PAN-JAPAN

The International Journal of the
Japanese Diaspora

Spring/Fall 2016 Volume 12, Numbers 1 & 2

Special Issue

Conjecturing Communities: Ebbs and Flows of Japanese America

Edited by Lane Ryo Hirabayashi

http://lilt.ilstu.edu/pan-japan

PAN-JAPAN, Volume 12, Numbers 1 & 2, 2016

Special Issue

Conjecturing Communities: Ebbs and Flows of Japanese America

Lane Ryo Hirabayashi
guest editor

Table of Contents

4: Zainichi Koreans [Koreans from Japan] in the U.S.: Negotiating Multiple Displacement and Statelessness

Kyung Hee Ha

Haunting Zainichiness

It was Spring 2005 when anti-Japanese demonstrations were organized in several cities across China and Korea in response to Japan's attempt to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.[1] Sadako, a second-generation Korean woman from Japan in her 50's, was going to have lunch with her Japanese friends in the San Francisco Bay Area[2]:

> That morning, one of my friends called me and said that we should not go to the Korean restaurant as we originally planned because of the anti-Japanese sentiment. She was afraid of being harassed by the local Koreans and said "Let's go to a Vietnamese restaurant instead." She also kindly warned me by saying "You should be careful too." Ha ha.

Laugh. That was all Sadako could do. Laugh at the fact that her friend could not possibly imagine that the person she was talking to was actually herself Korean. Laugh at herself because she still could not bring herself to expose her Korean background to her Japanese friends even thirty years after had she left Japan.

According to the 2010 census, there were 1,304,286 people of Japanese heritage (of which 763,325, or 58.5% classified themselves Japanese alone) and 1,706,822 people of Korean heritage. In the year 2012, 1,663 Japanese, 13,790 South Koreans and 19 North Koreans naturalized as American citizens.[3] Sadako and others that I will introduce in this chapter do not fall into these statistical categories neatly because they are ethnically Korean, born and raised in Japan, and usually hold South Korean passports at the time of immigration. This chapter discusses the experiences of these "invisible" Koreans from Japan, generations of postcolonial exiles, also

known as "Zainichi Koreans." "Zainichi" literally translates as "residing in Japan" in Japanese language, however, it means more than one's physical location in Japan or a mere identity category. The term represents one's subject position as the marginalized within the Japanese context. As narratives in this chapter reveal, Sadako's frustration is nothing unique, but typically experienced amongst contemporary Zainichi Korean immigrants in the U.S.

Indeed, being physically transplanted outside of Japan does not mean that one stops being Zainichi in a figurative sense. Zainichiness haunts Koreans after they migrate to a new host country. The idea of haunting is useful here. In her book, *Ghostly Matters*, Avery Gordon (2008) examines the absent presence that is haunted by the legacy of slavery and other systems of oppression and extermination. She states, "The ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life". Through haunting, the ghost reveals the past in the present, by traveling across temporal and spatial boundaries. In this chapter, I examine the ways in which the ghosts of imperialisms "hidden apartheid" (Hicks, 1997) in, Japan and experience of multiple displacements, haunt Zainichi Koreans in the U.S.. I focus on the second- and third-generation Zainichi Koreans who were born and primarily raised in Japan and eventually immigrated to the United States. While in Japan, being "at home," they felt alienated politically, socially and culturally, and experienced the sense of displacement. How do they gain agency in dealing with their homelessness and contested meaning of citizenship once they leave "home"? What do Zainichi Koreans carry as they immigrate to the U.S. where they are further marginalized as "twice minorities" (Espiritu, 1989)? How do their subjectivities and identities as Zainichi Koreans change when they start residing outside of Japan, specifically in the United States? Put simply, what does it mean to be a Zainichi when they are no longer literally Zainichi?

To begin to tackle with these questions, I first briefly discuss Zainichi Korean immigrants' attempts to find home in existing

Korean and Japanese communities in the United States. Then, I will discuss the experience of Zainichi Koreans, with particular focus on why and how they construct the U.S. as benevolent in direct contrast with what they have experienced in Japan. Finally, I examine their "home making" practices and efforts that do not necessarily take a form of "full inclusion" into a singular nation-state or geographical space –a critical antithesis to a normalization approach to a stateless subject. As a way of conclusion of this chapter, I will indicate some of the future directions I would like to explore, as there needs to be more investigation and theorization of Zainichi Korean experiences in the United States.

There are several ways in which Koreans in Japan deal with the sense of displacement in the country where they were born and raised. Some choose naturalization and others choose repatriation to the Korean peninsula. Still others fight for their rights as an ethnic minority without naturalizing as Japanese nationals. Interviews that I conducted with twenty-four Koreans from Japan who currently live or have lived in the United States reveal that racism, sexism and classism intersect and lead a presumably small number of Zainichi Koreans to decide to immigrate to a new host country in which they hope to cultivate the sense of belonging that they have never had before.

Part of the Korean Diaspora, Apart from the Korean Diasporic Community

While the majority of the interviewees initially came to the United States as students or spouses of American citizens, some of them came through the sponsorship of their family members who had already immigrated to the United States from South Korea. Specifically, for Rika (3rd generation female in her 30's), her father's sister who immigrated as a nurse in the 1970s sponsored Rika's family's immigration in 1984. Similarly, Kwangja (2nd generation female in her 60's) had her father's brother in Hawaii sponsor her visa. Masato (3rd generation male in his 20's) moved to Orange County

when he was a sophomore in high school through his uncle from South Korea.

These examples indicate that Korean immigration from Japan is not always an isolated event from the Korean immigration from South Korea. Rather, some of Zainichi Koreans have kept strong ties with their families in South Korea, which eventually became a critical instrument for their immigration. It is remarkable that despite their displacement from the Korean peninsula, some of the Zainichi Korean immigrants have become part of a larger Korean chain migration to the United States. This suggests that the triangular connections between the Korean Peninsula, Japan and the United States are maintained and lived through the experience of Zainichi Korean immigrants.

Borrowing the phrase of scholars Lavina Shankar and Rajini Srikanth (1998), I describe Zainichi Korean immigrants as a part of the Korean diaspora, and yet apart from the Korean diasporic communities in the United States. Some of my interviewees reported their unpleasant interactions with Korean immigrants and Korean Americans. For example, Masato talked about his experience at a Korean church-gatekeeper for Korean communities in the U.S.[4].

> At first people thought I was cool because I was from Japan and I spoke Japanese, but soon after they lost interest in me. One day, one of the church members was trying to test my "loyalty" to Korea by invoking the recent dispute over *Dokdo* island (or *Takeshima* in Japanese) between South Korea and Japan.

Masato and others stated that they felt that their authenticity is always being checked and what it means to be Korean is determined and regulated by Koreans from Korea or Korean Americans who consider themselves culturally and linguistically more authentic.[5] In diasporic Korean communities, Zainichi Koreans are seen as not "Korean enough" culturally, linguistically, politically and ideologically because of the pressure of assimilation they experienced in Japan and thus made to feel alienated.

However, at the same time, the Japanese immigrant community can only be helpful to a certain extent because it cannot address critical issues, such as re-entry permit to Japan and retaining Japanese permanent residency, that Zainichi Koreans outside of Japan are confronted with. Additionally, Kwangja (2nd generation female in her 60's) and others mentioned that they have experienced and witnessed discriminatory treatment against Zainichi Koreans by Japanese in the United States–an indicator of the thriving racism against Koreans in the diasporic Japanese community. Despite the fact that Koreans from Japan share a language and cultural background with Japanese, they do not fully fit into the Japanese community either.

Some of my interviewees regard the pan-ethic label "Asian" as a viable alternative to having to choose between Japanese and Korean or being rejected by both. However, this does not mean that they take on a new Asian/Asian American identity that is vastly accepted in U.S. society because such a label in effect homogenizes and fails to acknowledge differences and diversities within the Asian groups. For Zainichi Koreans, it becomes extremely difficult to acknowledge and celebrate their unique history of being born as an ethnic minority in the former colonizer's country and experiencing multiple displacements, both of which make important part of who they are today. Due to the lack of space and recognition, it is not surprising that the Zainichi Korean immigrants, who chose to immigrate to a new host country, did not gain a sense of belonging, and continued to feel alienated. Although they hoped that their initial feeling of alienation would be cured by leaving Japan for a new country that they believed to represent "freedom and equality," they are in fact made to realize that there is no remedy for their homelessness. The fact of being an ethnic minority and complete "stranger" no matter where they are is the only thing that has been consistent in their life as interviews with Junho and other Zainichi Korean immigrants indicate. Their statelessness also contributes to the way in which they are rendered vulnerable and made to feel insignificant as human beings.

Construction of United States as Benevolent

> I realized that somehow I felt relieved when I arrived to Los Angeles, where no single racial/ethnic group exceeded more than half of the total population. Being minority was nothing special here. I felt like I didn't need to be nervous any more when, for example, I say my name or show my passport. I was surprised that I felt that way because I believed that I had never felt any pressure from being a minority. But I realized that I was actually feeling pressure on a daily basis while I lived in Japan.
>
> Sejin, 2nd generation male in his 30's

While Zainichi Korean immigrants continue to feel extraneous and vulnerable, it is also true that they come to feel "relieved" about being a minority in the United States as Sejin's recollection reveals. It was the day he discovered the hidden fear of being a minority that he had always felt, but never realized. Many other interviewees also said that they felt more comfortable being a minority in the United States because of the larger population of minorities –a direct result of the imperialism that the United States seeks to forget –and the recognition of issues related to these groups. In this section, I discuss how the United States is constructed as a benevolent nation that tolerates different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and cultural practices. I am particularly interested in the ways in which my interviewees narrate the United States as a liberal democratic country in explicit and specific comparisons with their experiences in Japan.

The belief in the United States is a liberal democratic society has to do with the fact it employs the *jus soli* (nationality by birthplace) principle in which any individual, who is born in American territory automatically becomes a citizen as a birth right regardless of her/his parents' country of origin. It is very striking to Zainichi Koreans who are rendered "alien" in the country they are born because the Japanese government employs the *jus sanguinis* (nationality by blood) principle, which requires one to have at least one parent who is Japanese national to be able to claim Japanese nationality as a birth-

right. In other words, second- and third-generation Koreans born and raised in Japan are not automatically given Japanese nationality by being born in Japanese territory. Conversely, children with a Japanese parent, regardless of their birthplace, are considered Japanese by virtue of blood. Sadako, Rika and others see the *jus soli* principle as one of many examples that show how liberal U.S. society is to accept anyone who is born in its territory as citizen, regardless of her or his racial and ethnic origin. Citizenship based on the *jus soli* principle has its roots in the liberal idea of the Fourteenth Amendment that provided a broader definition of citizenship and allowed slaves and their descendants to become citizens with entitlements to constitutional rights. In other words, this purportedly liberal Amendment is the product of the violent institution of slavery.

Being a citizen does not only mean that one possesses civil rights such as voting rights, but also the right to have the protection of those rights under the constitution. Rika (3rd generation female in her 30's) finds it extremely powerful to have laws that protect individual rights against racism:

> I think that it's easier to live in the United States...[even though] there are a lot of things about this country that is not really minority friendly, or that a lot of it are *(sic)* dominated by white people. More so in other countries that I've been to, for example, Japan, Korea, or even some parts in Europe. I think at least you feel like that law is there to protect your individual rights. I think America has become more politically correct.... I think I have more freedom here. I think coming to America, a lot of things happened, but in the end, I think that it's given me the sense of identity that I am proud to be actually Korean with my Japanese background.

Rika believes that citizenship and constitutional protection in fact grant her the right to embrace her ancestral and cultural backgrounds, the right she was never allowed to have while living in Japan. Similarly, Jinsuk (3rd generation male in his 20's) compares the minority situation between Japan and the United States and points

out a critical difference in the way that racism is treated in each country:

> [In Japan] I always felt it [racism] was hidden like people wouldn't acknowledge.... In America, it's opposite of Japan.... People say there's so much racism here. It might be true, but at the same time, at least it's acknowledged and we see it when it's happening.

Although both Rika and Jinsuk are aware of the issues in American society and their own positionality as a racialized minority, they still feel more comfortable in the United States where they feel racism is acknowledged and their individual rights are protected by laws and being "American" does not necessarily seem to mean the total negation of their ethnic and cultural heritage.

Sadako (2nd generation female in her 50's), on the other hand, repeatedly emphasized that her immigration was absolutely the right decision, with more explicitly reflecting on gender:

> I'm so glad that I'm not in Japan. If I were still in Japan, I would have just become a boring middle-aged woman. Sexism there was really severe you know. I also think I would have still been stigmatized about my Korean background and would have continued to hide that I'm Korean.... Here in the U.S. you can't discriminate based on sex, race, or even age because it is a country of immigrants.

First of all, it is important to note that gender was one of the leading factors for many Zainichi Korean female immigrants to decide to leave Japan for an allegedly more egalitarian society as Sadako's narrative indicates. According to a 2004 survey[6] that was conducted among 818 Korean women in Japan, more than 60% reported that they were unable to continue their education after completing compulsory schooling (K-9) mainly because of their expected gender role that did not require higher education. Since they face traditional gender role obligations in the patriarchal Korean community, the sexism they experienced was more severe than in the broader Japanese society. As

is the case with many communities of color, gender issues were not addressed for a long time in the Zainichi Korean community because "racism" was regarded as a higher priority over any other issue. That is to say, as many Zainichi Korean feminist scholars have pointed out, while Korean men were denouncing Japanese racism, they failed to address issues of physical and verbal abuse against women in their community. Therefore, it is understandable that Korean women, who experienced inequality and oppression on the basis of their ethnic origin and gender simultaneously, sought a society perceived as more liberal and equal, such as the United States.

Secondly, it is remarkable how Sadako and many others referred to the United States as a "country of immigrants"—an ideology that conveniently obliterates the history of plundering of land and resources, massacre of the indigenous population and extermination of their languages and cultures. As the United States absorbs populations into its empire, it disguises itself as a benevolent savior for immigrants and refugees who are always already racialized and gendered before their migration through colonialism, war and neocolonialism. The narrative of America as a country of immigrants creates space and hope for Zainichi Koreans that they are finally allowed to be "proper" subjects in a country thousands of miles away from their home where they continued to be denied and dispossessed. One of the factors that helped them reaffirm the idea of a liberal democracy is through experiencing America's "tolerance" toward differences. In the following section, I will discuss how the experiences around one's name can be perceived as something that attests to the society's im/maturity toward differences.

(Re)naming as Liberatory Practice

Many of my interviewees raised the use of name as one of the significant ways through which they felt "liberated" and experienced U.S. benevolence in a tangible form as a first-hand experience. Naming is one of the most important visible elements for Zainichi Koreans to assert or hide their Korean identity. The major-

ity of Zainichi Koreans have at least two names, the official Korean name and Japanese alias. However, approximately 90% use the latter in everyday life to avoid discrimination and prejudices according to the 2000 Mindan survey. The tradition of using Japanese aliases has a long history with its roots in the 1939 so-called "Change of Name Law" that was applied to all Korean colonial subjects of the Japanese empire, under which Koreans were pressured to adopt Japanese-sounding aliases. It was part of the assimilation policy that the colonial government enforced on Koreans, along with the prohibition of Korean language use in public. Even after Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 and the "Change of Name Law" no longer exists today, it is still common for Koreans in Japan to use Japanese aliases due to social pressure. In other words, Koreans in Japan continue to regulate themselves because they are aware of the social and economic consequences of using Korean names.

Among the twenty-four interviewees, there were few who had used their Korean names while living in Japan. All of them said that they found it a great deal easier to use their Korean names in the United States because no one gives them awkward reactions. Haneul (3rd generation male in his 30's) clearly remembers how "relieved" (his word) he felt about his name:

> I liked the fact that I can use my name without being made to feel strange. When I say my name, "Kim," in Japan, people would react like "What? Kim?" and here, when I say my name, people are like "Okay, you're Kim." No one questions or makes me feel awkward. I felt so relieved.

On the other hand, the majority of those who used to use Japanese aliases to avoid discrimination in everyday interactions went through a "name change" upon relocating to the United States, i.e., discarding their Japanese alias and using the original Korean name. This decision has to do partly with their experience of trans-

national traveling. Crossing national borders require many different moments in which one is required to use her or his official name no matter how foreign it may sound and despite the fact she or he has never used the name before. Because most Koreans in Japan use Japanese alias in their everyday life, the process of obtaining a passport and visa–creating documents with their Korean name and being interviewed in that name–can be a wake-up call for the many to become aware of their Korean background for the first time. Even before their actual immigration takes place, some kind of Korean-ization tends to occur, and this can be one of the reasons why they decide to discard their Japanese alias and begin to use the Korean name in the United States. Junko Kaneda (3rd generation female in her 20's) says:

> My parents went by the last name Kaneda and called my sister and me by our Japanese names since we were raised to hide Korean identity when we were in Japan so that my sister and I wouldn't be discriminated again or picked on in school.... When we moved to Hawaii, we ditched the Kaneda and became Kim.... I thought it was neat. I kept the first name Japanese though just cause I don't really relate to Sunja (Junko's Korean name) since no one ever called me that. But having the Korean last name was cool because it was like, "Ah –so we're open about this now and people here won't care."

As Haneul and Junko's accounts reveal, being able to use their Korean names (more easily) signifies not simply having a choice of a name that one uses, but the fact one can actually be "open" about being Korean without being made to feel awkward. They think that "people here won't care" what name they use and what and who they are. They feel "liberated" about being Korean through gaining the right to use their Korean name, something that they were never allowed without negative consequences in Japan, but the allegedly benevolent American society affords them. In this way, we can observe that the already existing idea that the United States is a liberal democratic country is successfully reinforced among Zainichi Korean immigrants.

As a result, all of my interviewees talked somewhat favorably of American society over Japanese society. However, this did not mean that all of them actively sought to become U.S. citizens by discarding other affiliations, specifically South Korean nationality and Japanese permanent residency. Contrarily, the majority still held South Korean nationality and Japanese permanent residency at the time of the interview. For some, it was simply because naturalization does not appear as an urgent necessity because they can live and work legally in the United States with a visa or permanent residency. For others, it was a strong political statement to reject full inclusion as a citizen by any single nation-state. Instead, they intentionally maintain their (incomplete) affiliations with multiple nation-states.

Becoming an American for Convenience

> But I'm applying for the citizenship. But I don't really think that's a contradiction. There is a pragmatism that I didn't really have before. In the U.S., even if you become a citizen, our connections with Korea or Japan are not going to be jeopardized. But becoming Japanese national is just unthinkable. I go back to Japan regularly. My family is there. My grandparents are buried there. I want to be able to go back to Japan infinitely, but I would rather die [than] if I become a Japanese national.
>
> Yuka, 3rd generation female in her 30's

While living in Japan, none of my interviewees actively sought naturalization as a solution to ending racism because they were aware that the process required total assimilation, a legacy from the colonial, era or simply did not see the urgent necessity to do so. However, some of my interviewees after living in the United States started to view naturalization as an effective way to deal with their statelessness and the sense of being an ultimate stranger. Such shift in thinking about naturalization is strongly supported by the belief that naturalization as an American does not mean the negation of ethnic origin or cultural heritage. However, when asked directly why they decided to natural-

ize, all of them said it was out of convenience. Sadako (2nd generation female in her 50's) is among those who chose naturalization as a means to deal with alienation not because she blindly believed in the benevolence of the American society, but primarily for "practical reasons":

> You know I've become American. But it wasn't because I wanted to become an American, but for practical reasons. In reality, I live here and will probably live here for the rest of my life. If that's the case, I thought I should make it easier for me to go visit Japan. I don't have a strong ethnic identity.... But Japan's different. We were finger printed like criminals. When I had to give my fingerprints for alien registration, I didn't question it, but now I think back and resent what I had to go through and again think Japan is such a brutal country.... Having become U.S. citizen, I can vote for the first time in my life. I am happiest about that more than anything.

Similarly, Rika (3rd generation female in her 30's) names voting rights and the freedom of mobility with an American passport as main reasons why she thought becoming a U.S. citizen was practical:

> I've been here for the most of my life and I'm paying taxes too. There's no reason that I don't become a citizen.... Voting rights are another thing too.
>
> When I went back to Japan for the first time after eleven years, I had lost my permanent residency there and had to apply for a tourist visa to visit my own family. That made me mad and sad at the same time. I was like, "Why do I have to obtain visa to go to the country where I was born?" That was when I decided to become a U.S. citizen, so I can visit Japan without having to worry about a visa (partly author's translation).

For many who have lived in the United States for twenty or thirty years, it is likely that they had to give up their Japanese permanent residency at some point because it was an extreme financial burden to return to Japan and renew it every year prior to 1995

and every four years after that. It was not until March, 2006 that South Korean nationals were allowed to visit Japan for 90 days or less without a tourist visa. Before then, all South Korean nationals, whether they were born in Japan or not, had to obtain a tourist visa –the inconvenience and source of frustration expressed by Rika and other interviewees who had lost Japanese permanent residency. On the contrary, U.S. nationals were not required to have a tourist visa to Japan for 90 days or less, which in itself reflects how powerful U.S. imperialism, and hence a U.S. passport, is in the world–the "convenience" that Sadako and others talk about.

Although both Sadako and Rika, like the majority of my interviewees, claimed that they prefer living in the United States because they think racism, sexism, and other structures of oppression are relatively gentle, or at least recognized as proper issues to be dealt with unlike in Japan, the two central reasons that directly influenced their decision to naturalize were for practical reasons. The reasons were because 1) citizenship allows them to enjoy full civil rights, specifically voting rights, which they think can give them a sense of belonging as a recognized full member of the society, and 2) American passports enable them to visit Japan more easily particularly after losing the permanent residency in Japan. These two reasons at glance seem to contradict with each other in the way that the former is a condition for Zainichi Koreans to feel emplaced within the boundaries of the U.S. nation-state, while the latter enables to them to travel across the U.S. borders, specifically to Japan. It implies that they regard having ties with Japan as a critical element for them to continue to have Zainichi Korean identity while they are no more Zainichi (residing in Japan) in a literal sense.

These two aspects of "convenience" that primarily led Sadako and Rika to naturalization are essential to dealing with statelessness and the sense of alienation. It did not seem that Sadako, Rika, and others who have become U.S. citizens had a naïve faith in citizenship and its promise of inclusion that Lisa Lowe (1996), Yen Le Espiritu (2003) and others have critiqued. Rather, their narratives reveal that

becoming U.S. citizen has a broader implication for Zainichi Koreans in the way it kills two birds with one stone. In other words, U.S. citizenship allows them to overcome the sense of alienation in *and* beyond the U.S. context by providing legal rights in the U.S. where they currently reside as well as means for easier travels to Japan, connections with which remain critical to their identity as Zainichi Koreans today. Again, the fact that a U.S. passport functions almost like a free-pass itself speaks to its imperial and hegemonic presence in the world. As I stated earlier, Zainichi Korean interviewees take the critical standpoint on the legitimacy of the U.S as a nation-state.

Negotiating the Myth of U.S. as Benevolent

> Honestly, I don't consider the U.S. as a legitimate nation.
> Yuka, 3rd generation female in her 30's

> No matter where I go, I am an ethnic minority. I am homeless.
> Seokyung, 3rd generation in his 30's

The U.S empire has expanded its territory through conquest, colonizing, and war, and has "differentially incorporated" colonized and racialized bodies into its territory. Yuka challenges the legitimacy of the United States as a nation–as a "nation of benevolence and freedom" –because she, having being born and living as a stateless person, is able to see the violence of a nation-state system that Espiritu addresses. Similarly, Seokyung becomes aware of the limitations and contradictions of the promise of inclusion that does not realize social, class, and cultural equality, but rather functions as a disguise to obscure the structural racism and inequality.

However, this knowledge does not always discourage the Zainichi Korean immigrants from acquiring U.S. citizenship because they think it can still benefit them–gaining a means to go back to Japan more easily and a means to claim their rights as the cases of Sadako, Rika, and others reveal. Those who have become U.S. citi-

zens did so not because they believed in full social inclusion through naturalization, but because they found it useful to deal with the lack of citizenship and freedom of mobility. On the one hand, they gain legal and juridical equality through citizenship. On the other hand, they gain freedom of mobility through American passports to avoid being confined in the country that continues to racialize and alienate them, as well as to maintain their ties with Japan. Especially for those who had lost Japanese permanent residency, becoming a U.S. citizen appears rather out of necessity to keep their freedom of mobility (specifically the easier re-entry to Japan) than simply a choice to have more legal statuses.

As discussed above, it is the belief that the U.S. is relatively liberal that allows Rika to be "proud to be actually Korean with my Japanese background". Because their "connections with Korea or Japan are not going to be jeopardized" (Yuka), this allows the choice of naturalization to become available to some Zainichi Koreans. The connections with Korea and Japan are not just about maintaining language and cultural practices while residing in the United States, but also about remittance, communication with family and friends, and occasional/regular visits. Zainichi Korean immigrants strive not to lose these connections. For them to maintain the ties with Japan where they were born and raised and where many of their family members reside, it often requires a U.S. passport, especially for those who have lost Japanese permanent residency, because it is almost impossible to regain the permanent residency in Japan once it is lost. It does not necessarily mean that they actually make frequent visits to Japan once they obtain U.S. passport. Rather, the fact that they know they *can* go back to Japan any time they want perhaps makes them feel the stronger ties with Japan. In a way, it seems that the U.S. citizenship grants Zainichi Korean immigrants agency to embrace and maintain their Zainichiness.

The different ways in which Zainichi Koreans negotiate their statelessness and multiple displacement experience compli-

cates the conventional understanding of what "home" is. Diaspora studies scholars have argued that diasporic people have longing and memory of the homeland, as well as a desire for eventual return (Safran 1991; Clifford 1997). However for Zainichi Koreans in the U.S., even though Japan appears as somewhat like "home," they cannot quite do so. While in Japan, they did not wish to become a citizen of Japan. This is always situated in tandem with the construction of the benevolence and liberal ideology of the United States. For example, in her interview, Yuka clearly stated that becoming a Japanese national was just "unthinkable" even though she regularly visits her family in Japan and she "would rather die" than naturalize as Japanese. Some of my interviewees said that having family members in Japan itself did not make Japan their home anymore. In fact, when I asked where their home was, none of my interviewee named any geographical location. The majority of them paused for a while and told me that they did not know where their home was.

In *Home Bound*, Espiritu (2003) defines "home making" as "the process by which diverse subjects imagine and make themselves at home in various geographic locations" (2). Then, do Zainichi Koreans who cannot name where their home is engage in home making? If so, how, and with what kinds of tools, and through what kinds of means do they do so? What constitutes home or the sense of being at home for Zainichi Koreans in the United States?

Multiple Homes

> I just recently made my mind that I would live here [in the United States] permanently. But regardless, because I lived in Japan where my mobility was restricted legally and otherwise, I decided to have as many places to live as possible as my options. That's why I retain re-entry permit to Japan and South Korean passport so that I can go live anywhere I want to if something happens.
>
> Kwangja, 2nd generation female in her 60's

Kwangja has been renewing her re-entry permit to Japan to retain permanent residency ever since she immigrated to the United States in1974. She would go back to Japan every two years prior and every four years after November 1991 because the permit can only be renewed at a local office of the Japanese Ministry of Justice.[7] Kwangja said it was because her "strong consciousness as Zainichi" that made her do everything she could to return to Japan in order to retain her permanent residency –the status through which she can claim material and discursive ties to Japan.

Born in Osaka, Japan where there is the largest Korean ethnic community, to Korean immigrant parents in 1946, Kwangja's life was strongly affected by the chaotic political situation in post-war Japan and the newly liberated Korean peninsula –both under the U.S. military occupation (1945-52). In 1946, the year she was born, Koreans in Japan were considered at once as Japanese around duties and obligations and aliens around rights and privileges, as discussed in earlier section. However, in 1952 when Kwangja was six years old, upon the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the Japanese government unilaterally stripped Koreans and other remaining former colonial subjects of the Japanese nationality and made them "aliens." When the two mutually antagonistic regimes were established in the Korean peninsula, the majority of Koreans in Japan did not make a choice because they believed in the immediate reunification of their homeland although the majority of first-generation Korean immigrants came originally from the southern provinces of the Korean peninsula.[8] Kwangja's family was among the very few who quickly chose South Korean nationality as her father supported its right-wing anti-communist ideology. Political turbulence continued. When Japan and South Korea established diplomatic relations in 1965, the Japanese government recognized the South Korean government as the sole legitimate government in the Korean Peninsula and promised that it would provide Zainichi Koreans who choose

to become South Korean nationals with residential stability, diplomatic protection, and overseas travel documents.[9] Kwangja attempted to discard her South Korean nationality to protest the unequal treatment of Koreans depending on which government they supported. However, due to the pressure from her father, a high-ranking officer in Mindan (the organization supported by the South Korean government), Kwangja did not end up changing her nationality.

Within the first twenty years of her life, Kwangja went through changes in her nationality and legal status in Japan because of the political turbulence in and around the Korean peninsula and Japan under U.S. influence. The series of experiences led her to see the fluidity and artificiality of national borders as well as the unevenness and inequality of what a legal status represented –the direct results and effects of the hegemonic presence of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region and each newly emerging nation-state's political agenda. Kwangja, therefore, intentionally tries to retain legal statuses in as many countries as possible because that would allow her to relocate from one country to another if that seemed the best choice depending on the socio-economic and political situations. Similarly, Junho (3rd generation male in his 20's) who has lived in the United States for sixteen years, retained South Korean nationality while holding permanent residency in the U.S. and Japan because he believed that it was "a privilege very valuable for someone who wishes to work internationally" as it allows him to legally live and work in any of those countries. From their experiences, it seemed impossible to feel completely "at home" in a single geographical location. Kwangja and Junho attempted to have multiple homes between which they had means to move with flexibility by retaining as many legal statuses as possible. If not gaining permanent residency in the U.S. immediately, the idea of holding many legal statuses was commonly seen among other interviewees as well.

Intentional Refusal

> I have permanent residency here [in the United States]. My husband and daughter are citizens. I am holding Japanese permanent residency for my Zainichi identity because I believe that symbolizes the unresolved legacies of post-World War II and Cold War. And I want to embody the *contradiction* in order to expose the violent history of war and colonization (italic by author).
>
> Youngja, 2nd generation female in her 50's

While some maintain non-citizenship statuses in the United States, Japan and South Korea "for convenience"—allowing them to travel, live, and work easily in and across those countries—others, if not many, intentionally remain stateless because they refuse the idea of inclusion by nation-states as a remedy for their statelessness and homelessness. Contrary to the conventional discourse that assumes immigrants and refugees seek refuge and inclusion through naturalization and cultural assimilation, some Zainichi Koreans completely refuse the idea of inclusion. It is a strong political statement to embody their statelessness by identifying the material and symbolic condition of Zainichi Korean communities that have been forced to be born into and live under as a result of the unresolved post-World War II and Cold War legacies. The idea of interstices proposed by Homi Bhabha (1994) explains how the condition of statelessness can be an interstitial space –the space "in-between" that he finds useful in providing:

> ...the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood –singular or communal –that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. It is in the emergence of the interstices –the overlap and displacement of domains of difference –that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated (2).

I argue that some Zainichi Koreans continue to inhabit the interstices –of nation-states, of nationality laws, of histories, of sub/humans –to interrogate the vastly accepted idea that immigrants and refugees must be domesticated by nation-states. Youngja and some other Zainichi Koreans that I interviewed, despite the inconveniences and disadvantages in terms of mobility and political participation, choose to remain stateless because they think their stateless bodies can be a powerful instrument to allow space to critically examine the formation of nation-states. The process inevitably creates categories of citizens and non-citizens by regulating the membership criteria and justifying the "differential inclusion" that involves the mistreatment and non-protection of people who are unilaterally categorized as non-citizens. This is one of the *contradictions* that Youngja talks about, i.e. the violence of differential inclusion by nation-states under the guise of liberal democracy and individualism that nurture the false consciousness of full inclusion through naturalization. This rejection of inclusion as a political statement and strategy can perhaps be the practice of what Jose Muñoz (1999) describes as "disidentification," which he defines as follows:

> Disidentification is meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship (4).

According to Muñoz, disidentificaion is not about counter-hegemonic or anti-assimilation, but about "recycling and rethinking encoded meanings... and using the codes as raw material for representing the disempowered" (31). Clearly, those Zainichi Koreans who refuse to naturalize and remain *de facto* stateless are opposing the system of nation-state that always produces the category of non-citizens whose human rights are legally and socially violated. But what they seem to be engaging is not a complete refusal, but rather negotiating and maneuvering between different laws that

grant legal status such as nationality and permanent residency that operate under the system of the nation-state, specifically maintaining access to a passport (through nationality) and permanent residency. For example, for not having South Korean citizenship, Zainichi Korean males are exempted from the compulsory military service. They are also allowed to retain their permanent residency in Japan as long as they do not become South Korean citizens and remain nationals. Similarly, they do not naturalize as U.S. citizens because it technically requires one to discard her or his current nationality. All of these regulations and responsibilities upon acquiring citizenship can potentially limit the flexible mobility of Zainichi Koreans. Thus, even though they choose to inhabit the interstitial space of statelessness to interrogate the system of nation-state and its violent absorption of the racialized and gendered bodies, they still negotiate within and benefit from the same system.

Interestingly, some of my interviewees described having non-citizen status in multiple nation-states as a "privilege very valuable for someone who wishes to work internationally." Indeed, to be able to remain stateless while having means to travel transnationally may be a privilege, but that privilege also involves inconveniences and disadvantages, for not having citizenship or protection of civil rights in any country. In other words, their flexibility is at the expense of not having protection of their rights. This is probably the most significant difference between Zainichi Koreans with multiple non-citizen statuses and those who are often described as "flexible citizens" by Aihwa Ong and others. While the latter benefits from the system of the nation-state by having multiple citizenships with the privileges that citizens are entitled to, the former tries to maneuver in the system while rejecting to be fully incorporated into it. It may be inevitable for Zainichi Koreans, as subjects of multiple displacement that is rooted in multiple imperial projects and as subjects who are divided by national borders, ideologies, languages, and cultures, to imagine and have homes in various geographical locations. In this regard, those who naturalize as U.S. citizens and those who

refuse naturalization are rather similar in the sense that both of them make their choices based on the same desire to have means for flexible mobility by either having multiple home spaces or rejecting any singular home space.

Conclusion

I have examined the roots and the routes of Zainichi Koreans' experiences of being multiply displaced and stateless in the context of Japanese colonialism of Korea, U.S. occupation in Asia, and division in Korea, which are intricately conflated to determine subjectivity of Zainichi Koreans whether intended or not. It may be more accurate to say that the creation of a stateless population was rather incidental and resulted from nation-states pursuing their national interests and security. Born in the interstitial space, Zainichi Koreans have been included in and excluded from the national entity of Japan, South Korea, North Korea, or the U.S. both legally and socially, depending on what each nation can benefit from the acts of including and excluding.

I have attempted to show the different ways in which Zainichi Koreans in the United States constructed their subjectivity and identity through negotiating their experience of being multiply displaced and stateless. Whether they choose to become citizens or remain stateless, maintaining and regaining ties with Japan seems central to their motives because what it means to be Zainichi Korean is still very much rooted in the space of Japan. Material and symbolic ties with Japan play a crucial role in constructing their subjectivity and identity as transnational Zainichi Koreans. For some, it meant to remain *de facto* stateless and for others it meant to become a U.S. citizen because a U.S. nationality allows them to have easier transnational movement.

For my future studies, I would like to discuss dynamic relationship between Zainichi Koreans in Japan and Zainichi Koreans in the United States because interviews that I conducted revealed that their subjectivity and identity as Zainichi Korean is strongly influ-

enced by the minority politics and what is going on in Japan in general. It can also be influenced by other transnational actors such as Chinese and Korean immigrants and their anti-Japanese sentiments toward Japan that Sadako experienced in the United States (see Introduction). Moreover, I was intrigued by Kwangja's narrative about the campaign she and other Zainichi Koreans in Los Angeles organized to demand the release of the Suh Brothers, Zainichi Korean political prisoners in South Korea under the military dictatorship during the 1970's and 1980's. This is one example of how Zainichi Koreans have created the transnational solidarity network with activists in Japan and all over the world to dismantle the triangular hegemonic alliance that the U.S., Japan and South Korea created in the context of the Cold War. As this campaign and other political movements tell us, Zainichi Koreans were never passive objects, but always tried to gain subjectivity that is not simply about inclusion, but also about the transformation of the hegemonic system and unequal power relations. Embodying the stateless—the contradictions of the nation-state system—Zainichi Koreans may be actively building home to claim a sense of belonging in the act of rejecting the inclusion to a particular nation-state.

Notes

1. Edward Cody. "New Anti-Japanese Protests Erupt in China Thousands Descend on Consulate in Shanghai; Beijing Remains Calm." *Washington Post*. April 16, 2005.

2. The names that appear in this chapter are all pseudonyms to protect informants' privacy.

3. U.S. Department of Homeland Security website. "Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2012 Naturalizations: Persons Naturalized by Region and Country of Birth" http://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-naturalizations (accessed May 1, 2014).

4. The majority of Korean immigrants become part of Korean churches in the United States that function both as a place to nur-

ture one's faith and as an ethnic community where members build kinship and business partnership.

5. The 2000 Mindan survey reveals that less than ten percent of Zainichi Koreans are foreign-born as opposed to fifty-seven percent among Korean Americans according to the 2000 census. In terms of language proficiency, while over seventy-percent of Korean Americans speak Korean at home, more than ninety percent of those born after 1976 said they are not able to carry basic conversations in Korean. These numbers may suggest that Zainichi Koreans are more assimilated into the host society linguistically and culturally than Korean Americans.

6. *Apro* Project. 2004.

7. Confirmed with the Osaka Immigration Bureau (Kyoto Branch) on February 1, 2015. For detailed discussion on the history of "re-entry permit" system and Zainichi Koreans, please refer to Chung, Yeong Hwan. "History and Present of the 'Reentry Permit' System" ['*Sainyukoku Kyoka' Seido no Rekishi to Genzai*]. PRIME, 33 (2011): 31-46.

8. Sonia Ryang. *Diaspora without Homeland*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009

9. Ibid.

References

Apro Josei Jittai Chosa Project. *Apro Project: Investigation of the Actual Conditions of Women*. 2004.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Clifford, James. Routes : T*ravel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Cody, Edward. "New Anti-Japanese Protests Erupt in China Thousands Descend on Consulate in Shanghai; Beijing Remains Calm." *Washington Post*. April 16, 2005.

Espiritu, Yen Le. "Beyond the Boat People: Ethnicization of American Life." *Amerasia Journal* 15, no. 2 (1989): 49-67.

---. H*ome Bound : Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Hicks, George. *Japan's Hidden Apartheid: The Korean Minority and the Japanese*. Surrey, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1997.

Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts : On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

Mindan. "Mindan Statistics Interim Report, 2000."

Muñoz, Jose. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Ong, Aihwa. *Flexible Citizenship : The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Ryang, Sonia. *Diaspora without Homeland*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009

Safran, William. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (1991): 83-99.

Shankar, Lavina Dhingra, and Rajini Srikanth. *A Part, yet Apart South Asians in Asian America*. *Philadelphia*, PA: Temple University Press, 1998.

Websites

"The Asian Population: 2010" United States Census Bureau, accessed May 1, 2014. http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf

"Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2012 Naturalizations: Persons Naturalized by Region and Country of Birth" U.S. Department of Homeland Security, accessed May 1, 2014. http://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-naturalizations