South Koreans<sup>10</sup>. This breakdown is illustrated in the chart below. It should be noted however, that all 25 Korean patients were born in the southern region of the Korean peninsula now known as South Korea with the majority having birth places in Kyongsang provinces.

#### NATIONALITY AND GENDER OF SRH PATIENTS

	Japanese Nationals <sup>11</sup>	Korean Born <sup>12</sup>	Total
Female	59	19	78
Male	16	6	22
Total	75	25	100

<sup>9</sup> Among those identified as Japanese nationals, there may be Koreans who have elected to pass as Japanese. As the grant awarded to the nursing home does not require stipulation of patients' national identity, the nursing home relies on self-identification of the patient and/or his/her family.

<sup>10</sup> Compared to the national ratio of 2:1, South Koreans appear to be over-represented in this facility.

<sup>11</sup> The term, "Japanese Nationals", is used in this dissertation to indicate those individuals who are born in Japan and hold Japanese citizenship. This category does not include those who have elected naturalized Japanese citizenship. In discussions of the Korean resident population in Japan, terms such as "Japanese National" are problematic in distinguishing who is Japanese vs. non-Japanese. With respect to 2nd, 3rd, and 4th generation Koreans living in Japan, defining terms such as 'Japanese National' is problematic. However, with these limitation notwithstanding and for lack of a better term, "Japanese Nationals" is used in this thesis.

<sup>12</sup> This category includes those patients who were born on the Korean peninsula and then migrated to Japan irrespective of naturalized citizenship.

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## CITIZENSHIP OF KOREAN BORN SRH PATIENTS

	North Korea	South Korea	Japan	Total
Female	0	19	0	19
Male	4	1	1	6
Total	4	20	0	25

Of the 25 Korean patients, eleven came from Arakawa ward, seven from Shinjuku ward, four from Kawasaki City, one from Itabashi ward, one from Kita ward and one from Omiya City. Of the 25 residing at the nursing home at the time of fieldwork, only one had been an in-patient at a hospital and then transferred to SRH. The rest were walk-ins. All 19 Korean born women were widows and two Korean born men were widowers. Prior to enrolling in SRH, the majority of Korean patients were living alone. The living arrangements of Korean born patients and Japanese nationals at SRH is illustrated below:

## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF SRH PATIENTS BEFORE ENROLLMENT

	Living Alone	With Spouse	With Children	Other <sup>13</sup>
Korean-born	17 (65%)	2 (8%)	6 (23%)	1(4%)
Japanese national	23 (30%)	15 (20%)	32 (43%)	5 (7%)
Total	40	17	38	6

The breakdown of Korean born and Japanese national patients living alone and with their family differs significantly between the two groups. Among the Korean born patients 65%

<sup>13</sup> This category includes those patients who were living at another nursing home before coming to SRH and those who were living with a non-familial roommate who was not their spouse.

had lived alone compared to 30% of the Japanese nationals. Only 8% of Korean born patients lived with their spouses compared to 20% of Japanese nationals and in the case of those living with children, 23% of Korean born patients lived with either their daughter or son's family compared to 43% of the Japanese national population. These results indicate that over twice as many Korean-born patients lived alone and that almost twice as many Japanese nationals lived with their children compared to their respective counterparts.

### **Diagnosing Dementia**

Dementia, derived from the Latin term, *dementatus*, denotes mental deterioration, affecting an estimated four million people in the United States (Harrison, 1991). It is a major cause of long-term disability in old age and increases rapidly in incidence with age with approximately two percent affected between the ages of 65 and 70 and then jumping to 20% for those over 80 years of age (Harrison, 1991: 189).

Dementia has been defined by the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual by criteria of (i) a deterioration of previously acquired intellectual abilities of sufficient severity to interfere with social or occupational functioning; (ii) memory impairment; (iii) at least one of the following: (a) impairment of abstract thinking; (b) impairment in judgment or impulse control; (c) personality change; (iv) failure to meet the criteria for 'intoxication' or 'delirium', although these may be superimposed; and (v) either of the following: (a) evidence from physical examination, laboratory tests, or history of a specific organic factor judged to be causally related to the disturbance; or (b) in the absence of such evidence, the assumption of the existence of an organic factor necessary for the development of the syndrome (Mahendra, 1984: 20). The following is model by which dementia may be conceptualized.

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**Primary factors**

Structural cerebral changes

Cognitive impairments

Clinical and behavioral manifestations

**Secondary factors**

Functional or metabolic disorders of the brain

Incidental physical illnesses

Depression, inactivity, social neglect

Intrapsychic factors, personal factors, environmental factors

(Pearce, 1984: 12)

Dementia may result from cortical disease such as Alzheimer's, the most common type of dementia, or from disease of subcortical structures such as the basal ganglia, thalamus and deep white matter such as in Huntington's disease. Cortical and subcortical dementia are differentiated in that the former which is characterized by loss of cognitive functions and the latter exhibits slowing of cognition and information processing, flattening of affect and disturbances in motivation and mood (Harrison, 1991).

According to epidemiological studies carried out in the last ten years among elderly Japanese over the age of 65 years, the incidence of dementia in the general population is between 3.3-5.4% for men and 6.3-7.5% for women (Kiyohara et al., 1994, Fukunishi, et al, 1991, Homma, 1989). For patients in nursing homes, these figures dramatically increase to between 61-67% (Rovner, 1990, Hirayama, 1986). There are no studies reporting the incidence of dementia among Korean elderly permanent residents in Japan.

According to Dr. Sohn the most common medical problems confronting his patients at SRH are dementia, depression, osteoporosis, hypertension, and diabetes and listed here in decreasing prevalence. Examination of the patient records confirmed this assessment with dementia far out numbering other diagnoses. A comparison between Japanese national and Korean born patients revealed the preponderance of dementia in the latter

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group . An examination of the patient records revealed that of the 100 patients, 82 were diagnosed with dementia . However, among the Korean patient population, all 25 were diagnosed with dementia as indicated in the chart below.

#### DEMENTIA DIAGNOSIS FOR SRH PATIENTS

	Japanese Nationals	Korean Born	Total
Female	45 (76%)	19 (100%)	64
Male	12 (80%)	6 (100%)	18
Total	57	25	82

The figures indicated that among the Japanese national population at SRH the incidence of dementia was 76% among female patients, 80% among male patients and 82% in this population in total. These figures contrasted with the Korean born patient population in which each person was diagnosed with senile dementia. In a closer examination of the records of the twenty five Korean born patients, hypertension was also diagnosed in five cases, osteoporosis in two and severe diabetes and diabetic related blindness in one. Dr. Sohn later elaborated on these findings.

S: "Dementia is an increasing problem among the old. I would say that it is the biggest problem for my patients. There is a range however, in the severity of the condition for different people. Some only have short periods of cognitive dysfunction and then there are others such as the patients you saw in the play room with Takahasi-san who are severely demented and are not able to function on a day to day basis. This condition is combined with depression for many patients, particularly among the Korean elderly. In many cases the depression has been a chronic problem. "

I: "Have you diagnosed many of your patients with Alzheimer's disease?"



written on them, look at the signature at the top. They were all diagnosed by Dr. Sohn. Do you know how old Dr. Sohn is? He says he's 79 years old, but I think he must be older than that and he is still practicing medicine. To him everyone is demented. I think he's the one with senile dementia.... Take a look around. Talk with the patients and decide for yourself whether all these people are demented."

### Finding Shelter

Taking Dr. Hong's invitation to talk with the patients at SRH, it became increasingly apparent that while being diagnosed with dementia, the memories of many of the Korean born patients were remarkably vivid. Both long term and short term memory seem to be intact in the majority of cases and at least, from the untrained perspective of this observer, the cognitive function of all but three of the Korean born patients did not impair coherent communication.<sup>14</sup> By interviewing SRH nurses and patients and consulting the patients' medical records, 12 patients seemed to suffering from mild to severe dementia. Of the remaining 14, the informal and formal interviews of the elderly patients and in several cases, interviews with consenting family members in Tokyo<sup>15</sup>, indicated patients' feelings of psychological insecurity with regards to their health and social support.

In the case of Cho Bong Su, a 74 year old woman, her children decided to enroll their mother in SRH in order to ensure Cho-*halmoni*'s safety. Cho-*halmoni* had been living in a small apartment in Arakawa ward when she had taken a fall down an outdoor staircase. Although she suffered only minor cuts and bruises, her daughter who lives in Nakano ward took the advice of a friend and brought her to SRH. Her daughter explained the decision in this manner,

<sup>14</sup> Psychometric scales were not administered on SRH patients to confirm the diagnoses of dementia. While this would have enhanced the study considerably, there were three considerations influencing the decision not to use them. The first was the logistical matter of time constraints. The second was the desire not to directly challenge the authority of Dr. Sohn. Lastly, this ethnography is less concerned with the actual incidence of dementia and more with the experiences of Korean elderly and motivation and intentions of SRH physicians in delivering their care.

<sup>15</sup> With the assistance of the Dr. Yang and SRH staff, I was able to contact the families of eleven patients who lived in Tokyo. Relatives of five patients agreed to be interviewed for this project.

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This structural quandary which financially isolates the population of first generation elderly Korean residents directly contributes to their vulnerability in Japanese society and helps to explain the role of an institution like SRH for these individuals and their families.

For Ahn Dong Yong SRH was an option of last resort. *Ahn-harabuji* is a seventy year old man who resembles a man in his late fifties. He is thin and taller than the other male patients at 182 cm. His face is long and his cheeks are sallow. His eyes however, are quite bright, accented by thick brows which lilt high, giving him an animated expression. Although *Ahn-harabuji* seems quite shy, he wears a perpetual smile with such constancy that it gives a mask-like quality to his demeanor.

In my informal conversations with SRH residents in the facility's recreation room, *Ahn-harabuji* would aggregate with the others as if to listen to our dialogue, however, he never contributed his own opinions to the discussion. He would situate himself on the outskirts of the self-formed groups; his expression never changing regardless of the topic of discussion. It was not until after fruitless entreaties for him to join us that one of the other patients explained that *Ahn-harabuji* was deaf in one ear and had poor hearing in the other, requiring one to literally yell to be heard by him.

Ahn Dong Yong shared one room with Kim Sun Moon, a 68 year old North Korean man originally from Cholla-do. *Kim-harabuji* and *Ahn-harabuji* had been acquaintances in Tokyo prior to enrolling at SRH. In fact, *Kim-harabuji* had been the one who told *Ahn-harabuji* about the facility. Through his introduction, *Ahn-harabuji* was accepted at SRH. However, according to Kim, Ahn did not require medical care as much as he needed a place to live. He explained this candidly.

"*Ahn-harabuji* is not really sick. He takes the medicine that they bring to him and every once in while he will act out just to make sure they won't expel him, but there is really nothing wrong with him. He is deaf in one ear, but that happened when he was a young man. The reason he is here is because he has no place to go. He married a Japanese woman...I believe that she is *Burakumin* and she swindled

him out of his money and kicked him out of his house. He is trying to sue her so he can get something back, but I don't know if he'll get anything. He was literally living in the parks until I told him about SRH. He is very worried that they will find out that there is nothing wrong with him, so he is very quiet most of the time. If he were not here, he really would be in a terrible situation."

*Ahn-harabuji* was born in 1925 in a small village in Kyongsangbuk-do where he was the youngest of seven siblings. His parents grew rice on a small plot of leased land. He finished three years of elementary school, dropping out to help his parents in the fields. When he was fifteen, he says that he came to Japan alone to work in a steel factory. However, according to his current wife who lives in Arakawa ward, *Ahn-harabuji* was coerced into labor with other young men from neighboring villages in Korea by the Japanese military. It was shortly after arriving at the steel factory in Kawasaki that he lost his hearing in his left ear which he explained in this manner:

"The factory was very cruel to Korean workers. There were both Japanese and Koreans in the factory, but for the most part, Korean workers were kept separate from them. Our foreman was Japanese, of course, and he was an unjust man. He would walk around the workers and yell that we were just lazy Koreans. He had a steel pipe which he always carried around with him in the warehouse. He would push the pipe into people's sides and backs and stomachs if he thought we were not working fast enough. I really hated him. One day there was this new boy who worked near me. It turned out he was from a village very close to mine in Kyongsangbuk-do. He was young, no more than a high school student although I am sure that he didn't go to school. I wanted to teach him how to perform the work correctly so he wouldn't get into trouble, but as I was talking with him, the foreman, Saito - I'll always remember his name - had walked up behind me. Before I knew what was happening, the foreman was hitting me with that steel pipe. He was punishing me for speaking Korean to this new man.... My right ear was badly mutilated. I have lost all hearing out of this ear. This is what the Japanese did to me.

*Ahn-harabuji* worked at the steel company until the end of the War. Afterward he held a series of jobs in various small businesses run by Korean residents. In 1957 he decided to return to South Korea and lived in Pusan until 1968 when he returned to Tokyo. *Ahn-harabuji* gained employment in a Korean restaurant and married a Japanese national who is now his ex-wife in 1973. The two of them lived in Arakawa ward until 1990 when they separated and were divorced when his wife discovered that *Ahn-harabuji* was still married to a South Korean women in Pusan with whom he had two children. His wife in South Korea has also since divorced *Ahn-harabuji* and his children have refused to establish communication with him, although he says he has sent them money and gifts every year. *Ahn-harabuji*, unable to gain employment and ineligible for old age pension, had been living in Okachimachi near Ueno Park with a Korean resident friend. However, when the landlord threatened to evict his friend from his apartment because of *Ahn-harabuji*'s presence, *Ahn-harabuji* left, living in various shelters and public areas until *Kim-harabuji* told him about SRH.

Extensive interviews with *Ahn-harabuji* revealed him to be a lucid man who retains both short term and long term memory. Although reticent, *Ahn-harabuji* appeared to be of clear consciousness. In fact, at no time during my fieldwork period at SRH did I see witness episodes of disorientation, loss of memory, emotional outbursts or any other inappropriate behavior exhibited by *Ahn-harabuji*. However, *Ahn-harabuji*'s chart indicates, that while otherwise in good health, he is suffering from dementia. Further examination of his chart revealed one episode of disorientation when admitted to SRH in 1993. Since that time, there have been no other like incidents. Conferring with Dr. Sohn on this case, our discussion of the diagnosis of dementia becomes entrenched in a review of *Ahn-harabuji*'s life history and the social problems he is confronting.

S: "When *Ahn-harabuji* came to SRH, he was severely undernourished and suffered from the early stages of pneumonia. As you already know, he is without family and

was homeless for an extended period of time. He has suffered a great deal in this country and although he is not without his mistakes, his worn out body is the product of being unfairly treated. The purpose of SRH is to give shelter and care to people just like Ahn-*harabuji* . "

I: "However, would you say that the diagnosis of dementia in Ahn-*harabuji* 's case is accurate?"

S: "What Ahn-*harabuji* suffers from is a type of "social disease." It is under the general category of "hate" manifested in the ill treatment of his brethren. If I could write down that diagnosis on his medical record, I would prefer doing that."

The "category of hate" which Dr. Sohn refers to reveals the doctor's perception of animosity between Japanese society and Koreans. In his response to questions of the dementia diagnosis, Dr. Sohn redirects the discussion to issues of inter-ethnic conflict.

In a candid style that I grew to appreciate, Dr. Hong was more pragmatic in his interpretation of the role of dementia as a diagnostic category for SRH patients. Re-casting SRH as a "silver business", Dr. Hong argues that sensitivity around funding criteria affects the ways in which patients are labeled at SRH. He explains it in this way.

H: "This nursing home is funded by the Japanese government. For every patient that we keep here, we are paid 85000 yen a month to cover their room and board expenses. In addition, the government pays for all medical procedures and medications prescribed for the patient. The 85000 yen, however, is a flat rate for each patient. Although SRH is a short term care facility, I guarantee no patient who enrolls will have any reason to leave this place. This will be where they will spend the rest of their lives, as long as SRH remains financially viable. This is how this kind of business works. What incentive does SRH have to release patients to their homes when most of these patients have nowhere to go? Certainly many of these patients are mobile and able to function by themselves, however, as long as we can offer a medical reason for their stay here, they will stay. "

I: "Are you saying that the dementia diagnosis is merely a way to satisfy the government for funding purposes?"

H: "Well...you met with many of our patients. Did all the Korean patients seem demented to you? I am not trying to belittle Dr. Sohn's medical judgment, but I think that it should be quite obvious that this is not a charity organization. Expenses must be paid."

The diagnosis of senile dementia for Korean born patients at SRH has been used to ensure that these elderly individuals would not be excluded from enrollment in the facility. Senile dementia, a disease which includes a broad range of symptomology and for which there is no treatment, suffices as an acceptable condition to prolong patients' tenure at an intermediate care facility like SRH. Although current epidemiological literature confirms the relatively high incidence of senile dementia among institutionalized elderly patients in Japan, in the case of SRH, diagnosis of the disease has served as a way to provide housing for elderly Koreans who have few other alternatives. This abuse of the health system reflects structural barriers in rectifying social inequities in the areas of housing and old age pension for first generation elderly Koreans.

An examination of the lives of Korean residents at SRH reveals attempts at navigation of Japanese society which have, to a large extent, ended in failure. The majority of first generation Korean residents who migrated to Japan during the colonial period lack education and social support and have extensive experiences of struggling to attain financial and social stability. Discrimination in employment preventing Korean residents from obtaining positions in the civil sector and at major Japanese companies (excluding the period of Japanese colonialization) contributes to the differing routes towards old age between Korean residents and Japanese nationals. External forces spurring the deterioration of the extended family unit has also contributed to their vulnerable position and their eventual placement at SRH.

In understanding this phenomena at SRH, it is important to examine the life paths and experiences of the physicians themselves. As Korean residents in Japan, their

management of Korean patients at SRH appears to be informed by events in their own lives with respect to Japan and Japanese society. This is most apparent in Dr. Yang's perception of discrimination in the field of medicine. Trained as a surgical resident, Dr. Yang's decision to work in the field of geriatric medicine was largely influenced by his inability to pursue his initial goals in his chosen sub-field. This set back fostered his empathy with other Korean residents and recognition of his identity not as a physician in Japan, but, first and foremost, as a Korean resident.

The legacy of the colonial period and his personal experience with Japanese brutality in the deaths of his father and brother lingers in Dr. Sohn's conscience as he describes his relations with Japanese society. In much the same sense that his Korean patients are homeless, Dr. Sohn is also unable to return to his home in South Korea. The repercussions of colonialism on the Korean peninsula and the evolution of South Korean political leadership has kept Dr. Sohn away. His sense of duty to those discriminated against in Japan arises from this legacy.

As a newly arrived resident of Japan, Dr. Hong is relatively reticent in regards to his own experiences of discrimination and Japanese colonialism. While being critical of the preponderance of senile dementia among Korean patients at SRH, he appears to have accepted the phenomena as simply part of the "silver business". His insistence that disease strikes Koreans and Japanese equally reveals a reluctance to discuss discrimination as a factor in management choices of SRH patients and reflects his interpretation of these choices as products of simple personal gain and economics.

On the other hand, Dr. Yang and Dr. Sohn who, along with Dr. Hong, are responsible for the admittance, diagnosis, and rehabilitation of elderly patients perceive SRH as a project for the Korean resident community. The moral implications of keeping patients in the facility when it may be otherwise medically indicated are balanced by their perceptions of the cumulative effects of discrimination on the lives of elderly Korean





## CHAPTER VII

### BODILY MEMORY IN DIASPORA

Skimming through the colorful children's book written and illustrated by Choi Hee Kyung for zainichi children, I stood at the front of the Italian restaurant, "Miran,"<sup>1</sup> where I waited for six members of the YMCA Korean Resident Women's Group, including the author of the book, for dinner. I had met three of the women before at a conference focusing on Japan's War Crimes Against Women at Waseda University and they had invited me to joint their committee dinner meeting to become acquainted with others in their organization. They were all over the age of 60 and active members of a feminist group in Tokyo, spearheading the campaign for reparations for "comfort women" who served the Japanese army during the War.

As the women arrived at the restaurant, greetings were carried out in the Japanese language. Soon everyone had arrived and the waiter sat us at a corner table. Because of the relatively early hour, the restaurant was not crowded. After everyone had ordered, the women began to talk about an upcoming demonstration to be held in front of the capital building the following week. The conversation was conducted in Korean since all the women were bilingual. However, as a waitress approached to fill our water glasses, the conversation switched from being carried out in Korean to Japanese. This continued until the waitress had walked back to her station, at which point, the conversation returned to Korean. Details of meeting spots and delegation of responsibility took up most of the discussion however, when the food was arriving, the conversation switched again to Japanese. As the servers returned to their work stations, the conversation resumed in Korean. These switches of language by the women continued throughout the meal. While

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<sup>1</sup> On the flourescent neon sign, "Miran" was spelled. "Miran" is meant to indicate the Italian city of Milan.

changes from Japanese to Korean and vice versa were not abrupt, the rhythm of cross-usage was synchronized to the proximity of the wait staff, rather than the content of what was being said. In the end, we all said good-bye to each other in Japanese outside the front door of the restaurant.

Beforehand Choi Hee Kyung and I had made plans to have dessert at a nearby coffee shop in order to discuss her book. Puzzled by the switching of language at dinner, I asked Choi Hee Kyung how she and her colleagues decide which language, Japanese or Korean, to use when they gathered together. She responded by saying:

We, *halmoni's*, like to speak Korean. Of course, we can speak Japanese, but it makes us feel better to speak Korean and the only chance we get to do this is when we are together or when we go to Korean activities at the church, or the YMCA...most of us can not even speak Korean in our homes anymore because our children and grandchildren speak only Japanese.

I asked her then, why she and the others did not speak Korean throughout the meal and why they switched to Japanese at certain points in the conversation. She answered by asking,

Did we do that? Maybe, it is out of habit. I have to admit that some of the *halmoni's* speak Japanese better than Korean now. Most of us have not gone back to Korea since we arrived in Japan during the war, or if we have returned, it was only a couple of times as a tourist or a visitor. But, to be honest, I hadn't really noticed tonight. I think we spoke in Korean most of the time.

Having later confirmed a similar pattern of language usage in a variety of public settings among elderly bilingual Korean residents, I became curious about the significance of this phenomena. I was interested in the general question of how immigrants negotiate between indigenous culture in the form of language and customs with those of the host

culture. In particular, I was concerned with the function of time and how this negotiation process manifested itself in the identity of Korean elderly and their navigation of Japanese society in everyday life.

In analyzing the narratives of elderly Korean residents, references to the body and bodily acts comprised a consistent theme in describing identity and adjustment to living in Japan. The body is privileged throughout the life histories in relaying the liminal status of Koreans residents as both the object of separation and the tool of agency. In analyzing the role of the body, ethnicity as understood and reflected upon by elderly Korean residents in Japan is treated not only as signifier in the context of social interaction, but as embodied conceptions of self.

### **The Anthropology of the Body**

Although the human body has been an important focus of social discourse, it has mainly been relegated to the fields of the biological sciences and clinical medicine. However, recently the body has re-emerged as an important vehicle by which to understand human relationships in the dynamics of culture, power and history and is currently the subject of a growing literature in social theory. The relatively new field of medical anthropology focuses on the body as a central symbol in its theoretical paradigm, viewing it as a template on which social processes are metaphorized. The departure from traditional dualistic perspectives of body and spirit is significant in the way in which we think about the "self:" its representation and its agency.

The anthropology of the body emerges from a critique of traditionally held beliefs of the Cartesian split between mind and matter. The historic moment of Decartes' eureka of introspection in defining the self apart from the physical body manifested itself into succeeding categorizations of human inquiry. The dual conception of body and spirit laid

the foundation for opposing dominions of the physical sciences and the arts, the former deeming the body as the subject of Nature and the latter of "human nature."

The Cartesian split established the fundamental premise of medical inquiry and its practice. The body, reduced to a system of organs, is further divided into tissue and then, to cellular masses, and further to DNA which is decomposed into nucleic acids, beginning the cascade of reductive thinking inherent of the medical sciences. Medical anthropology as a sub-field of anthropology responds to these assumptions by challenging them and generating a critique of conceptions of health, body and self as socially constructed. It emerges from a history of discourse critical of the "subject-less body" and is historically located a revolution against assumptions of duality of mind and body in western thought. Rather, medical anthropologists and anthropologists of the body reconfigure the human entity as whole, rejecting separation of physical and mental and thus, advocating a new approach to understanding the "self."

### Techniques of the Body

In his essay, "Techniques of the Body," (Mauss, 1979 [1950]), Marcel Mauss, argues that human movements are not performed "naturally." Rather, all actions, however mundane they may be, such as walking or squatting, are learned behavior. These actions are executed, according to Mauss, via "techniques" which are adapted within a social context of values and system of status and prestige.

While most would not argue against Mauss' premise that all behavior is a product of development, it is the latter part of his statement which gives way to debate. It is a stance which emphasizes the diversity of human action as a result of differences in rules of behavior. In describing the mechanism of learned behavior, Mauss identifies a "triple consideration" of actions or techniques invoking psychological, sociological and biological perspectives. Mauss labels these as "physic-psycho-sological assemblages," illustrating

these perspectives with the example of squatting. In a rather lamenting tone, Mauss writes of the difficulty most western adults have with this position, although his observance of young children indicates that this has not always been so. Noting that adults from most non-western societies have little difficulty with the squatting position, Mauss concludes that social values of decorum and status attached to certain bodily postures in western cultures force squatting out of usage, deleting it from the repertoire of habits executed.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, Mauss uses the term, "habitus," in identifying behavior learned via "techniques." However, in clarification he chooses the term, *habitude*, translated as habit or custom, in conveying his intended meaning of "acquired ability and faculty" (1979 [1950]:73). *Habitude* or habit is, Mauss elaborates, the product of socialization within bounded groups distinct from others. He writes:

These habits do not just vary with individuals and their imitations, they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions and prestiges. In them we should see the techniques and work of collective and individual practical reason rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties (1979 [1950]:73).

Implicit in these statements is an understanding of bodily actions as culturally conditioned. Bodies commit actions which are meaningful only within the social context they are enacted. Individuals acquire knowledge and techniques on how to behave through observation and instruction.

Mauss identifies two conditions of technique acquisition: tradition and effectiveness. By tradition, he refers specifically to the transmission of behavioral codes in the form of collective, interdependent social interaction. Mauss contends that,

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<sup>2</sup> While Mauss' essay was written in 1950, his simplistic dichotomy of western and non-western societies is noteworthy. His discussion of squatting neglects explication of the social values associated with or rather, dissociated from this action. The reader is left to her own devices as to the intrinsic and/or extrinsic assignation of value and function squatting may or may not have and whether these values fluctuate according to socioeconomic and gender differences within a "western" and "non-western" society.

In group life as a whole there is a kind of education of movements in close order. In every society, everyone knows and has to know and learn what he has to do in all conditions (1979 [1950]:75).

Thus, through self-awareness and introspection individuals use their bodies to conform to group rituals. These bodily acts in turn, communicate one's identity and legitimate one's membership to a social group, thus fulfilling Mauss' second criteria of effectiveness. The body's movements achieve an individual effectiveness in maintaining group expectations and codes. For Mauss the body is a means for agency. He writes,

The body is man's first and most natural instrument. Or more accurately, not to speak of instruments, man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is his body (1979 [1950]:75).

In this way individual actions and collective behavior work in an interdependent manner.

Mauss' discussion of the body invites problematization of the body in social discourse. By examining the body: its actions, representations and manipulations, social theorists begin to engage in cultural critique. From this theoretical framework, anthropologists of the body and medical anthropologists depart in an examination of illness, health and medical systems in hopes of gaining further insight into the body as a vehicle in the social production of knowledge.

### Mindful Bodies

In the latter part of the 1980's two important works emerged in the field of medical anthropology. The first is the ethnographic work by Emily Martin published in 1987 which examines the medicalization of reproduction in the United States. The second is the

article "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology" by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock published in the same year.

Martin's ethnography entitled, The Women in the Body, is a critical analysis of how the female body is represented and treated by the medical system in the context of reproduction. Martin examines women's perspectives on their own reproductive health in the areas of premenstrual syndrome, menstruation, child birth, and menopause and compares these to current biomedical knowledge of these processes.

Martin's contribution to the anthropology of the body is in exposing biomedicine's subjectification of the female body from which the female self is extricated. Martin invokes Foucault in his analysis of pain and control of the body<sup>3</sup> in her interpretation, explicating chronic fragmentation of the female body by a hegemonic medical system. However, departing from Foucault, Martin discusses the role of resistance in the voices of women she interviewed, claiming that women constantly reject and reformulate conceptions of female-ness in relationship to their gendered bodies.

In their seminal article Scheper-Hughes and Lock offer three perspectives from which the body may be viewed. These are defined as the individual body-self, the social body, and the body politic. Collapsing the mind into the body, Scheper-Hughes and Lock identify these three spheres as interdependent and representative of the deconstruction of western assumptions of the dichotomous self.

The first body, the "body-self," is described as the phenomenological lived experience of the individual. However, while claiming departure from traditional views of duality, this term is problematic in its inherently dichotomous construction. Rather, the hyphenated body-self reiterates dualistic thinking by begging the question of why is the "self" apart from the body, if it does not connote a separated entity? The confusion of the term, notwithstanding, Scheper-Hughes and Lock continue in their discussion to describe

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<sup>3</sup> See Discipline and Punish, 1979





the self as experienced only through the body, thus physical experience is conceptually inherent in any conceptions of identity and awareness.

The "social body" resonates of symbolic structuralist anthropology, such as the work of Mary Douglas and her study of the body as a template of natural symbols. Scheper-Hughes and Lock reintroduce the concept of the "social body" in the context of medical anthropology. Using the perspective of disease, the analogy is made that the disease and health of the individual body may be interpreted metaphorically as the disease and health of society at large. Disease is viewed as the bodily manifestations of social and cultural stress or imbalance.

Delineation of the "body politic" has been discussed in Martin's work and is influenced by Foucault. It is the view of the body under "surveillance and control." Foucault's analysis of the birth of the clinic as a site of control has been particularly seminal in the field of medical anthropology in its critique of clinical medicine and the subjectification of the ill. This approach to the study of the body has been significant in recent feminist writings. Paradoxically, the female body in western society has been the focus of critical discourse concerned with how female conceptions of "self" have been controlled by bodily images.<sup>4</sup> Scheper-Hughes and Lock use body politic to denote the collective body within a fabric of power and control.

### Body, Memory and Bodily Memory

In understanding the history of ideas which have developed in the anthropology of the body, the theoretical discussions led by medical anthropologists such as Martin, Scheper-Hughes, and Lock have significantly influenced others in approaching the body as a source of symbolic knowledge of social relations and culture. However, Mauss' discussion on the techniques of the body diverges slightly from these developments in

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<sup>4</sup> See Susan Bordo, 1988.

medical anthropology. As opposed to treating the body as socially constituted as an object of knowledge or discourse, Mauss shows that the body is culturally shaped in its actual practices and behavior. Thus, rather than a metaphor, the body and its practices are seen as lived culture through processes of incorporation and memory. Bourdieu (1990) elaborates on Mauss' discussion on habitude by identifying "doxa." He writes:

Doxa is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a habitus and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense. Enacted belief, instilled by the childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad, an automation that leads the mind unconsciously along with it and as a repository for the most precious values is the form par excellence of the blind or symbolic thought (1990:68).

Bourdieu echoes Mauss' critique of "natural" actions, identifying habitus as collective practical sense learned and then becoming automatic behavior.<sup>5</sup> Bourdieu identifies the role of memory and goes on to describe the relationship between preserved thought and physical action.

Every social order systematically takes advantage of the disposition of the body and language to function as depositories of deferred thoughts that can be triggered off at a distance in space and time by the simple effect of replacing the body in an overall posture which **recalls** the associated thoughts and feelings, in one of the inductive states of the body which, as actors know, give rise to states of mind (1990:69).

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<sup>5</sup> Edward Said (1990) explicates Bourdieu's usage of "habitus" by stating that it is the "coherent amalgam of practices linking habit with inhabitation" (1990: 359). "Inhabitation" is elaborated further by Said in his discussion of the experience and meaning of exile. Inhabitation in this case is with respect to the nation. He links individual habitus to collective habitus. He couches these practices in terms of nationalism by writing that, in time, successful nationalisms consign truth exclusively to themselves and relegate falsehood and inferiority to outsiders...just beyond the frontier between "us" and the "outsiders" is the perilous territory of not-belonging: this is to where in a primitive time peoples were banished, and where in the modern era immense aggregates of humanity loiter as refugees and displaced persons (1990:359).

Although Said directs his comments to the exclusion of individuals in the context of "exile," his comments are applicable to the position of unwanted long-term immigrants. Demarcating the borders of legitimacy, Said also speaks to the lack the inclusion of individuals in the age of increasing nationalism .

Dovetailing this discussion on habitus as memory is an explication of what Paul Connerton (1989) terms bodily memory. Extending on the view of the body as a template of personal history, the role of bodily memory is focused on as Maussian "technique" in the navigation of everyday life. Implicit in this framework is the dialectical relationship between past and present and the phenomenological repercussions on the body as well as the contextualization of the body in terms of time and space.

In his deceptively thin book, How Societies Remember (1989), Connerton offers a most comprehensive and theoretically rich discussion of "bodily memory." Echoing the paradigms discussed by Mauss and Bourdieu,<sup>6</sup> Connerton writes of "rules of behavior" as reproduced and remembered by individuals in the forms of "habit-memories" defined as habitually observed rules of decorum (1989:84). Through "habit-memories," social prestige and status is communicated via the execution of appropriate gestures, postures and other bodily actions. Acquiring "habit-memories" is a process of maintaining "proper decorum." Connerton writes:

Bodily memory is a term for learned behavior executed by the body. What is remembered is a set of rules for defining "proper behavior," the control of appetite in the most literal sense is part of a much wider process which will appear, depending upon our vantage point either as a structure of feeling or as a pattern of institutional control (1989: 83)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Connerton borrows the concept of "habitude" in describing memory which has been "sedimented" in the body. Using the same example of posture, Connerton chooses to illustrate his point by deconstructing styles of sitting, rather than Mauss' choice of squatting.

<sup>7</sup> Connerton's discussion on bodily memory is evoked by Kleinman and Kleinman (1994) in their study of illness narratives in China. Kleinman and Kleinman describe the phenomena of "sociosomatics" of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, defined as reactions to trauma experienced by individuals during this time period. This discussion is part of Arthur Kleinman's extensive research on neurasthenia, a common syndrome of chronic pain, sleeplessness, fatigue and dizziness. Kleinman and Kleinman report that patients' remembrance of bodily complaints broadened into more general stories of suffering that integrated memories of menace and loss with traumatic effects characterized by demoralization, fear, and desperation. Kleinman and Kleinman state that, "symptoms of social suffering and the transformation they undergo, are the culture forms of lived experience. They are lived memories. They bridge social institutions and the body-self as the transpersonal moral-somatic medium of local worlds" (Kleinman and Kleinman, 1994:716). For the Chinese patients Kleinman and Kleinman interviewed, neurasthenic complaints were the locally available vehicle of distress that offered a culturally salient common pathway for expression of their suffering. This leads Kleinman and Kleinman to conclude that "bodily complaints could also be interpreted as a form of resistance against local sources of oppressive control" (Kleinman and Kleinman, 1994: 716).

In contrast to Mauss and Bourdieu, Connerton elaborates his discussions of bodily memory to include mechanisms of "control." Addressing the question of how habit-memories are transferred between individuals, producing cultural phenomena, Connerton identifies "performance" as the method in retaining and communicating bodily memory.

He writes:

...it is through the act of performance that they are reminded of it. Bodily practices of a culturally specific kind entail a combination of cognitive and habit-memory. The appropriate performance of the movements contained in the repertoire of the group not only reminds the performers of systems of classification which the group holds to be important; it requires also the exercise habit-memory (1989: 88)

While it is not difficult to imagine that bodily actions are the products of behavior conditioned by the unique characteristics of particular groups in which individuals live, several questions do remain. The first is the quality and magnitude of social control which produces uniformity in physical action. Why are there recognizable cultural differences in the ways in which people crawl or walk, for example, when the goal is simply to go from points a to b? The second question is related to the first by asking what are the repercussions of not conforming to established rules of conduct? And, third, what occurs at the individual level when there are two codes for a certain action which are in direct conflict with one another? These questions ask how bodily memory interacts in a social arena in which different codes of behavior exist? If bodily conduct is representative of group membership and is produced through activation of memory of learned technique, how is this manifested in a minority population? These are questions central to phenomenological experiences of ethnicity and marginalization.

### **Betwixt and Between**

For immigrant populations, the concept of bodily memory is particularly relevant to the integration of dominant practices at both the levels of the individual and the ethnic community. Minority populations may be construed as bounded on some level, yet not impermeable to the behavioral expectations of the majority or dominant society in which they live. With time and exposure, behavioral changes occur in both the immigrant individual and to a slower extent the community in general.

These processes of behavioral change have been labeled by a variety of less than satisfying terms such as assimilation, acculturation and adjustment.<sup>8</sup> However objectionable these terms may be, social scientists must agree that environmental cues are internalized and reflected upon by individuals, provoking behavioral change. For immigrants this process is often a source of anxiety in which learning and practice of rules of decorum are motivated by the desire to "fit in."

In the narratives of elderly Korean immigrants, memories of the first years of living in Japan are characterized by high levels of stress and anxiety. Korean residents describe their difficulty in learning the Japanese language and customs and recall numerous incidents of embarrassment at their inability to hide their "foreign-ness." The memories of Korean residents may be characterized collectively by a deep sense of social awkwardness and stigmatization as this introduction to Japanese society was predominantly identified as the most difficult period of their lives.

#### **Recognition and Incorporation of Cultural Codes**

For immigrants, adjustment does not occur without first, observation of indigenous behavior and second, attempts to imitate. However, the gap between the first and second

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<sup>8</sup> The dissatisfaction of these terms stems from their politicized usage in which minority populations are believed to be absorbed by the dominant population, thereby, losing their distinctive cultural and historical character. These processual terms have waxed and waned in popularity and have become the lexicon of the heated tug-of-war between cultural pluralism and "melting pot" paradigms.

steps is often wide and at times, impossible to achieve. Connerton (1989) discusses this in terms of 'recognition' and 'incorporation.' He identifies the difference between being able to recognize a code and being able to incorporate it, writing that successful individuals achieving both recognition and incorporation "embody the socially legitimate body and so are able to impose the norms by which their own bodies are perceived and accepted by others" (Connerton, 1989:90). Breaking down the acts of incorporation even further, Connerton writes,

Incorporating practices depend for the particular mnemonic effect on two distinctive features: their mode of existence and their mode of acquisition. They do not exist 'objectively,' independently of their being performed. And they are acquired in such a way as not to require explicit reflection on their performance (Connerton, 1989: 102).

Thus, incorporated behavior becomes 'habit,' actions which are performed routinely and do not take up reflective thought. The discussion by Connerton by habit memory resonates of Mauss' analysis of human techniques. It offers a conceptual framework by which behavior is understood. Connerton writes,

...it is through the act of performance that they are reminded of it. Bodily practices of a culturally specific kind entail a combination of cognitive and habit memory. The appropriate performance of the movements contained in the repertoire of the group not only reminds the performers of systems of classification which the group hold to be important; it requires also the exercises of habit-memory (Connerton, 1989:88).

Using this framework, let us examine the interface between learned behavior of one's group of origin and new rules of decorum as presented by the host society after migration. In this type of analysis, habits as acquired during early socialization and retained in bodily memory are subjected to modification in a re-learning of rules in a new social environment.

Upon reflecting on their life stories, the majority of first generation elderly Korean residents described their first years living in Japan as their most difficult. Although their present lives in old age prove to be arduous and often lonely, narratives of life during the early years of migration are cited as the most emotionally taxing. This may be largely explained by the unique historical circumstances of their arrival. However, Japanese colonialism and war effort notwithstanding, Korean elderly cite anxiety and loneliness specifically due to what may be termed "immigrant's ignorance."

Immigrant's ignorance occurs because bodily memory is not encoded automatically and in the leap between recognition and incorporation, understanding and meaning are not synchronized in efforts at incorporation. For immigrants, these efforts are negotiated within existing habits of behavior. For these individuals, an additional perspective of emotional incorporation must be considered. Immigrants enter into a foreign environment where memory must be re-tooled and new meanings are assigned to bodily actions and appearance. A common sentiment among Korean immigrants to Japan was anxiety associated with the increasing need to look and act Japanese. This was particularly important for women. The presentation of one's body was a way in which to adjust to life in Japan. However, given the low status of Korean immigrants during the colonial period and the ambivalent feelings of most Koreans towards Japan, acceptance of Japanese society, as well as by Japanese society was and continues to be a problematic paradox.

### The Emperor's Clothes

After having several interview sessions with 76 year old widow, Soh Soong Nam, I asked her if she would show me some of her pictures from her albums. (I had made it a practice to ask all my informants to see their photos.) Soh Soong Nam was not eager to share these with me, but after several sessions, she surprised me one afternoon with a ready stack of albums full of yellowed black and whites I had not known existed. Her

oldest album contained pictures of she and her husband in Tokyo in 1938. There were no pictures from her early years in Korea. In one photo she and her husband were leaning against a railing with the background of Tokyo Bay accentuating their young bodies. She was wearing western clothes of a skirt and sweater and her husband was in pants and a collared shirt.

Soh Soong Nam narrated her photos by describing not only alienation from Japanese society, but also isolation from other Korean migrants. She recounts how she came to rely completely on her nuclear family. Her husband worked in the local steel factory and although she wanted to help him bring in income, he would not allow her to work. She recalled those days of staying inside their cramped one room apartment as some of the loneliest in her life.

I was afraid to go outside the first two years I lived in Japan. It was very difficult for me to adjust to life here. My biggest problem was that I did not know the language. I tried to learn at home with the materials that my husband would bring from his class at the factory, but it seemed impossible. I had hardly any contact with the outside world. I would go to the market for food, but I was afraid to speak to anyone because I knew they would know immediately I was Korean. I cried almost everyday. My husband was picking up the language much more quickly than me...I suppose he had to at the factory, but I felt like an alien. I did not have many Korean friends during that time either. It was too difficult to befriend other Koreans in those days. We were all so drained from just trying to survive here.

Turning the pages, I found pictures of Soh Soong Nam, still as a young woman in her twenties, dressed in a intricately designed *kimono* of bright yellow and pastel blue.

Remarking on how lovely she looked, Soh Soong Nam grunted, saying that she looked like a monkey. Taken aback, I asked her to explain:

"I don't know why my husband took a picture of me wearing this. I never wanted to wear *kimono*. I am sure I told him not to. Yes, you can see the expression on my face. I am not smiling. No, I was not happy then. I forced



myself to buy and wear *kimono*. It was very expensive for us to buy such a thing then. We were very poor, but I bought it because I wanted to stop being noticed when I walked down the street. Can you believe how foolish I was when I arrived here? I didn't know anything. I actually wore *hanbok*<sup>9</sup> outside. I learned quickly though. People would call out to me that I was a dirty Korean and to go back to my own country. My husband and I decided that I must start to look Japanese."

Soh Soong Nam recounts how she learned how to tie her *kimono* from observing other women wearing the traditional dress.<sup>10</sup> Soh Soong Nam explains she chose to wear this traditional dress as a way to expedite her acceptance into Japanese society. To be accepted was to become invisible which, paradoxically, Soh Soong Nam believed she could achieve by wearing clothes in which she felt like a "monkey."

"It is strange to see myself in *kimono*. I feel almost that it is someone else wearing these clothes, although I remember how I felt very vividly even though it has been so many years since that day. I was in a desperate state of mind then. I was tired and frustrated at my poor Japanese and at my Korean clothes. I thought that by wearing *kimono* that I would be treated like everyone else. But you know, I only wore that dress a few times after we took that picture. I didn't feel right. I didn't feel comfortable. It still makes me uncomfortable to see me in these clothes because, really, it doesn't fit."

Choosing to wear a *kimono* was a way for Soh Soong Nam to actively attempt to become part of the fabric of Japanese society. In the absence of language and knowledge of custom, the body was covered by a Japanese symbol, in order for the body to go unnoticed. This act does not constitute "bodily memory" or invocation of learned techniques as described by Connerton and Mauss, but rather, it was intended as a

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<sup>9</sup> *Hanbok* is literally translated as *han* meaning "Korean" and *bok* meaning "clothes." In this case, Soh Soong Nam is referring to traditional Korean dress for women which consists of a floor length, broad, skirt which begins at the upper chest and a very short jacket with long oval sleeves.

<sup>10</sup> However, during this time in the late 1930's, western clothing was very common and more popular among the younger generation in Tokyo. Although *kimono* was worn, it was mostly donned by older women.

temporary solution to the inability to incorporate identity recognized as different from one's own. As time elapses, however, immigrants are able to perform cultural behaviors with increasing facility and incorporation at some level is attained. This learning process is a function of time and discipline of the body.

### The Silence of the Urban Jungle

For Korean residents in Japan, the need to observe and mimic was often expressed as essential to live in Japanese society. It is, as Soh Soong Nam says, a way of surviving and in so doing, a matter of becoming invisible. Having recognized the codes of behavior, first generation Koreans were sensitive to their transgressions and the implications of these on sentiments of Japanese towards Koreans.

While riding the subway from her house in Arakawa, Kim Ho Jung and I took the train to a rummage sale sponsored by the Tokyo Korean Christian Church in Iidabashi. The train was not very crowded as we had missed the rush of students heading off to their Saturday morning classes. Across from the seats we occupied, two young women stood. They looked as if they were going out for a day of shopping and were in good spirits, laughing and teasing one another. They spoke fluent Korean and were either tourists or recent immigrants to Japan. In contrast to the relative quiet of the train car, the voices of the two women were quite loud, drawing not only our attention, but also that of others.

Kim Ho Jung began to frown, continuing an icy stare of the women. After two stops, the young women departed, noticeably decreasing the noise in the train car. Kim Ho Jung leaned over to me and said she did not understand why Koreans were so loud. I asked her to explain and she continued, saying:

Korean people are known for their loud voices, especially the younger ones. The Japanese are always saying that Koreans are rude and make a lot of noise. I hate to say that the Japanese are right in anything they say about Koreans, but it is hard to disagree when proof stands right in front of

you. That's partly why I did not like Korea...I told you I visited Seoul two years ago, didn't I?..It is so noisy there. People are rude and are not considerate of others around them. But that is Korea so it doesn't really matter, but here in Japan, people are expected to behave like the Japanese...you know, quiet. Those young girls ...everyone was looking at them and thinking, "those loud, rude Koreans." It is embarrassing.

For Kim Ho Jung, the young Korean girls should have been more aware of their surroundings and more considerate for others who were riding the train. Although she believed that such behavior is normative in Korea, in Japan, Koreans should be "quiet" and thus, polite. Like Soh Soong Nam, Kim Ho Jung advocates invisibility. To be invisible is, at some level, to be Japanese. This is achieved by sensitivity to one's environment and self-control. Kim Ho Jung's discomfort with the loud voices of the Korean girls is due to the implications she believes this behavior will have on how Koreans are viewed by Japanese. In this case, it is control of one's voice which is at stake. These sets of controls are the ways in which membership is attained and maintained. Membership in Japanese society requires suppression of behavior not characteristic of the group.

Control is cultivated by two processes which Connerton identifies as having interlocking levels. He writes:

There is the formation of a type of person whose control over its members is more stratified and centralized. At one level there is a particularly strong development of individual self-control. Rules of etiquette impose internalized restraints upon any indiscriminate display of feeling and teach attentiveness to the finer nuances of propriety and to the distinctions between public and private life. At another level there is a particularly marked development of social control. Rules of court society impose a well regulated social distance between classes of people who are distinguishable by publicly observable standards of refined behavior. The social control which is the prerogative of court society and the self-control which is the attainment of a civilized person are mutually defining (Connerton, 1989: 83-84 ).

Connerton focuses on social control exercised by different classes. However, his insights are applicable to the control evident between ethnic majority and minority groups as well. The interrelationship of these internal and external forces on the individual produces modes of behavior which conform to group expectations. For new members of a particular group, self-control may only emerge after comprehension of the new rules. The success of interlocking forces is dependent on attaining this recognition. The self-control exhibited in becoming a member of a particular society is one of incorporation. Successful incorporation of practice into the bodily memory defines "embodiment" (Stoller, 1994). However, in the case of immigrants, failure to recognize codes or to incorporate behavior may result latent self-control relative to social control, producing stress and anxiety.

#### Public vs. Private Behavior Modification

While reformation of bodily memory is analyzed thus far, as a significant vehicle by which immigrants transform behaviors to adjust to new social environments, not all new codes are adopted and not all old habits are discarded. Rather, bodily memory combines new codes with old as individuals negotiate a new social environment.

In understanding which behaviors do change one must consider the contextualization of behavior in public vs. private spheres as an important dichotomy. Much of the narrative indicates that being invisible is a measure of successful integration into Japanese society. Presumably, invisibility in this case means invisibility to Japanese people in the public arena. However, in the private realms of the home, family, and ethnic community, certain indigenous "habits" of the bodily memory continues to be reaffirmed in the performance of native cultural codes of behavior.

For Soh Soong Nam, the public sphere was manipulated by her wearing *kimono* to give the appearance of membership. It was an attempt to be accepted by others as Japanese in order to be included into a society from which she felt deeply ostracized. For

Kim Ho Jung the public space of the train car dictated the rules of decorum established by Japanese society as she has come to understand it. Kim Ho Jung identified behavior of making noise and drawing attention to oneself as "Korean," and suitable only in the context of Korea, what she, as a Korean, could identify as the private sphere. Kim Ho Jung's complaints are not so much against the intrinsic behavior of the Korean girls, but rather, how their behavior will be interpreted by Japanese riding the train which she fears will then be reflected back onto Korean residents like herself. Thus, the rules of decorum appear to have only been incorporated to the extent of practical sense, rather than a change in how Kim Ho Jung judges proper behavior in the abstract.

The distinction between public and private spheres of behavior is of particular importance in analyzing the ethnographic data presented in the beginning of this chapter. When Choi Hee Kyung states that she did not notice herself or her colleagues switching between the Korean and Japanese languages, this indicates that such behavior has been fully incorporated and therefore, does not beg conscious reflection on her part. However, the correlation between the proximity of the presumably Japanese waiters and waitresses and the use of Japanese language is behavior which draws upon this dichotomy. The presence of the Japanese waiter changed the "private" sphere of the table to the "public" realm of the restaurant and in so doing, changed the codes of behavior from that of using the private language of Korean to the acceptable public discourse of Japanese.

One cannot help but consider the resonance of colonial era rules prohibiting the use of Korean language in both Korea and, among Korean migrants, in Japan. Following this interpretation of current behaviors of language switching in public vs. private arenas of this age cohort, it would seem that "habitus" developed during this period of introduction to Japanese society lingers in current behavior in late life in the form of bodily memory.

### Traceless Incorporation and the Aging Body

Although the processes of recognition and incorporation of cultural codes are largely a conscious effort at some initial stage, complete incorporation is behavior executed automatically, without reflection. Thus, changes in the corpus of bodily memory often seem "traceless" from the perspectives of elderly immigrants. Traceless incorporation as, Connerton states, is when individuals are incapable of providing a means by which any evidence of a will to be remembered can be "left behind" (1989:102). Elderly, having added host behavior into personal habit are unable to identify moments of transformation.

Traceless incorporation was often evident in the change in taste for long term Korean residents of Japan. Food, an ever-present feature of most Korean social gatherings I have been privy to in both Japan and the United States, is often a medium by which social bonds are forged within the ethnic community. In interview data Korean food was used as a metaphor in describing feelings of ethnic identity. An illustration emerges in a visit with Cho Han Chul and his wife, an elderly Korean couple living in Tokyo.

#### Native Tongue

I met Cho Han Chul at his home in Arakawa for dinner. His wife was cooking a traditional Korean meal of *soon doobu jigae†*, a spicy soft tofu and seafood stew, *bulgogi†*, marinated, charbroiled slices of beef, and side dishes consisting of *kimchee†*, spicy, fermented cabbage, *shi-kimchee†*, marinated spinach, and *kim†*, seaweed toasted with sesame oil. Cho Han Chul was telling me about his trip to South Korea he had made in the previous year. He had not visited since migrating to Japan in 1938 and had been very anxious to see how "his country" had changed. However, his description of his trip was filled with remorse.

"I cannot recognize Korea anymore. It is completely different from when I was a little boy. The cities are very crowded and too busy. People are so concerned with money. I feel that there is no heart in people there. Everywhere I went

people wanted to sell me something. I couldn't stand it . It wasn't only Seoul, either. My hometown in Kyongsang-nam-do has also changed. There used to be only dirt roads leading to small houses. Now there are these tall high rises and shopping malls. I do not recognize it anymore. I felt like a complete stranger."

Kim Soo Jung, Cho Han Chul's wife, motions to us to begin eating at the small table in the tatami room where the food is overflowing. She says to me, "*Harabuji*, was just upset because he didn't like the food." To this Cho Han Chul smiled and said,

Yes, it is true. Korean food is too spicy there. It upset my stomach. There wasn't any flavor-just red pepper. I like the kind of Korean food she makes (nodding to his wife). I suppose it is not real Korean food and is probably much more bland than what they make in Korea But it is how I like Korean food. You probably will find this food too spicy but actually, it is much more mild than the Korean food they serve in Korea these days. I suppose after so many years in Japan, my tongue has changed (with a chuckle).

Characteristic of my many meals with Korean residents in Japan, there was the usual words of caution that the Korean food being served would be very spicy. These words of warning were offered even after countless explanations that I had eaten Korean food virtually everyday growing up in my Korean parents home in the United States and that the "extremely hot and spicy *kimchee*" was a staple of my childhood.<sup>11</sup>

Cho Han Chul's comment that his "tongue had changed" was a sentiment which I met with a high degree of frequency in talking with older Korean residents. Inevitably comments about Korean food would emerge in the context of discussions of ethnic

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<sup>11</sup> In truth, like many other Korean Americans with whom I have conferred, Korean food served in Korean restaurants in Japan is much more mild than the Korean cuisine served in the United States, which is more akin to the flavor of food served in Seoul. However, for elderly Korean residents in Japan, distance from the Korean peninsula seemed, in their minds, related to the level of authenticity of Korean cuisine which was measured in calibrations of spiciness. The understanding was that the United States, being on the other side of the Pacific must serve even less spicy Korean food than in Japan. An analogy could be made to the authenticity of Korean identity as well. However, this expansive discussion will be reserved fo another space.

identity. As a distinctive feature of Korean identity and culture, Korean food took on a significant role in the framing of one's position between Korean and Japanese culture. It was as if one's disposition towards Korean foods represented one's identity of being Korean in general.

In the narrative of Koo Young Ja, her inability to eat Korean food is the focus of her feelings of alienation from Korea. Having been hospitalized twice in the past year, Koo Young Ja is largely house bound, although she has hired a "helper" who cooks and cleans for her twice a week. One day during our weekly visits, Koo Young Ja surprised me with a small dish of *kimchee* which she added to our meal of *miso* soup and rice. She explained, saying,

"This is for you. I know you like it. I can't eat it myself because I have stomach problems from it. Whenever I eat *kimchee*, I become ill for a few days. I am not sure how this happened because when I was younger I ate it all the time, even when the children were growing up. But, my weak stomach can no longer handle it. This is another reason, you see, why I could never live in Korea. The food would kill me. You have some though. I bought this for you."

Most Korean churches I visited served a Korean meal to their congregation after services on a regular basis. At Tokyo Korean Church attended by Koo Young Ja, elderly Korean residents, predominantly women, gather together in a separate tatami room and are served by their middle aged "daughters" at low tables. These meals serve as a period of social interaction for these women to catch up with each other's news while partaking of Korean food. It is a time which Koo Young Ja looks forward to as she is able to communicate in Korean language with women she considers her "friends."

The meals served are generally modest, consisting of beef broth, rice and a few side dishes. *Kimchee* is always present at these meals. On the numerous occasions I joined the *halmoni's*, I observed Koo Young Ja as well as several other *halmoni's* eat *kimchee*



, despite their complaints that it is bad for their health. I asked Koo Young Ja about this on one of my visits. She explained her behavior in this way:

I eat *kimchee* at church because all the *halmoni's* keep telling me how delicious it is. They say, "The *kimchee* is so fresh and flavorful" and they urge me to have a little. I suppose I couldn't resist, even though I know my stomach will feel sick afterwards. In fact, I didn't recover until yesterday from last Sunday's lunch.

The focus of Korean food, specifically, *kimchee*, deserves some contextualization as it is not a benign cultural category in Japanese society. Rather, in much of the narrative recounting incidents and remarks of discrimination, Korean residents are denigrated for their smell of "garlic," a principle ingredient in Korean cooking and present in relatively large quantities in *kimchee*.<sup>12</sup> I asked Koo Young Ja when her eating habits changed, but she could not remember. This was characteristic of most elderly Koreans who experienced "changing tongues." The point of transformation is largely "traceless." A changing tongue among many first generation, elderly Korean residents may be a metaphor of Japanization or it may be a coping strategy taken root against social attitudes towards Korean residents in Japanese society.

### Dissonance in Identity

Having arrived in Japan at an early adult age, current Korean elderly were forced to negotiate change of their bodily memory to incorporate new rules of decorum. With age and repeated performance of new practices, these performances become habits. Changes in habitus as conditioned by one's native culture to incorporate new rules of the host society is motivated by "unease," according to Connerton. He defines unease as being a

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<sup>12</sup> Derogatory comments regarding the eating of *kimchee* by Japanese towards Koreans appears to be a dated phenomena of which elderly Korean residents may be more sensitive. In most recent years, Korean cuisine has become popularized along with other non-Japanese cooking and Korean restaurants or *yaki-niku* houses (literally translated in Japanese as "fried beef") are increasingly common in commercial areas of Tokyo. It should also be noted that *kimchee* or the Japanese name, *kimuchee*, is readily sold in most Japanese grocers.

continual feeling of a gap between the socially legitimate body and the body which one has and is. Unable to incarnate an acknowledged model, one tries vainly to compensate for this inability through the proliferation of the signs of bodily control. This is why the petit-bourgeois experience of the world is characterized by timidity and unease: the unease of those who feel their bodies betray them and who regard their bodies, as it were, from the outside and through the appraising eyes of others, surveying and correcting their practice (Connerton, 1989:90-91).

For elderly Korean residents, the need to incorporate Japanese behavioral norms was compelled by the gaze (and often the very real threat) of Japanese society. Under colonial rule, the superior-inferior relationship was invoked by colonial power and colonized labor. For Korean migrants to Japan the option of "becoming" Japanese at least to the point of "invisibility" was believed to exist. This was pursued with a change in bodily memory to behavior recognized as the norm in Japanese society. Connerton further explains the mechanism:

...it is a habitual experience of the body as a condition of unease, a perpetual source of awkwardness, as the all too tangible occasion for experiencing a fissure between the body one might wish to have and the body one sees in the mirror: a fissure of which one is being perpetually reminded both by the reactions of others and by the process of self-monitoring by which they notice and try to rectify the gap between the socially legitimate body and the body one has (Connerton, 1989: 91).

However, what Connerton takes for granted in his conceptualization of bodily memory is the resolution of "unease" with incorporation of behavior. For long term elderly Korean residents, the unease expressed in unresolved identity of not being Korean nor being Japanese resonates in narratives on continuing feelings of disenfranchisement from both Korea and Japan. Soh Soong Nam, a widow for the twenty three years, speaks of being betwixt and between.

I have visited Korea a few times. It is funny but Korean people in Korea think that I am Japanese. This really shocked me at first. Clerks would ask me if I needed help in Japanese and I would have to tell them that I am Korean. This was a little disturbing to me and I would ask them why they thought I was Japanese and they would say it was because of my clothes and the way I acted. I suppose it is because I have spent most of my life in Japan that I have changed. But, in Japan I am treated like a Korean. So, I am stuck in the middle, some where in middle of the ocean between these two places.

This liminal state of ethnic identity may be explained in several ways. The most evident is that behavioral incorporation has not yet, fully been achieved and thus, the "gap between the socially legitimate body and the body which one has and is" persists, maintaining a phenomenological experience of "other." Another perspective is that "incorporation" is not achieved. Rather, new cultural codes of behavior are recognized and imitated in public spheres only, whereas native behavior is maintained in private spheres. Thus, rather than becoming "habitus," integration can only be partial. The dichotomy between public and private behavior recreates the boundaries between majority/minority, Japanese/Korean and national/foreigner. However, importantly, these boundaries of behavior are created by both Japanese social attitudes towards minority groups and are reproduced by ethnic communities. The desire of "invisibility" by Korean residents reflects the quality of integration fostered in Japanese society and is integral to dissonance felt by elderly Korean residents in their identity.

However, in addition to this is a dissonance felt by Korean residents towards their own bodies and the changes which have occurred in their bodily memory as they have aged in Japanese society. As a result of "recognition" and "incorporation" of Japanese cultural codes and behavior, elderly Korean residents recognize the process of Japanization which have occurred on their bodies. The changing of one's tongue, the weakening of one's stomach and the silencing of one's voice are all transformations which are not only

identified in the narratives of Korean residents, but identified in the context of their identity as a minority member of Japanese society and an ex-patriot of Korea.

While changes in the bodily memory were motivated by deeply felt "unease" in the early period of migration to Japan, "unease" continues into late life resulting not from "a fissure between the body one might wish to have and the body one sees in the mirror" but stemming from the cracks in the mirror in which the image of self is one of fragmentation.

## NATIONALISM AND MEANINGS OF HOMELAND

### *Samsu Kapsan*<sup>1</sup>

*What has brought me to Samsu Kapsan?  
Here, the wild peaks,  
water tumbling down, the steeps piled up!  
Alas, what place is this Samsu Kapsan?*

*Longing for my home,  
I cannot go back.  
Samsu Kapsan is so far, so far!  
That ancient road to exile is here!*

*What place is Samsu Kapsan?  
I came here, but cannot go.  
There is no way back. If only  
I were a bird I could get free!*

*I cannot go, cannot go  
back to the home where my love stays.  
To come or to go-the idea mocks me!  
Alas, Samsu Kapsan imprisons me!*

*I long for home, but Samsu Kapsan  
imprisons me.  
No way back. For this body  
from Samsu Kapsan there is not escape.*

*-Kim Sowol*

The following chapter addresses the issue of nationalism as it has emerged for elderly Korean residents in Japan. Of particular importance is the legacy of colonialism and the division of the Korean peninsula as a result of the Korean War and their influence on images of homeland for this population in diaspora. This discussion focuses on questions such as how actions, emotions and beliefs are forged into conceptions of nationalism?; how nationalism transcends national borders to emerge in overseas citizens?; and how the

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<sup>1</sup> This poem by Kim Sowol (1902-1934) was published in 1935 one year after his suicide in his native town of Namsi. The poem is translated by David R. McCann.

historical and social construction of ethnicity in Japanese society contribute to national affiliations with North and South Korea?

In understanding the relationship between identity and nationality for first generation elderly Koreans who migrated to Japan during Japanese colonialism, it is important to recall that this population emigrated from an undivided Korean peninsula. After civil war broke out, Korean laborers remaining in Japan were faced with a unique choice of claiming allegiance either to the North or South. As noted, the fact that over 90% of the Korean migrant labor force came from southern provinces of Korea was not reflected in the division of the Korean community in Japan. Familial origins was not the deciding factor in the over half who elected North Korean citizenship shortly after the end of the Korean War. Although the massive repatriation campaigns of the 1950's and 1960's have contributed to a higher percentage of South Korean residents than North Korean, the presence of North Koreans in Japan has, and continues to influence the portrayal of Korean ethnicity in Japanese society and abroad.

The media in Japan and South Korea and, in recent years, the United States have portrayed Korean residents in Japan as delinquent and dangerous, reporting ties to the *yakuza*\*, or Japanese organized crime, and involvement in illicit business activities. A highly publicized scandal in 1989 involving Korean owned *pachinko* \*<sup>2</sup> parlors reaffirmed the most popular current image of Korean residents in Japan. A media exposition of the alleged funneling of profits from Korean owned pachinko businesses to North Korea helped to popularize the view of Korean residents as constituting a significant overseas financial base for the North Korean government placing Korean residents under increasing scrutiny by the Japanese government. The presence of the North Korean organization,

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<sup>2</sup> *Pachinko* is similar to a pinball arcade game in which players buy silver balls which fall down a maze and into slots. The object is to have balls fall into certain spaces; a matter of luck rather than skill. Pachinko parlors are found throughout Japan and have mesmerized millions of Japanese players.

*Chosen Soren* , and its South Korean counterpart, *Mindan* , have created Japan's own 38th parallel on the Japanese isles, as both have aggressively represented their home countries.

For Koreans in Japan, issues of nationalism, ethnicity and identity remain intertwined, indistinguishable from one another. Structuring this network of relations is the spatial configuration of a homeland out of reach, and a host society in Japan into which absorption occurs only at high personal cost. These factors collude in the maintenance of the liminal cage of diaspora identity. These components, separate, yet contingent on one another, reveal sources of identity which diverge from one another, depending on from which perspective one examines this complex. In order to understand Korean ethnicity in Japanese society and the role of the Korean peninsula as homeland, it is imperative to examine both "push" and "pull" factors in the emergence of nationalism for Korean residents in Japan.

This chapter examines nationalist sentiment among first generation elderly Koreans and argues that for both North and South Korean residents, the Korean peninsula as "homeland" anchors personal identity. Although the majority of this aged population migrated from Korea in early adulthood, the conceptual idea of the Korean homeland figures significantly in memories throughout the life course and have contributed to the imagining of an imminent "homecoming" which is discussed in light of *zainichi* memory of Japanese colonialism and its role in reaction to and resistance against a legacy of prejudicial treatment.

### **Nationalism Divided**

As described earlier in this dissertation, mirroring the 38th parallel division of the Korean peninsula, the Korean resident population in Japan is distinguished by North and South Korean factionalism, represented respectively by *Chosen Soren* and *Mindan* organizations. Affiliation to either of these national coalitions is packaged with a series of

assumptions on national loyalty, ideological beliefs and political stance. In rather simplistic terms, national identity signaled by citizenship is often presumed to reflect the political beliefs of Korean residents with respect to the national agendas of the North or South. This conflation of citizenship, nation, and identity has rendered the Korean "problem" in Japan into a facile transference of homeland politics which ignores the spatial and temporal characteristics constituting an ever-changing diaspora identity.

As alluded to previously, Koreans in Japan have recently received notoriety in both the United States and in Japan for their alleged financial support of the toppling North Korean government.<sup>3</sup> Beyond ignoring the more sizable South Korean citizens in Japan, the popularized view of Korean residents as North Korean agents ignores the complex political, economic and psychological factors contributing to these offers of aid to North Korea. Instead of deeming the actions cavalierly as signs of North Korean nationalism, it is essential to examine the relationship of Japan, North Korea and South Korea with respect to the historical context of Korean residents now living in Japan and to recognize the heterogeneity inherent in the national affiliations forged under the guise of nationalism. It is imperative to discuss the role of *Chosen Soren* and *Mindan* to understand the various national discourses in Japan among Korean residents.

In identifying the guiding ideology of *Chosen Soren*, the organization has defined itself as:

An overseas organization of the citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which represents the will and interest of the 700,000 Koreans in Japan. It holds the ideology of President Kim Il Sung as the sole leading ideology. *Chongryun*'s task is to make all its officials and Koreans in Japan into genuine revolutionaries and passionate patriots who would be eternally faithful to the Great Leader Kim Il Sung and Dear Leader Kim Jong Il<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See "Koreans in Japan Fund Big Birthday for Kim Il Sung," Washington Times 2/15/92, "North Koreans in Japan are seen as cash source for nuclear arms," New York Times 11/1/93, and "Crisis in Korea Pushes Japan to Review Role," Wall Street Journal, 3/23/94 to name a few newspaper articles.

<sup>4</sup> From the Dictionary of Categories of Kim Il Sung Thought as cited by Ryang (1992: 106).



In addition to claiming to represent all Korean residents in Japan, *Chosen Soren* sees its role as training Korean residents to be good North Koreans, measured in loyalty to the now late Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il <sup>5</sup>. The main focus of *Chosen Soren*'s political agenda has been the reunification of the Korean peninsula into one nation. Viewing Japan as a temporary resting place, *Chosen Soren* contends that only through the inevitable unification of the two Koreas will Korean residents in Japan be able to return to the "fatherland". This central tenet of *Chosen Soren* ideology dovetails with the organization's fervent resistance against assimilation policies in Japan, a position resonant of colonial era resolve against Japanese policies of subjugation.

As opposed to *Chosen Soren*'s rather ambivalent participation in the various *zainichi* movements against discriminatory practices in Japanese society, *Mindan* has been instrumental in several demonstrations protesting exclusionary policies against foreigners, including the anti-fingerprinting campaign and the current effort to gain the right to vote. Although accused by *Chosen Soren* of collaborating with Japanese policies of assimilation, *Mindan* has demanded that the Japanese government not only recognize the Korean presence in Japanese society, but to afford respect for Korean cultural traditions. In one such movement, collaborating with Korean resident religious organizations, *Mindan* was supportive of campaigns to force Japanese media to correctly pronounce Korean names on television broadcasts. Angry that Japan's national television station, NHK, did not use the Korean reading of his name written in Chinese characters <sup>6</sup>, a South

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<sup>5</sup> From her work among North Korean youth in Japan, Sonia Ryang argues for radicalization of Althusser's distinction between ideology in general and particular ideologies by emphasizing that "underprivileged individuals" do consciously and unconsciously rationalize their positions and that the state "may fail to incorporate all of the population under its ISA's (Ideological State Apparatuses) and may consequently, tolerate the existence of heterogeneous beliefs or even an opposing belief as in many cases including that of the Japanese government and Chongryun Koreans."

<sup>6</sup> Both the Korean and Japanese languages incorporate Chinese characters, particularly in proper names. However, the languages often use different readings of the same character. In the case of reading names, Japanese news reporters would read characters according to Japanese readings instead of Korean. These divergence will often distort their pronunciations.

Korean resident pastor sued NHK, for the right to "possess one's own culture." Although the Kita-Kyushu District Court ruled in favor of the television station, NHK began reading all foreigners' names in the ways they are read in their home countries.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to these internal efforts to change policy, *Chosen Soren* maintains that gains in access to Japanese rights are dubious and dangerous to the lives of Koreans in Japan as it renders their identity more ambiguous. Disdain towards such movements is couched in the ever-present rhetoric against what is perceived as oppressive Japanese assimilation measures. This antagonism toward Japan and the prospect of Japanese citizenship as Ryang (1992) states, is fundamental to the identity of *Chosen Soren* as it sustains its existence.

Constant reminders of Japanese repression thus constitute part of the external structure which *Chongryun* requires for its survival. Here lies part of the answer as to why *Chongryun*, although never overtly confronting the Japanese government, never ceases to maintain a carefully guarded distance from it either, let alone entering a friendly and exclusionary policies of Japan...*Chongryun* would lose its raison d'etre (1992: 111-112).

The implication of this argument is that if prejudicial treatment in Japan abated, Korean residents would withdraw their ideological affiliation to North Korea and submerge themselves into Japanese society. While this assumption may be more readily accepted by younger generations of Korean residents, it is a difficult one for first generation elderly Koreans for whom national ties to the "fatherland" are not necessarily derived purely on the basis of Japanese exclusion. For first generation Korean residents in Japan, it is argued that affinity with the homeland is forged by both the inability to assume a suitable niche in Japanese society due to structural forms of discrimination, and the maintainance of the memory of a legacy of resistance against Japanese colonialism in its subversive attempts in

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<sup>7</sup> Mainichi Shinbum 10/22/76.

colonial assimilation policies, contribute to an interpretation of their experiences in Japanese society which offers continuity of their sense of membership with respect to both their country of origin and Japan.

### **The Death of a Hero**

One day while visiting with Choi Young Mi and her grandson, Kim Jin Ho, in Shinjuku ward, Choi-*halmoni* brought over a clipping from the April 1994 edition of "*Chosen Zashin*," a North Korean news magazine. The feature article reported a celebration of the alleged discovery of the burial of *Tangun*, the mythical forefather of the Korean race. The burial was allegedly discovered outside of Pyongyang in North Korea. The article was flagged by several pictures of a deep, wide grave surrounded by several smiling Korean men leaning on shovels. Pointing to the pictures, Choi repeatedly said that the burial was authentic and that when the countries were reunified, I, too, could go see it.

The legend of *Tangun*, literally translated as "King of *Tan*", has it that this royal figure was the first king of the Korean people. Borne of a deity of the heavens and a female bear, *Tangun* spawned the beginnings of the Korean kingdom 4,500 years ago. The story is treated like most cultural folktales, explaining origins of a particular group, however, the myth has played a significant role for the North Korean government by claiming that the Great Leader, Kim Il Sung, was a direct descendent of the legendary forefather.

In an effort to persuade me of the burial's authenticity, Choi-*halmoni* volunteered that there had been many visitors to the burial site; people who were willing to attest to its existence. In a tone which intimated that he and his grandmother had traversed this topic before, Kim interjected that the magazine was merely a propaganda piece and that *Tangun* was a mythological figure; not real. He chastised his grandmother for believing the North Korean government, by rhetorically asking:

*Tangun* was a mythological figure; not real. He chastised his grandmother for believing the North Korean government, by rhetorically asking:

"How can grandmother believe the North? How can grandmother praise a leader who spends more money on building monuments of himself while his country starves? (Picking up the magazine clipping). Look at this burial. It is brand new with its expensive tombstone and plaques-it doesn't seem thousands of years old. It is only another way of celebrating Kim Il Sung. Grandmother criticizes the South, but at least there people eat three meals a day and not made to worship the man who keeps their stomachs empty!"

Angrily, Choi-*halmoni* retorts:

"What kind of talk is that? You speak from ignorance. The young know nothing of history. Our Great Leader will be the one who will save Korea. The South is all corrupt. There is nothing but greed now. First the Japanese occupied our country and just when we were able to get them out, the Americans came. Now the South are puppets for the American government. You have been too influenced by Japanese society and do not understand the reality of our situation."

Although Kim looked displeased with his grandmother's response, he gave a small chuckle, telling her not to get too excited because it would be bad for her health. Choi-*halmoni* waved her hand at him, telling him that if he did not to say ridiculous statements, there would be no need for excitement.

Like the majority of her cohort, Choi-*halmoni* had originated from the southern region of the peninsula, yet in 1955 she and her husband selected North Korean citizenship. Although she had been an active member of the local chapter of *Chosen Soren* throughout most of her life, she had dramatically decreased her involvement in the past ten years due to her failing health. However, she maintained many ties with friends within the organization and subscribed to *Choson Ilbo*, the organization's daily newspaper. On several occasions Choi-*halmoni* had talked to me about her faith in Kim Il Sung. She had

described him as a great revolutionary who had fought bravely against Japan during colonialism. With overwhelming enthusiasm, she said that she anticipated the day that Kim would reunite the two countries, a division which she felt was the cruelest legacy of the Japanese government. To emphasize her point, she said that the 38th parallel was as if someone had cut through her torso, splitting herself in half. Only after reunification, *Choi-halmoni* said she felt she could return to her country.

"You do not understand how us old people feel. You were born in America, so you can not imagine how our hearts are uneasy. Can you imagine two countries separated by a line in the ground? We both speak Korean, eat Korean food, sing Korean songs-why should we be divided? The Americans and Japanese are the ones who did this to our country. Until it is whole again, I can not return. I am waiting for our "Great Leader" to make our Korea one and then, I will be able to go home."

Although all three of *Choi-halmoni*'s children attended chosen *gakko* at either the elementary or middle school levels, none of her four grandchildren had. In fact, her grandson, Kim, had joined two of his cousins in switching his citizenship from the North to the South. He had majored in business at Meiji Gakuin University and had secured a job working for a small Japanese firm specializing in computer software, a rare accomplishment among Korean residents and one which *Choi-halmoni* had mentioned often with pride. His company had recently offered him a temporary position at a branch company in California which spurred his decision to exchange his North Korean citizenship for that of the U.S. recognized South in order to make the trip. He now spent most of his free time practicing English conversation with a tutor he had hired in preparation for his transfer.

When asked whether she was bothered by her grandson's decision to change his citizenship, *Choi-halmoni* shrugged, stating that younger generations did not have the experiences of the older Korean residents. Having fulfilled her job raising her own

children, she said that the actions of her grandchildren were her daughters' responsibilities. However, in a sardonic tone, she did express concern that citizenship had been reduced to a practical matter of obtaining visas for business trips and vacations to America and Europe, rather than a symbol of national loyalty and faith. For herself, she believed she would never exchange her nationality.

Nationality and sentiments of loyalty merge in the narrative of Cho Young Jin, a 75 year old North Korean citizen who migrated to Japan from Kyongsangbuk-do in 1944. A quiet, literate man who lived with his eldest daughter and her family in Arakawa ward, *Cho-harabuji* spoke with much enthusiasm in January 1994, six months prior to death of Kim Il Sung, of his faith in the North Korean leader and his belief in the eventual reunification of the Korean peninsula.

"I am getting older but I feel confident that in the near future, our Great Leader will unite the North and South and our country will once again be restored. It is then that we will be saved. We are not concerned with life in Japan because we are merely travelers. Japan will continue to treat us poorly, but in the end this will not matter. I am waiting for Korea's reunification when we will be able to leave this enemy country and return to our homeland. For me, Japan has always been a temporary resting place."

Although his daughter had also attended *Chosen gakko* through high school, her husband was a second generation South Korean resident of Japan. Neither one engaged in political work for either *Chosen Soren* or *Mindan*. *Cho-harabuji*'s daughter explained that her father had witnessed his brother's death during a riot after the closing of a Korean high school by the Japanese resident government in his hometown in colonized Korea. At the age of eighteen he migrated to Japan after being forcibly recruited to work in Mitsubishi Steel Company shortly after the Japanese invasion of China. He married her mother who was born in Tokyo. However, in 1956 her mother died giving birth to their third child after which *Cho-harabuji* had never remarried.

Politically, *Cho-harabuji* had always been active in underground campaigns against the Japanese government during colonization and participated in meetings of the Japanese Communist Party. At the end of the War, he became involved in *Chosen Soren* and although a hiatus after the death of his wife, he continued to volunteer at a branch office. His daughter said that although she, personally, did not have high expectations of Kim Il Sung and his plans for reunification, she recognized the importance "this type of thinking" played in her father's life. Because of his exemplary service to *Chosen Soren*, *Cho-harabuji* had been chosen to visit North Korea eleven years ago. Although the trip was only four days long, he recalls the beauty of North Korea frequently describing the beauty of the landscape and the "purity" of the North Korean people. He remembers one episode during his trip in this way:

"A group of us had decided to take a hike in the mountains near Pyongyang one day. It was very peaceful, walking among all the trees. We had never seen such beautiful land, untouched, pure. We decided to stop for a smoke when we reached a cluster of boulders. When we finished, we threw the butts on the rocks. We had noticed a couple of kids watching us from among the trees. I suppose they were playing up there. Anyway, one of the boys ran over to our butts. We were laughing because we thought he wanted to get a last smoke off of them. But, then we realized that he was gathering them up to in a small plastic bag to throw away later. From that point, I began to understand how good the education of our children is in North Korea."

The following summer, amidst growing international concern over nuclear reactors in North Korea, the North Korean government announced that Kim Il Sung had died on July 8, 1994 of a heart attack. Shortly after this event, I met with *Cho-harabuji* again and spoke with him about his feelings on the political changes in North Korea. With the specific mention of Kim Il Sung, *Cho-harabuji* became silent and his eyes began to tear. After a few moments, he spoke:

come to no good. We must wait and see. I am unsure what will happen in Korea. I am unsure what will happen to me."

A discussion one month later with Cho-*harabuji*'s daughter revealed that since Kim Il Sung's death, her father had fallen into a deep state of sadness. She was increasingly concerned that his appetite had virtually disappeared and that he had stopped reading the daily *Choson Ilbo* and visiting friends. He spent most of his days sleeping or sitting quietly, staring out the window. She was frightened that his interest in his own grandchildren had dissipated as he no longer lectured them on the dangers of becoming like the Japanese. Although she had asked her father repeatedly to visit the doctor to check on his diabetes and high blood pressure, he refused.

#### Messianism and Immortality

The death of Kim Il Sung only reaffirmed the "Great Leader's" significance in the lives of North Korean citizens in Japan, particularly the elderly first generation. Beyond invocations of North Korean nationalist rhetoric, Kim Il Sung was and continues to be a man worshipped, a symbol of revolutionary bravery against Japanese colonialism and resistance against Japanese imperialism. In a sense, he was the great memory keeper of Japanese aggression and subjugation of the Korean people. Kim, through the nationalist campaign for reunification, maintained faith and hope for a new Korea which would reconcile the spatial dissonance of the Korean population, both on the peninsula and overseas in Japan. For migrant Korean laborers now in their seventies and eighties, North Korean nationalism as embodied by Kim Il Sung addressed their experiences in diaspora and the desire for reconciliation with their collective homeland.

An examination of messianism as a social phenomenon may be well served in understanding the role of Kim Il Sung in North Korean nationalism among first generation elderly Korean residents in Japan. In a study of messianic characteristics observed in Israel



An examination of messianism as a social phenomenon may be well served in understanding the role of Kim Il Sung in North Korean nationalism among first generation elderly Korean residents in Japan. In a study of messianic characteristics observed in Israel between 1977-1983 <sup>8</sup>, Levy (1990) analyzes the background and the political and social implications of hero worship. In his study, Levy explains that messianism is postulated as a universal phenomenon expressing the all too prevailing human need for omnipotence and immortality effected through identification with the mythic figure of the hero.

The reincarnation of *Tangun* with the alleged discovery of the forefather's remains in North Korea constructs a verifying narrative of "race" in an increasingly globalized and unrecognizable modern scape where issues of "origins" has become subverted. The myth serves to offer an argument of the distinctiveness of the Korean people as pure with traceable lineage. Not to be mistaken as a literal explanation of origins <sup>9</sup>, it serves as a symbol of tradition and culture intact before the intervention of the Japanese on the peninsula thus, using claims of history as legitimizing force. It is a vehicle by which to undermine the importance of the events of the 21st century and reclaim ancient ancestry and linking it with the "Great Leader". Kim Il Sung is the hero combined with the charismatic leader; an individual by virtue of his special qualities is bestowed supreme authority. Jung describes the nature of the "hero" as "human but raised to the limit of the supernatural"; to the "semi-divine" <sup>10</sup>. By resurrecting *Tangun*, Kim Il Sung's claim of direct ancestry to the divine forefather of the Korean people raises his own status and right to mythic proportions.

The zeal with which faith has been put in the Great Leader is attested to by the formidable tenure of the uninterrupted reign of Kim Il Sung as well as the trickle of reports from North Korea where the wearing of buttons with Kim Il Sung's portrait is considered

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<sup>8</sup> Levy (1990) discusses hero worship with respect to Menachem Begin and nationalism in Israel.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that there are small factions which worship *Tangun* as the father of the Korean race. These groups are called *Tangun Gyo*.

<sup>10</sup> Cited by Levy (1990:189) from Jung's *Psyche and Symbol*.

an honor. However, while the emergence of the phenomenon of hero worship is more easily understood within the context of the hermit nation of North Korea, its existence among Korean residents in the late capitalistic society of Japan is more problematic. The question remains as to why such loyalty, particularly among older generations, remains steadfast and what does this reveal of the identity of this aged diasporic population with respect to this brand of nationalism?

According to the analysis of Levy, messianism emerges as a result of a deculturation process in which a particular cultural system (Judaism, in his research) seems to dilute itself and a search for a group-self ensues on a socio-cultural level. He contends that the prevalence of messianism as a social anomaly is presented here as deriving from a break in the continuity of vita, nourishing symbols of cultural tradition. This process is best understood by Lifton's term, "psychohistorical dislocation", <sup>11</sup> which refers to a period in which traumatic events disrupt an established system or understanding of cultural values. <sup>12</sup> In the case of Korean residents in Japan, the period of Japanese colonialism and massive migration to Japanese labor markets serve as traumatic events which resulted in a re-negotiation of national and cultural identity. The psychohistorical model incorporates not only the temporal and spatial dislocation of Koreans residents which resulted in their living away from the homeland, but also the emotional dislocation of migrants who attach their identity to a homeland to which they will never return.

With regard to Korean residents, Scheff's (1992) discussion of ethnonationalism offers an insight in his distinction between two kinds of attachment: love and infatuation. According to Scheff, on the one hand, infatuation rejects real knowledge of the loved object, becoming an attachment based on an idealization. However, on the other hand, love requires actual knowledge of good and bad traits through experience. For North Korean residents, the indefinite status of being away from the cherished homeland breeds

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<sup>11</sup> Levy (1990: 200-205).

<sup>12</sup> See Markusen's (1993) study of Genocide in Cambodia for further discussion of Lifton's model.

infatuation rather than love: an inability and lack of real desire to see North Korea in terms other than eventual paradise. The spatial divide allows the maintenance of an idea of returning to a unified Korean peninsula without having to reconcile actual knowledge of the failures of the North Korean government.

It is not difficult to understand the appeal of the ideological rhetoric of the most valorized resistor of Japanese colonialism; one who maintained the memory of colonial suffering when the rest of the world had rather forget. Kim Il Sung and his crusade against Japanese imperialism offers affirmation of the suffering of first generation Korean residents in the forms of national membership as opposed to perpetual liminality; as well as the fantasy of an eventual homecoming. In this sense, messianism spawns from a craving for the historic and mythological golden-age from which the fragmented diaspora seeks to recover a collective indigenous identity.

The "story of nationalism" as constructed by *Choi-halmoni* and *Cho-harabuji* is one which has been incorporated into their interpretations of their positions as overseas patriots. The project of reunification lends itself to elderly North Koreans who, by claiming Japan merely as a temporary "resting place," are able to maintain a critical posture towards Japanese society by embracing the anti-Japanese rhetoric of the North Korean regime. The reunification theme in North Korean nationalist rhetoric also suspends the question of repatriation for Korean residents by establishing their important collaborative role outside of the homeland. Thus, the possibility of a homecoming is contingent on the reconciliation of the nation as a whole, deferring serious consideration of the realities of an ultimate return.

It is not surprising that the reaction of elderly North Korean residents to the death of Kim Il Sung has been one of tremendous sadness and insecurity. As the fulcrum of North Korean nationalism, Kim's demise has been feared by North Korean residents in Japan on both the practical level of the administration of North Korean organizations such as schools

and banks, and on an ideological level of signaling the end of a mythological era after which the realities of life in North Korea may become painfully clear. For many elderly North Korean residents, Kim's death, more than any other political event has produced a sense of homelessness.

### **The Homecoming: Repatriation in Death**

In contrast to North Korean residents whose country does not have diplomatic relations with Japan, South Korean residents are eligible for visas to travel to and from South Korea and Japan<sup>13</sup>. However, for many elderly Korean residents, as discussed in previous chapters, living in South Korea is not a viable option due to the lack of familial networks and feelings of cultural discontinuity. Unlike the ideology of the North, *Mindan* has not concentrated wholly on the reunification project, but has diffused its homeland politics with campaigns to change Japanese treatment of Korean residents. A merging of these concerns has occurred recently in the issue of "comfort women" who were conscripted by the Japanese government to perform sexual services to Japanese military personnel. This issue has also resulted in a collaborative effort between feminist Korean groups in both South Korea and Japan to hold the Japanese government accountable for these violations of human rights and to obtain compensation for surviving women who are currently in their seventies, eighties and nineties. This issue has illuminated much of the convolution between South Korea and Korean resident groups in Japan, manifesting itself

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<sup>13</sup> Both the South Korean and Japanese government have used the issuance of travel visas as punitive measures against Korean residents who were either believed to be involved in anti-government campaigns. For example, during Park Chung Hee's regime, those South Korean residents in Japan engaging in protests against the South Korean dictatorship were stripped of their South Korean passports, placing them in the nebulous category of being nation-less. For one politically active South Korean resident, this situation lasted for thirty two years. The Japanese government has refused to grant re-entry visas to Korean residents who were in violation of alien registration laws such as the now defunct fingerprinting law. While Korean residents were allowed to leave Japan, without re-entry visas, they would not be able to return.

Since liberation in 1945, South Korea has waxed and waned in its recognition and support of Korean residents in Japan. As opposed to the North Korean regime which has steadfastly counted Korean residents in Japan as members of its constituency, the South Korean government has often viewed Korean residents with suspicion and distance. Several political events have influenced this record of fluctuating treatment, however, the period of greatest estrangement was during the late President Park Chung Hee's regime (1961-1980). Events such as the kidnapping of then opposition leader Kim Dae Jung from Japan and the assassination of President's Park's wife by a radical Korean resident in Japan during this period served to stunt South Korean support of Korean resident issues and to treat Korean resident groups as opponents of the South's repressive government. During this period, South Korean residents were highly critical of the Park dictatorship. Although current reforms in South Korea have been recognized by some as spurring democratic progress, for many elderly South Korean citizens in Japan, previous political activity in *Mindan* and other organizations has produced a jaded attitude towards South Korean domestic politics. Although most of the South Korean elderly who were interviewed were in favor of reunification of the Koreas, it no longer remains a significant personal issue for them. Rather, the political future of South Korea was treated as divorced from personal life, an attitude which proves in stark contrast to North Korean citizens like *Choi-halmoni* and *Cho-harabuji* .

For Lee Kyung Soo, a South Korean citizen originally from Kyongsangbuk-do, homeland politics was only a source of useless worry. Although she had spent 30 of her 81 years as an active member of *Mindan* , she could not speak about Korean politics without a certain amount of sarcasm and disdain. To the question of reunification, she responds by saying:

"I am not God. How should I know? I do not know much about politics. If North and South Korean can agree, then there will be reunification. It may happen. But, it doesn't

"I am not God. How should I know? I do not know much about politics. If North and South Korean can agree, then there will be reunification. It may happen. But, it doesn't matter. You know, after the war, I made such efforts for *Mindan*. I would prepare food for all the meetings and help in the office with the various projects. But now, after all that work, I know that it was a waste of time. After the war, *Mindan* and *Soren* [North Korean Resident Association in Japan] did not interact with each other. There was no cooperation between the two groups at all. There was so much hostility and anger towards one another. At night, when we would have our meetings at the *Mindan* office, *Soren* people would come and throw stones at the building, breaking windows and damaging our office. Our men would come out and there would be a struggle - a physical struggle with people hitting each other. That kind of thing happened often and it was very serious at the time. People felt so strongly. Now, I know that all of that was simply a waste of time. It doesn't have any meaning. It doesn't matter how eager and motivated people are if their governments do not change. The associations are useless. I used to work hard for reunification of our country, but I gave all of that up because the governments do not change."

*Lee-halmoni* had migrated to Japan in 1936 and worked in a textile mill in Kyushu for three years. She married her husband in 1941 who was working in a clothing store run by his uncle in Tokyo. They had four children who attended Japanese schools and married Japanese nationals. *Lee-halmoni*'s husband had also been active in *Mindan*, particularly immediately following the war. Although they had discussed repatriating to Korea in 1947, they did not want to jeopardize their relative economic success from the clothing store for unknown lives in postcolonial Korea. They continued in the clothing business, opening a second store in Kawasaki City in 1960. However, in 1966, *Lee-halmoni*'s husband died of pneumonia. After his death, *Lee-halmoni* attempted to run the store by herself, however, she eventually sold the business to another Korean resident and moved in with her eldest son's family. Currently, she lives alone in an apartment in Nishi-Nippori which she says she prefers as she enjoys the independence.

Speculation on the reunification of the two Koreas seems to be a useless endeavor for *Lee-halmoni* as she often makes sarcastic remarks about South Korean politicians. However, despite her pejorative attitude towards the South Korean government, she continues to stay abreast of even the most mundane political events on the Korean peninsula by subscribing to the *Hankuk Ilbo*, a major South Korean newspaper. It is part of her afternoon ritual of reading each edition from beginning to end. She says that she can not help but wonder what is happening in her "home" country. In addition, she participates in a network of elderly Korean residents who circulate videos of Korean *durama*<sup>\*†14</sup>, soap opera equivalents, among each other which she usually watches in the evenings.

Subsidized by her son's monthly contributions of 100,000 yen (\$1000) a month, *Lee-halmoni* leads a modestly comfortable life. Her biggest worry is her health which has caused her family growing concern with her deteriorating diabetic condition and increasing arthritis. She fears not being able to move about freely and having to rely on another person to feed and clothe her. However, she says that once she passes away, she will be at peace. She explains:

Do you know about the tomb the late President Park Chung Hee prepared for all Koreans living in foreign countries? He made this tomb for anyone living outside of Korea. It is a place where we may go when we die. I want to go there when I die. It is just beneath Seoul. If I go there when I die, I will be saved. I will be protected because I will be in my own land and no longer in a foreign country. If I die and remain in Japan forever, I will not be uncomfortable, but it would be better for me to go back to Korea. I will always be proud of being a Korean. I will be proud of this until the day I die. I feel at peace because I have my own tomb in Korea. I don't tell that to people because many Koreans here must remain in a Japanese tomb. But, in the end, I will rest in my homeland.

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<sup>14</sup> *Durama* is the English word, drama, adopted in both Japanese (spelled in *katakana*) and Korean. It refers to television dramatic series.

Although I have searched for information of the tomb referred to by *Lee-halmoni*, I have not been able to find any references to its existence. After speaking with her daughters, I was told that *Lee-halmoni* has only one younger brother living in South Korea. Although her children were not actively preparing for her death, they did want to be able to fulfill her wishes, but did not know whether a family burial plot existed in South Korea. Their fear was that there would be no place in Korea for *Lee-halmoni* after she died.

The wish to return to the Korean peninsula was an issue which emerged frequently in discussions of death with elderly Korean residents. Although most did not feel that living in South Korea was a realistic possibility due to difficulties in language, orientation, lack of familial support and diverging behavior cultural codes, there was belief in the ability to return to the homeland after death. This wish was framed not in the context of desire so much as destiny. It is an issue which distinguishes first generation Korean residents from their progeny and reflects the differences in the quality of attachments the former maintains with their country of origin. The case of Kim Young Bok's father illuminates this phenomenon.

### Send My Ashes Back

The entire family had decided to visit Kim Young Joon's burial one Saturday afternoon. Kim's widow, Park Min Kyung, and her son's family had marked the date on the calendar a month before so as to make sure everyone could attend. In preparation, the women cooked various bean cakes, fish, and steamed rice and packed their car for the two hour ride to the cemetery. The grounds of the Buddhist temple where Mr. Kim's family memorial was located was not far from the main highway to Chiba prefecture from Tokyo, yet, the rural area was sparsely populated and consisted of many open, uncultivated fields. The temple was located on top of a small hill and was surrounded by hemlocks and fiery red Japanese maples.



Behind the temple, *Park-halmoni* and Soo Jin, *Park-halmoni*'s great grandchild, grabbed two buckets and filled them with water from a faucet near the path. Mr. Kim explained that they would be used to wash the headstone. I asked Mr. Cho why he had decided on this location in Chiba which was so far from their neighborhood for his father's memorial and he explained that the cost of land in Tokyo was prohibitively expensive. He said that in Chiba he paid 4,000,000 yen (approximately 40,000 U.S. dollars) for two small plots.

When we reached the top of the hill, each burial area looked to be about five by five feet and was crowded against the next one, continuing row and after row as far as one could see in either direction. The memorial headstones consisted of solid, square blocks of polished marble with the names of the family members etched in the center.

*Kim-harabuji*'s headstone seemed about six or seven feet tall. In front were two stainless steel vases which fit neatly into the marble. The Kim's wondered who had put the relative fresh bunches of flowers in each of the vases and decided that it must have been the groundskeeper because they had not been there since six months ago on their biannual visit.

Immediately, the women began to wash the marble memorial with rags and toothbrushes they had brought from home and the water from the pails they had carried up the hill. During this time, Mr. Kim showed me around the grounds and pointed out five other Korean family memorials, reading the Korean names from the marble markers. Asking whether he knew these families, he said that he did not but explained that the cost of land had made this cemetery particularly popular. When we came back to his father's memorial, he remarked that he had bought the empty lot next to his for his second son's family. He explained that his first son and his family's remains would be kept together with he and his father's while the second son would begin his own line and thus, needed a separate burial plot. When I asked where his daughter, Mi Na, would take her place, Mr.



Kim said that when she married, she would join her husband's family memorial. He chuckled however, and said that if she did not marry, he would let her into his plot.

As the washing of the memorial ended, the old flowers were removed and thrown away and replaced by fresh ones and the food which we had brought was laid out in front of the tombstone. Park-*halmoni* announced that they were ready and the family bowed in a silent prayer. Walking back to the car, Mr. Kim explained that his father had been Christian like himself, however, that his body was cremated as required by Japanese law. According to his father's wishes, he kept half of his ashes at the memorial in Japan while the other half was sent back to Cholla-do to his father's brother who would place them with the family plot in South Korea. Mr. Kim explained that his father had always described himself as having one foot in Japan and one in Korea, so he felt that by having half his ashes with his descendants and half with his ancestors, he could reconcile this split identity in death.

Park-*halmoni* , overhearing our conversation, tugged at her son's arm and asked him if he remembered that she wanted to have all her remains sent to Korea. Mr. Kim smiled and told her that he had not forgotten and that she need not tell him again. Park-*halmoni* leaned over to me and said,

"I have lived here for over sixty six years and that is long enough. Why would I want to remain here longer than that? When I pass away, I want to make sure that I return to my own land. It would be too much to have to spend eternity in this place."

### The Practicalities of Citizenship

In this discussion of nationalism among elderly Korean residents in Japan, it is important to include Japanese citizenship as a third alternative in the election of national identity. Although the number of Koreans obtaining citizenship has increased over the last ten years, the proportion among first generation elderly Korean who migrated to Japan

during Japanese colonialism is slight. The reasons for this include the difficulty one faces in applying for Japanese citizenship. While a legal pathway exists, those who have applied have reported becoming disconcerted with its labyrinthine quality and the numerous delays in their applications' progression through Japanese bureaucracy. Several successful applicants have indicated that socioeconomic status as well as "contributions" have influenced the outcomes of applications, however, even with these resources, the process is far from simple.

The main reason why most first generation Korean residents have not become Japanese citizens is due to the memory of Japanese colonialism. The persecution of Japan sympathizers after the end of World War II, particularly in North Korea, attests to the vehemence of Korean patriotism with respect to Japan for this age cohort. Resonant of the colonial policies of enforced assimilation, Japanese citizenship is interpreted as synonymous with "becoming Japanese" which demands that naturalized citizens relinquish their previous cultural identity. Until recently, this has meant adopting Japanese names, an act which most Koreans who lived under Japanese colonial rule would not be able to accept without reconciling the memory of this period of oppression.

For those who do obtain Japanese citizenship, however, there are undeniable benefits, particularly for those future generations who intend to live in Japan indefinitely. In taking this option, Korean residents are able circumvent several forms of discrimination in Japanese society from which Japanese citizens are protected. However, this is not to claim that naturalized Japanese citizens are inured to attitudinal discrimination should their Korean origins be discovered. In a similar vein, election of naturalized Japanese citizenship does not necessarily indicate lack of nationalist sentiment towards the Korean peninsula. Rather, for many elderly Korean residents, Japanese citizenship and national identity are maintained in separate spheres.

connections (as well as illicit cash transfers), Matsumoto readily acknowledges that his citizenship application was given "special consideration". For Matsumoto, Japanese citizenship has allowed him to engage in several lucrative real estate investments as well as giving him right to vote, to receive old age pension and to travel frequently between South Korea and Japan.

Currently, he is in semi-retirement from his medical practice, yet continues to be the head administrator at a small private hospital sixty miles north of Tokyo. He lives alone in a house near the hospital though he also utilizes a *manshon*\*<sup>15</sup> in Ikebukuro ward in Tokyo. His wife died in 1978 from breast cancer. His one daughter married a third generation Japanese American who she met while studying in the United States and has settled in Hawaii. Matsumoto's son is a surgeon who works and lives in Saitama prefecture with his wife. When asked why he had decided to obtain Japanese citizenship, Matsumoto-*harabuji* responded in this way:

"Many Korean residents ask me about this. It is rather simple, actually. I planned to live here with my family for the rest of my life. Having Korean citizenship is not useful and in fact, it is a liability. I had my children to think about and the truth is that being a Korean in Japan is disadvantageous. I know some feel that taking Japanese citizenship is a disloyal act, but for me, it is not an emotional issue, it is a practical one."

His son explained that recently his father had begun sponsoring several Koreans from China who had come to Japan as college students to learn Japanese <sup>16</sup> by offering financial support and housing during their stay. One such student, Kim Mee Kyung, a twenty-one year old Korean woman from China, explained that she had come to Japan to learn Japanese which would be helpful for her to get a job as a tour guide when she returned

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<sup>15</sup> *Manshon* is the Japanization of the English word, "mansion", and describes newer, larger apartments with modernized amenities.

<sup>16</sup> The Korean community in China is principally located just north of the North Korean border. In contrast to the Korean resident population in Japan, this diaspora group has been allowed to maintain a strong Korean identity in China, characterized by successful Korean schools and businesses. The majority of second and third Korean residents of China speak Korean as well as Chinese.

home. She attends Japanese class for five hours everyday and works in a Chinese restaurant as a waitress every evening for seven hours. Though the work has improved her language skills, her income is not enough to pay for living expenses in Tokyo. Through a Korean friend also from China, she met *Matsumoto-harabuji* who pays her rent and bought her several amenities including a small color television. According to *Matsumoto's* son, his father has subsidized fifteen Korean students from China and three from South Korea.

In addition, *Matsumoto-harabuji* has increased his visits to Pusan, his hometown, despite difficulties with his health. His son said he was surprised, however, when his father had recently told him his wishes upon death.

"My father and I have never talked much about his family or his experiences in Korea before the War. Up until I went to college, I did not even know where my father was born and that was only because my mother explained this to me. Of course, I knew that he was Korean. In fact, I had an antagonistic relationship with my father when I was a school boy because I was teased a lot for being a Korean, even though I am only really half Korean. I looked down on my father because of this. It has only been recently that I have come to terms with my background. It was very surprising to me when my father came to me recently to tell me he had bought a burial plot in South Korea. He said that he wanted his ashes sent to my uncle who lives in Pusan when he dies."

Addressing his plans for after his death, *Matsumoto-harabuji* explained his intentions in this way:

"Yes, I asked my son to send my ashes to Pusan because there is family history there. My brother and his family live there and they have kept up our family burial. They are the keepers of *chesaf* which is very important to Koreans. We bought some land for my wife when she died. It is outside her hometown of Nagoya. I visit there every year. I thought about joining her there so that we could be together again, but over the years I have begun to think about family. My daughter is in America and my son has his own life now with his wife. They are not planning to have children. My

1. The first step is to identify the problem or goal. This involves understanding the current situation and what you want to achieve.

2. Next, you need to gather information. This could involve research, talking to experts, or looking at data.

3. Once you have information, you can start to develop a plan. This should include a clear timeline and a list of tasks.

4. It's important to set realistic goals and to be flexible. Things may not always go as planned, so you need to be able to adapt.

5. Finally, you need to execute the plan. This involves putting your ideas into action and monitoring progress.

Addressing his plans for after his death, Matsumoto-*harabuji* explained his intentions in this way:

"Yes, I asked my son to send my ashes to Pusan because there is family history there. My brother and his family live there and they have kept up our family burial. They are the keepers of *chesaŋ* which is very important to Koreans. We bought some land for my wife when she died. It is outside her hometown of Nagoya. I visit there every year. I thought about joining her there so that we could be together again, but over the years I have begun to think about family. My daughter is in America and my son has his own life now with his wife. They are not planning to have children. My brother has always asked me to come live with him in Korea, but I have found that I am more comfortable living here and visiting him from time to time. However, after I have passed away, I would like to be reunited with my mother country."

For Lee-*halmoni* , Cho-*harabuji* , and Matsumoto-*harabuji* , repatriation to the Korean peninsula is important, albeit after death. Matsumoto-*harabuji* mentions the importance of *chesaŋ*, a tradition of paying respects to one's ancestors. However, beyond mere adherence to tradition, Matsumoto-*harabuji* has appeared to have resurrected his country of origin in late life. The forging of connections to Korea and the Korean people has been witnessed by Matsumoto's son who has learned more about his father's "identity" in late life than in any other period of the lifecourse.

Throughout much of the narrative of elderly Korean residents, the option of returning to Korea was discounted due to alleged difficulties in acclimating to a significantly altered Korean society. Many explained that trips to South Korea produced feelings of estrangement and false identification as Japanese tourists. Thus, in most cases the barriers to repatriation, particularly in late life, are derived from cultural dissonance whereby extended residence in Japan rendered an often valorized homeland foreign. Paradoxically, the homeland continues to weave throughout the narratives of life history in which separation from one's rightful place centers in the understanding of one's life events.



The ultimate resolution of the imagined homecoming thus, is deferred until the point of death whereby the dislocation is rectified in a definitive and irreversible act.

### **Ethnic Difference and the Story of Nationalism**

According to the pundits of modernization theory, the end of the twenty-first century should have paralleled the demise of the nation-state. However, in its stead, the nation has been bolstered by the re-emergence of ethnicity as a source of political and social division and solidarity. This has led to a surge in interest in the phenomenon of nationalism. Although many have claimed that nationalism is merely imagined<sup>17</sup>, others have argued, imagined or not, it continues to have a profound effect on the way human beings think, as illustrated by Gellner's comment.

Nationalism is not what it seems, and above all not what it seems to itself...The cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions. Any old shred would have served as well. But in no way does it follow that the principle of nationalism itself in the least contingent and accidental (Gellner, 1983: 56).

Using the query, "what is a nation?" Ernest Renan links memory and history by stating that a "nation is a soul, a spiritual principle." He continues,

Only two things, actually constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past, the other is in the present. One is the possession in common of rich legacy of remembrances; the other is the actual consent, *the desire to live together* the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common....The nation, even as the individual is the end product of a long period of work, sacrifice and devotion (Renan, 1994: 18, emphasis added).

Renan's inclusion of a "desire to live together" presents an interesting problem for diaspora populations. In using this definition of a nation, one is forced to grapple with the

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<sup>17</sup> See Anderson (1983) and Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983).

distinction of "exile" with respect to national affinity. According to Grinberg (1989:2) "what sets exile apart from other types of migration with their possible permutations and development is that departure is involuntary and return impossible." In examining diaspora populations, the barriers to returning home are numerous and varied and each connoting a qualitatively different relationship with the "homeland".

For Korean residents in Japan, the issue of homecoming is cloaked by layers of events and experiences which have distorted traditional ideas of nationalism and nationality. In living outside the physical borders of the nation, the concept of citizenship as linked to national identity is cast in a tenuous relationship in which nationalism and/or national allegiance is no longer taken for granted as the state of being "away" casts these overseas citizens in a questionable light. In this way, diaspora suspends assumptions of national identity and places an additional responsibility on overseas citizens to "act out" nationalism in order to demonstrate affinity. Nationalism thus, although viewed as a collective phenomenon, in diaspora, arises from individual choices and actions which effect national membership otherwise tenuous. In the case of Korean residents in Japan, identity through action is particularly critical, in light of the historical context of Japanese colonialism and the subsequent division of the Korean peninsula. Specifically, this case contributes to a model of diaspora nationalism which addresses generation differences and cohort effects of divergent life experiences and memories.

For Smith (1986) the fundamental constituents of ethnic identity are the myths, memories, symbols and values with which groups of individuals have in common. As a primordialist orientation to ethnicity, this perspective argues that groups maintain an historical essence which acts on a fundamental level to constitute collective identity. Because of shared traits, individuals categorize themselves into self-defining groups which ultimately, in Smith's thesis, evolve into vehicles for nationalism.

In contrast to Smith's perspective which emphasizes "oneness" in cultural identity, Hall (1990) identifies a second approach which recognizes the transformation of identity through time. Instead of focusing on fixed characteristics of particular groups, this approach views identity as constantly changing in response to events and experiences. In Hall's words, identity is a matter of "becoming as well as being" (1990:237), concluding that only through this temporally fluid approach can the colonial situation be fully comprehend. Bowman (1993) concurs with Hall in his examination of Palestinian identity. He writes,

But although their memories of a common origin (however reconstituted these may be) give them a ground, a symbolic repertoire, for identity, it is their experiences which will provide references for those symbols and a landscape for that ground. These experiences are specific to particular positions in class and social structures.

With respect to Korean residents in Japan, it is important to understand memories of the homeland as refracted by postcolonial experiences in Japanese society and the position of this largely migrant labor force with respect to the social structure of Korean society at the turn of the century. This discussion attempts to understand the role of the homeland in the lives of this population with a general interest in the significance of the mother country on the identity of diaspora populations.

As primarily displaced peasant labor, first generation Korean migrants constituted a predominately uneducated, illiterate (both in Japanese and Korean) population which, without the protection of civil rights, were funneled into a shrinking labor market in Japan. Having left the Korean peninsula mostly in their late teens and early twenties from a variety of villages in the southern Korean provinces, a collective memory based on childhood and early adolescent experiences are less represented by collectivity than by disparate events in localized settings. Japanese colonialism and migration to Japan is the most common theme in the organization of life history narratives and it is one which invokes stories of suffering,

subjugation and denial of national pride which emerge as collective themes for elderly first generation Korean residents in Japan. Thus, for both North and South Korean residents, the experiences of Japanese colonialism, rather than common origins and memories of life in Korea prior to migration, fuel nationalism and craft national identity. Nationalism in diaspora can be viewed as a response to experiences within the host culture against which memories of the homeland are kept. In Scheff's (1994) discussion of ethnonationalism, there are clues to how diaspora nationalism may emerge. He writes,

Ethnic nationalism arises out of a sense of alienation on the one hand, and resentment against unfair exclusion, whether political, economic, or social. By the same token, inclusion, justice and fairness in these realms undercuts and defuses nationalism (1994: 281).

The sense of alienation is evident throughout the Korean resident narratives of experience of Korean residents in Japan. Alienation is felt on both fronts as Korean residents are excluded from absorption into Japanese society as well as endure dissonance from their country of origins. The result of this double sense of alienation is a gaze "homeward," filtered through an imagining of an alternative elsewhere which reflects not only a pre-migration past but also the social negotiation of the present. The socially understood conception of homeland does not function as a discrete category in the imagination, but one which changes continually in response to a fluid social environment.

The imagining of the homeland, however, is not just a fabrication of place and membership. Rather, the reality of the homeland is continually reaffirmed by the repercussions of its existence on the lives of Korean residents in Japan, whether this is in the form of disavowal as has been the case at time by South Korea or inclusion by the North. However, the ideas and/or constructs of the homeland for Korean residents in Japan may be strikingly divergent with its configuration on the peninsula. Secondly, the

central significance of homeland for Korean residents emerges from its role in Japanese exclusionary policies as Field (1993) articulates:

The reason is the actually existing Korean homeland, which is at the same time the reason Resident Koreans are discriminated against: They are subject to prejudice because they are Korean and the essence of being Korean is to be found in the homeland...The theology of Resident Koreans unequivocally directs them to the Korean peninsula. There unification will realize not the oppressive product of modernity, the nation-state, but the rather more magical folk-state (Field, 1993).

For Korean residents, nationalism is a vehicle by which to critique prejudicial treatment in Japanese society, a response to exclusionary treatment by claiming membership elsewhere. By asserting Korean identity, particularly North Korean identity, elderly Korean residents are able to claim the "homeland" through memories and the knowledge of having originated from another place. Memories become powerful tools of authority and authenticity. In this way, nationalism is used to tell a story in which dislocated members may be able to find their positions from within and without. Nationalism and nationalistic rhetoric becomes the narrative of self-justification.

Nationalism as a narrative uses constituent elements such as actors, actions, story past and present, narrative present, narrative space within an orderly and naturally self-justifying framework (Layoun, 1992: 413).

Thus, on some level, Korean nationalism in Japan is a statement against the legacy of Japanese colonialism and contemporary practices of discrimination; discrimination based on difference. In the former the words of Parker (1992), nationalism is understood as not determined on the basis of its own intrinsic properties but as a function of what it (presumably) is not. It implies that some element of alterity for the definition of

nationalism is ineluctably shaped by what it opposes. In this case, Japan's image is what is opposed

However, this is not to propose that nationalism or nationalist sentiment among first generation elderly Korean residents is simplistically a product of rejection from Japanese society. The analysis of the narrative data in this chapter affirms the importance of the contextualization of migration as well as subsequent political history on the identity of diaspora populations. In the case of Korean residents in Japan, nationalism is a critical narrative framework by which to explain and understand one's life and identity within this context. The inherent narrative qualities of nationalism is articulated by Layoun (1992:411) who states:

Nationalism is an articulation of the story of the nation-it is the privileged rendition of past events and 'explains' the natural relationships in a given society.

By positioning oneself within the "story" of nationalism, the memory of being a colonial subject of imperial Japan is preserved and the relationship between Korean residents as overseas citizens and Japanese society is naturalized. Korean nationalism, both North and South, are predicated on the colonial experience. According to the nationalist narrative, Japanese occupation is the event which triggers the cascade of events which leads to both a divided Korean peninsula and the overseas position of Korean residents in Japan. Nationalism explains these political arrangements through which personal diaspora experiences take on meaning.

The relative importance of the idea of homeland and homecoming for the first generation as opposed to succeeding generations is an important distinction. Cultural identity is not a simple model of generation diffusion whereby first generation Korean residents retain "traditional" cultural traits to a greater extent than second and third generation, explaining their relative attachment to the homeland. Such cursory analysis

portrays first generation immigrants simply as retainers or vessels of past lives and elides the ways in which meaning and identity are created through interaction with the host culture.

By referring to the Eriksonian model, first generation diaspora identity may be better understood. According to Erikson (1980), the self consist of three spheres of integration: spatial, temporal and social. Spatial integration is the feeling of individuation and existentialism. Temporal integration is the feeling of "sameness." It is the reconciliation of different representations of the self over time, establishing continuity from one to the next. Social integration is the feeling of belonging and involves projective and introjective identification. The act of migration may manifest disruptions in each of these spheres. In the majority of cases, first generation elderly Korean residents in early adulthood were either physically or economically forced to migrate, for the most part, without their families. Although the homeland does not hold the same meaning for each Korean migrant, separation from home does have collective resonance in ways which are not evident among second, third and fourth generation Korean residents. Korean nationalism as exhibited in desires and plans for repatriation, albeit in death, offer a cohesive narrative of historical events in which to insert a dislocated sense of self. It is an attempt to maintain the spatial, temporal and social spheres of experience.

The Korean homeland maintains significance for many elderly first generation Koreans. Nationalism which maintains the homeland as a collective referent and allows the imagining of a homecoming offers Korean residents in Japan a way of critiquing their position and experiences within Japanese society. Korean nationalism is predicated on anti-colonial and anti-Japanese rhetoric which preserves the memory of subjugation in order to maintain a posture of self-determination. The inherent narrative structure of nationalism lends itself to the life history narratives of elderly Korean residents who have come to understand their lives as intertwined with the fate of the homeland.

## CHAPTER IX

### RACIAL PURITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY IN JAPAN

*Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people. As members of such an economy, we have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominance, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As a result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion ( Audre Lorde, 1990: 281).*

In defining ethnicity in Japanese society, the trap of an oppositional framework of "us versus them" is alluring, as witnessed by the explosion of literature focusing on Japan which has been collectively referred to as *nihonjinron*. The self consciousness of *nihonjinron* with respect to western models of culture has crafted a body of work which attests to the nebulous and paradoxically orientalist presentation of Japan as 'unique'. This position, which is the collaborative effort by both scholars within and without Japan, has emerged from attempts at reconciling difference, in most cases, the surpassing phenomenon of "successful difference" of Japan, Inc.<sup>1</sup> Within this genre of literature there are revealing discussions of the questions of Japanese identity; reflecting both emic and etic perspectives on definitions of Japaneseness. An investigation of *nihonjinron* is presented here not as a scavenger hunt for discrete categories of ethnicity in Japanese society, but rather to initiate a discussion of ethnic identity in Japanese society as reflected by Japan's image of itself in light of ideas of nation, nationalism, and blood ideology.

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<sup>1</sup> Japan, Inc.(1990) written by Eli Max is an example of recent works which grapple with deconstructing the economic success which fuels much of the recent literature on Japan written in English.



Beginning with a discussion of the major ideas examined in *nihonjinron* works, this chapter will focus on the treatment of ethnic minorities in Japanese society.

### ***Nihonjinron* : Defining Japanese**

*Nihonjinron* works which emerged during the World War II era with the historically important publication of Ruth Benedict's national character study, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (1946), produced a sketch of Japanese character built on qualities such as taciturnity, emotional thinking and subjectivity, implicitly contrasted by the Western model of assertion, rationality, and objectivity. Benedict's work, though void of actual fieldwork data, has had a lasting impact on the state of cultural work in Japan. Her analysis of Japanese society as highly regulated and hierarchical gives way to discussion of Japanese concepts such as "on", a system of social obligation and "giri", socially sanctioned relationships of dependence. Benedict explicates these ideas in terms of a circular configuration of emotions and which influence relationships among the Japanese people.

The circle of social relationships is also alluded to by Takeo Doi in The Anatomy of Dependence (1973) in which he introduces the topic of "amae" as a psychological feature of the Japanese. He explains that "amae" is derived from the verb, "amaeru", which is defined as the act of behaving "self-indulgently, presuming on some special relationship" that exists between two people (1973: 29). Doi further explains that "amae" is initiated in infancy when, for example, a child relies on her mother's breast for milk, exhibiting dependency without anticipation of reciprocation. This behavior continues into adulthood, encouraged in relationships with others. Although Doi does not contend that the *amae* relationship is an exclusively Japanese phenomenon, he does present the argument that it is more developed in Japanese culture by referring to the lack of linguistic evidence of "amaeru" equivalents in other languages. Doi concludes that group dependency is a more "essential" characteristic of Japanese society than that of other cultures.

Anthropologist Chie Nakane published Japanese Society (1970) in which she discusses Japanese social organization and introduces the concept of vertical society and discusses these effect on group relationships. She examines the concepts “attribute” and “frame” in which the former is defined by the natural abilities of individuals while the latter defines the locality of social interaction such as within an institution or social group. Nakane’s thesis is that Japanese society is ordered vertically with strict codes of hierarchy via “frames,” typically defined by age and work cohorts. However, within these frames it is believed that attributes distinguish individuals from each other giving a micro structure of differentiation and movement within social relations.

A hallmark of nihonjinron writing is the use of dichotomous categories in the opposition between what is considered "western" with "eastern". Although it is difficult to circumvent this convention when conducting comparative studies of culture, this approach and its implications deserves critical review. Nancy Rosenberg (1992) addresses how discussion of nihonjinron have been framed simplistically by two views of social behavior which has been constructed diametrically opposed to one another by stating that:

We often portray Japanese as the opposite of our ideal selves as concrete thinkers, particularistic moralists, situational conformists, unintegrated selves; as intuitive rather than rational, animistic (undivided from their environment), and unable to separate body and mind. The temptation of such general conclusions continually bedevils Western trained scholars in Japan. At the other extreme, scholars sometimes try to save Japanese people from other-ness by showing them as completely like us: individuals who feel the repression of society, who think reasonably, who make moral judgments based on abstract principles, and who indeed have integrated selves (1992: 2-3).

Images of Japanese Society (1986) by Mouer and Sugimoto is an example of the reaction against the popular image often caricatured by the media of Japanese “groupism,” a model which denies the role of the autonomous individual. A critical response to orienting

perspectives of the Japanese is offered by Peter Dale in his book, The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness (1986), in which he not only virulently criticizes the "myth" but implies that this discourse represses Japanese people. The following is representative of the tone and perspective of his book:

"In constructing a mythology of culture which denies the existential distinction between "I" and "Thou", and in supplanting that original and ineluctable estrangement between self and other with a cozy affirmation of the identity of subject and object as an ethnic ontology, the mandarinat legitimates a world in which neither the individual nor the group may obtain a pregnantly dialectical relationship of enhancing exchange. In this ideological exclusion from Japanese culture of a principle of mutuality and equilibrium between the individual and his society, neither the potentialities of the self nor those of the community can ever achieve, or aspire to, a more complete realization" (1986: 222).<sup>2</sup>

However, despite these criticisms of *nihonjinron*, the popularity of its attempts at defining the character of Japan indicates the tremendous reflexivity and consumption of images of Japanese society from abroad as well as by the Japanese people themselves. The resonance of notions of "uniqueness" is instrumental in understanding the nature of Japanese identity and nationalism.

### Nationalism and *Nihonjinron* Ideology

In his work, Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan (1992), Kosaku Yoshino discusses the major tenets of *nihonjinron* literature in light of competing theories of ethnicity and nationalistic sentiments. Yoshino examines the relationship between race and cultural nationalism; he argues that implicit in Japanese nationalism is a blood ideology which inherently excludes the "foreign".

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<sup>2</sup> Although challenge of the stereotyped Japanese group model is necessary and may prove fruitful in producing different perspectives, Dale's treatment of the subject suffers from an underlying evolutionary orientation by which Japanese culture is seen as "primordialistic", in contrast to Western "development". The didactic tone Dale uses in presentation of his arguments against Japan's popularized image undermines an assumed prescription of thinking about Japanese behavior in different ways.

Yoshino is most interested in what he identifies as the time versus spatial dichotomy in evaluating *nihonjinron* in light of nationalism. Although he initiates his discussion by examining the use of historicism in the role of primordialism in conceptions of ethnic identity in modern Japan, it is the modernist approach to which Yoshino is most sympathetic. He critiques what may be considered a historicist perspective in defining ethnic and nationalist sentiments by stating that the use of history is selective in which specific symbols are consciously designated and incorporated as "traditional" and this is powerfully incorporated in nationalist ideology. As such, the production of memories by the "thinking intellect" manipulate national history and thus, deliberately, construct a unified doctrine of nationalism.

In concert with Yoshino's discussion is Befu and Manabe's (1991) consideration of the "invention of tradition" in their article, "*Nihonjinron* : The Discursive Manifestation of Cultural Nationalism" (Kwansei Gakuin University Annual Studies, Vol. XL). After a discussion of *nihonjinron* as a cultural system and world view of Japan constructed in a manner not unlike the culturally specific national world views of "America" and China, Befu and Manabe take a stand which concurs with that of Yoshino in stating,

*"Nihonjinron* is indeed a set of propositions about the uniqueness of Japanese derived from traditional culture. It is presented as if a world characterized by this set of propositions, having to do with the Japanese national character, social structure, etc., is literally alive today. Its exaggerations of certain features, its sweeping generalizations, its deliberate omission of modern aspects of Japan and its consequent obfuscation of reality in creating *Nihonjinron* does warrant calling it an invented tradition, very much in the way described by Hobsbawn and Ranger (1991:113)."

Using interviews of businessmen and educators in Japan on their perceptions of *nihonjinron*, Yoshino analyzes different conceptions of Japanese nationalism with respect to the age cohorts of his informants, distinguishing between what he labels "resurgent

cultural nationalism” and “prudent revivalist nationalism”. The former is defined by Yoshino as that which centers on the thinking of Japan’s intelligentsia and focuses on the “rediscovery, redefinition and reaffirmation of Japanese uniqueness” (1992: 203). This type of nationalism is aligned by Yoshino with spatially oriented theories of ethnicity in which ethnic identity emerges only with respect to competing others and with nihonjinron literature which centers on beliefs of Japanese distinctiveness. Prudent revivalist nationalism is described as the effort to reverse the negative national appraisal of the Japanese of by Japan’s defeat in 1945, manifested by the subsequent indictment of institutional symbols such as the emperor system. This nationalist sentiment is founded on a vision of historical continuity and attempts to link pre-modern Japanese values with contemporary society. Yoshino describes this perspective as going beyond the search for identity to one of solidarity in which rituals and symbols such as the emperor system are “revitalized” in order to provide the basis for national collectivity.

It is not surprising that the results of Yoshino’s study indicate age cohort differences in which older generations who experienced the War are characterized by revivalist nationalism and younger generations (those born after 1933) exhibited predominantly resurgent cultural nationalist sentiments. In direct conflict with the results from Befu and Manabe’s study (1991), Yoshino reports that these findings on age cohort differences indicate a lack of strong identification with the emperor system and premodern Japanese values among younger generations, particularly those with occupations in business and education.

However, these results also would seem to indicate that older generations are less influenced by nihonjinron literature than the younger generations. This forces the question of why Yoshino establishes an opposition between the ideology of nihonjinron and the ideology of the emperor system. In actuality, the content of much of nihonjinron literature can be traced to pre-modern concepts such as that of the “ie”, or family based

organizational system which is inseparable from the emperor system. Rather than *nihonjinron*, a critical distinguishing difference between the age cohorts may be linked to the specific event of World War II and the assessment of blame by younger generations which results in the lack of sympathy toward key institutions such as the Emperor system. In fact, *nihonjinron* as an ideology of Japanese uniqueness may, in its many forms, apply to each age cohort in a meaningfully different way.

Although Yoshino provides a fair review of the *nihonjinron* literature, he treats *nihonjinron* as a uniform entity without establishing a clear depiction of how he is using this genre. Specifically, in his discussion of revivalist nationalism, *nihonjinron* has been implicitly defined as the body of literature based on a boundary approach, a spatially reactive characterization of Japanese ethnicity. However, in constructing an opposition between *nihonjinron* ideology and revivalist nationalism, Yoshino ignores basic tenets of *nihonjinron* ideology founded on notions of racial purity and homogeneity which rely on the authority of national history much in concert with the foundations of the Emperor system.

In his final remarks, Yoshino belatedly defines nationalism as referring “broadly to the sentiment among a people that they compromise a community with distinctive characteristics and the will to maintain and enhance that distinctiveness within and autonomous state (1992: 225).” What appears to be missing in this generally thorough and provocative discussion, is an analysis of the forces working within contemporary Japanese society which have contributed to both *nihonjinron* literature and cultural nationalism. This type of discussion invokes a “boundary approach” as well as a “historical approach” framework in which marginalized social groups residing within Japanese society contribute to the discourse only as a contrasting case of what it means to be truly Japanese.

*Nihonjinron as Civil Religion*

The influence of *nihonjinron* in Japan's society has been discussed by many writers concerned with the study of cultural "uniqueness". However, only a few scholars have framed this cultural theory in terms of a "civil religion". Most prominent of these are Robert Bellah and Winston Davis, the former concentrating on "premodern" Japan while the latter offering a more contiguous treatment of religion in Japanese history.

A critical issue for those concerned with the changing role of religion in nation states is the phenomenon of secularization in the context of rapid modernization. Japan represents a particularly interesting model for discussion of these social processes in light of the unanticipated boom of so-called "new religions" (see Hardacre). In the vein of Max Weber (1957), it has been theorized that with the onset of rationalization and positivism, integral to the modernization of a society, there is a complementary decline in the role of religion and magic. In opposition to this hypothesis is one which is based on a concept of man as "homoreligious" and contends that because religion has historically and trans-culturally existed until the present, that it will continue to function significantly within society, though perhaps in changing forms.

As Davis (1992) has pointed out, these generalizing viewpoints on religion's social role are stereotypically dichotomous. Rather, Davis advocates an approach which carefully analyzes the various components of religion in terms of belief, emotion, and modes of expression and behavior and determines which of these are "dominant" and "recessive" in relationship to a supposed decline. In so doing, Davis investigates the adherence to Japanese traditional religious rituals such as "Obon", the festival in which respect is paid to ancestors and uses data reporting the level of Buddhist and Christian affiliation among the Japanese. From these, Davis contends that religious belief is not to be "diluted" as an indicator of religion's changing role, but, rather, patterns on ritual behavior serve as better indicators. He concludes this chapter by stating that "as an institution and as a set of

beliefs, religion plays a less decisive role in Japanese society (and *a fortiori* in politics) than it does, say, in the United States.”

In responding to Davis’s implicit conclusion that religion in 20th century Japan has been secularized, it is important to ask what exactly is meant by ‘secularization’. A dictionary definition of this term is a process of being made not “sacred or ecclesiastical” or a “transfer from ecclesiastical to civil or lay use, possession or control.” (New Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1989) Upon substituting this definition in the phrase “secularization of religion”, the question of the decline in religion in the modern era is replaced by one which first asks who controls religious belief in the breakdown of “ecclesiastical” boundaries and how does this then, belief transform the civic sphere”?

In the secularization of religion, “civil religion”, a term borrowed from Rousseau, has been used to describe modernized religious belief system. Although several definitions of this term exist, the definition offered by Davis as cited by Harumi Befu (1976) is useful, particularly in cross-cultural analysis. He defines civil religion as “a systematic network of moods, values, thought, rituals, and symbols that establishes the meaning of nationhood within an overarching hierarchy of significance.” Thus, what makes a religion civil is the identification of a “nationhood” or social entity founded on geographical, historical and political boundaries. Thus, the player within a civil religion is no longer defined by an individual or a sect, but, rather, a political unit in which, as Befu has stated, a member may perform in concert with a particular political agenda.

In answering the original question of what does it mean to be a good Japanese, the issue of how these ideas of *nihonjinron* are transmitted is critical. As it has been noted by Bellah and others, American civil religion is reified throughout the nation via rituals and symbols. Examples include the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance by schoolchildren, the singing of the National Anthem at the commencement of sporting events, as well as observance of President’s Day. It has been argued by Befu and others that while similar



symbols and rituals such as the flag, the national anthem and the Emperor system could function in Japan as they do in America, they do not. As Befu has pointed out, these symbols have been met with a certain amount of resistance in large part due to their relationship to the events of World War II. As a result, these symbols fail to successfully function in uniting the nation-state, much less representing a civil religion based exclusively on political identification.

What has been suggested by Befu and others is that it is precisely the lack of symbols and rituals which unify the country which has precipitated the rise of *nihonjinron*, replacing them. However, it is difficult to determine whether this relationship is causal or correlative. Rather, *nihonjinron* may have arisen quite independently of the demise of these national symbols, but, rather, as a result of the type of national identity Japan wishes to maintain. Given increasing internationalization, it is expected that Japan would engage in a period of identity formation as has been discussed by many Japanese specialists. However, the delineation of the components of "Japanese uniqueness" must also be a result of the internal forces of Japanese society; otherwise, nationhood would have been sufficient as a unit of differentiation. Japan, claiming to be a homogenous nation, would, in theory, have been able to "reconstruct" social memory and thus, salvage the use of national symbols by redefining them in conjunction with contemporary thought. However, this has not been possible because of resistance. The critical question, then, is who is resisting? One example which has been described by Field (1991) is the case of the Okinawans. In her collection of fictionalized essays broadly based on Japanese social history, Fields describes the sense of betrayal felt by many Okinawans towards the emperor for his lack of equitable recognition. Resistance against symbols such as the emperor have largely been instigated by groups which have been marginalized in Japanese society. These marginalized groups disrupt the ideal of Japan as a homogenous state.



These exceptions or groups of exclusion, thus, give definition to the meaning of *nihonjinron*.

*Nihonjinron* and Blood Ideology

In discussion of the emergence of a civil religion in Japan, *nihonjinron* has been offered as the prevailing “systematic network” in contemporary society. The tenets of *nihonjinron* can be discussed by using Ben-Dasan’s *The Japanese and the Jews* (1972) and Harumi Befu’s discussion on the subject. The critical elements of *nihonjinron* or *nihonkyoo*, the term Ben-Dasan chooses to use, include *kuuki* (air) in which actions are explained in terms of it being distinctly Japanese; *jitsujoo* in which truth is cast in terms of human feeling and relationships; *michi* which defines humans as one aspect of nature in totality, Japanese language ability as an innately Japanese quality; and *joori* as a situationally based logic which incorporates human feelings. Although other qualities could be included, the essential features of supposed Japanese “uniqueness” are founded on supposed inborn behavioral patterns which are used to communicate with other Japanese; patterns which are incomprehensible and irreproducible by “foreigners”. This is clearly stated by Ben-Dasan:

One of the most difficult aspects of the entire situation is the fact that the concept of humanity lying at the heart of Nihonism cannot be expressed in words; it too relies upon implication for definition. Since a mastery of implications is impossible for foreigners, only Japanese can become Nihonists (1972:113).

Given the content and premise of *nihonjinron*, it must be evaluated in terms of its qualification as a civil religion. It is helpful to turn to Bellah’s discussion in his article, “Religion in Japan: National and International Dimensions,” (1983) in which he states that American civil religion was the product of a nation formed by a conscious, voluntary act beginning with the Declaration of Independence. According to Bellah, America’s civil

religion is one in which pluralism is cloaked by ideals of equality and freedom for individuals as well as the collective. Bellah continues to make a distinction between associational and institutional aspects of civil religion stating that associational aspects are emphasized in American civil religion whereas Japan's civil religion is largely institutional. This differentiation between American and Japanese forms of civil religion is significant in its implication of individual autonomy as well as the conscious versus unconscious nature of civil religious indoctrination. Following Bellah's contention that civil religion in America is largely associational and thus, of conscious choice, it is assumed that in America one may also choose not to adopt her civil religion, at least as constructed by Bellah. Thus, although civil religion works upon the political entity of nationhood, an individual may be "non-religious" (non-patriotic). In a sense, this choice is sanctioned by the tenets of the American civil religion themselves.

In Japan, however, one is absorbed and represented by civil religion by simple virtue of her birth and having "Japanese blood". A comparable case may be found in Judaism. Unlike the consciousness of religious affiliation and adherence which characterizes the Jewish people, the Japanese may not even be aware of the existence of the so-called civil religion. This is explained by Ben-Dasan when he states,

...scattered over many parts of the globe, yet united by the idea of the synagogue and by rabbinical tradition, Jews could not avoid comparing themselves with the peoples among whom they lived. In doing so, they discovered their own traits, from which evolved an awareness of a unique thing called Jewishness. The Japanese, never having undergone such dispersal, are less aware of the forces that unite them, especially of that it is taken for granted, a remarkable fact when one considers that it is as valid a religion as Judaism, Christianity, or Islam (1972:107).

The reason for this purported lack of awareness on the part of the Japanese may be traced to the absence of a source of prescriptive behavior. Unlike in Christianity, for example, where a religious member may look to an authoritative text such as the Bible to

seek guidance in how to be a good Christian, the Japanese do not have “official” doctrines on how to be a good Japanese. In fact the idea of prescriptive behavior is a moot question as it is one of the fundamental tenets of *nihonjinron* that behavior is a manifestation of genetic makeup and the belief that one can not consciously become Japanese without being Japanese. Thus, the discussion becomes circular.

However, what is problematic is that if *nihonjinron* is to be defined as a civil religion using the definition offered by Davis, race cannot be the sole criteria for participation. Rather, the unit of analysis must be the nationstate. Thus, in speaking of a civil religion, the criteria for citizenship is important. In the United States it could be argued that nationalistic documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights serve to create and perpetuate what it means to be an American. As a nation predominantly of immigrants, perhaps citizenship based on principles rather than blood is necessary. In Japan’s case, however, the legal qualifications for citizenship emphasizes racial categories. While a legal path exists which allows naturalized citizenship, the process is difficult and results in only a minute percentage of successes. As illustrated in the case of Koreans living in Japan, citizenship is rarely attained by “non-Japanese” that is those without Japanese blood. By establishing a legal and bureaucratic system which maintains the cultural and racial homogeneity of the Japanese state, the definition is fulfilled.

### **Identifying the Foreign**

Despite the rhetoric of homogeneity in Japan, the streets of Tokyo reflect a different picture revealing the effects of transnational modernity. The influx of foreign visitors to the islands has made the goal of racial purity a difficult one to maintain. What was a simple dichotomy between native and foreign has been complicated by the transfer of goods, services and human capital in and out of Japan proper at a bewildering pace. However,

these transformations in Japanese society notwithstanding, the categories of "foreignness" as reflected by "Japaneseness" remain unchallenged. To the question of who is foreign, responses continue to focus on supposed intrinsic Japanese and non-Japanese qualities.

For Hiroshi Tanaka, a twenty four year old Japanese who works as a technician at a Japanese computer company, foreigners are hardly a novelty. Through his college days at Meiji University and his business contacts at work, he has met several foreigners from the United States, Europe, China and Singapore. By all accounts, Mr. Tanaka is as cosmopolitan as other Tokyo-ites of his generation. He enjoys American action movies, particularly those starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Sylvester Stallone, listens to the most popular American and British music bands as well as the fashionable *Afurika no ongaku*, or "African music" of late, and eats regularly at a wide variety of Italian, Thai and French restaurants in the metropolis. Like many of his classmates in college, Mr. Tanaka has also traveled to the United States and Europe, taking his most recent trip with a group of graduating seniors after commencement.

Despite his complicated multicultural palate of the foreign, when asked how he identifies the "foreigner" in his society, Mr. Tanaka responds with the simple answer "by the color of the person's hair and the shape of his eyes". When asked if these were definitive signs, he responded in this way:

If you are asking me whether I think a "foreigner" may become Japanese, I would have to say, "no". In my opinion, there are three important elements to be accepted as Japanese. The first and most important thing is that they must be able to speak Japanese fluently. Secondly, they must understand our culture, history and behavior. This is one of the most difficult problems and you can only achieve this by having personal relationships with Japanese people. However, even if they are able to meet these requirements, there is still a third one. They must look like Japanese. I know that this is a difficult problem. In your country, you have black and white people but Japan is a one ethnic group nation. So, even if they speak Japanese perfectly or know Japanese culture, I think it is difficult for Japanese to accept foreigners because of different skin colors. For example, Lui Ramos, who is a pro-soccer player in Japan was

naturalized as a Japanese citizen from Brazil but most Japanese did not consider him Japanese. He has a Latin American face and a strange hairstyle. I, personally, think he has done very well in penetrating Japanese society, but there are barriers still.

While Mr. Tanaka's statement is not meant to be representative of a monolithic Japanese approach to difference and ethnicity, it does reflect an attitude consistent with the ideals espoused in *nihonjinron*, emphasizing Japanese "uniqueness". Mr. Tanaka begins by claiming that only with mastery of culture, history and behavioral codes can a non-Japanese "become" Japanese, yet, in the end, he makes the caveat that one must "look Japanese" as well. This rather oblique requirement nullifies the previous conditions by distinguishing "acting" with "looking" Japanese. By introducing the issue of black and white conflicts in the United States, Mr. Tanaka conflates the issue of Japanese nationality to one of racial origins, thus, rendering the idea of "becoming" Japanese moot. This conceptualization of difference is based on lineage and blood where the unit of analysis is not the individual, but the history of the individual with respect to family and genetic makeup. In examining the *Ainu* and the *Burakumin*, two marginalized groups in Japan, these ideas of difference are more fully understood.

#### The *Ainu* and *Burakumin* : Heritage of Difference

The search for ethnic origin has focused much of the discussion on the *Ainu* people who occupied the islands of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuriles until after World War II when the Japanese Government "resettled" most *Ainu* onto Hokkaido. Unlike the *Burakumin* and the Koreans, the *Ainu* until recently have been geographically contained to these areas, with little contact with the Japanese. In addition, the *Ainu* are believed to exhibit physical differences from the general Japanese population which have led to stereotypes of "the hairy *Ainu*", "the Caucasooid race in the Far East" and the "stone age savages" as indicated by Ohnuki-Tierney in her ethnography entitled, The *Ainu* of the

Northwest Coast of Southern Sakhalin (1974) in which she describes the economic activities, customs and rituals and life cycle of the *Ainu* people. While her ethnography conspicuously steers away from in-depth discussion of ethnic relations with the Japanese, she does report the ways in which increasing awareness of ethnic identity has manifested itself. She writes:

Many *Ainu* are now reasserting their cultural identity. In this sense they constitute a social group distinct from that of the Japanese. In this effort some have resorted to drastic measures. For example, a simultaneous bombing in 1972 of an exhibition case containing *Ainu* artifacts at Hokkaido University in Sapporo and of a group of statues at Asahikawa were done either by "radical" *Ainu* or by their Japanese sympathizers (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1974: 117).

She goes on to explain that the statues are criticized by *Ainu* who consider the sitting position of the *Ainu* figure, in contrast to the standing position of the Japanese figures, to be an insult of insubordination. The lack of faith that *Ainu* artifacts and bones will be treated respectfully by Japanese archeologists has led many *Ainu* to oppose the excavation of *Ainu* grave sites. The resistance at being coopted into Japanese society has encouraged many *Ainu* to advocate a revolution and the establishment of an *Ainu* republic (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1974). While the seriousness with which these calls for self-determination are difficult to gauge, it reveals a fundamental recognition of difference based on divergent genetic stock by both the *Ainu* and Japanese society at large. Assimilation of *Ainu* to Japanese society comes only at the cost of being placed on the lower rungs of Japanese society, a position which most *Ainu* are unwilling to accept.

Both the primordialist and boundary approaches seem pertinent in the interpretation of the *Ainu*'s assertion of their identity in Japanese society. While cautiously guarding their own ethnic history embodied by their artifacts, the *Ainu* also react to the increasingly encroaching contact with the Japanese. It may be argued that while primordialism lays the foundation for a sense of community, the boundary approach is pertinent as ethnic identity



is threatened by usurpation by the dominant Japanese society, which takes control of the narrative of origins of the *Ainu* through the discovery of cultural artifacts and rituals practiced by the *Ainu* community. In this sense, ethnicity for the *Ainu* is seen as a reaction to social pressure as indicated by Ohnuki-Tierney:

The future of *Ainu* culture is uncertain, and *Ainu* opinions are divided as to what their future should be. Indeed, there are many parallels between the history of the *Ainu* and that of the American Indians from the first contact with the "civilized" peoples who claimed their land (1974: 117).

Unlike the *Ainu*, the *Burakumin* are not considered to be racially different from the Japanese. In fact, the *Burakumin* speak Japanese and uphold the same cultural customs. In this sense then, the *Burakumin* would not qualify as a separate ethnic group in Japan. However, the occupational differences which do distinguish this group from the majority in Japanese society makes their situation important in the discussion of interrelationships of social groups in Japan and the issue of social discrimination. The *Burakumin* have been viewed as residuals of the caste system of the Tokugawa Period in which individuals were restricted to professions believed to be unclean such as that of butchers, undertakers, and tanners. In addition, the *Burakumin* were forbidden to marry commoners and were limited to designated residential areas or ghettos. While the Meiji Restoration produced the Emancipation Edict of 1871 through which *Burakumin* were registered as "new commoners", the *koseki*, family registry, continued to be used against the *Burakumin* in hiring practices. In addition, *Burakumin* continue to be shunned by the Japanese majority. *Burakumin*, most easily identified by their home address, continue today to suffer from attitudinal discrimination. To prevent being identified as *Burakumin*, many young people have reported getting off at stops far from their homes when riding public transportation or walk in roundabout paths to prevent speculation of their "polluted" heritage.

The case of the *Burakumin* has recently encouraged discussion on the economic implications of marginalized status. Interested in *Burakumin* collective agency in fighting against discrimination, Upham (1987) discusses the emergence of the Buraku Liberation League and the types of tactics employed by the organization in an attempt to further the cause of the *Burakumin* group. He reports that:

...(r)ecent research has shown that they [*Burakumin*] constantly struggled against discrimination during the Tokugawa Period, particularly from the latter half of the eighteenth century. Their struggle took many forms and had various goals. At times, the *Burakumin* accepted their separate status and exploited it to gain a degree of political independence or lessen their economic burdens. At other times groups of *Burakumin* would make elaborate legal arguments claiming that, although certain sumptuary laws or economic restrictions might apply to some minority groups, their particular group was not included and they should be treated as commoners for those purposes (1987: 79).

According to Upham, the *Burakumin* have used their marginalized status as a means of political agency demanding equal access in the market as well as profiting from differential treatment when the situation proved beneficial. Emphasis on Upham's findings is not made here to single out *Burakumin* in the manipulation of marginalized status as a vehicle in the fulfillment of generalized individualized goals. This is a social process which distinguishes the boundary approach to models of ethnic identity. Rather what is interesting is the interaction between primordialist and boundary frameworks. The inherited lineage of "pollution" excludes *Burakumin* from assimilation by using and thus, accepting their category of difference, *Burakumin* are able to address discrimination in Japan. In contrast, claiming to be the same as Japanese does not change racial categories. Thus, on the level of accepted difference, Japanese society offers a dialogic relationship without jeopardizing the nationalist rhetoric racial purity.

### **Korean Ethnicity and the Model of Homogeneity**

Due to the apparent preoccupation with "uniqueness" and "racial purity" by the Japanese, it would be easy to explain the case of Koreans in Japan as the result of simple xenophobia. Lee and DeVos (1981) emphasize a Japanese aspiration of racial homogeneity by which non-Japanese are categorically denied group membership. They write:

The Japanese still pride themselves on their uniqueness and resist the idea of assimilating or accommodating any ethnic minority fully within a concept of citizenship that remains almost identical with a concept of racial purity (Lee and De Vos, 1981: 355).

The preceding discussion of the *Ainu* and *Burakumin* offer only a cursory introduction to a growing number of marginalized groups in Japan. Despite the changing configuration of Japanese society, policies and rhetoric are slow to evolve from notions of homogeneity. As *nihonjinron* and the *Ainu* and the *Burakumin* situations indicate, hierarchy and "location", either up or down, in or out, are central to social relationships in Japan. In addition, history and lineage influenced how an individual or group is treated. These two grids powerfully collaborate in the case of Korean residents in Japan, particularly with respect to colonialism. While age cohort effects have influenced and will continue to influence the activities of Japanese individuals as well as Korean residents, the ideology of racial purity and the price of assimilation continues to effect younger generations of Korean residents in Japan in their search for a viable Korean identity in Japan which adequately addresses the experiences and life stories. The following description of a Korean resident festival, reveals these efforts.

#### Arirang Festival

The production of festivals within the Korean resident community is a characteristic of both North and South Korean endeavors and has often been captured by the Japanese

media as a display of Korean ethnicity. One of the many that I attended in Tokyo was sponsored by the Korean Cultural Center and the Korean YMCA. Fliers for the event had been decimated at many of the Korean resident churches, Korean newspapers, and as well as through word of mouth.

The festivities had been planned to be held inside the gymnasium of a Japanese high school in Arakawa ward and were scheduled for most of a Sunday afternoon. Arriving late, I quickly found a seat next to Soo Jung, a third generation Korean resident in her twenties. She informed me that the next act was going to be a dramatic play. The actors came on to the stage and standing in a line, bowed together to the audience. The actors consisted of a two women, a young girl and two men. Dressed in the traditional Korean dress of Yi Dynasty villagers, it became apparent that the skit focused on a three generation Korean family of a husband, wife, older daughter, young son and grandfather.

In the first scene of the festival's skit, the grandfather is hunched over, walking with a cane. A narrator from offstage explained much of the action to the audience. She stated that one morning the grandfather was walking on a path up along Mount Sorak<sup>3</sup> when he lost his footing and fell to the ground. Sprawled on the ground, he was then visited by a mystical black bird which sang to him that if he fell two more times, for a total of three, he would live only five more years. Having heard this, the grandfather trembled in fear and made his way back to his village at the base of the mountain.

Seeing how dejected the grandfather looked, the father asked him what was the matter. After the grandfather relayed the omen sung by the black bird, the father furrowed his brows in concern and told the grandfather to be careful in the future to prevent the curse from falling on him. The grandfather, his head lower than when he had arrived, nodded in agreement and entered the family house. There the mother and daughter greeted the grandfather, asking why his head was so low. Upon explaining his predicament, the

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<sup>3</sup> Mount Sorak is in northeast South Korea.

women doubled over and laughed, teasing the old man for being so foolish in believing the bird. "Surely," they cried, "it was only your imagination!" The grandfather walked away and the narrator tells us he went to bed without eating his dinner.

The next morning, the grandfather arises from his room to the bright sun and begins his daily walk to the mountain, having forgotten the bird of the previous day. However, walking down the path from his day's journey, the grandfather again trips and falls. The same black bird swoops down immediately and sings that this second fall means that if he trips once more, he will live only five more years. Clearly afraid, yet carefully walking in exaggerated slow movements, the grandfather finally arrives at his home where begins to sob. His grandson (played by a young girl) notices her grandfather and asks him, "What is the matter?"

Once again, the grandfather explains the omen delivered by the black bird and continues to cry, defeated. The grandson, rubbing his chin, sits quietly thinking, and slowly a smile spreads across his face. Jumping up, he asks his grandfather:

"The black bird said that if you fall three times, you would have five years to live?"

"Yes."

"Well, grandfather, if falling three times means five more years of life then six times must mean ten years, and nine times must mean fifteen years, and twelve times means twenty years... Grandfather, do you see? Go to the mountain and fall down thirty times and you will live another fifty years!"

To this, the grandfather leaps into the air, hugs his wise grandson, runs to the mountain and proceeds to fall and roll across the stage in happy glee while the Korean drum troupe which had been hiding at the sides of the stage emerge, pounding their instruments louder and louder, indicating the finale of the skit.

The next event consisted of the personal testimonials of five youth. The first was a boy in high school who was a second generation Korean resident in Japan. He explained

that he, at first, used a Japanese name and pretended to be Japanese, but then he decided in high school that he wanted to assert his Korean identity and use his given Korean name. He said, however, that it had not been easy to use his Korean name and that many of his friends were unable to accept him as Korean. However, he said that he made the right decision in the end to which the crowd applauded and cheered. He said that he appreciated festivals like Arirang because it helped him understand his own heritage and identity.

The next few speeches were also by second and third generation *zainichi* and they told similar stories of discrimination and their determination to assert their Korean identity. The last speech was by a Japanese female student who said that she first found out about the difficulties facing Korean residents in high school after she became friends with a Korean student. She said that it is important to be able to be Korean in Japan and that slowly she wants to work towards change.

The last event was a spectacular drum performance by all twenty four participating students. The troupe wound around the gym and performed while configuring into different arrangements on the floor. The beat of the drums was strong and unrelenting. The older persons of the audience, mostly family members, watched in silence as the sounds grew more and more urgent.

The following evening, NHK, the Japanese National Broadcasting Company, reported on the Arirang Festival. After brief footage of hand painted "Arirang Festival" signs outside of the Japanese high school where the festival had taken place, the camera switched to stock footage of the playground at *Chosen Gakko*, a Korean middle school, where students, dressed in traditional Korean dress were engaged in a drum drill. In the far background, large portrait banners of North Korean leader Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il could be seen in the background. The event was one which had taken place several months earlier. The NHK reporter described the Arirang Festival as a "cultural event" in which Korean residents celebrated "national songs and customs."

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

Without properly acknowledging that the majority of the events at the Arirang festival had focused on Korean identity in Japanese society as celebrated by second, third and fourth generation *zainichi*, the report falsely constructed the event as yet another "demonstration" of Korean nationalism. The report on the Arirang Festival reveals the ways in which ethnicity, identity and the nation become reflexively intertwined in the case of Korean residents in Japan. For the general Japanese population, the Korean population remains categorized by affiliation to the Korean peninsula. Without reporting the festival's intention of celebrating Korean resident identity and the sentiments of second, third, and fourth generation Korean residents that Japan is their home, the media maintains a separate category for Korean residents. The image of Koreans in Japan, coupled with the image of North Korea, is one of insurrection, divergence, and dislocation: a case of deviance from conformity and the alleged harmony of Japanese society.

In explaining the difference between Korean residents and the Japanese, the push and pull factors effecting the division between the two groups is difficult to distinguish. In the previously mentioned interview with Mr. Tanaka, he admits that classifying Korean residents as foreigners is a difficult assessment, but that their "difference" is unmistakable.

"Although I can't judge differences between Koreans and Japanese by appearance, I feel that Korean residents are different from us. In my opinion, Korean residents exhibit a lot of groupism and they tend to avoid interacting with other people like Japanese. I think it might be because they live together in a very small, tight areas in Japan. I suppose you would call these places "ghettos". I suppose you might say that there are walls between Koreans and Japanese."

Mr. Tanaka said he had never met a Korean resident and he claimed that most of his information came from his family and from the media. His attitude coincides with that of Kazuo Inoue, a 30 year old stationary store manager in Arakawa ward. Mr. Inoue describes Korean residents in this way.



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"I hear that North Korean people in Japan always have a portrait of Kim Il Sung, probably replaced now with Kim Jong Il, in their homes and that they keep a smaller picture of them in their pockets to take with them wherever they go. I am not saying whether this is good or bad, but in my opinion, North Korean people's lives are always intertwined with Kim Il Sung or Kim Jong Il. They respect these people as if they were gods. In fact, I wonder why Koreans live in Japan when they have such strong loyalties elsewhere"

The presupposition that ethnic differences are attributed to race rather than to culture and are based on blood ideology allows the argument that Koreans and/or other non-Japanese are incapable of being truly Japanese via learned behavior because they have come from elsewhere. As an alternative to attempting to forge an acceptable Korean identity within Japanese society, several Korean residents, particularly younger Koreans, attempt to pass as Japanese by adopting Japanese name and denying their Korean heritage. While the success of these attempts are difficult to document, Lee and DeVos make the significant point that "(i)n effect, many Japanese would not mind that Koreans pass and assimilate by becoming totally invisible" (Lee and De Vos, 1981: 356). On the surface, this position seems to contradict a doctrine of "racial purity". However, this reveals that Japanese identity is predicated on the idea of racial purity. Thus, by suppressing ethnic and national difference, Korean residents are able to become Japanese by "forgetting" their previous identity and becoming adopted into the Japanese narrative of blood and lineage. Absorbing Korean residents as Japanese allow the story of common lineage to be maintained.

Besides "passing", the percentage of Korean residents becoming Japanese has dramatically increased due to the rising interethnic marriage rates now reported as 70%. Recent legal changes now allow children of Korean and Japanese parents, regardless of either parent's gender, to claim Japanese nationality. These trends coupled with the current insignificant number of Korean nationals migrating Japan, contribute to a scenario,

taken to its logical conclusion, results in the dwindling perhaps, disappearance, of the Korean population living in Japan. In this sense, absolute assimilation is achieved via racial absorption even in light of institutional discrimination and exclusion. This was a topic of concern at a conference entitled, "The New Korean Resident in Japan Identity," sponsored by the Korean YMCA in Tokyo in 1995. Attended by largely second and third generation Korean resident students, faculty members and journalists, the conference focused on the discovery of a Korean identity in Japanese society, not contingent on homeland politics. Although the possibility of a disappearing Korean resident population was provoked lively discussion. The fact that such a conference was taking place rendered the argument unimportant. Rather, the participants focused on changing Japanese attitudes towards diversity.

#### A Third Way

In the last decade, the forging of a "third way" has been increasingly discussed in the *zainichi* community, particularly among younger generations. As opposed to the political agendas of North Korean and South Korean political organs, the "third way" refers to an effort to forge a unique Korean identity within Japanese society which are not tied to the North or the South. As to be expected, *Chosen Soren* disagrees with these efforts claiming that the third way movement paradoxically, threatens Korean identity as reported in an editorial in the *Chosen Soren* sponsored daily newspaper, *Choson Shinbo*:

It is deplorable to see that there is a trend to take a third path which lacks loyalty to either the North nor the South. Chongryun workers must heighten their pride as overseas citizens of the glorious father land led by the Great Leader.

Despite these misgivings, concern over an identity for Koreans who plan to live indefinitely in Japan indicates a generational cohort difference within the Korean resident community in

which sources of identity diverge between the old and young generations . The "third way" represents the increasing disillusionment among younger generations with homeland politics which do not affect their lives in Japan in real terms. As an illustration of its emergence, third generation Korean resident Yi Min Jung's thinking reveals the intricate navigation of citizenship in diaspora and the changing dynamics of her perceived relationship to North and South Korea and Japan.

I met Yi Min Jung at Meiji Gakuin University at a conference entitled "Ethnicity in Japan," of which she was one of the student organizers. As a third year student, Yi was an international relations major who planned to write a thesis on twentieth century Chinese foreign policy. After attending *Chosen Gakko* for five years during elementary and middle school, she switched to a Japanese high school. As a result she is bi-lingual in both Korean and Japanese, an unusual accomplishment for a third generation Korean resident. In the following narratives the transformation of Yi's goals is revealed.

"When my grandfather died, my eldest uncle took over many of his responsibilities in the North Korean association here in Tokyo. My family has always been very involved in North Korean politics. However, my father has tried for many years to break away from most of this activity. He wanted to change his citizenship to the South because he believed that it was not practical to have North Korean citizenship when most of his clients are from South Korea. We finally convinced my grandmother to allow us to change last year. Once we received her permission, it was a very simple process. We only needed to complete an application at the South Korean consulate. I am personally, very happy about this change. It means that I will be able to visit South Korea and possibly, the United States."

Yi explains that as a high school student she had planned follow in the footsteps of many of her family members and work for *Chosen Soren* . She was not encouraged to obtain an "ordinary" job because of her education and age. Besides her political work, she was expected to marry and to do as her mother who raised Yi and her three siblings while at home. Although she was aware of these familial expectations, she decided to work for a

North Korean bank as a clerk after graduating from high school. After a year, Yi decided to quit her job, explaining that while the bank manager had given her many new responsibilities as a testament of faith in her ability, she felt burdened by her family's prominence in North Korean resident political life. She left the bank to attend college where she decided that through her study of international relations, she role as a intermediary between North and South Korea. She explained the motivation for this shift in this way:

"I am majoring in international relations because I feel that I must work toward better communication between North Korea and South Korea. Both countries want to have reunification but there are many obstacles from making this a reality. As a Korean resident in Japan with ties with Chongryun within my own family, I feel that I am in an important position. I would like to be liaison between the two countries. Before I can do this, I think that it is important that I first work in South Korea so I can understand life in the South."

After attending a language program in Seoul for several months, Yi returned to Tokyo. At the end of her fourth year at the university, we met and talked about her plans.

"I have been thinking lately that I would like to enter broadcast journalism. I met the station news manager at NHK recently and he thought I might have some potential in television. I am thinking of enrolling in a broadcasting program. Do you remember when I told you that I wanted to work in South Korea? I found out from my trip to Seoul that this is not possible. While there, I realized that I know nothing about Korean society. I was an outsider, like a tourist. I do not think that I could live there. After this experience, I began to think that I had no right to try to be a liaison between the North and South. Even though I am Korean, I am used to the Japanese ways of doing things. I have to say that this realization was quite a shock. I still think that I can work for the Korean community, but here in Japan, perhaps as a television reporter. I think that through this occupation I can make the media more sensitive to *zainichi* concerns. I can make a difference in that way."

Yi's search for a social niche within the political endeavors of both the North and South reflect the experiences of much of the Korean youth in Japan. As result, a social consciousness has developed within this group to work towards improving life within Japanese society. In contrast to the aggressive protest movements characterized by *Mindan* and the demands of loyalty by *Chosen Soren*, this "third way" seeks to change attitudes and policies by working within Japanese institutions and organization, attempting mutual understanding. Yet, the success of such a approach is dependent on either the manipulation of the cultural categories of difference or the reconfiguration of such constructions of difference. However, more fundamentally, difference, itself, must evolve from a framework of deviance in order for prejudicial treatment towards Korean residents and others to dissipate from Japanese society. Only then can a third way be paved.

### **Migrant Laborers and Ethnicity in Japan**

The issue of ethnicity has only loomed larger for Japan as escalating numbers of international laborers have continued to migrate to high demand Japanese labor markets. Resonant of the colonial era, today's workers no longer only originate from the Korean peninsula but now come from Southeast Asia, South Asia and South America. With respect to these sizable populations, there are conflicting signs as to whether ethnic tolerance is on the rise in Japanese society. While there is certainly a great deal of interest in the world and other cultures as witnessed by the plethora of television programs on various international communities, these productions appear to address Japan's own brand of orientalism, a by-product of latent capitalist purchasing power honing an increasingly complex international palate. However, these acculturative efforts notwithstanding, attitudes towards "ethnics" in one's own backyard has not necessarily improved tolerance.

Congregating in large groups in urban centers, the influx of foreign labor has created ethnic tensions. Iranians, in particular, have come under greater scrutiny by

conservative groups who criticize the ethnic "pollution" of these visitors. In 1992, an estimated 30,000 Iranians were working in Japan. These workers, predominately male, are highly visible due to their weekend gatherings at Yoyogi and Ueno Park in Tokyo. Although the Iranian workers claim that these meetings are only opportunities for social networking when the young people may play recreational sports and exchange information on job openings, many right wing Japanese groups have treated these Iranian workers with suspicion, claiming that they gather to plan illicit activities and exchange information on new ways of evading immigration laws and visa limits. One group called *Taiikosha* that has made these accusations claiming to be defending Japan from "vicious intruders".<sup>4</sup>

Other attacks against the Iranian population in Japan have been levied by a neofascist organization named the "Blue Sky" which utilizes loudspeakers on top of vans to tour the city, bellowing statements such as "If the Iranians don't go home, we'll have no choice but to start killing them" and "Foreigner come to Japan to commit crimes so it is our duty as patriots to make them leave." as well as "They [Iranian laborers] rob convenience stores and molest Japanese women. They have made certain parts of Tokyo forbidden because of crime. They have AIDS."<sup>5</sup>

The National Police Agency report that crimes committed by non-Japanese are no higher than by Japanese. However, the association of the foreigner with crime and deviance has produced articles with headlines such as "Surge of Gaigin Crime in the Streets,"<sup>6</sup> and NHK programs such as "*Kurashi no Journal*," a program discussing the problem of crime committed by foreigners in which footage of Iranians socializing in Yoyogi Park is shown while a narrator describes the higher incidence of rape and murder in Japan.

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<sup>4</sup> *Japan Times*, 2/24/92, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> *Japan Times* 3/24/91, p.2

<sup>6</sup> *Mainichi Shinbum*, 3/24/93, p.1

While the media has been instrumental in racist depiction of foreigners as criminals, there have been changes in this arena. In a special one hour program by NHK (3/3/95), the story of a "nation-less" Filipino infant was aired. The baby borne of a Filipino woman who had migrated to Japan in search of work. The mother had been employed as a "hostess" at one of the many illicit bars in Japan's sex industry. After having relations with a Japanese client with whom she had developed a personal relationship, she gave birth to a baby boy. Soon after she returned to the Philippines, leaving the infant behind in Japan. This was all the information that the Japanese government had of the alleged mother of the infant, unable to find her identity. The abandoned baby was taken under the care of a Episcopalian American missionary couple living in Japan. They applied for Japanese citizenship for the baby. However, the government rejected their application, claiming that because the mother was believed to be Filipino, the baby should have Filipino citizenship. However, since there was no proof, the Filipino government refused to take responsibility for the infant. The case continues to be argued in court.

In addition, there has been increasing awareness of the numbers of babies conceived by sex workers in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia by the large numbers of Japanese businessmen participating on so-called "sex tours". Recently, the Japanese government has been taking steps towards granting citizenship rights to those children who are able to identify Japanese fathers. However, while changes appear to occurring in recognition and accountability of the increasing complex relationships between Japanese and foreigners, these have not occurred without pressure and scrutiny resulting from campaigns such as that of "comfort women" used in the colonial era.

In light of the rapid transnational mobility of labor evident in Japan as elsewhere, the question of racial purity and nationalism seems an anomaly in the age of cyber-communication and globalization. However, the power of these categories of difference are easily demonstrated by the increasing incidents in which violence is rationalized by



these ideals. For Japan where nationalism is an allegory for family and membership is contingent on lineage, the options presented to minority groups such as Korean residents in Japan are limited to selective "forgetting" of a Korean heritage in the act of assimilation or the relegation to a position of subordination.

Answering the question of which of the models of ethnicity and difference described earlier best explains Korean residents in Japan is difficult because these theories of primordialism and boundary approach are not mutually exclusive. The boundary approach is critical in impetus for self-consciousness. For example, it has been said of Korea that before colonialization by Japan, there was no real need to define itself. Yet, faced with the threat of usurpation by an outsider, the nation began to recognize itself, to craft itself. This is not to state that reflection produced by the contesting of boundaries is sufficient in fully explaining the nature of ethnic identification. Rather, the approach of primordialism in its emphasis on shared history, customs and beliefs provides the basis of collective affiliation. For Korean residents who attempt to forge an identity situated in Japan, categories of race and difference, fundamental to the ways in which Japanese view themselves, are challenges to a model of homogeneity in which "ethnicity" is coupled with deviance.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

#### *Dedale*

*Pioche! enjoignait la virole  
Saigne! repetait le couteau  
Et l'on m'arrachait la memoire  
On martyrisait mon chaos*

*Ceux qui m'avaient aime  
Pus deteste, puis oublie  
Se penchaient a nouveau sur moi  
Certains pleuraient, d'autres etaient contents.*

*Soeur froide, herbe de l'hiver,  
En marchant, je t'ai vue grandir,  
Plus haute que mes ennemis  
Plus verte que mes souvenirs.*

*-Rene Char*

As a first grader I was frequently teased by a little European American boy who would sing racial epithets such as "Chi-nese, Jap-a-nese, dirty knees, look at these!" flashing his bum at me on cue. Although I defiantly told him that I was neither Chinese nor Japanese, but Korean, he retorted that there was no such thing. Desperately wanting to prove that Koreans existed both to him as well as to myself, I asked my father to show me where Korea was on our model globe. Memorizing its location, the next day I dragged my childhood nemesis to the school world map and pointed to the exact spot my father had shown me. Thinking that this would end his song and dance, I was speechless when he glibly responded, "So."

Identity based on ties to concrete locations in space are an increasingly anachronistic concept. Modernity has contributed to the changing dimensions of time and space which are more characterized by fluidity and transmutability than any inherent values. Although

human beings and actions are necessarily embodied and engaged in concrete moments in time and particular points in space, increasingly experiences are contingent on events, real or imagined, of distant eras and locations. As the telecommunication giants tell us, "our world is getting smaller" and our positions are constantly in flux as boundaries dissolve and reappear in irresolute configurations.

The rise of capitalism and the globalization of political economies has accelerated these changes. As a result, mobility and global exchange has altered relationships to place and time and complicated measures of distance. This is elucidated by Giddens (1994):

Globalization represents the formation of social ties and indefinite space-time spans, whose transforming properties are evident on an intentional as well as extensional basis. In other words, one of the most distinctive features of the contemporary period is the burgeoning of complexities between the global and the local, where "the local" includes not just the regional locality but intimate aspects of our personal lives (1994: xiii).

Global mobility has altered concepts of the "local" and complicated questions of where are the "here" and the "there"? Increasing migration of labor has rendered communities in diaspora commonplace, challenging traditional notions of the nation and nationalism. No longer are places of birth, residence, or death markers of who and what we are as illicited in the following quote:

There can be no recovery of an authentic cultural homeland. In a world that is increasingly characterized by exile, migration and diaspora, with all the consequences of unsettling and hybridization, there can be no place for such absolutism of the pure and authentic (Morley and Robins, 1993:27)

For first generation Korean residents in Japan, identity is produced through negotiations of the transmutable categories of the "here" and "there". This dichotomy not

only refers to the spatial dimensions of nationality, citizenship, and colonial subject, but also the temporal dimensions of past, present and future. These orientations intersect and transect one another in which categories of foreigner and citizen are legitimized by memories and the construction of a recognizable past. As nation is inherently a concept based on history, nationalism is one in which demands that history is claimed as one's own. Thus, in modernity where traditional markers of identity fade, claims to memory emerge as signs of authenticity.

Contention arises in the inevitable case of conflicting stakes on the past. The state, retaining its power over the production of "truth", are the most frequent champions in the bout over history; the defeated being those who are dispersed and unheard. Diaspora populations defined by their fragmentation, but conscious of their shifting identities are often preoccupied with linkages to an acknowledged past in forging a sense of self in the present. It is this phenomena which spawns the resurrection of Masada and the myth of the hero in the late Kim Il Sung. In an era when social categories of identity are increasingly characterized by their multiplicity and evanescence, social memory serves to anchor group and individual identity to places in time and times in space.

In Japan's insistence on homogeneity as integral to its national character, memories of colonialism inherent to Korean residents' identity have been successfully thwarted. However, with recent admissions by the Japanese government of colonial practices, conflicting renditions of memory have contributed to slow changes in Japanese society. Reforms such as the repeal of the fingerprinting law for Korean residents as well as steps towards the rewriting of colonial history in school textbooks indicate the beginnings of recognition for Korean residents. Through such recognition and admittance in history, Korean residents may become included in the concept of the Japanese nation as a whole.

However, for many first generation elderly Koreans, inclusion is not a formidable goal. Through life history narratives, elderly Koreans incorporate an orientation of having

come place and another time. For many, assimilation into Japanese society usurps this integral framework of life experiences. Memories are incorporated and crafted into life stories in which suffering and hardship are linked to Japanese colonialism and its legacy in discriminatory practices. Identity in late life is contingent on Japan as colonizer which is conscripted on the aged bodies of Korean elderly residents.

Beyond the national struggle over ownership of the past is the growing conflict in generational memory between the oldest old and second and third generation Korean residents. The disjuncture between first generation memories of colonialism and second and third generation "amnesia" has influenced their different vantage points in understanding and functioning in Japanese society. Beyond age cohort effects in life experiences, the utilization of the past differs across generational lines. For first generation Korean residents "home" continues to be tied to the Korean peninsula, that is, an undivided Korea. Conceptions of North and South Korean nation states are rejected for an imagining of a pure space identified in ideas of Korea suspended in time. As opposed to younger generations, elderly Koreans focus on the homeland and the idea of a "homecoming". Thus, for elderly Koreans, the gaze is perpetually "there", despite the tacit knowledge that the envisioned homecoming will never be fulfilled.

In an increasingly unrecognizable present, memories are continually recalled and reconstituted in response to the shifting parameters of one's social environment. For individuals in diaspora, social memory emerges in the forging of collective identity and self-concept. In the aging process, memories throughout the lifecourse are linked into narratives which simultaneously reflect cohesion, conflict, resolution and ambiguity in describing one's life experiences. Life histories are not generated into neat packages of life's "truths" illuminated in old age. Rather, these stories reflect a site, a position, a location in late life from which the past is gleaned and self-representation is constructed.

I have never met my first grade playground buddy since those tumultuous days of self-doubt and existential angst at Finch Elementary School. Having regained my speech since being rebuffed, I would like another chance to prove that Koreans exist. This time instead of pointing at a map, I would point to myself. That should be enough.

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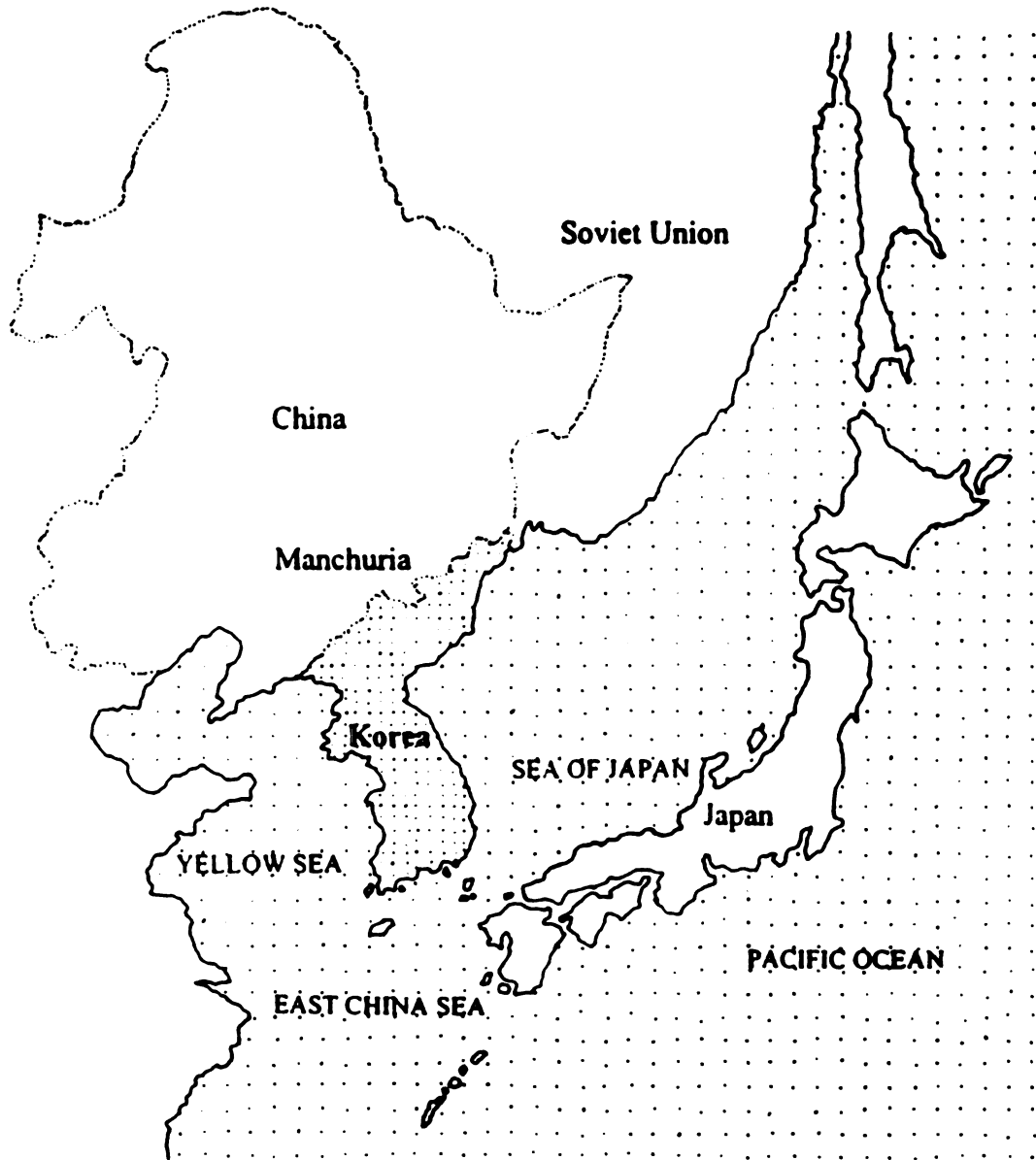
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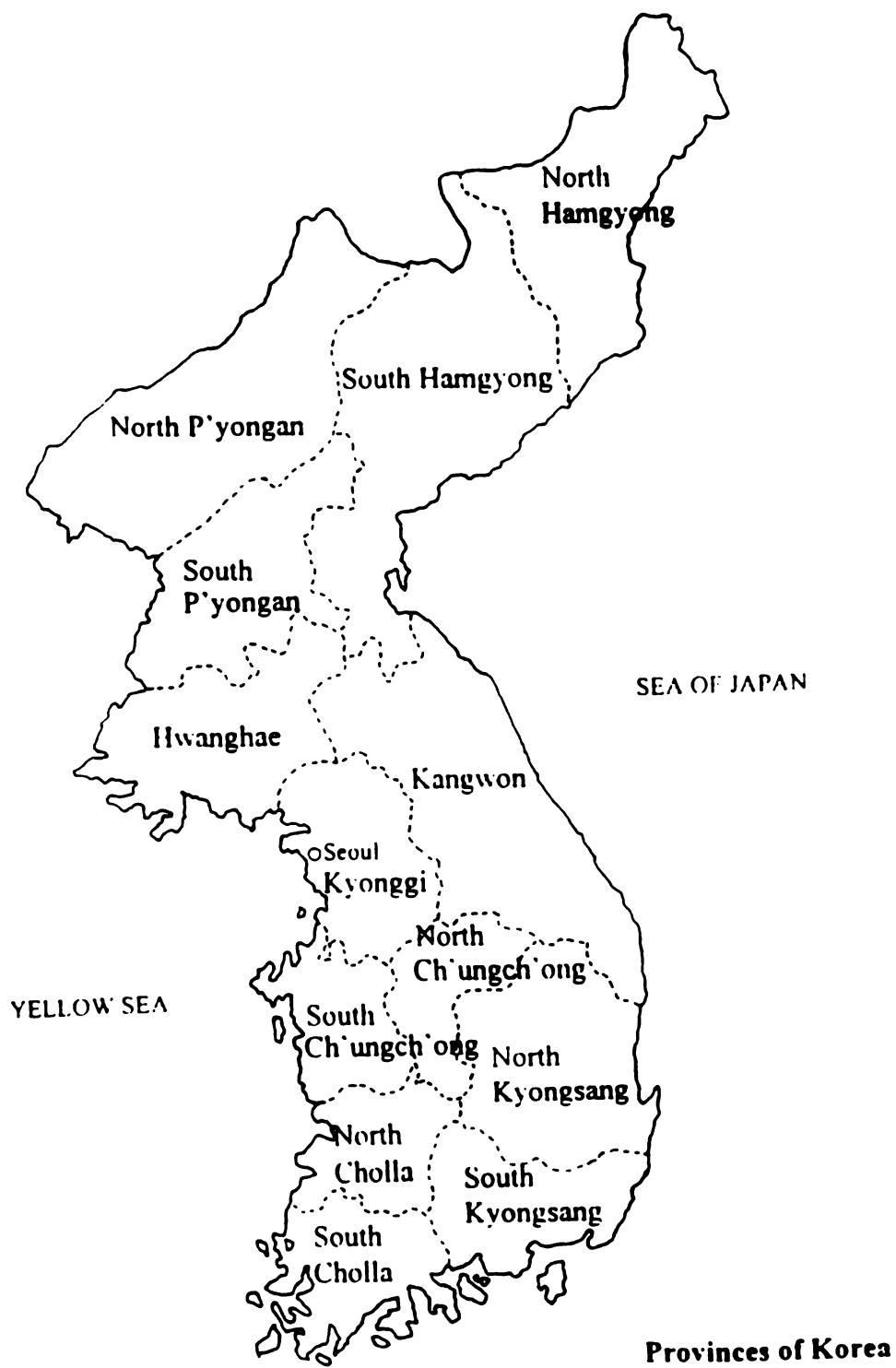
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APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B





## APPENDIX C

### Place of Birth of Koreans in Japan as of 1938

<u>Province</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Kyongsang-Namdo	300,163	37.5
Kyongsang-Bukdo	184,651	23.1
Cholla-Namdo	165,125	20.6
Cholla-Bukdo	48,858	6.1
Ch'ungch'ong-Namdo	28,751	3.6
Ch'ungch'ong-Bukdo	22,524	2.8
Kyonggi-do	14,433	1.8
Kangwong-do	8,312	1.0
P'yong-an Namdo	7,824	1.0
Hamkyong-Namdo	5,884	0.7
Whanghae-do	5,643	0.7
P'yong-an-Bukdo	4,666	0.6
Hankyong-Bukdo	3,044	0.4
Total	799,878	100.0

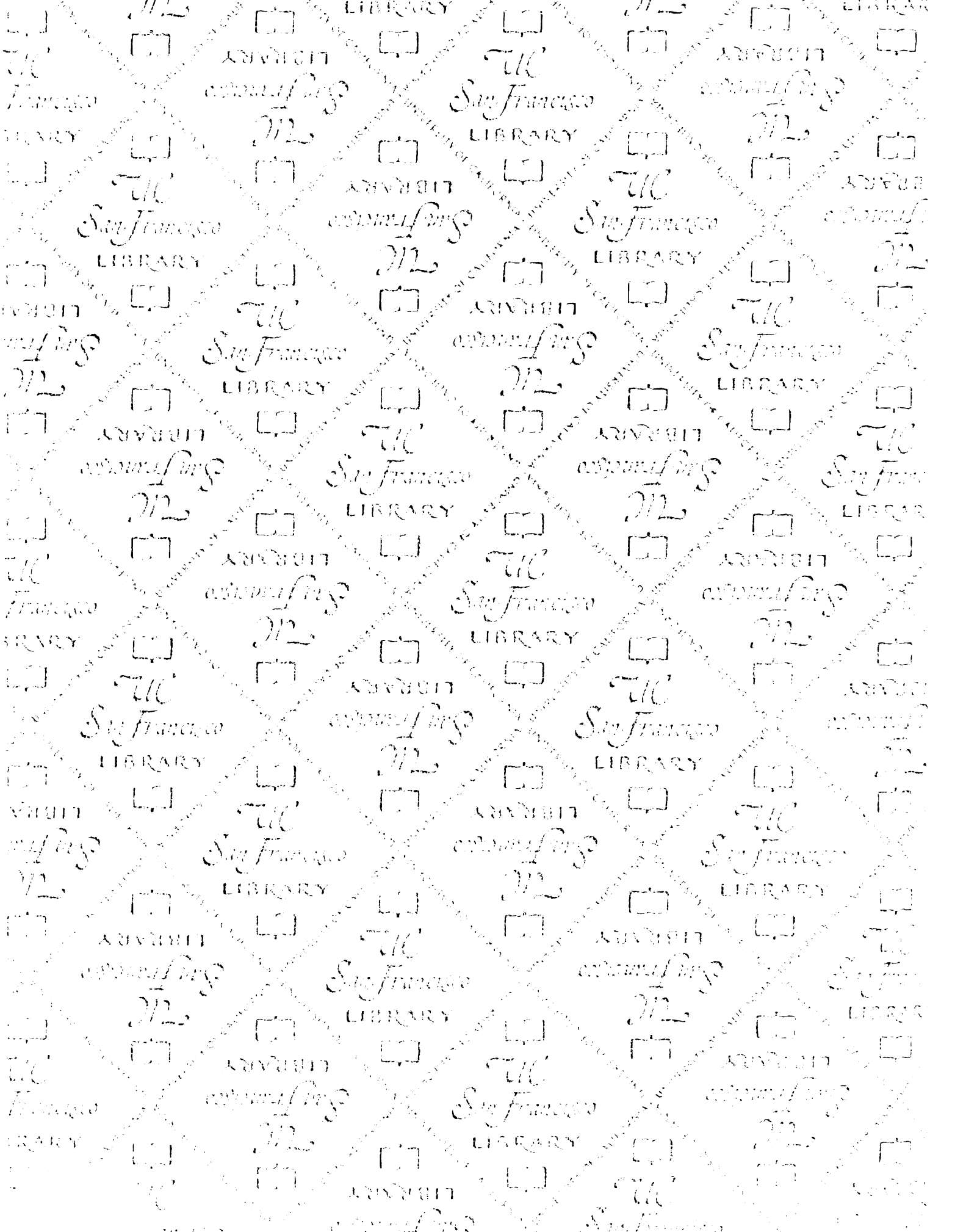
(Naimusho, 1938)

APPENDIX D

Korean Immigrants to Japan from 1909 to 1945

<u>Year</u>	<u>Korean population in Japan</u>	<u>Conscripted laborers or military draftees</u>
1909	790	---
1910	---	---
1915	3,989	---
1916	5,638	---
1917	14,501	---
1918	22,262	---
1919	28,272	---
1920	30,175	---
1921	35,876	---
1922	59,865	---
1923	80,617	---
1924	120,238	---
1925	133,710	---
1926	148,502	---
1927	175,911	---
1928	243,328	---
1929	276,031	---
1930	298,091	---
1931	318,212	---
1932	390,543	---
1933	466,217	---
1934	537,576	---
1935	625,678	---
1936	690,501	---
1937	735,689	---
1938	799,865	---
1939	961,591	38,700
1940	1,190,444	54,944
1941	1,469,230	43,493
1942	1,625,054	112,007
1943	1,882,456	122,237
1944	1,936,843	280,303
1945	unknown	160,427

(Naimusho, 1945)



# For reference

Not to be taken  
from the room.

