

Theme Issue: *Contemporary Zainichi Experience*
Past, Present, and Future Trajectories

Guest Editor's Introduction

Jackie J. KIM-WACHUTKA

(Essays and poems contributed by SON-KATADA Aki, YAMADA Takao,
SHIN Sugok, FUKUOKA Yasunori, KIM Seonkil, MUN Gyongsu, IJICHI Noriko,
HONG Yeongok, Sehyong, KIM Sijong, CHO Yeongsun, and FUNI)¹

Zainichi: Past Memory, Present Action, Future Vision — History, Community, Person —

Scholars, activists, poets, a rapper, and lay persons who research on, advocate with, creatively express about, perform and everyday *live Zainichi*—the diaspora in Japan with roots on the Chōsen/Joseon (Korean) Peninsula² speak

1. Korean and Japanese names for contributing authors are Romanized according to their preferences. Korean words generally follow the Revised Romanization style and Japanese the Hepburn style. In certain instances Romanization of Japanese and Korean names and words follow the customary usage in existing literature. In the summer issue the word for mother, “Omoni,” followed the Japanese romanization. The winter issue emphasizes Zainichi diversity in identity as well as locations abroad and thus mother, “Eomeoni,” follows the Korean romanization.

2. The word “*zainichi*” means “residing in Japan.” Within this special issue, “*Zainichi*” is written with a capital Z to elucidate the origin, history, and legacy of a specific group of people. It prioritizes the diasporic group’s history over the marker of a nation-state.

Jackie J. Kim-Wachutka (wkr12168@fc.ritsumei.ac.jp) is a tenured lecturer at the Language Education, Planning, and Development Center and College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University

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from the pages of this special issue. The one-year conversation dedicated to “Contemporary Zainichi Experience” showcases a global positioning of Zainichi as an object of research that traverses numerous national boundaries, with collaborations from contributors and reviewers from Japan, the U.S., South Korea, Canada, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Slovenia, Lithuania, England, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Indonesia. Through a “research imagination” that “allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress, and design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries” (Appadurai 2001, 6), this special issue is a fusion of voices by and about Zainichi. It demonstrates an inter-disciplinary, inter-area, and inter-regional merging of intellectuals, grassroots social activists, and *Alltags* actors whose collaboration is essential as a social force centering Zainichi within the realm of a global dialogue on colonial legacies of violence and displacement and postcolonial attempts at reflexivity, positioning, defining, and redefining of former migrants and their descendants. Within this special issue, an international broadening of knowledge production on Zainichi taps into a polyphony of scholarly works pertaining to the social sciences, literature, film, and art. Simultaneously, the short essays and poems contributed especially for this occasion, found in the appendix of this guest editor’s introduction, depict as motif Zainichi and its future.³ Alongside the main contributing articles, their voices are an ensemble of Zainichi from first to fourth generation, those of mixed heritage, Japanese, and “newcomer” Koreans. All contributions across multiple disciplines, expertise, life experiences, and backgrounds reveal the urgency of holistic dialogue at a time when, as Appadurai (2001, 14–15) emphasizes, the research subject has acquired international, transnational, or global dimensions of vital interest. Zainichi are indeed gaining recognition as a resilient ethnic minority once formerly colonized by empire, whose diversity and difference are not without steadfast connection to roots and community. The coalescing efforts at archiving their experience recapitulate the past of “origins” manifest in the present action of re-collecting and re-membering to lay hold of a future continuum. It is this critical moment that Zainichi share with diasporic peoples across borders, and this “Contemporary Zainichi Experience” is a way to create new forms of dialogue.

The past—fleeting moments resurrected in memory. The present—unfolding

3. All essays and poems were originally written in Japanese and Korean and translated into English. FUNI’s rap/poem was written by the artist in English for this special issue.

lived experiences foretelling what is to come. The time spans of past, present, and future are not singular temporal segments but are fluid and flow into each other's spatiotemporal dimensions. Zainichi within contemporary experience stems from the past, is lived in the present, and imagined for the future. Benjamin writes, "For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns[,] threatens to disappear irretrievably" (1968, 255). Zainichi stands at a threshold. It is upon this threshold that a sense of urgency attempts to take hold of a fleeting moment. We revisit Benjamin's proclivity towards the bygone that could never be completely historicized but instead "becomes" through what Khatib (2017) declares as a disruptive constellation of the present and the past. Benjamin, drawing on historian Leopold von Ranke, writes, "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was'. It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (1968, 255).

The past for Zainichi meant structural oppression, discrimination, inequality, and suffering both within the main society as well as within the ethnic community itself. But also within this tumultuous history incremental social achievements have been made and are continuously being fought for and achieved. Like a tidal wave the force of which radiates and flows outwards, Zainichi within the microcosms of Japan and their positioning within a global conversation is elucidated by the fruits of internationally recognized social and civic movements. Min Wha Han's article "A Place of 'Re-collect': Zainichi Experiences with/in Utoro Japan" introduces the possibilities of living archives. Focusing on Utoro,⁴ its Zainichi community, and the Utoro Peace Memorial Museum inaugurated in 2022, she unravels complex meanings of Zainichi experiences within Utoro as a place of memory, social movement, and discursive action that elucidate the significance of Utoro in Zainichi Korean history. Situating them within the colonial and postcolonial socio-politics of the ethno-racial Other in Japan, she highlights Utoro's transformation from a segregated Korean "ghetto" to a contested "illegal" site and a target of hate, then to a site of commemoration through grassroots efforts among Korean and Japanese actors to remember and reconstruct the place's sociohistorical meanings.

4. The Utoro district of Uji City in Kyoto Prefecture was where mobilized Korean migrant workers brought to build a military airfield during World War II were left abandoned after Japan's defeat. Since then, they have faced continuous threats of eviction but have gained the right to remain through support from Japanese and Korean citizen's groups, the South Korean government, and the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and by actively forming interethnic grassroots organizations and movements. See Utoro heiwa kinen-kan (n.d.).

In connection to the Utoro community movement that has attracted significant international attention, Son-Katada Aki shares in her essay the firsthand stories of women in Utoro and their push for the local, national, and international communities to know and join their grassroots movement that are made up of collaborating networks of Zainichi of Utoro, the Zainichi community at large, women, elderly, fellow minorities both ethnic and otherwise, and the Japanese majority—a coalition of people who strive for an inclusive society. Utoro has become an important symbolic landmark as a place of resistance, struggle, and suffering. It now also stands as a testimonial of achievement gained through networking and cooperation that percolates shared hope, especially for those on the fringes of society. However, as Yamada Takao—directing member of the Social Welfare Service Corporation Seikysha (Shakai fukushi hōjin Seikyūsha) and representative of the Kawasaki Citizens Network Against Hate Speech (Heitosupīchi o yurusanai Kawasaki shimin nettowāku), who has spent a lifetime working and living among Zainichi Koreans in the Sakuramoto district of Kawasaki City—points out in his essay, “Institutional discrimination has decreased significantly, but discriminatory attitudes still remain and are reproduced to this day.” Conflicts and ruptures of diversity are further exacerbated amid blatant hate and violence as well as through subtle insidious acts. Naoto Higuchi’s “Logics of Strategic Racism in the Anti-Hate Speech Law Era: Analyzing the Discourse against Zainichi Koreans in Japanese Right-Wing TV Programs” offers an inner glimpse of Shin Sugok’s litigation battle from 2018–2022 against the popular media platform DHC TV, which is funded by the large Japanese healthcare and beauty corporation DHC.⁵ Higuchi demonstrates how racist rhetoric against Zainichi Koreans in the post-Hate Speech Elimination Act of 2016 is delivered through strategic racism—subtle expressions of racial discourse further complicated by implicit codes.⁶

Perpetrators of hate employing historically constructed stereotypes and a familiar discriminatory vernacular of colonial occupation in order to emphasize the “superior” and “inferior” within society represent a violent legacy that continues to live on within the fabric of a perceived “homogenous” society. Arendt (as cited in Benjamin 1968, 3) argues that no society can function without classification; ironically, this necessary classification is the basis for all social discrimination and discrimination is no less a constituent element of the

5. DHC Corporation CEO Yoshiaki Yoshida is notorious for his right-wing discriminatory rhetoric and racial slurs.

6. See also Kim-Wachutka (2019) describing how Japanese “patriotic” women’s groups such as *Hana dokei* (Flower clock) and *Soyokaze* (Gentle breeze) utilize the rhetoric of “culture,” “tradition,” and “love of country” to surreptitiously embed hate speech in their public rallies.

social realm than equality is a constituent element of the political. She emphasizes that everyone in society must answer the question of *what* he is—his role and function—over *who* he is. Indeed, the question of “who,” as Arendt argues, recognizes personhood, which in Japan’s colonial and postcolonial history was not granted to the “colonized.” Imperial Japan’s negating of personhood is seen in Ryang’s (2003) explanation, similar to that of Arendt, of “what” made the massacre of Koreans happen in the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake on September 1, 1923.⁷ Ryang turns to the collective unconscious and cultural logic seen in the concept of “*homo sacer*,” an excluded person and outsider who may be profanely killed, whose death would not even be deemed a worthy sacrifice within a modern sovereignty. She argues that ordinary citizens *could* (emphasis mine) kill and that such a violent act *could* be overlooked and even insidiously supported by the state because ultimately the colonized residing in the colonizer’s land were *personae non grata* and exemplified a non-entity, what Giorgio Agamben (2003, 737–740) describes as “bare life.” In other words, as Arendt (as cited in Kristeva 2001, 4–5) argues, the denial of human life is abolishing the meaning of all lives, including the perpetrator’s own.

Now, a hundred years later in 2023, the powerful essay title “Chōsenjin (Koreans) Yet to be Killed,” and the question of whether the Japanese majority would even understand the meaning of this locution, is posed by Shin Sugok, the co-chair of human rights organization Norikoe netto (Overcome net). Shin argues that the “killing” of Zainichi at present does not occur through a bodily annihilation but verbal attacks of targeted hate speech. Butler writes, “If language can sustain the body, it can also threaten its existence” (1997, 5). She raises Mari Matsuda’s point that speech itself enacts domination, and a speech act can do injury through which the social structure is reinstated, constituting the subject in a subordinate position (18–19). She asks the profound question of what gives hate speech such efficacy and proposes ways to counter the totalizing effects of such injury. Just as the massacre of Koreans during the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 is not officially recognized in national memory because, according to the government, there is “no record,” denialism

7. Along with Koreans, Chinese, Buraku outcastes, and political “dissidents” were among those killed by Japanese citizen “vigilantes” in the aftermath of the earthquake. In a recent feature film *Fukuda-mura Jiken* [Fukuda village Incident], Tatsuya Mori relays the story of the killing of nine Japanese mistaken as Koreans by vigilantes in the village of Fukuda (now Noda) in Chiba Prefecture near Tokyo, who stemmed from a stigmatized Buraku community. See *Kyodo News* (2023).

and amnesia continue to fuel hate speech⁸ in more insidious and dangerous forms.⁹ But the recent October 12, 2023 ruling by the Kawasaki Branch of the Yokohama District Court in favor of Kawasaki Fureaikan's director, third-generation Zainichi Korean Choe Kang-ija, declaring the posting "Go back to your own country" discriminatory, attests to attempts at deconstructing the power of colonial "othering" by setting legal precedents and changing the oppressive structure.¹⁰

Simultaneously, counter-hegemonic undercurrents resisting a dominant history and established narrative of denial are heard and seen in artistic and creative forms of expression. Yasuko Ikeuchi introduces a short documentary film titled *In-Mates* (2021), directed and produced by Iiyama Yuki, the screening of which was canceled in 2022 by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's Human Rights Division and Japan Foundation, which felt the film "contained violent remarks and scenes that could lead to unproductive discussions over historical awareness" (see also Fukushima 2022). The film is based on postwar medical records of two Korean "inmates" in the psychiatric ward of the former Tokyo Oji Brain Hospital (see for example Suzuki 2022). The Tokyo government stated that it stopped the screening because, in one scene, an interview between Iiyama and Zainichi rapper and poet FUNI, renowned Tokyo University scholar Tonomura Masaru refers to the massacre of Koreans during the Kanto earthquake as "truth."¹¹ FUNI also vocalizes in his own style the sense of frustration and vexation of the "foreign" inmates, whom the Tokyo government described as "provoking hate speech."

Just as the film elucidates the complexities of multiple intersectional experiences of forced migration, oppression, disabilities, the inability to speak, being misunderstood, incarceration, and anguish ascribed to historical events,

8. See *Tokyo Shimbun* (2023). The stone memorial to the dead is managed by the nonprofit organization *Hosenka*, the director of which is Sin Minja.

9. Since 2005, the Japanese "patriotic" women's group *Soyokaze* (Gentle breeze) has periodically held a gathering called the "*Shinjitsu no ireisai*" [Memorial Service for Truth] in Yokoamicho Park (see Kim-Wachutka 2019). The Tokyo Metropolitan Ordinance on Respect for Human Rights has acknowledged the "memorial" as a hate event. This August, the group moved its rally to in front of the stone memorial, continuing to call for the "expulsion of Koreans from Japan." They also state that the vigilante killings during the Kanto earthquake were justified as "self-defense." see (Ando 2023).

10. See Kim-Wachutka (2023) for a discussion of Zainichi women setting legal precedents against hate speech.

11. Demanding an explanation of and reason for the cancellation of her film's screening, Iiyama also circulated a petition for future screenings, collecting about thirty thousand signatures. Supporters have also begun weekly protests at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building in Shinjuku. See Fukushima (2022).

Christine Marran's review of the English translation of Lee Chong Hwa's *Still Hear the Wound: Toward an Asia, Politics, and Art to Come* (2016) introduces the edited book that draws attention to a younger generation of artists who express their own lived experiences as descendants of traumatic diasporic displacement by encountering memories of the previous generation through their art. She highlights the interwoven experience of the hegemonic trappings of colonial and imperial violence, the scars of which manifest as the power and strength to survive. The encounter with ruptures and transgressions metamorphosizes into new forms of expression. Rebecca Jennison, who co-edited the English translation of *Still Hear the Wound* elucidates in her article, "In/Visible—New Directions in Contemporary Art by Zainichi Koreans: Fragile Frames/Precarious Lives—in Soni Kum's *Morning Dew* (2020)," third-generation emerging Zainichi female artists who draw inspiration from intergenerational responses and encounters with trauma and memory of colony, empire, violence, diaspora, and its tumultuous history. Jennison especially focuses on artist Soni Kum, who highlights the insecurities and risks faced by Japan-born Zainichi Koreans who, believing in the propaganda of "paradise," repatriated to North Korea during the time of "mass exodus" (see Morris-Suzuki 2007), and in recent decades have risked their lives to cross over to Korea and Japan via China. Jennison draws on the works of Kum and other younger Zainichi women artists, arguing that their innovative art in the context of transnational, inter-Asia, and trans-pacific dialogue elicits questions of visibility and invisibility and voices and silence, demonstrating that diasporic trauma is an ongoing legacy that connects the generations.

The generational inheritance of trauma is also discussed in Fukuoka Yasunori's essay on "Zainichi Koreans in Our Midst," who speak of intersectional histories of discrimination, stigmatization, and violence seen in multiple entanglements across time, space, family, and generations. He argues that discussion of diversity highlights the need to accept its "normalcy" but that its multiple layers simultaneously reveal histories of stigma and exclusion that leave scars across generations, as seen in his interviews with Zainichi Korean Hansen disease sufferers and their children. Likewise, Kim Seonkil, chairman of the Kobe Foreigners Friendship Center (KFC), founded in the aftermath of the catastrophic Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, believes that diversity must not only be talked about but also activated by stakeholders themselves through personal agency and the courage to speak out against trendy "multicultural co-existence" that does not recognize actual histories of contestation and protest. The non-profit organization is headed by an ethnically diverse board of directors and employees include Japanese, Zainichi Koreans,

Vietnamese, Chinese returnees, Nikkei Peruvians, international marriage migrants, Ukrainian evacuees, and those from Inner Mongolia, China. It provides aid to foreign populations through numerous services in multiple languages, Japanese language education for children, care services for the elderly with diverse backgrounds, and support for refugees from Myanmar and elsewhere.

The interwoven complexities of diaspora, its longings, scars and trauma, and web of memory within what Appadurai calls disjuncture of floating populations and transnational politics within national borders reminds us that the various flows of “objects, persons, images, and discourses—are not coeval, convergent, isomorphic, or spatially consistent” (2001, 5). We can see this in the realities of multiplicities that transport and interweave memory and memory discourse of “Zainichi” across borders that is central to Maren Haufs-Brusberg’s article “Literary Negotiations in Contemporary Zainichi Korean Literature: Zainichi Korean Postcoloniality and its Entanglement with Global History.” It draws upon the possibilities seen in the writings of younger-generation authors who relate Zainichi to a larger global-historical framework. She focuses on three literary works that center on Zainichi protagonists that intersect regional and political boundaries and their precarious entanglements with public memory and personal lived experiences that expand into the theme of global historical reflexivity. She argues that the authors’ attempts to situate Zainichi Korean minority within global (post)colonial history and their references to the Asian and African diaspora in the United States contribute to the reframing of prevailing Zainichi Korean minority narratives.

Meanwhile, a younger generation of Zainichi writers contemplate their own diasporic history and lived experiences located in everyday life, incorporating the symbolic nation and trans-nation represented in the scape and way of food as seen in Jooyeon Rhee’s “Culinary Intimacy in Fukazawa Ushio’s *The Matchmaker* and ‘When Yi Tongae Eats.’” Fukazawa, a third-generation female author connects Zainichi culinary symbols to a Korea of the imaginary. The space of consumption of this once denigrated food connects the protagonist’s memory, longing, and nostalgia of a “homeland” that is both within the memory of her family and also the struggle to search for “home.” Rhee analyzes the symbolic marker of food and the role it plays as a medium of affective and sensorial intimacy further layered and complicated by the intricate intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity of Zainichi Korean identity and their place in contemporary Japan.

As generations advance, it is very clear that “Zainichi” is no longer about being but becoming. Mun Gyongsu’s essay “Two Turning Points for Postwar

Zainichi Koreans: The 1970s and the Present” discusses the debates over the position and direction of Zainichi Koreans in the postwar period. From looking towards the homeland, focusing on the reality of residence in Japan, or searching for other alternatives, Zainichi identity discourse has transitioned contingent upon social and historical milieus. “Zai-Nichi”—literally “being in Japan”—has gone beyond the binary of “homeland orientation” or “Japan orientation” and even beyond a “third way.” Mun argues that Zainichi Koreans are looking towards a “transborder” and “transnational existence” (see also Mun and Yun 2020). Along these lines, Ijichi Noriko, in her essay “What is the Future of Zainichi Koreans,” points to the diversifying realities of Zainichi who are of double heritage, children of parents who themselves have both Korean and Japanese parents, and those who specifically choose to identify themselves as Zainichi or part Zainichi. She asks who “Zainichi” is now in the current times and what it might become in the future, diversifying ever more. Within these growing multiplicities, Ijichi emphasizes the importance of an inclusive space, such as the newly inaugurated Osaka Korea Town Museum, of which she is vice director, where anyone can enter and access historical materials, information, and knowledge.

Struggles and gains from the ground up that contribute to incremental social change and community initiatives to open up communal spaces and sites of memory are observable in Joel Matthews and Eiko Osaka’s “The Tethered Fates of Japan’s ‘Foreigner’ Communities: Zainichi Koreans, Residency Provisions, and the COVID-19 Pandemic.” They argue that the social gains won through Zainichi Korean activism in the past laid a foundation of “residency provisions” that protect the civil rights of a growing foreign population in Japan. This is readily evident in the recent Covid-19 pandemic that brought foreign communities further together in their efforts to create a more substantive multicultural community. Insurmountable struggles of the past led to social and civic achievements through collective activism previously barely acknowledged but now becoming visible, meaningful, and belatedly recognized. The complexities of Zainichi are contemplated by newcomer Hong Yeongok, a Korean who came to Japan in the 1980s. She describes in her essay “Joseon, Chōsen, Zainichi, and I” life in a Zainichi Korean family and community and the difference in the emotional nuances within the descriptors of *Hanguk* (South Korea), *Joseon* (Korea), *Chōsen* (Korea/n, in Japanese), and Zainichi. She asks an important question, “Is being ethnically Korean so important?” Likewise, feminist, activist, and longtime friend, second-generation Zainichi Pak Hwami, in our most recent conversation, shared her thoughts about what constitutes “Zainichi.”¹² Her nephew, a third-generation Zainichi Korean, has been living in Southeast Asia,

the U.S., and now in Japan with a Caucasian American wife and their small daughter. Their main languages at home are English and Japanese. Pak wonders in what ways Korea could or should also be a part of the little girl's life and, furthermore, how the "Zainichi" of "Zainichi Korean" fits into the young girl's variegated ethno-cultural identity.

Within the overreaching tentacles of empire and the ensuing diaspora that encompass space, geographies, borders, and displacements, we see another kind of Zainichi scattering from the peninsula, involving a series of circular migratory movements, in Hyangsuk Kwon's article "The Multiple Layers of 'Zainichi' Korean Chinese Diaspora Viewed from a Kaleidoscopic Perspective through the Prism of the Documentary *Indelible*." Kwon presents a rare glimpse into the "Zainichi" Korean Chinese diasporic experience seen in director Tsunoda Ryūichi's (Kim Seongwoo) documentary film *Indelible* (2019). Although ethnic Korean Chinese and Zainichi Koreans speak of another historical dimension specific to their destined country of migration, Kwon demonstrates the connecting fate that intrinsically interlinks the dominant themes of diaspora such as dispersal, family separation, patriarchal order, aging, multilayered identification, and overlooked aspects of gender and migration. She argues that the Korean-Chinese-Japanese director who grew up in Japan uses film as a medium to discover himself and his roots. Herself a third-generation Zainichi Korean, Kwon and her work on Zainichi Korean-Chinese reveal through a kaleidoscopic method the multi-layered patterns of "Zainichi" within East Asia's diasporic milieu.

As first-hand witnesses of "relics of the past" and, in the words of Nora (1989), *milieux de mémoire* (real environments of memory) begin to fade, where are the markers of *les lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) for Zainichi? The legacy of illuminating living places of memory is seen in the recent translated publication of Zainichi writer Kim Tal-su, whose *raison d'être* was to introduce historical presence and spaces of Chōsen culture discoverable in Japan, pointing to the bound histories of the two countries.¹³ Eric Roper's review of the newest translation by Christopher Scott of Kim's work in the English language, "The Trials of Pak Tal and Other Stories," reveals the longstanding importance of Kim Tal-su's presence within Zainichi Korean diasporic literature. Roper notes that the work is one of six recent translations published by Seoul Selection in their Korean Diasporic Literature series. A

12. Interview conducted on September 23, 2023.

13. See Kim Tal-su's "Korean Culture within Japan" [*Nihon no naka no Chōsen bunka*] series, 1–12 (1970–1991).

prolific writer and icon of Zainichi Korean literature driven by the desire to introduce Zainichi Koreans to Japanese readers, one can say that Kim paved the way for recent attempts to mark sites of memory for Zainichi Koreans as tangible landmarks of Zainichi history.¹⁴ Such attempts provide a way for personal and collective encounters to experience a living history for future generations. Youth who continue to carry on the legacy and connect to the future are exemplified in “My Name is Sehyong,” a university student’s essay also included in this special issue. As a fourth-generation Zainichi Korean, the story of his name, coming to know it, understanding his roots, and forgoing of an easier route by adopting a Japanese name and nationality signifies the author’s approach to preserving his ethnic identity, history, and personhood.

Whether it be the Osaka Koreatown Museum in the historical Zainichi focal landscape of Ikuno or the newly inaugurated Utoro Museum that has gained much local and international support, spaces in the tightly knit ethnic school or local community, or churches, Buddhist temples, human rights organizations, historical resource centers, ethnic care facilities, or virtual spaces, Zainichi roots and history are embodied in a repository of communal memory. In dialogues and conversations that take place in the private and public, with roots firm but the form metamorphosing, active and reactive, in cadence with the progression of time, as in the words of poet Kim Sijong, “Zainichi o ikiru” (Live Zainichi) in the alchemy of everyday.¹⁵ We see this in the three poems contributed by Kim Sijong, Cho Yeongsun, and FUNI. During our meeting on October 3, 2023, first-generation ninety-four-year-old poet Kim Sijong sat on a small stool, with pen in hand, focused quietly on a white sheet of paper. After a while, he wrote the following in a meaningful stroke, in Japanese first and then Korean, evoking the rustling of a tree:¹⁶

Tree!
Tree who listens
to the sound of your sway
Tree!

14. Kim Tal-su’s continuing legacy of geographical marking of historical places of memory can be seen in a book titled *A Walk through Zainichi Korean History* (*Zainichi Korian no rekishi o aruku*, 2017) edited by the “Zainichi Korean Youth Association” (*Zanichi Korian seinen rengō*). The association is a gathering of those who, regardless of nationality, have roots on the Korean Peninsula. Documenting their own attempts to find out about their history and roots, they provide through a “fieldwork approach” maps and diagrams of locations and interviews, notes, and other visuals.

15. Interview conducted on October 3, 2023.

16. For the original writing, see page 40.

Tree who listens
to the sound of your sway

And everything
from the place of gaze dimmed

Cho Yeongsun, a second-generation Zainichi, finds deep meaning, both for her life and Zainichi identity, in a *hanbok* passed around the family on special occasions. She recalls the “international marriage” of her third-generation children and imagines the stories her fourth-generation grandchildren will hear about, as they themselves will be a part of the two countries’ bound and shared history.

FUNI, a 2.5-generation poet and rapper, dedicated a poem/rap that envisions a future for Zainichi titled “*Kotoba Kaku, Kaku Meika*,” which are also the names of his two daughters of Zainichi Korean-new comer Korean and Filipino-Chinese heritage, born and raised in Japan in the ethnic enclave of Kawasaki city’s Sakuramoto district, one of the main epicenters of Zainichi grassroots activism. He explains that, like their namesake, “Writing Words” will empower them—“Making Revolution” may start with just one.

Zainichi, born through the imposition of empire, have evolved within imperial colonial history, wars, destruction, unrest, resistance, “liberation,” oppression, struggle, and movements to secure the rights of autonomy and existence. We revisit Benjamin in contemplating the history that informs the unknown future:

A Klee painting named “Angelus Novus” shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (1968, 257–258)

“Contemporary Zainichi Experience: Past, Present, Future Trajectories” is a continuing dialogue of hardships had, battles fought, and gains made both big and small that become an archive generating further conversations, discussions, and debates, without pause or rest, and as such breathes and lives, giving hope for a future. This special issue is the product of very talented contributing authors and the many reviewers who invested their valuable time and expertise. I would like to extend a very special thank you to the scholars, activists, poets, rapper,

and everyday actors for their essays and poems that are powerful, insightful, sensitive, and personal. I admire their passion and dedication to giving their all each day, every day, to make a better community and society. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Seong Sang-Hwan for his enormous faith and support and allowing a year-long conversation dedicated to Zainichi Koreans through the publication of special issues through summer and winter 2023.¹⁷ Many thanks also to editor-in-chief and professor John P. DiMoia and the *Seoul Journal of Korean Study*'s copy-editing team. Finally, and very importantly, I offer my especially heartfelt gratitude to Editorial Assistant Ji Hyun Park for her outstanding organizational skills, dedication, patience, hard work, and tremendous talent in making this one-year project a great success.

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17. This special issue is a continuation of the summer 2023 edition of the *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*, initiated after a very fruitful Zainichi Studies Symposium titled "Contemporary Zainichi Experience" and held on January 28, 2022. The conference was hosted by Professor Seong Sang-Hwan, director of Seoul National University's International Center for Korean Studies at the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, in coordination with Tokyo's International Christian University (ICU) and Professors Seunghun Lee and Allen Kim.

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Contributing Essays and Poems

Women of Utoro SON-KATADA Aki*

I am a child of a second-generation Zainichi mother and a Japanese father. I studied in a Zainichi Korean student group during my college years and continue to participate in several community activities. Among other subjects, I teach “multiculturalism” at the university, and one of the things I want my students to learn in these classes is how Zainichi Koreans have lived in Japanese society. Moreover, I want students to see how people can make a difference in our troubled society, so I include examples in my classes. To my delight, the Utoro Peace Memorial Museum, which tells the history of the Utoro community, opened last year (2022).

Utoro is a Korean settlement in Uji City, Kyoto Prefecture, which I have visited since my student days. Originally, it was a vacant field where Chōsenjin (Korean) laborers worked in civil engineering for the construction of the Kyoto Military Airport and their families lived during wartime. After Japan’s defeat, some of the residents (who were “neglected and “disposed like rags” after the war) continued to live there and gradually adjusted their lives during the difficult times. In the late 1980s, the land passed from Nissan Shatai, which had taken over ownership of the pre-war government-controlled corporation, to a real estate agency, and the residents were told to vacate. They refused and were taken to court as illegal occupants.

The struggle to protect the land in Utoro lasted for nearly forty years. The trial, which ended in defeat for the residents, disregarded the history of the Zainichi Koreans who had lived there. They desperately appealed to the court regarding their experience of exploitation and hard labor during the war and numerous counts of discrimination afterwards. The people of Utoro resisted eviction with the words, “We will stay and fight.” Their voices reached the

*Son-Katada Aki is an associate professor at the College of Social Sciences, Ritsumeikan University

United Nations and South Korean society, and although they were unable to convince the Japanese government in a meaningful way, they were able to gather many supporters and much encouragement and finally reach a resolution. The women of Utoro were very important in this struggle. It was said that “the source of Utoro’s power are the mothers.” The voices of these women are richly documented in a journal published by the Association to Protect Utoro, a Japanese civic group that fought together with the women to protect the land.

The people of Utoro were able to speak out because of the hardships they had endured in their lives. As many elderly women said, “We have been discriminated against since we were small children, and we have worked hard to survive. Our willpower is the one thing they cannot defeat.” They were proud of their history. One elderly woman also said the following in a roundtable discussion among Utoro women at the time of the court defeat:

I was surprised at how bad it [Utoro before the war] was. But I worked extremely hard. I gave birth to five children there and worked hard to raise them. The condition of our house improved little by little, making it a place more habitable. All with my own strength. Them telling us that we have to leave means all of that would disappear; the fifty years I spent living in Utoro would be reduced to nothing. Who is going to make us leave? The courts? I won’t allow it. It’s such a shame.

The people of Utoro also had a deep respect and love for their parents’ generation, who had built their lives on this land, which was little more than a grassy plain, in a time of (even more) severe discrimination and poverty. As one woman who grew up in Utoro said, “I saw the hardships my mother and father endured, and I was so disappointed and couldn’t stop crying when the court ruled in favor of the land-grabbers who were just after the money.”

Another important part of the Utoro story is the people who came together to support the people of Utoro. The friendship between Zainichi Utoro residents and Japanese citizens in the Association to Protect Utoro formed the core of solidarity that helped garner wider societal support for the cause. One of the places of such passionate solidarity was a gathering of women’s groups in Kyoto, the Women’s Festival You Create. At this “very lively event full of women’s power,” the women of Utoro every year told their history and thoughts and struggles, and the women who packed the event hall listened attentively and responded enthusiastically. The first year they participated, the women of Utoro were hesitant to join the majority Japanese women. They were encouraged by Hong Jeongja 洪貞子, a leader of Utoro’s Nongak (Korean farmer’s dance) group and of a younger generation, who said, “If there is to be prejudice, so be

it. If there is to be discrimination, so be it. But if we don't expose ourselves to it, we will never be able to understand each other." These words have been passed down since then, with Hong saying at the time, "Actually, I could not have said this until two or three years ago. I think I was very passive toward the people around me. However, the land issue arose, and I began to participate in community development meetings in Utoro, and then in protest marches in front of Nissan Corporation in Tokyo." Through meeting Japanese people and members of the Association to Protect Utoro, she wrote, "An unexplainable courage arose in me. . . . I met so many people, but for me personally, these encounters were the catalyst for a major change in my sense of life, my way of seeing and accepting things, and my values." On the day of the Women's Festival, Hong wrote that she was really happy that none of the Japanese women left the room and for the kind words she later received. She also said that "we Utoro women" would like to "change into proactive women of the 1990s."

As reflected in the statement, "Utoro demonstration led by the Nongak group is cool and well-liked," the women of the Nongak group were at the forefront of the Utoro movement. They gathered at night without rest to practice after working every day on their feet. One particularly memorable and big performance was the parade on Shijo Dōri Street in 1994, in which a Nongak group made its way through the downtown area, drawing the attention of passersby.

Hwang Sullye 黃順禮, the president of the Utoro Women's Association, wrote about the event as follows:

"Dear citizens of Kyoto, this is a march to protect Utoro. Everyone is welcome to participate. Please walk with us!" Familiar voices echoed from the campaign cars, and even people in wheelchairs and elderly usually beset by aching backs and knees were doing their best. I thought, "Oh, I have never seen such a beautiful sight!" We will fight with what we have learned here in Utoro. First, we have Nongak, a "treasure" that we have acquired to express ourselves. It is a joy that has yielded ten or twenty times more than the painful memories. Now, we may go out anywhere and speak out for Utoro and ourselves. Looking back on the past five years in Utoro, we would like to thank once again those who have supported us, and from now on, rather than just Utoro, we would like to work together to build a better society as a whole.

In this way, a place has been created to convey the voices of these women in Japan and their struggle to protect Utoro, and the fact that there are many people who come to visit, though the form is not yet completely realized, gives me a strong sense of hope.

On “The Future of Zainichi”

YAMADA Takao*

When I was a university student and involved in the anti-security (*Anpo*) and anti-war movement with the Keio University *Beheiren* (abbreviation for the university group *Betonamu ni heiwa o! Shimin rengō*; Peace to Vietnam! Citizen's coalition), I met a young second-generation Zainichi Korean man whose employment at Hitachi Ltd. was revoked on the grounds of his nationality. Through the advocacy of legal services followed by a lawsuit in 1970, I had the opportunity to meet the late Pastor Yi Inha and other members of the congregation of the Kawasaki branch of the Zainichi Daikan kirisuto kyōkai (Zainichi Korean Christian Church; hereafter Kawasaki Church), located in Sakuramoto, an area densely populated by Zainichi Koreans. I myself was in the midst of job hunting, and on the bus ride back from a Christmas service I was invited to, I saw a poster that read, “recruiting employees for Kawasaki City.” Kawasaki City had been promoted to an ordinance-designated city, which meant it was mass hiring to open a ward office. Despite not studying for the civil service exam, I luckily passed. My first place of employment, in 1972, was the Tajima Branch Office of the Kawasaki Ward Office, which had under its jurisdiction areas like Sakuramoto. I was in charge of alien registration, school enrollment, and child-care allowance. The main part of my work was alien registration affairs, and I spent every day at the counter providing lifestyle counseling and legal advice. At the time, almost all administrative services related to social security had a nationality clause. With such foreigner exclusion, I inevitably focused not only on discrimination by private corporations but also municipal governments. So, along with members of the Kawasaki Church, I participated in the campaign to eliminate administrative discrimination, which demanded people be allowed to move into municipal housing, receive child-care allowance, and obtain information on school enrollment. I also raised my voice from within the municipality. Fortunately, it was also a time of prefectural and municipal government civic reform, so I did not suffer isolation at the workplace.

Meanwhile, Kawasaki Church, in response to the theme of the sixtieth anniversary of its mission, “Following Christ into the World,” opened an unlicensed nursery school (1969) for working families in the area but was

*Yamada Takao is a representative of the Kawasaki Citizens Network Against Hate Speech (*Heitosupīchi o yurusanai Kawasaki shimin nettowāku*) and directing member of the Social Welfare Service Corporation *Seikyūsha* (*Shakai fukushi hōjin Seikyūsha*)

confronted with the reality that the children and their parents were living with “Japanese names.” The nursery school decided as its policy to first have the teachers use their real (Korean) names, then have the children do the same. The school also sought to persuade Japanese parents to use the Korean greeting “*annyeong*.” These practices became established over the next few years, but the children were dispersed across differing school districts when they moved on to elementary school depending on their address, and when some using their real names became targets of bullying and discrimination, they asked their parents if they could go back to using their “Japanese names.” In an effort to follow up on these children, afterschool childcare activities were voluntarily set up, which were later approved as a commissioned project by Kawasaki City, and this helped the children live as Zainichi Koreans as they grew up to become junior high and high school students. In 1973, the “Social Welfare Service Corporation Seikyūsha,” established with Kawasaki Church as its parent organization, was approved as a corporation by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, and the following year, Sakuramoto Nursery School was re-launched as a licensed nursery school in Kawasaki City. In 1988, the city established by ordinance the “Kawasaki City Fureaikan,” a children’s cultural center (afterschool childcare facility) and social education facility, and the “Social Welfare Corporation Seikyūsha” was commissioned to operate the facility.

When I finished work, I would participate in the education support for junior high school students and help children going through rough times, or support movements to eliminate ethnic discrimination that took place in various regions. Through these activities and study, I learned that the ethnic group of Zainichi Koreans was born out of annexation of the Korean Empire by Japan in 1910 and the start of colonial occupation, and that the life history of each Zainichi Korean is layered with the discriminatory social structures of Japanese society. It is perpetuated due to a lack of reflection on colonial rule and the historical conflict caused by the division of their home country into North and South.

Through the campaign for the elimination of ethnic discrimination led by the “Liaison Council against Ethnic Discrimination,” which was formed after the Hitachi Trial support movement, Zainichi Koreans fought against discrimination and broke down barriers in various areas, including tenancy, school admission, employment, bank loans, appointments for public office, qualifications for becoming lawyers, and fingerprinting required under the Alien Registration Law. Currently, political participation (e. g., suffrage or appointment of local government municipal employees or teachers to managerial positions) and postwar compensation remain unresolved, but from 2013, hate speech on

the streets has been spreading rapidly, while hate crimes in the form of sending threatening letters, arson incidents, and hate speech on the Internet have continued. Hate speech targeting Zainichi Koreans illustrates Japanese society's superficial understanding and perception of Zainichi Koreans. Institutional discrimination has decreased significantly, but discriminatory attitudes remain and are reproduced to this day.

The number of special permanent residents, a symbol of one hundred years of Zainichi Korean history, has halved from six hundred thousand in the postwar period to three hundred thousand and are seeing the birth of a fifth generation. With the amendment of the Nationality Law in 1985, which changed from a patrilineal bloodline principle to a dual-parental lineage, the number of Korean nationals has decreased. However, whatever their nationality, Zainichi Koreans should positively embrace their family roots and their grandparents' life histories. As ethnic minorities who have been at the mercy of the state, I wish for them to be able to recognize the injustices and human rights violations perpetrated by the state or by the majority and actively fight against them. The history of Zainichi Koreans reveals a history of struggle to protect their individual dignity while being at the mercy of the U.S. Far East policy and the national policies of Japan, South Korea, and North Korea, and a history of struggling to build a community of harmonious coexistence without being discriminated against as citizens. It teaches us the importance of critically examining the policies of the state. It is important to remember that it is the responsibility of the majority, to which I belong, to inquire into injustices and human rights violations perpetrated by the state and the majority.

Chōsenjin (Koreans) Yet to be Killed

SHIN Sugok*

On October 12, 2023, the Kawasaki Branch of the Yokohama District Court ordered a defendant to pay a total of 1.94 million yen in compensation in the so-called “Go Home” trial. It was a landmark decision in the history of postwar Japan’s discrimination trials.

In 2016, in response to a third-generation Zainichi woman who protested a hate demonstration, the defendant uploaded an article titled “●●●, who do you think you are!!” on an anonymous blog, and wrote, “You are an enemy of the Japanese nation. Go back to your own country now!” Many *nettouyo* (Internet *uyoku*, or right-wingers) responded to the article, thus beginning a tremendous online lynching of the woman. When she requested the Legal Affairs Bureau to delete the blog article, she was slandered persistently on social networking services, being called such things as a “fake victim of discrimination,” and the torrent of hate extended into her personal life. During the examination of parties, the defendant’s lawyer described the lawsuit as “making a business out of discrimination,” which caused a commotion in the courtroom.

Neither the defendant nor the defendant’s lawyer appeared in court at the first trial lower court decision, which clearly recognized that the series of slanderous statements constituted “unreasonable discriminatory words and actions” under Article 2 of the Hate Speech Elimination Law and were an infringement of personal rights under Article 13 of the Constitution. There are no penalty provisions in the Hate Speech Elimination Law. It was thus said to be a useless law until this trial decision. In addition to being a landmark event, the extreme persistence of the slander may have moved the judge as well.

The phrase “go home” is one that people born in this country but with roots on the Korean Peninsula hear too often. Once appearing in a show called “Asa made nama terebi” (Live TV until morning), I was told, “(stop nagging) go home” by a cast member considered to be a liberal. I was at a loss for words and could not retort. I was at a loss for words and could not retort. My compatriots who watched the program criticized me, saying, “Why didn’t you say something back” and “I was disappointed.” This was because for many of my compatriots, the phrase stabbed their hearts. . . .

To be born and raised in Japan, to live speaking Japanese, to work in Japan,

*Shin Sugok is a human resources development consultant and co-chair of the International Network to Overcome Hate Speech and Racism (Norikoe netto)

to fall in love with a Japanese person, to have a child in Japan, and to die in Japan. For many Zainichi, it is impossible to live a picture-perfect life in their homeland. They have nowhere to return to.

For Zainichi, taking matters not of labor issues or management problems but racism to court incurs more risk than if a Japanese person files a lawsuit. This is because they cannot afford to lose. Even if they win, the slightest reservation in favor of the racist would create new obstacles which legitimizes and solidifies discrimination. If someone objects to one of the majority supporting discrimination against foreigners, this person would immediately be ganged up on and their daily life completely shattered.

In 2013, a Zainichi woman sued the Zaitokukai and far-right blog *Hoshu sokuho* (Conservative bulletin) for spreading lies, exposing her personal life, and inciting horrendous internet lynching. Many Zainichi trembled with horror after witnessing this. It is not just online bullying; one cannot live in peace or security where strangers suddenly take pictures of you, send you mail containing cockroaches, and deliver you death threats.

Sure enough, the case was won. However, victory does not mean the discrimination stops. . . . For racists, bashing Koreans is entertainment and a just cause, so there is no reason for them to relax their fists. Bringing a case to court is expensive, and social isolation is inevitable even if there are supporters. Furthermore, when Zainichi decide to speak up, they must be prepared to be stalked for the rest of their lives. If misinformation spreads, some may lash out. But living everyday under protection is out of the question. This would drive anyone crazy. As a result, they start suffering from various symptoms such as sudden hearing loss, and their bodies and souls become battered.

At the time of the verdict of the “Go Home” trial, not only I but friends who had fought against the Zaitokukai in court broke down in tears. The plaintiff—who is also a mother—was in trial for seven years, and I sympathized with her struggle as if it were my own.

The year 2023 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the Great Kanto Earthquake. In commemoration of the anniversary, a movie was made about the Kanto Massacre and several events were held here and there, and the memorial service, which usually attracts around one hundred people, was attended by over seven hundred people, with mass media cameras lined up. However, few will probably come to offer a prayer next year. Amid the festivities the words, “We have done enough and should be done with this,” could almost be heard. And the Japanese government still insists “there is no document” that “proves the massacre occurred,” and there has been no debate in the Diet or a national investigation to uncover the truth. Nothing has changed.

It seems unlikely in our lifetime that the Japanese people, the majority of this country, will understand the words of the plaintiff of the “Go Home” trial, which she uttered in an interview—“We are Koreans yet to be killed.” This is why the fight must continue.

Zainichi Koreans in Our Midst FUKUOKA Yasunori*

In the spring of 2013, I retired from Saitama University at the age of sixty-five. I would like to start this essay by recounting a memory from my time as a professor of sociology at the university. A third-generation Zainichi Korean student entered my seminar. She had been using her Japanese name Mitsui Saori 三井沙織, but in an essay she submitted for the course, she revealed her background. When I was twenty-eight years old, I started my research into the discrimination against the Burakumin; at forty, I began investigating issues faced by Zainichi Koreans, and published my book *Lives of Young Koreans in Japan* (2000, Trans Pacific Press); in 2003, when I turned fifty-five, I delved into problems surrounding Hansen's Disease, or leprosy. I imagine that after seeing my research focuses over the years, this student thought it was safe to share her secret with me.

As it turned out, her great-grandmother had been a shaman (*mudang* 巫堂). Although her great-grandmother had already died, I was able to interview her grandmother who knew the great-grandmother well before her death. Together with my student, the interview lasted many hours.

When my student went on to graduate school, she decided to go by her ethnic name Kim Sajik 金沙織. Around the same time, she said to me, "Professor, I look forward to the students who are going to enter Fukuoka seminar this year!" In other words, she was excited that this year again, a so-called social minority student would enter the Fukuoka seminar and reveal his or her background.

A few years prior to my retirement, the Fukuoka-*zemi* (seminar) became known especially for its diverse group of minority students and lively atmosphere. There were Zainichi Koreans, gays, transgenders, those suffering mental illnesses (such as schizophrenia, depression and eating disorders), and many claiming to have siblings who were *hikikomori*. In the "Fukuoka-*zemi*," where students all engaged in some sort of reveal, they had fun in their unrestrained discussions. It must have been a relief to no longer hide their secrets.

However, this was not the case in the lecture-type class where I taught contemporary society studies to a large number of students. The average student would submit an essay saying something along the lines, "I have never encountered a Zainichi Korean before." I would think, "But there is a Zainichi

*Fukuoka Yasunori is a professor emeritus in the Department of Sociology, Saitama University

Korean sitting right next to you.” In these lectures, when I would read aloud an essay written by a minority student with his or her consent and without revealing his or her name, the change in the classroom’s atmosphere was palpable. As soon as the students realized that the problems of discrimination Professor Fukuoka was lecturing about were not distant ones—that victims of discrimination were in the classroom—their attitude toward the class became more earnest. I witnessed this scene every year.

I recently published a book, *Interview: Another Case of Isolation* (2023, Buraku Liberation Publishing House) (Kikitori mō hitotsu no kakuri). Due to a policy of forced isolation, people suffering from leprosy were detained and sent to the Hansen’s Disease Sanatorium. In this dark reality, the children of leprosy patients were housed in an orphanage attached to a sanatorium. The book contains the life stories of twenty-five people who underwent such experiences. Out of the twenty-five stories, five feature Japan-born Zainichi Koreans. The first of them is a woman (born in 1934) who married a Zainichi Korean of Korean nationality. The second is a man (born 1938) who was aware of his Korean descent but, when he was about to enter high school, realized he was not yet registered as a foreigner and rushed to apply for a residency permit. He subsequently acquired Japanese citizenship after marrying a Japanese woman. The third, a man (born 1936), applied for and received Japanese citizenship upon marriage so that his child would not be disadvantaged due to nationality. His partner, who was present during the interview, was a familiar face from the orphanage attached to the sanatorium and Korean as well (making her the fourth Zainichi Korean). The fifth was a woman (born 1950) whose father was a first-generation Zainichi Korean afflicted with leprosy. Her mother was Japanese. Her parents, concerned their daughter would suffer from her nationality, decided not to register their marriage, and she was entered into her mother’s Japanese family register. When she grew up, she asked her father to allow legal recognition of their relationship as father and daughter, but he rejected her wishes, stating, “Nothing good comes from having a leper and a Korean as a father.”

The theme of my book is Hansen’s disease. However, one reason why numerous Zainichi Koreans appear as if a matter of course is because the incidence of leprosy among Koreans was higher than that of Japanese, due to the poor living conditions created by Japan’s colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. In this context, the number of Korean inmates in Japan’s Hansen’s Disease Sanatoriums was much higher than the percentage of the population.

Another reason would have to be the way I conducted the interviews. Just because the interviews pertain to leprosy does not mean I ask exclusively about

the disease. My first question for anybody who has been subject to discrimination is this: "From the time of your birth, however hazy it may be, what is your very first memory?" I want to hear the life story of whomever is sitting in front of me. Moreover, I speak in a frank manner. During my interview with the third Zainichi Korean man, although he had never told anyone about his Korean heritage, he recounted that "[My] father was from Gimhae in South Gyeongsang Province. Once, during the war, before I was in elementary school, I visited the city with him. I remember walking down a long beach after getting off the boat." Those who kept secrets about being a relative of someone suffering from leprosy or about being a Zainichi Korean despite now being a Japanese citizen would speak about it.

In the everyday lives of the majority of Japanese society, Zainichi Koreans are essentially invisible. This does not mean that they do not exist. Despite being next to each other, the issue is the lack of "encounter, interaction, or dialogue" between Japanese and Zainichi Koreans. The Japanese and those Zainichi Koreans passing as Japanese interact with each other only on a surface level. This prevents the arrival of a "society of coexistence" founded on diversity. Members of the Japanese majority must always be mindful of the fact that it is not unusual for Zainichi Koreans to be among them, that believing they do not exist is merely a consequence of cloudy vision, and that they must take into account how their own daily actions impact others and act accordingly.

Schoolteachers especially, but hopefully everyone, should develop the sensibility that, although they may not yet recognize them, it is not unusual that there may be Zainichi Korean students, students of Buraku descent, Ainu students, LGBTQ-identifying students, students with special needs, or students with relatives who suffered from leprosy and are afraid of discrimination in their classrooms. And I would like this sensibility to be shared with the children. From here, a "society of coexistence" founded on diversity may finally begin.

The History and “Future” of Zainichi Koreans

KIM Seonkil*

Zainichi Korean Society and I

Japan's defeat in 1945 led to the abandonment of its colonies, but over two million—including my father who was seventeen years old at the time and my mother who was eight—decided to remain in Japan as “Chōsenjin” (Koreans) with Japanese nationality.

When I was a child, my father was clearly a sympathizer of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon), which may have influenced the fact that my older sister attended an ethnic Korean school. On the other hand, my mother wished for all her children including me, with the exception of my older sister, to be educated in a Japanese school, and it appeared that she had a distaste for Chongryon.

Japan's economy recovered through special procurement during the Korean War. With American support, Japan was able to regain its power in the international community, but many Zainichi Koreans struggled in poverty. The country meant to protect them was exhausted from war, and they were subjected to feelings of contempt and discrimination that had formed during the colonial period. During the upsurge of the “repatriation” movement to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) that happened before I was born, approximately one hundred thousand Zainichi Koreans went on a one-way trip back to what was advertised as “paradise on Earth,” propaganda that was spread by Chongryon and the Japanese media. I am told that my father said to my mother, “If we get on the boat early enough we can live in Pyongyang, so let's go back,” but that my maternal grandfather said to my mother, “If you are told to go back to the North, you should separate,” and that this stopped them from leaving. I never heard in detail about father's desire to go (migrate) to North Korea, but the unprecedented mass migration from a “liberal” system to a “socialist” state was born out of “despair” regarding Japan among Zainichi Koreans and “hope” for North Korea. Whether it was a cryptic signal from a repatriated relative telling us not to come (a strange letter arrived saying the three-year-old eldest son should return to Japan after turning twenty), the

*Kim Seonkil is the chairman of the specified non-profit organization Kobe Foreigners Friendship Center (KFC)

development of South Korea, or my father's desire to visit his home country (South Korea), the turning point for my father is unclear, but by the time of my adolescence my family became one of those holding South Korean citizenship while maintaining an acquaintance with Chongryon.

My nationality changed from "Chōsen" to "South Korean" simply due to family circumstances, and my family did not choose South Korean nationality or obtain permanent resident status under the agreement reached when diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan were established in 1965. I personally believe it was better not to go along with the policy (a divide-and-conquer policy) that gave those with permanent residence upon agreement partial social security (such as National Health Insurance).

Human Rights Movements and Agency

After graduating university, I worked at a system development company in Tokyo while also doing volunteer work for children in the southern part of Kawasaki City where many Zainichi Koreans resided. It was a social welfare organization of which the Zainichi Korean Christian Church was the parent organization. A central task was to move heavy chairs in order to change the afterschool childcare space into a space for Sunday services. I do not have any affinity with Christianity—perhaps I am better suited to be a lost sheep—but in the social welfare organization there was a senior with whom I got along well and saw as a brother figure. He was also against fingerprinting, at one point the leader of a Zainichi Korean human rights movement, and the youngest officer of a human rights organization in Kanagawa Prefecture co-built by a Zainichi Korean and a Japanese.

When this senior returned to his hometown, I accepted a position at an exploitative social welfare organization and assumed a role in the human rights movement for Zainichi Koreans. I immediately regretted switching jobs, but the early 1990s were a time of many achievements, such as the prevention of prosecution (reporting) fingerprint refusers by the government and abolishment of nationality clauses for hiring local municipal employees. During the discrimination abolishment movement at the time, there were challenges in seeking a system to provide relief funds from municipal governments to elderly Zainichi Koreans who had been excluded from receiving their pensions; Kawasaki City, for example, dispatched employees to crush the movements. Retaliatory demonstrations were held in front of the city ward office with a bullhorn, and ultimately these efforts were successful in an ordinance-designated city with a high population of Zainichi Koreans.

At a time when Zainichi Koreans for whom discrimination had not necessarily been a formative experience—having had health insurance from birth, for example—were coming of age, the movement to eliminate discrimination against Zainichi Koreans was successful but at times did not resonate with the younger generation. In my efforts for advancing human rights, or going further back when I first learned of the civil rights movement in the United States as a high schooler, there was an image of Zainichi Koreans where regardless of left-or right-wing ideology they were categorized and labeled. Their movement was praised when expectations were met, but there was disappointment when they were not. I remember thinking, “This is tough.”

When I was in my first year of high school, my homeroom teacher and the advisor to the Korean Culture Research Club urged me to use my Korean name and not the alias (Japanese name) I had been using until middle school. I announced to my class matter-of-factly, “I am Korean and my name is Kim Seonkil.” I remember that this matter-of-fact manner seemed to disappoint my teacher, who told me, “Your seniors usually trembled or started crying [when they revealed their Korean names].” At the time I did not know it, but I think I wanted to live with “agency.” To this day, this sentiment has not changed.

Zainichi Koreans and the “Future”

Currently, Zainichi Koreans have not received nearly as much attention within the context of Japan’s “multicultural co-existence.” Zainichi Korean society itself is diverse. There are groups with deep connections to North Korea and South Korea, organizations founded on region of birth, groups who aim to maintain cultural heritage, and Christian churches that continue to exist despite decreased membership. In organizations originally comprised of those who migrated during colonial rule and their children, we now see glimpses of broadened definitions of Zainichi to include those who more recently immigrated to and settled in Japan, but at this moment there is virtually no organization which presents itself as Korean Japanese. Despite the passage of time, the identity of “foreigner” (not Japanese) continues to be passed down from generation to generation. Regardless of whether this is good or bad, simply put, it has “persistently and perseveringly been passed down.”

I wonder whether it might be possible to meld people’s histories and memories in a future society where people migrate to and live in. Since the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, the Kobe Foreigners Friendship Center (KFC), a specified non-profit organization, which I represent, has enjoyed broad support in its activities, including Japanese-language support for

adults with foreign roots, education support for children, life counseling or assistance in multiple languages, and support for the elderly with diverse backgrounds (e.g., management of senior citizen care-facilities). More recently, our activities have expanded to support Myanmar refugees and Ukrainian evacuees.

There are other large-scale NGOs in Japan involved in supporting foreigners, but something we emphasize and see as largely different about our organization is the involvement of stakeholders in projects. Among the eight members of the board of directors, there are five with foreign roots, including myself. Among the approximately seventy staff members, including part-timers, there are those with diverse backgrounds who work along with Japanese people such as Zainichi Koreans, Vietnamese, overseas Chinese, Nikkei Peruvians, international marriage migrants, Ukrainian evacuees, and individuals with roots in Inner Mongolia, China. At KFC, we maintain a diverse organizational and business structure as a means to ensure “autonomy” in supporting foreign nationals.

Through my own history and KFC activities, I have pondered the potential of Zainichi Koreans in the society to come. When a Vietnamese staff member who came to Japan as a refugee was confronting an organization that persistently demanded unnecessary documents from foreigners, she said to me, “When we first came to Japan and were refused employment because we are Vietnamese, I got angry and resentful.... But after being refused jobs time and time again, not being able to live, I began to think, ‘I’m Vietnamese, but is that okay?’” Many Zainichi Koreans and Vietnamese refugees, just like Palestinians working as laborers in Israeli settlements, face numerous unreasonable encounters, which push them to such self-questioning. Those who know the history of Zainichi Koreans, rather than focusing their efforts on a Japanese-led “multicultural coexistence” that does not address discrimination, the foolish supporting of “multicultural families” that create outdated Koreans, or false praise [of multiculturalism] as in the “Emperor’s New Clothes,” should instead raise their voice to create a society in which we might believe, “We can do anything as a foreigner.”

At times, people who make comments that may be inconvenient to the current hegemony may be labelled as creating “division” and not “cohesion.” However, facing the injustices Zainichi Koreans have encountered, and the injustices of the present, is connected to the “coexistence of the future.” I hope that I, and the organization I belong to, can be a part of this effort.

Two Turning Points for Postwar Zainichi Koreans: The 1970s and the Present

MUN Gyongsu*

It was a quarter century after the war, in the 1970s, that the late historian Kang Jaeon 姜在彦 spoke of “structural changes” in Zainichi society (“Sixty-Five Years of Zainichi Koreans,” *Quarterly Sanzenri*, “Zainichi Chōsenjin no rokujūgo nen,” *Kikan Sanzenri* no. 8, 1976) and created a buzz in the media with debates over a new trajectory for Zainichi Koreans, including a “third way.” The keyword was “settlement.” By this time, the Japan-born second generation surpassed seventy-five percent and a movement centered on the second generation to protect the rights and interests based on their “permanent residency” in Japan, was gaining momentum.

However, it is a fact that Korean settlement in Japan existed even before the war. According to Japanese government documents, by 1938, out of the approximately eight hundred thousand Koreans residing in Japan, around 660,000 (eighty-two percent) had established households, and it was stated that “Koreans residing in Japan are gradually becoming more settled” (Home Ministry Police Affairs Bureau, “Movement of Koreans Residing in Mainland Japan”). Thus, there were already discussions of Zainichi Korean “settlement.”

After Japan's defeat, many of the Koreans who stayed in Japan had already established households from before the war and were indubitably permanent residents who had their roots planted in Japanese society. Simultaneously, now freed from the yoke of imperial rule, East Asia came to be dominated by nationalism, and the liberation of individuals came to be discussed as the liberation of an ethnic people. Therefore, postwar Zainichi Korean social movements oscillated between discourses on the “logic of residents,” arguing over the issue of permanent residency, and the “logic of an ethnic people” based on the assumption of belonging to the homeland. Towards the end of the 1950s, when the movement for repatriation to Chōsen (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) was intensifying, the “logic of an ethnic people” overpowered the “logic of residents,” and the “repatriation ideology” stating that “unification should resolve the Zainichi issue” became prevalent. During the 15 years from the liberation from colonial rule in 1945 to the postwar repatriation movement, all issues related to Zainichi Koreans converged into the logics of ethnicity and

*Mun Gyongsu is a specially appointed professor (professor emeritus) at the College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University

nation. Owing to what could be described as a divergence between existence and ideology, against this background, the so-called “Zainichi discourse,” a debate over the position and direction of Zainichi Koreans in the postwar period was conceived. In the 1970s, as Japan underwent significant social changes due to high economic growth, and the postwar generation of Zainichi emerged, the heated enthusiasm in Zainichi society surrounding the repatriation movement and the Japan-Korea Treaty subsided, and Zainichi Koreans thus began to face anew their situation. Around 1970, many Zainichi writers such as Kim Sijong 金時鐘, Kim Seokbeom 金石範, Yi Hoeseong 李恢成, Kim Hak-yeong 金鶴泳, Ko Sa-myeong 高史明, Yang Seok-il 梁石日, and Kim Taesaeng 金泰生 burst onto Japan’s literary stage with works written in Japanese, and the existence of a new category, “Zainichi Korean Literature,” came to be recognized. The unifying force of the “repatriation ideology” began to fade, and the inner reality characteristic of Zainichi Koreans, irreducible to homeland or Japanese society, gave rise to the category of “Zainichi Korean Literature.”

The structural changes in Zainichi Korean society during the 1960s and 1970s produced not only literature but much discussion on the nature and direction of Zainichi Korean movements. In 1975, the Sakanaka paper (Hidenori Sakanaka, “On the Future Direction of Immigration Control Administration” *Kongo no shutsunyūkoku kanri gyōsei no arikata ni tsuite*) was published, signifying changes in Japan’s immigration control administration, which had primarily targeted Zainichi Koreans. There was a shift from the previous policy of regulation and exclusion to one that sought assimilation and naturalization through improvements in legal status—a transition from hard to soft measures. Second-generation-centered movements to protect rights and interests were emerging, and some first-generation Zainichi, such as Kang Jeeon, began to discuss the positioning of such efforts to protect rights and interests more consciously within the “structural changes” pertaining to the Zainichi Korean question.

The latter half of the 1970s was a turning point for ideas and discussion concerning Zainichi Koreans, and a time of debates regarding this turning point. In 1977, five prominent members of the Japan-Korea Research Institute, including Satō Katsumi, jointly published an article titled “Aiming for a Self-reliant Relationship” (*Jiritsu shita kankei o mezashite*) (*Chōsen kenkyū*, no. 172), in which they argued that Zainichi Koreans in Japan, considering their reality of being settled in Japan, should focus more seriously on their existence in Japan than in North or South Korea. In 1979, Iinuma Jirō, together with Tsurumi Shunsuke, published the magazine *Chōsenjin* (Koreans), in which they proposed a “third way,” suggesting that Zainichi Koreans should focus on

acquiring civil rights in Japan while maintaining their ethnic identity. In response to the claim which criticized conventional directions and movements of Zainichi Koreans that emphasized belonging to the homeland and pushed for the protection of rights and elimination of discrimination, Kang Sangjung 姜尚中 criticized this from the standpoint of stressing the importance of Zainichi Koreans tie to the “homeland” (*Quarterly Sanzenri, Kikan Sanzenri* no. 42, 1985). Yang Taeho 梁泰昊 then criticized this view (*Quarterly Sanzenri, Kikan Sanzenri* no. 43, 1985), which led to further disputes.

Through the debates that took place over a decade, from the time the issues raised in the pages of *Chōsenjin* to the Kang-Yang debate, an important point emerged beyond the binary of “homeland orientation” or “Japan orientation.” In other words, it is an affirmation that Zainichi Koreans lead an unrestrained, open existence not uniformly confined to their divided home country of North and South Korea or Japanese society.

Zainichi Koreans currently face a “structural change”—a second turning point. As of the end of 2021, the number of those with South Korean nationality or with *Chōsen-seki* status (referring to geographical origin in the Korean peninsula; those who did not opt for South Korean nationality with the 1965 Normalization Treaty and remain stateless) decreased to four hundred thousand, with the number of “special permanent residents” originating in Japanese colonial rule falling below three hundred thousand for the first time. The cumulative number of people acquiring Japanese nationality is about to reach four hundred thousand, and ninety percent of marriages among Zainichi Koreans are with Japanese people. In short, Zainichi Koreans, in terms of nationality and residence status, may soon disappear.

Of course, the increasing rate of “naturalization” does not necessarily mean that assimilation and disintegration are proceeding in tandem. On the contrary, trends of “returning to the homeland” or “ancestral return” are evident among members of the third generation and younger. It is not uncommon for those of the younger generation to seek a base in South Korea or maintain dual nationality. “Transborder Zainichi” or “transnational” ways of life have become established as a trend, and lifestyles that go beyond the binary choice of “homeland orientation” and “Japan orientation” are being explored in various forms.

In 2019, South Korea surpassed Japan’s GDP per capita (purchasing power parity). K-culture, including music, movies, and TV dramas, has captivated the world, and a younger generation of Japanese is now looking at Korea with at times admiration and at others envy, but at least more as an equal neighbor. These changes have also affected the image and self-awareness of Zainichi Koreans, who were once seen as symbols of discrimination and poverty, further

propelling their transborder way of life.

Meanwhile, the backlash over historical perceptions and nationalism continues unabated, and hate crimes against Zainichi Koreans persist. While the integration of culture and social life between Japan and Korea has been progressing more than ever, the dissonance over historical awareness seems to be deepening. Furthermore, the first generation born in Japan (second generation) is approaching the point where they must face their own aging and death while taking care of their first-generation parents. Many of the second generation are left to die in poverty and loneliness, abandoned by social welfare.

In this context, how can we maintain the historic identity inherent to Zainichi Koreans, who have lived between Japan and the Korean (Chōsen) societies of North and South Korea? Zainichi Koreans are now facing a critical moment.

What is the Future of Zainichi Koreans?

IJICHI Noriko*

To what extent can I, as a Japanese, despite being a researcher, talk about the future of Zainichi Koreans? This was the question that initially came to mind when asked to contribute to this special issue. After some consideration, I decided to write about some of my recent thoughts on the subject.

When I was a student, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Europe and to visit the site of the Nanjing Massacre, and I began pondering Japan's colonial rule of East Asia. As graduation began to near and I thought about what to write about for my graduation thesis, a professor suggested that I write about Zainichi Koreans, and so I started learning about their history. At the time, the books on Zainichi Koreans available in bookstores were predominantly written by men and featured men, and those who participated in the anti-discrimination movement were also mostly men. I enjoy listening to people's stories, and so with much help and employing a life-history method, I began my research on first-generation Zainichi Korean women. My involvement with Eomeoni hakgyo (Mother school), a literacy class in Ikuno Ward of Osaka City, led me to a Jeju native. For my graduate research, after two years of fieldwork conducted while living in a fishing village and enrolled at Jeju National University, I started researching the life of Jeju residents in Japan based on historical relations between Jeju Island and Osaka. I have now continued this project for close to thirty years.

Currently, there are Japanese residents with a variety of nationalities and roots. . . . While terms such as "Zainichi *gaikokujin*" (foreigners), "Zainichi Brazilians," and "Zainichi Vietnamese" have also been used, the term "Zainichi" has become synonymous with "Zainichi Koreans." Recently, in English-language journals and at international academic conferences, the word "Zainichi" alone has come to refer to Zainichi Koreans. There is a long history of debate regarding who exactly qualifies as a "Zainichi Korean." The potential qualifications, such as nationality, legal domicile, status of residence, and identity have increased over time.

There is a reason for this. As society has transformed and research progressed over time, the term has come to encompass not only those who came to Japan before the liberation of Korea but also those who re-entered or first came to

*Ijichi Noriko is a professor at the School of Literature and Human Sciences, Osaka Metropolitan University

Japan after liberation and those who came to Japan through marriage. I have been continuing my life-history research through interviews of close to one hundred people, almost half of whom were smuggled into Japan after liberation. This was a common path for Jeju residents because of the April 3rd Jeju Uprising. There was a time when the expressions “old comer” and “newcomer” were used frequently in existing research, but recently even these are being reconsidered. Furthermore, special permanent residents, an indicator long held to define Zainichi Koreans, have been decreasing in number. According to statistics published by the Ministry of Justice on the population of foreign residents in Japan, as of December 31, 2022, there were 436,670 “Korean” residents, of which 285,459 were special permanent residents.

If nationality is taken as the basis for defining Zainichi Koreans, then how have people of Korean roots who have Japanese nationality been positioned? When I wrote my undergraduate thesis on the naturalization of Zainichi Koreans, those who had naturalized said that at the time they were not accepted by the ethnic group. . . . Nowadays, there are people who explicitly identify as Zainichi Koreans of Japanese nationality and voice their opinions and play active roles in a variety of situations. In university classes, due in part to the Korean Wave, some students happily come to tell me they have recently discovered they have Korean roots. Of course, there are also those who quietly express their negative feelings on comment cards. In addition, recently there has been a focus on people referred to as having mixed roots. A younger generation is emerging in which one of the parents or grandparents has Korean roots, or in which people of these generations themselves are already of mixed roots. When looking at these young people, it seems that when they try to learn about their roots and to join ethnic groups or organizations, they are bogged down by relationship dynamics and organizational activities. However, there is no suitable way for them to search for their roots alone. Therefore, with the hopes of making a space in the city where people can simply open the door and without a need for permission access books related to themselves, the Osaka Koreatown History Museum was launched on April 29, 2023, which was initiated originally in the spring of 2021.

The existence of Zainichi Koreans has always been diverse and will continue to diversify. On the other hand, the number of Zainichi Koreans able to make a social statement has been limited. At the center were unsurprisingly men. Reflecting on my experience researching through life histories, interviewees more often than not talked about their fathers. When asked, “Where is your mother from?” it was not uncommon for them not to know. There should have been a variety of people involved in their lives. Having encountered this type of

storytelling many times, I believe that perhaps the Zainichi story has become quite standardized in some areas. How were the children's generation positioned within the ethnic organizations when the father was Zainichi Korean and mother was Japanese, or when the father was Japanese and mother was Zainichi Korean? Nowadays, there are many media tools, such as social networking services, that transcend cultural boundaries, and due to the current diversity of society, multiple varying Zainichi discourses are likely to emerge.

Who will we think of and consider when discussing the theme "the future of Zainichi Koreans"? Scholars continue their research on Zainichi Koreans from multiple angles, but depending on the extent to which they have pondered the question above, it is important to bear in mind that the actual subject of discussion could change and continue to change, both now and in the future.

Joseon, Chōsen, Zainichi, and I HONG Yeongok*

I came to Japan in 1988 from Seoul to Kyoto. My husband was a second-generation Zainichi Korean. We got married in Korea. When I joined my husband's household, the first thing that I remember, even now, is the first *jesa* (ancestral rites). It was such a culture shock. The ceremony was done in an old traditional way. It was as if time had stopped for my husband's Zainichi family. I thought of course there would be cultural differences between me and the Japanese. But I didn't realize that there would be a cultural difference between me as a Korean from Korea and my husband's family who was also from Korea. They were a close family and part of a tight-knit community. The culture and daily life made me feel as if I had gone back in time.

When I first came to Japan, I was proud of being Korean, but in the eyes of the Japanese it was as if I was a mere "*Chōsenjin*." In the neighborhood association, an elderly Japanese woman, I guess in her own way trying to help, whispered to me quietly that I should never tell anyone that I was a Korean. The Japanese saw me as a Korean from the point of view of their history, and I felt at this time, for the first time, that I should feel ashamed.

Recently, my niece and I visited my husband's old elementary school. Can you believe, they still had my husband's old records. We could see his grades and the comments that his teachers wrote. When he was in first grade, he was labelled a *fumajime*, or "not disciplined," and his grades were poor. When he was in sixth grade, his homeroom teacher wrote that he did not come to school because there were problems in his family. When I read this I really felt for my husband. Although he never said much about it, I realized that he must have had a hard time as a Korean.

My mother-in-law, who is now 106 years old, used to always refer to the Japanese in a negative way at home. At first, I wondered why she would do that, especially as someone who never had a bad thing to say about anyone. I soon realized that it was because she had spent so many years as an object of discrimination. My mother-in-law is from a district now part of Daegu, in North Gyeongsang Province. She was born in 1917 and came to Japan when she was thirteen years old. She spoke fluent Japanese to a point that Japanese people would say that she had no accent. But now she speaks much more Korean in a dialect of her childhood such that sometimes I even have a hard time

*Hong Yeongok is a mother and daughter-in-law

understanding her. When I first came to Japan from Seoul and saw my mother-in-law for the first time, I thought she looked like a woman from the countryside. When I began to realize the kind of suffering and hardship that she went through, I was able to understand why. I think that women during those days, all women her age, must have suffered. Having lived together for many years now, when I think about her, at the age of seventeen, married to a person that she did not care for and then living all her life working and supporting her family, I think I can now understand.

My husband died fifteen years after we got married. Over the years since then I have always thought that one day my mother-in-law would tell me to go back home because my husband was no longer alive. She, on the other hand, always thought that one day I would say to her that I will now go back to Korea and start a new life because my husband was gone. This is how we spent our years together, almost forty years, both afraid and watching each other's facial expressions. We did our best not to show the enormous sadness that we shared—her losing her son and I losing my husband. Now when I think about it, maybe we both felt grateful that we were able to live these years without allowing ourselves to truly feel the loss.

My mother-in-law used to sell traditional Korean candy and homemade liquor. Her homemade liquor was so popular, even with the Japanese police, who really liked her sake. If there was to be a raid, these policemen would tip her off and she would quickly dispose of the sake. She was really smart, always making sure that the policemen were well bestowed with her sake. If she were born as a man she would really have become something. All her children, when we get together, always say this. She also received a lot of awards from Mindan because she was so active in the women's organization. She and the women's group were particularly active during the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. Although she did not study, she is smart, and really a *yangban* in her own way. If something needs to be done and we tell her that it is for our *gyopo* (diasporic) community, she will drop everything else and do it.

These days, when I think about it, I came to Japan and have lived such a busy life. Raising my children, I have lived every day in such a hectic way without my husband. Now my life is here in Japan. I will not return to Korea. I used to hear people say that when they get old they would go back to their homeland. I cannot say that Japan is my *goyang*, or homeland, but my children are here, and my homeland is, I guess, what is in my heart. I was just in Korea last year. The Korea that I knew before is long gone. It has changed. It feels distant. My mother is still living and my siblings are there, and I go to Korea for them. But when they are no longer there, I wonder what I will feel. When I am

in Korea the only thing I think of is when I no longer will be able to see my elderly mother's face again.

My children do not like to say out loud that they are Korean. When I mentioned this to a Zainichi Korean, he said it is because they do not feel pride in the country that is a part of them. Perhaps I should have made a point of telling them more good things. When there are things about North Korea in the news, I notice that they avoid even more talking about their connection to Korea. I thought maybe they want to hide. But on the other hand, funnily enough, they see Korea as one, so for them I guess the country is in a way unified. All my husband's siblings still have South Korean citizenship except for his youngest sister, who naturalized. Among my mother-in-law's siblings, there are those who have *Chōsen seki* (stateless) status. Two of her siblings also went to North Korea. My mother-in-law's youngest brother was a former principle at a *Chōsen* school. When everyone in the family used to get together, they would get into big fights over politics. They would get angry and yell at each other saying that they never want to see one another again. But at the next *jesa*, everyone came together again, and it started all over again. When the first generation—my mother-in-law's generation—passes away, such passion for Zainichi politics will probably no longer be felt.

My children say they want to naturalize, and I am fine with this. The younger generation are not able to speak Korean. For example, my daughter has Korean nationality, and when she wanted to marry, I had to gather all the paperwork and translate everything from Korean to Japanese for the consulate. Although she is Korean on her passport, the fact that she is not able to do this on her own puts her at a disadvantage somehow. I think the younger generation should be flexible in their ways. When my daughter was in her second year of junior high there was an open house at her school, when parents could attend and observe the classes. On that day, I really made sure that I looked really nice so she could feel proud of me. Afterwards, her friends were calling out to their mothers, "*Okāsan*," and running towards them. But my daughter pretended that she did not see me and walked the other way. I went to her and her friends and saw how she tensed up and moved away with her friends. She told me not to speak. So I walked ahead of her. I still remember that feeling. I could not see in front of me because of the tears that welled up. When my son was little, he used to say that he was Korean and proudly that he was able to speak Korean, even yell this out. But as he grew up, I saw that he tried to hide that he is Korean. I think that maybe everyone must go through this once. But there is one thing that I asked of my children as a Korean. These days, North Korea shoots its missiles, and we hear this often in the news. I told them that even if their coworkers

speak ill of Korea, do not join in. I think that this is because we are *Hanguk saram*, Korean, after all.

What does it mean to be a *Chōsen* person? I think that the sentiments of being a *Joseon saram* is different from the kind of feeling that Zainichi and I as a Korean from Korea have. The nuance is different. The word *Chōsen* became a degrading word. But for me, in the beginning, I thought a *Chōsen saram* was, of course a *Joseon saram*, and what's wrong with that? There was no negative feeling attached to it. But I realized that for Zainichi the word has another kind of meaning, which I was only able to understand after a while. I realized that Zainichi's feeling of wanting to maintain ethnic consciousness and their desire to continue to hold on to this sentiment is due to the kind of discrimination they have undergone. I have never felt that I am a Zainichi, although I have been here in Japan with a Zainichi family for nearly forty years. I am a Korean who came to Japan through marriage. My husband used to say that when he was in Korea, he felt hurt when people in Korea used to call him a *gyopo* and not accept him as a Korean. The affection that my husband had for his homeland was noticeable, but with my children, I would have to say that it is different.

I think that the future of Zainichi depends on the way they feel—do they feel pride, or do they sustain a consciousness as they have in the past, one of feeling discriminated against and reacting towards it? I think that surroundings are important. As time passes, it is natural for one to become part of the society in which he or she lives. Is being ethnically Korean so important? But at the same time, I understand the sense of comfort of belonging to an ethnic community. There is somehow a sense of comfort and familiarity—shall I say, nostalgia—even now.

My Name is Sehyong Sehyong*

My name is Sehyong. I was born and grew up in Japan as a fourth-generation Zainichi Korean. My great-grandparents came from the Korean Peninsula, from Dongne-gun, South Gyeongsang Province. At *Chōsengakko*, my elementary school, I researched about the region and town where my great-grandparents came from.

Although I attended Japanese high school, I have never had a Japanese name. I only have a Korean name and Korean nationality. The name Sehyong 勢炯 was given to me by my grandfather and father. The Chinese character *se* 勢, in Japanese *ikiyoi*, means “impetus, spirit, vigor,” and *hyeong* 炯, *kei* in Japanese, means “clear, bright, light.” This second character is also related to a style of creating names that is very traditional to Korea, known as *dollimja*, where a character is passed down through generations of names. The five Chinese elements of fire, earth, metal, water, and wood can also be part of one’s name. In my case, *hyeong* has to do with fire. My two brothers also have the same fire element in their names; this was decided as the element for my generation in the family. My name expresses my Korean ethnicity. In Japan it is very easy to live with a Japanese name. I think a name is very important because a name explains who I am. I am proud of my name. It is important to protect my Zainichi identity and history of why I am living in Japan, just the same as how my ancestors protected it. When I have my own children, who will be fifth-generation Zainichi, even if they are of mixed heritage, I will tell them about our identity and history.

Recently, I asked my father once again the meaning of my name. He said it means to look into my bright future and to push forward vigorously. This is what I imagine for my own child.

*Sehyong is a university student

Tree
KIM Sijong*

木よ、
揺れている音を
自身で聞いている木よ、

나무여,
흔들리는 소리를
제 자신이 듣고있는 나무여,

そうしてすべては
定めぬ位置でうすれ
いったのだ、

23. 10. 3.

金時鐘

*Kim Sijong is a writer, poet, educator, and activist

Tying a *Hanbok* CHO Yeongsun*

There is a *hanbok* (traditional Korean wear).

It's a *chima jeogori* (skirt-dress) pale pink like the new buds of azalea and cherry blossoms in full bloom. The silk is thin like the wings of a butterfly. Six years ago, in autumn, six months before my daughter's wedding, she and I went to Seoul to have one made as a bridal gown.

My daughter was married five years ago in the spring. Her partner was an upperclassman in university who belonged to the same club. He is a young Japanese man. My daughter is a third-generation Zainichi Korean, so it was an international marriage, so to speak.

My husband and I had our own wedding ceremony on the same day thirty years ago. Ours was an arranged marriage between Zainichi Koreans. "I will never permit you to marry a Japanese. If you insist on doing so, consider yourself without parents and not our child," my father said. A marriage between compatriots. This is what my father demanded.

My father was born in the countryside in South Gyeongsang Province during Japanese colonial rule. Struggling to eat, my grandparents crossed the ocean with him, at the time two years old, on their backs. They settled in Tokyo and started a scrap metal shop. My father's family experienced poverty and hardship, like many other Zainichi at the time. My father faced harassment and discrimination, which likely strengthened a deep-rooted resentment toward Japan. Growing up as a second-generation Zainichi, I felt firsthand the emotional scars of my father, who kept most things to himself, and swore not to betray him in my choice of partner. I was in an environment where there were Japanese everywhere I looked, but I sealed off romantic feelings toward them.

My husband told me his father was the same. Growing up in a similar family environment, we didn't have to say things in words to understand one another. Blessed with a boy and a girl, we didn't raise our children like the first generation had raised us. We chose to value their independence and freedom in both work and marriage. We thought that if our child loves someone, their nationality should not matter.

During our daughter's wedding, the couple changed into different clothes for the traditional *ironaoshi*, the groom into a [Japanese] *hakama* and the bride into a *hanbok*. This would have been unthinkable for our generation thirty

* Cho Yeongsun is a wife, mother, grandmother, and poet

years ago. Both wearing their national dress and both respecting one another, we were deeply moved that this could be expressed without hesitation.

Three years ago in the autumn, my son married a Japanese woman who joined his company at the same time. She said that she wanted to wear her sister-in-law's *hanbok*. She expressed her desire to marry a Korean in a praiseworthy way. That summer, my nephew married a Japanese woman. She, too, wore this pale pink *hanbok*. While tying the *otgoreum* (vest bow) for her, I marveled at how it seemed to connect Korea and Japan.

Fourteen years since my daughter's marriage, she and her husband have one son and one daughter. Next year my granddaughter will be in middle school and my grandson will be in elementary school. My daughter seems to be teaching them about their roots little by little, the history of Korea and Japan. And the history of their grandparents.

The world is getting smaller, and they may even find themselves in international jobs. And someday, they, who have both Korean and Japanese blood, may become a bridge between the two countries. Right now, relations between Korea and Japan are strained. The discourse of "hate Korea," and hate speech

Long ago, in a time when there were no national borders, people likely respected other ethnic groups and built good relationships. Perhaps a man from the peninsula and a woman from the island also bonded in love.

Koreans and Japanese are flowers on the same stem.

This is what one *hanbok* taught me.

Kotoba Kaku, Kaku Meika: Writing Words, Making Revolution FUNI*

The words “Kotoba Kaku, Kaku Meika” in the title of the rap are the names of my two daughters. The first verse tells a fictional story called “Korea.” Call it destiny or a curse, my ethnicity always follows like a shadow; it is something that cannot be severed. My mother is a Korean who was “married off” to Japan. At the time, Zainichi, called *Jaeil gyopo* in Korean, were perceived as being rich. My mother was originally a “newcomer,” but because she has now been in Japan for over forty years, I have an identity crisis because I don’t know if I myself am Korean or not. My father is also a Korean but born and raised in Japan; and apparently, he has also been troubled with his own identity from youth. He was told by his parents to visit his home country, and when he stepped on Korean land for the first time, it was for an arranged marriage planned by his parents.

The following two lines are in the rap:

*“The answer, my homie, is rapping far from home”
 “The answer is rapping far from home”*

These have to do with my mother, who left her home country, Korea, to live in Japan, and my father, born and raised in Japan, living far away from his “home country,” Korea. To “rap” doesn’t mean to simply rap; I believe it means something that reflects a person’s life. I was once asked, “Is someone who can’t speak because of a disability unable to rap?” I did not want to say “yes” to that question. It was then that I realized that showing one’s thoughts or feelings through actions can also be called “rapping.” I started believing that a person’s life itself can be called a “rap.” Therefore, “rapping far from home” refers to how my parents spent their lives in a place far from home.

The second verse is the story of my partner. By explaining my partner’s family tree, the contrast between the first verse and the second verse shows that the first verse is a story about living beyond one’s ethnicity. My partner’s grandmother, a Filipina, married a Chinese person, and my partner’s mother married a Japanese person. I wanted to personify the idea that marriage is all about the person you live with, not the idea of race. However, the last phrase denotes that Japan did not offer what my partner was truly longing for. In other words, she was unable

*FUNI is a rapper, poet, performer, and activist

to be proud of her various roots within Japanese society, where the monoethnic myth runs rampant and where peer pressure is strong. She was raised in the Philippines until she was thirteen and holds her Filipino roots dearly, but in Japan, there is a stereotype linking Filipinas with the nightlife entertainment business. To resist these notions, she distanced herself from the Filipino community. She believed that a strong academic background would help her survive in this society. "Rapping far from home," regarding my partner, has to do with how her grandmother, her mother, and my partner herself are all living lives in places far away from safety.

The third verse is about my two children, whose names are the focus of the title. My children and I are foreigners in Japan, so our names are different from the Japanese. I go by two names in Japanese society, a Korean name and a common passing name. I have always felt it was hard to live in Japan because of my names. My name is Jeonghun 正勲, meaning "righteous order of chivalry," an honor bestowed on a citizen by a nation or military. I have always been confused by my name, because if I ever were to receive such an honor, I do not know whether it would be from Korea or Japan or somewhere else.

My children have many different roots. We wanted to give them names with both Chinese characters and Katakana mixed together to remind them of these mixed roots. However, when I tried to hand in their birth certificates to city hall, their names were denied because we were told that foreigners could not name their children with kanji and katakana Japanese script mixed together. "Blatant racism" are the two words that immediately came into my mind. But I realized that the city worker was just following the rules, perhaps with no racist intention. Still, I could not meekly abide by this. I protested this outdated system from the Taishō period, saying that times have changed and that there are now foreigners who are born in Japan and die in Japan. I asked if they could allow my child to be the first foreign person to use both kanji and katakana in their name.

My family name is Kwak, the character for which is unpronounceable in Japanese. My name is thus always forcibly changed into katakana. It is pronounced "Kaku," as in "to write." I am a rapper and poet, and my partner is a journalist for a newspaper. Since we both deal with words in our professions, we named our first child Kotoba 言葉 (word). This name was chosen with the hope that when she gets confused about her identity and has an identity crisis, she will look up "kotoba" in the bible and find John 1:1, "In the beginning, there was the 'Kotoba.'" If she were ever to lose sight of who she is as a person, she would find the phrase that says "Kotoba" existed from the beginning, and she would come to believe that she can stay as the person that she already is. We

named our second child Meika 命華, meaning “life and flower.” We chose the second character to reflect her Chinese heritage. If you connect her name to our family name, it becomes “Kakumeika,” meaning “Revolutionary.” Perhaps this meaning may put some pressure on her, but I also wanted her name to have the message, “If you have life, you can even go to the moon.”

“Rapping far away from home” is “living life far away.” I feel like I have been able to make it so far in life by encountering the curse, spell, or destiny called “Korea.” I wish for our own children and the next generation to live, to cherish their partners, to create their own small communities, and continue to push forward down their own paths and those for the following generations to come.

Kotoba Kaku, Kaku Meika

My 엄마 came from Korea in 1979
“Zainichi is rich” some people tell a lie
My 오빠 grew up in Japan
He steps into motherland to meet my mom

You always ask, who are you?

The answer, my homie, is rapping far from home
The answer is rapping far from home

My wife came from the Philippines when she was thirteen
Her grandma married a Chinese
And her dad is Japanese
But Japanese never give her what she really needs

You always ask, who are you?

The answer, my homie, is rapping far from home
The answer is rapping far from home

We named our first baby Kotoba 言葉
Because in the beginning there was the Word
We named our second baby Meika 命華
Make a Movement even if you are only one

You always ask, who are you?

The answer, my homie, is rapping far from home
The answer is rapping far from home

