Theme Issue: Contemporary Zainichi Experience

Guest Editor's Introduction

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Zainichi.
A reference that has become autonomous. Freestanding on its own. Once second-class citizens of a colony, residing in the metropole of the Imperial Other. Bound to tumultuous turns of history, torn between the hopes of liberation and the uncertainties of a dawn of "freedom." By some cosmic fate, like floating seed, they took root in rocky soil. Seed dispersed by wind is said to enroot even stronger and deeper into place.

The first generation now becoming the fourth, fifth and more. Generations forged lives, facing the challenges of each era. Postwar loss of Japanese citizenship and becoming stateless, having to register as "aliens." Repatriation or stay in place was everyone's big question. Some went back to an "independent" homeland to find disease and famine and returned secretly on illegal boats. Turmoil of political uprising and ideological division, government massacre of innocent villagers causing trauma scorched into memories of newly fleeing Cheju Islanders, mostly headed to Osaka. Transported island rituals and Gyeongsang-do tradition, in the hustle and bustle of the Osaka enclave. Multiple dialects and local language, hybrid, creolized vernacular, viscerally invocated for everyday survival. Witnessing from afar, civil war painfully halving motherland into North and South. Even on borrowed soil, pitted against one another in the Cold War division. Pledging allegiance to one, mistrusting each other. Becoming South Koreans or choosing to remain stateless.

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"Exodus" to a said "homeland" never before seen but only imagined, dividing families and loved ones permanently. Those deciding to stay put searched for ways, legal or not, to feed the family. Blood and sweat of labor for pennies. Poverty and stigma, laden with the pungent sensory that knew no escape. Diplomatic relations between the once colonizer and the colonized. Changing "stateless" to South Korea for the right of "Special Permanent Residence." Some choosing to remain stateless to send a message. Opting for South for the sake of convenience, but rejecting becoming Japanese just for a passport. Naturalizing as a matter of fact or for the sake of their children's future. Fighting for a rightful place for the children to learn. Ethnic *minzoku* education and maintaining "our" language. Pride and turmoil of claiming "true" names, abandoning passing names. Saying no to state demands of fingerprints and alien registration. A collective movement attracting 1.8 million signatures of domestic and international support and attention. Demanding equal employment and right to work regardless of revealing root of identity. Marrying a Japanese spouse and raising children with dual heritage. Wearing the *jeogori* (ethnic dress) school-uniform despite anonymous knife slit of hate crime on its skirt. Excluded from the pension system and fighting to gain it for the aging first generation. Seeking education equity and accreditation of ethnic schools.

Women encountering their own internal problems, struggling with oppressive traditions of strict patriarchy. Preparing endless side-dishes for numerous ancestor worship ceremonies (*jesa*) or finding voice to contest it and say no. Family problems, hushing domestic abuse, gathering courage to talk about it and seek help. Praying to mountain or water gods, rubbing palms in prayer to the beat of a "famous" shaman. Looking for solace in temples, the *Sōka Gakkai* Buddhist sect, Christianity, or alternative other. Bearing burdens and dilemmas as minority women in mainstream society and androcentric ethnic community. Seeking knowledge and raising awareness in the realm of the law to fight discrimination.

Zainichi[1] has evolved. From hiding for basic survival, to revealing to actually

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1. In 2022, there were 288,980 "Special Permanent Residents" with 260,605 holding South Korean nationality and 25,644 "others," which include mostly Koreans who maintain "*Chōsen seki*" and have not attained South Korean citizenship. The exact number of "Zainichi Koreans" is difficult to know due to large numbers acquiring Japanese nationality. Also children born from intermarriage with Japanese are automatically Japanese nationals. Although the number of "Special Permanent Residents" is decreasing annually, interest in Zainichi Koreans is increasing globally. Challenges remain but the wave of the Black-Lives Matter Japan movement, social campaigns against discrimination during the Covid-19 pandemic, and emphasis on inclusion and diversity have shed light upon Zainichi Koreans and their undeniable presence. The international popularity of the 2022 drama TV series "Pachinko," which is a spin-off of a best-selling novel,

live, and emphasizing identity to revert the injustice of unrecognition. Zainichi, a descriptor that encompasses the intricate interweaving of histories and biographies across nations, transnations, transborders, and now joining a global discussion. Talk of *ikoku*, a foreign land, or *takoku*, an other's land, becoming "*furusato*," a place of birth and nostalgic memories. The reference to "homeland" becoming a thing of the past, now it is about evoking "home." But this home, the land of birth of colonial legacy that is Zainichi, inflicts pain with shouts of exclusion and expulsion to "go back." But where should Zainichi go?

Across the sea, a homeland to the first generation who came long ago, "home," that was once there, is now here, for Zainichi. Things negated in the past are now accepted and even embraced. Accented mish-mash of *chanpon*, *gochamaze* pidgin, born out of need in the chaos of the former ethnic enclave, now entering canon as a literary genre. Places of "ethnic" learning slowly dwindle but meaningfully remain steadfast. Monuments are erected, movements spearheaded, injustice fought, all in order to enlighten those whose knowledge is murky, remind those on the verge of forgetting, and place pop-culture misinformation and internet disinformation and intended historical revisions and abbreviations on a passionately contested path. Community civic centers, interactive spaces of historical resources including real-time conversations and testimonies, and lively cultural events, coalesce around trendy nomenclatures of "multicultural co-existence" and "diversity" to challenge a continuously formidable meta-narrative of Japan as a mono-ethnic homogeneity. "We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left. Our interest in *lieux de mémoire* where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with a sense that memory has been torn—but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory" (Nora 1989, 7).

Zainichi—indeed not a monolith, increasingly multiple and diverse. But the mythical and mystical articulation of "our" (*uri*) has been a communal source of strength to speak truth to power. "This articulation is doubtless essential to singular beings: these latter are what they are to the extent that they are articulated upon one another, to the extent that they are spread out and shared along lines of forces, of cleavage, of twisting, of chance, whose network makes up their being-in-common" (Nancy 1991, 75). Generations continue to be

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undoubtedly has contributed to the recent attention.

linked to a "Zainichi" legacy, each singular experience being part of a collage to fuel the power of the grand narrative. But what should come next?

Some search for self in mnemonics of historical memories of trauma, oppression, suffering, and resistance. Others find space and place in claiming and proclaiming Zainichi. To self-reference or not, expressing subjective agency. Zainichi though is also located in the everyday, both known and unknown, within the simple and yet complex art of living ordinary lives, in the midst of unremarkable micro mundane. Zainichi too, is amongst the countless seeds of historical dispersal. Now in the company of minority movements in the local landscape and in other parts of the world. Regardless of the differing narratives of historical flows, together, resisting erasure and demanding recognition of their subjective experiences in singularity as well as collective.

The unfolding rhythmic Zainichi *shinse taryong* (lamenting narratives) of "genesis," converging and transforming to recount, *récit*, "re-marks the locations, points in memory, re-peats the Past sequences" (Cha 2009, 149) to give meaning to the present. The point of reference embodies notable milieus that interweave into a web of subjective telling of history. Evoking actual happenings from memory takes precedence over minute details of chronology of time. Rhythmic stories from one generation to the next reinforce and acknowledge each other's existence, becoming redefined and refined. Memory assures that their existence will continue as long as individuals remember. The emotional embodiments of oppression, hardship, struggle, and steadfast survival become crucial components that allow images, scenes, and narratives to grow within through social intermediation and then outwards, influencing collective recollection (Halbwachs 1992, 41–53; Assmann 2006, 7–11). Through the narratives of and about Zainchi, Zainichi is born and reborn and again…

The reference "Zainichi" Koreans is written in these pages with a capital "Z" to elucidate the origin, history, and legacy of a specific group of people whose descendants continue to carve out a place as a distinct ethnic minority in Japan. The general word "zainichi" means residing in Japan; and "[z]ainichi Koreans" as a combining form, prioritizes the marker of the nation-state over the diasporic group's *historie*. Therefore, "Zainichi" accentuates lived-lives shaped by the cultural, social, and political implications of colonial displacement and the legacy that continues to breathe life into the contemporary. Zainichi Koreans have not simply resided in Japan but have and are continuously challenging the oppressive and discriminatory structural powers. To contest erasure is through a collection and recollection of the past. Recollection is the backdrop of existence and its innermost scenery is memory and history (S. Kim, in Cho 2003, 9). "Zainichi *Chōsenjin* (Koreans) is not within Korea or Japan, it

is seen within the space of 'Zainichi' of everyday life" (S. Kim, in Cho 2003, 10). This space is a place of social practice occupied by sensory phenomena and products of imagination. Within space, energy flows and when time is evoked, the movement and change must be identified (Lafevbre 1991, 8–12).

This special issue is appropriately titled "Contemporary Zainichi Experience." The etymology of "contemporary"—*con* (with, together) and *temporarius* (of time)—reflects a common point of departure, the turning of each era, and transitioning generations within time and space of Zainichi experience. Time and space within "contemporary" is evoked through a connective energy flow of lived experiences of the past that creates urgencies within the present moment. Thus, within the special issue, space and temporal boundaries merge, highlighting the ruptures and elucidating the critical historical junctures of the diasporic Korean community in Japan.

Eika Tai's "Colonial Responsibility for Education of Koreans in Japanese Schools" focuses on the education of Korean children in postwar Japan. Tai writes that some Japanese teachers opposed postwar assimilationist education and tried to take colonial responsibility through providing postcolonial education for Koreans in Japanese schools. She examines how these Japanese teachers engaged in Zainichi Korean education from the 1950s to the early 1970s. By closely analyzing narratives from two teachers' associations, Chōmonkyō launched in 1955 and Kangaerukai in 1971, against the backdrop of sociopolitical circumstances and discursive formations, she argues that *minzoku* (ethnicity, ethnic-nation) and colonial responsibility were central concepts to these teachers' narratives. Tai demonstrates the historical significance of these teachers' struggles and suggests the importance of interethnic dialogue in the pursuit of taking colonial responsibility at the site of public-school education. The article emphasizes the impact the discussion continues to have on present day education in a growing multi-ethnic Japan.

From Tai's focus on ethnic education in Japanese schools, we move to the site of ethnic schools where interethnic networks and dialogue are elucidated as essential tools for the sake of minority children's learning. Ryoko Okamura and Hosok O's "Building Connections to Protect Ethnic Education: The Chōsen Schools' Intercultural Network" examines the impact of activism by the Chōsen school community in protecting ethnic education and promoting intercultural engagement between Zainichi Koreans, Japanese, and foreign school communities in Japanese society. Okamura and O illustrate the role of Chōsen schools as sites of intercultural and interethnic connection by reflecting on three moments in the contemporary Zainichi Korean experience: the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995; the Japanese government's exclusion of Chōsen

schools from its Tuition Waiver Program in 2010; and exclusion of Chōsen schools from the "Support for Children and Child-Rearing Program" in 2019. The article examines efforts by Chōsen schools and their grassroots activities with local communities and other foreign schools to fight for the right to ethnic education and improvements in their legal status as well as demand equal treatment by the Japanese government. Okamura and O argue that contrary to the negative perception of the Chōsen school as insulated "North Korean schools," the Chōsen school community is a space of intercultural synergy that connects people of diverse backgrounds, facilitating multiethnic collaboration and cooperation for a common cause in seeking the right to quality education for minority children.

The next two articles connect the realm of ethnic space through food, its consumption and production as a powerful symbolic marker of ethnicity, identities, nations, intersections, hybridity, as well as intercultural dialogue within multiethnic, multicultural Japan. "The Presentation of the Korean Self with Everyday Food: Negotiating 'Koreanness' through Kimchi Diplomacy in Contemporary Japan" by Yoko Demelius describes domestic cultural diplomacy to brand "Koreanness" using kimchi as a medium of political activism and civic movements for minority awareness and intercultural dialogue in Japan. She argues that discussions surrounding the production and consumption of kimchi in contemporary Japan reveal the negotiations at play in the Korean minority's assertion of proper Koreanness. Based on ethnographic work conducted among Korean communities in Western Japan, Demelius investigates the performative and preservation efforts that they undertake. She argues that kimchi diplomacy by Zainichi Koreans, particularly women, who share their knowledge of kimchi preparation at community events and distribute homemade kimchi as a method of soft activism of public outreach to community members, demonstrate their membership in Japanese society while preserving their cultural heritage.

Space of ethnic expression where ethnicity is negotiated and contested via food is the focus in Jonathan Glade's article "The Korean Restaurant: Beyond Violence in Zainichi Korean Film." He argues that within the backdrop of conflict and physical violence often depicted in Zainichi Korean films, the consumption and/or production of Korean food within the shared culinary space of the "Korean restaurant" offers a divergent form of social ties and possible alternative identities. Focusing on the films *Yakiniku Dragon* (2018), *GO* (2001), and *Blood and Bones* (2004), Glade analyzes the ways in which Korean restaurants serve as interactive spaces of congregation and healing in Zainichi Korean film. He argues that food and its shared culinary spaces depicted in these films allow for conflict resolution, connections across divides

within the Zainichi Korean community, and the assertion of varied and complex Zainichi Korean subjectivities. Multi-generational culinary spaces that embody hypermasculine projections and stereotypical markings of women vis-à-vis their male counterparts transcend these stereotypes by allowing for an alternative dimension of Zainichi space.

The next articles draw on cultural meanings, social activism dedicated to issues of ethnicity, gender, multiple hybrid identities, as well as on the cultural, linguistic, political and ethnic landscapes of expression, movements, communities, and merging spaces. Zainichi Koreans defy being situated in a singular geographical area of either Korea or Japan, but are the byproducts of the interlinking of multiple nations and locations.

We see this in "Ikaino's Afterlives: The Legacies of Landscape in the Fiction of Kim Yujeong" by Julia Clark. Social landscapes of the ethnic enclave Ikaino, the old name of the neighborhood of Osaka with the largest population of Zainichi Koreans, connect the multi-dimensions of ethnic and gender identities with the backdrop of patriarchy, constraints of tradition, and expressions of hybrid existence. Clark points to the legacies of this historic space as a foundational site of Zainichi Korean identity and cultural production. She examines the works of a woman writer Kim Yujeong as a contemporary response to Ikaino literature of the 1950s–1980s. The article presents Ikaino as a site of contested identities that seek to complicate the category of the ethnonational through questions of local space, language, and gender. Clark introduces Kim Yujeong's short stories "Tanpopo" (2000), "Murasame" (2002), and "Tamayura" (2015), which feature working women protagonists traversing Ikaino's borders, and the entangled geographies of Japan and the two Koreas. Clark argues that Kim's works seek to both shed light on the multiple structures of oppression that face Zainichi women living in the Ikaino area today, and critique the way those women have been represented in prior works of Zainichi literature. Clark argues that the landscapes that appear in Kim's works are transitional spaces, encountering the mutual constitution of Ikaino and the two Koreas within the contemporary Zainichi experience.

In continuation of focusing attention on marginalized and often overlooked narratives of women within Zainichi Korean communities and mainstream Japanese society, Jackie J. Kim-Wachutka's "Zainichi Korean Women and Intersectional Visibility: Private Talk, Public Speech, Political Act—Seeking Justice in Japan" emphasizes Zainichi women setting legal precedence within the public sphere. The article highlights strategies formed in intergenerational collectives and interethnic collaboration of women as a means to stop vitriolic hate speech and hate crime. Kim-Wachutka argues that Zainichi Korean

women's battles against hate speech is for the sake of demanding social justice as individuals as well as in reaction to the communal memory of oppression as Koreans in Japan, and as a message for the greater society that they will not simply take it and will not remain quiet. The article brings attention to a younger generation of women who are utilizing the power of knowledge to contest the social structure and becoming empowered by the current social milieu and global trend of examining marginalized lived-experiences through the lens of intersectional discrimination. She argues that visibility, acknowledgement, and recognition of not only "ethnic minority and women" but "ethnic minority women" is crucial in a growingly diverse society.

Finally, the special issue includes a book review of Taeyoung Kim's *Zainichi Koreans and Mental Health: Psychiatric Problem in Japanese Korean Minorities, Their Social Background and Life Story* (2022) by Christopher Laurent. Ethnic minority communities, with their often turbulent and complex histories, share in their reluctance to address mental health. Individuals face stigma when they attempt to seek help, and lack of outreach and assistance within the communities further exacerbate the problem. *Zainichi Koreans and Mental Health* introduces the reader to this important social issue of mental health, stigma, shame, and challenges of seeking and finding help.

The special issue incorporates a wide variety of multinational voices from broad disciplines by scholars who have long engaged with the theme of Zainichi Koreans as well as newly rising academics. Contributors and many reviewers stem from a variety of interdisciplinary approaches across a broad spectrum of social sciences and humanities: from area studies to history, from anthropology to sociology and gender studies, from literature, arts, and film to psychology, education, and law.

Multiple generations of Zainichi Koreans and their evolving experiences stand at the center of this special issue, igniting an opportunity to entwine various themes of ethnic and gender identities, social activism, political struggles, ethnic education, hate speech, counter hate speech and social spaces, literary works and creations, films and symbolic genres, generational shifts and transitions, emotional and psychological vulnerabilities, transnational and transborder connections, narratives and nostalgic memories, and aging. The multidisciplinary articles reveal the unraveling of the complex intersections, propelling invaluable discussions on the past, present, and future trajectories of "Zainichi."

The special issue titled "Contemporary Zainichi Experience" was initiated after a very fruitful Zainichi Studies Symposium with the same title on January 28, 2022 hosted by Professor Sang Hwan Seong, Director of Seoul National University's International Center for Korean Studies at Kyujanggak Institute for

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