

**THE TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES AND ETHNOCULTURAL CAPITAL  
OF *ZAINICHI* RESIDING IN VANCOUVER, CANADA**

by

David Barker

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# Approval

**Name:** David Barker

**Degree:** Master of Arts

**Title of Thesis:** The Transnational Identities and Ethnocultural Capital of *Zainichi* Residing in Vancouver, Canada

**Examining Committee:**

**Chair:** Dr. Barbara Mitchell

---

**Dr. Ann Travers**  
Senior Supervisor  
Assistant Professor of Sociology  
Simon Fraser University

---

**Dr. Parin Dossa**  
Member  
Associate Professor of Anthropology  
Simon Fraser University

---

**Dr. Sheila Steinberg**  
External Examiner  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
Humboldt State University

**Date Approved:** 14 March 2005

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## Abstract

The *zainichi* are descendents of colonial Koreans in Japan. This thesis employs semi-structured interviews, transnational theory and Bourdieu's conception of cultural capital to construct a qualitative analysis of *zainichi* identity representations. This thesis suggests that symbolic Koreanness acts as a severe 'deficit' that is frequently held against one's equal inclusion in Japan because Japan's national symbolic structure seems to exclude the possibility that *zainichi* can be fully Japanese, and that an undeniable, systemic pattern of *zainichi* suffering has arisen in Japan partly through a malfeasance in the state's wielding of symbolic power. Transnationalism, and the Bourdiean concepts of cultural capital and practice are employed to investigate the apparent paradox of a *zainichi* acquisition of formidable Japanese cultural capital and generally equally large deficits in the capital necessary to gain them distinction or membership in Korea or a Korean diaspora, combined with their being identified as symbolic representatives of Korea.

*To Junko,  
whose love sustained me through the writing of this thesis,  
but who paid the highest cost as I prioritized it over all else.  
I hope some day you know how much I thought about you as I  
typed each letter.*

*Your big heart, so free from narrow-mindedness,  
was what made me feel something good could come  
of writing research on minorities for the Japanese context.  
Without you, I would not have known how good I can be.*

*I know it's not enough to thank you  
for what this work put you through,  
especially in the final days, but I dedicate this thesis to you.*

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This paper owes the greatest debt to the faculty and staff of the Sociology and Anthropology department at Simon Fraser University. I would like to begin by thanking the office and support staff, who are too often under acknowledged, but without which all of us in the department would certainly be lost! In particular, I would like to thank Mickey Naisby, who often rescued me from my unceasing ignorance about paperwork and other university formalities, and without whom it would not have been possible for me to complete my defense in time to take a job offer in Japan.

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My primary units of analysis in this thesis are the reported descriptions of lived events and the representations of the subjective experience of them for participants in interviews as captured in transcriptions of such interviews. So to my participants, who furnished me with this data I am forever grateful, because I know that for them, it was more than just data, and they will never be just 'units' or 'resources' in my eyes.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my intellectual debts, first to the sociological researchers of *zainichi* issues in Japan who paved the way for my work, especially Fukuoka Yasunori of Saitama University and Oguma Eigi of Keio University. It almost seems as though *zainichi* issues cannot be discussed without quoting Fukuoka, and Oguma's (2002) *A Genealogy of Japanese Self-Images* is perhaps the finest book I have read concerning Japan. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Jon Lie of the University of California, Berkley, Sonia Ryang of Johns Hopkins University, and Yoshino Kosaku of the University of Tokyo. I hope they will forgive my audacity in occasionally expressing my approach in opposition to their own, as in the last analysis we have far more in common than in opposition to one another as far as the topic of *zainichi* is concerned. Jon Lie's insightful comments on *zainichi* identity, for example, led me to entirely re-craft my approach to identity in this thesis, which in the end I feel proved fruitful. I regret that the business of writing social science somehow highlights more the impressions of my skeptical, critical eye than it reveals the unabashed admiration I actually feel their work warrants. My own work, however much it appears to diverge from theirs, is in fact little more than an extension of the wealth they have painstakingly offered to the field, and I feel I cannot proceed without acknowledging that explicitly.



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## Preface

The *zainichi* discussed in this paper are the descendents of Korean migrants who moved into and established families in Japan during the period of Japan's colonial rule over Korea in the first half of the twentieth century. When I first met *zainichi* in Vancouver through casual, happenstance encounters in the bars and cafés of downtown Vancouver, I was confounded by their representations of national identity. (Why do you say to me "I think I *am* Japanese, but I am *not* Japanese"? If you were born in Japan, why do you carry Korean passports?) My initial confusion soon turned to full-blown curiosity. However, I found that the university library could offer me little to assuage my puzzlement.

Few qualitative studies are available in the English language sociological literature on the *zainichi* of Japan. As such, I decided it might be useful to contribute to building up the body of qualitative sociological literature in the English language on the *zainichi* of Japan, and especially the rather small body of qualitative studies on the conflicted national identity practices of *zainichi*. In time, the path I chose to follow was to use the methodological approach of grounded theory for a qualitative analysis of the national identity representations of *zainichi* staying in Vancouver, Canada, to seek data about the myriad ways these *zainichi* represent their national identities, and how their representation of these identities may have been altered by their experiences in the context of Vancouver, Canada, where they now are (generally only temporarily) residing.

This 'choice' may make me sound far more certain and deliberate than I actually was when I began. I choose grounded theory partly out of the hope that it could make

more apparent the theoretical roads I should pursue for this context wherein no theoretical perspective seemed initially to fit. Admittedly, I engaged in my thesis aware of my intellectual and theoretical poverty concerning the *zainichi*, with the hope that grounded theory would help to furnish the rest of the arsenal I required.

I have still not uncovered any literature in sociology exploring the framing effect of a stay in Canada upon the formation of *zainichi* identities. Yet in any given year there will be upwards of a few hundred *zainichi* residing in Canada's third largest city, Vancouver. The *zainichi* are not only a part of Japanese society, but are a vital part of urban Vancouver's diverse mix, as well. I have often wondered whether the findings of my study could be applicable to exploring the effect of the experience in Vancouver upon the identities of persons from other countries, and perhaps especially those that could be characterized as heteronational or having a shifting or ambiguous nationality prior to a stay in Canada. This will be for sociologists other than me to decide. However, it is my sincerest hope that that this study will contribute to building healthier and more harmonious social relations not only in Japan, but Canada and elsewhere.

## Chapter One - Introduction

As the Japanese sociologist and preeminent researcher of *zainichi* issues Yasunori Fukuoka suggests, the Japanese word *zainichi* ostensibly means ‘[temporary] resident’, but is often used “informally [...] to indicate members of the Korean ethnic minority in Japan” (Fukuoka, 2000: 271 [Preface note 2]). Fukuoka defines his use of the Japanese term *zainichi* as “(1) ethnic Koreans who came to Japan around the time of the Second World War, or earlier, and have lived there ever since, and (2) their offspring, who have been born and raised in Japan and basically look upon Japan as their permanent place of residence” (Fukuoka, 2000: 271 [Preface note 2]). I adopt Fukuoka’s definition of this term in my own work, deviating from it only in that I delete the last stipulation, “basically look upon Japan as their permanent place of residence” (Fukuoka, 2000: 271 [Preface note 2]), to better allow my participants own determinations of where they would like to live to come through, and in that I replace the term “ethnic Koreans” with *Korean descended persons* to better acknowledge those identifying themselves and other identified as *zainichi* by virtue of descent who may not identify themselves as holders of Korean culture and ethnicity.

The vast majority of these persons called *zainichi* in Japan are the second to fourth generation offspring of Korean migrants from Japan’s period of imperial and colonial expansion in the early part of the twentieth century (Fukuoka, 2000: xxvi). One might designate them “Korean-Japanese”, but for North American readers this may carry with it the connotation of immigrant-citizens who are at least legally equally included

within, and symbolically portrayed as among, the national community, but who stem from a Korean ancestry and perhaps maintain some aspects of Korean culture. This does not quite capture the context that the Korean-descended called *zainichi* find themselves in. Although they, generally their parents, and often their grandparents and great-grandparents as well, were born in Japan, many do not have Japanese citizenship. As will be discussed at length later in this thesis, some may feel very little attachment to a Korean culture or ethnicity. At the same time, though some feel a great attachment to Japanese culture, and all have led entire lives embedded in Japanese society, being born in Japan and feeling Japanese does not guarantee that the Japanese government or other Japanese will recognize them or their descendents either legally or informally as equal members in the Japanese nation.

Fukuoka notes that although Anglophone sociologists often call them “Korean Japanese”, the Japanese language equivalents of this term are not used for Korean descended *zainichi* in Japan. Instead, Japanese sociology and colloquial expression more often terms them *zainichi*, *zainichi chosenshin* (North Korean *zainichi*) or *zainichi kankokujin* (South Korean *zainichi*) (Fukuoka, 2000: xxxviii). This is the standard practice in spite of the fact that the categories of “Japanese Americans” or “Japanese Brazilians” are scribed similarly in English and Japanese – *Nikkei Amerikajin* (= Japanese American), and *Nikkei Burajirujin* (= Japanese Brazilian) (Fukuoka, 2000: xxxviii).

Fukuoda’s etymology of the word *zainichi* is insightful: *zai* signifies displaced and usually temporary residence, or sojourn, and may also be used to describe foreign students’ or travelers’ sporadic and temporary contexts in other lands (eg: *zai-Rio* = staying in Rio) (Fukuoka, 2000: xxxviii). Other phrases often used in English publications, such as “Korean residents” or “Koreans in Japan”, seem to do little more to

suggest to North American readers the usually life-long and even multi-generational nature of their residence in Japan, or their (in most cases thorough) level of acculturation to Japanese society. Although the *zainichi* are among the second to fourth generation descendants of Korean immigrants, the term *zainichi* reflects much about the legal stance of the Japanese state toward their inclusion among the citizenry, and also seems to reflect the prejudices of some Japanese citizens against them as alien others within their (symbolically homogeneous) Japanese nation. For this reason, although some may see the connotative implication of alienation or non-inclusion among the Japanese people as derogatory, I suggest that the term *zainichi* is useful as a trope in this thesis.

It is interesting to note that many of the Korean-descended, life-long residents of Japan I have spoken with, and especially the youngest, were unaware that the concept of *zainichi*, as applied to Korean-descended persons in Japan, is a relatively recent historical product. The terms *zainichi*, *zainichi chosonjin* (North Korean *zainichi*) or *zainichi kankokojin* (South Korean *zainichi*) are partly dependent on Japan's pre-War colonial subjugation of Korea and Koreans, but stem from the aftermath of the collapse of the Japanese Empire, and are more precisely products of reformulations of Japanese and Korean nationality subsequent to the defeat of Japan at the close of World War Two in 1945. Even *zainichi* less well-versed in history may not be aware that their state of being *zainichi* in fact emerges from a time *after* their ancestors arrived in Japan, although it certainly draws upon earlier colonial practices and in some ways represents the continuity of them, albeit in a transformed way. For these *zainichi*, and for the rest of us who lack this information, a sketch of the history of the construct of Japanese nationality and the *zainichi* concept with respect to Korean-descended persons born in Japan is insightful.

## **Koreans as Compulsory Japanese**

Korea was not only under Japanese colonial rule from 1910-1945, but was formally annexed to the Japanese nation. In 1910, Koreans were first accredited Japanese nationality (Kashiwazaki, 2000: 16) as part of a design to better assimilate them and Korean territory into Greater Japan. In 1939, the Japanese government, ostensibly in trying to further amalgamate Japan and Korea (effectively annexing Korea and Koreans to the Japanese nation-state), established a policy called *soshikaimei* which attempted to force Koreans to adopt Japanese surnames while keeping their households registered in Korea—regardless of their place of residence—in order to enable them and their offspring to be distinguished from Japanese subjects with lineages descended from long-ago Japan, while nevertheless rendering them “Japanese” in name and nationality (Ryang, 2000: 3; Kashiwazaki, 2000: 16). Thus, while Koreans were now intended to become Japanese citizens with Japanese names, they and their descendents could still be distinguished as colonial subjects by state or civil administrators.

For a variety of reasons, including semi-slavery, military conscription and also more benign factors such as economic and educational opportunities, a large number of these new Japanese nationals from Korea wound up living on the main islands of Japan (or those islands that now fall within the territory of post-War Japan). There, many had children who were born into Japanese society. These children were born formally “Japanese”, but as they came from a Korean familial lineage, they were registered in Seoul (the capital of present-day South Korea) separately from the children around them whose families were Japanese by more distant or pre-historical familial lineage, who were registered in Tokyo (the capital of Japan) regardless of their place of birth. In the aftermath of World War Two four decades later, when Korea was again severed from



Japan, 600 000 of the two million former Koreans and their descendents in Japan stayed, while many of the others utilized repatriation and resettlement programs encouraged by Japan's American occupational administration to go to Korea (Ryang, 2000: 4; Kashiwazaki, 2000: 20).

Korean males in colonial Japan were enfranchised Japanese citizens, and some were even voted into office (Ryang, 2000: 4). The right of the Korean-descended Japanese to vote in Occupied Japan, however, was soon rescinded by the Diet under the American occupation in December, 1945, and in May, 1947, *zainichi* were compulsorily detached from the general Japanese population under an 'Alien Registration Law' (Fukuoka, 2000: 11; Kashiwazaki, 2000; Ryang, 2000: 4)<sup>1</sup>. All Japanese nationals registered in Seoul were now designated 'aliens' in Japan, regardless of their birthplace or wishes. Thus, the legal state of being *zainichi* began to emerge as an act of the twofold Japanese / American Occupational administration.

However, it was an act passed on April 28, 1952 (the very day when the Occupation officially ended, restoring to Japan her full control of domestic affairs) that unambiguously expelled the now-registered *zainichi* from legal 'Japanese national' status and explicitly dissolved any and all rights of Japanese nationality pertaining to them (Fukuoka, 2000: 11; Ryang, 2000: 4; Kashiwazaki, 2000: 22-23). Such rescinded rights included the receipt of social services, veteran's benefits, employment in civil service,

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<sup>1</sup> Kashiwazaki suggests this was done out of a concern by the intelligence office of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Forces (SCAF) and Japanese legislators and officials that they were politically 'left-leaning', and so, were they to vote, might tend to lead Japan towards socialism, and that they were likely to support 'subversive' communist movements (Kashiwazaki, 2000: 21). Commander General Eichelberger of the SCAF remarked to the press in April 1948 that the Koreans then demonstrating to defend and reinstate their rights were inspired by communists, and said "I wish I had a big ship like the Queen Elizabeth here to send them all back to Korea" (Inokuchi, 152; Eichelberger, in the *Kobe Shinbun*, 27 April, 1948, cited in Inokuchi, 152). Some prominent Japanese shared this view. In 1948, Shigeru Yoshida became Prime Minister of Japan, and soon after wrote to General MacArthur, the Supreme Allied commander, asking him to send the Korean descended population in Japan to Korea (Inokuchi, 2000:153).

and the licensing of certain businesses (Ryang, 2000: 4; Kashiwazaki, 2000: 23). While the forcible inclusion of the Korean-descended in Japan as Japanese nationals was an act of the pre-War Japanese Empire, the expulsion of them from that status was a mutual work of American and Japanese administrators in Occupied Japan and of the post-War state that emerged from the Occupation. Within a day of the American Occupation ending, the descendents of colonial Koreans migrants in Japan were clearly no longer Japanese nationals. Although it was uncertain what was to become of those remaining, for now, they became Korean nationals on paper, and *zainichi* in common speech.

Between 1952 and 1996, over 200 000 persons now listed by the Japanese government as “Koreans”, the vast majority descended from the pre-War population of ex-Japanese nationals registered in Korea, were granted requests for Japanese nationality conditional on renouncing Korean names in favour of officially-recognized Japanese ones (Fukuoka, 2000: 21). Permission to become a Japanese national was initially premised on an assessment that applicants had “fully assimilated”, and among other considerations, could not still be living in an ethnic Korean enclave (Kashiwazaki, 2000: 23). Though the number of successful applications and the stories of those who have changed nationality in recent years suggest that *zainichi* have not been scrutinized for evidence of acculturation with the skepticism applicants in the past may have been, it is still possible for *zainichi* seeking naturalization to be rejected for suspicion of incomplete cultural assimilation.

Conferring nationality upon an applicant remains under the sole discretion of the Minister of Justice. While The Nationality Law of 1950 (Ministry of Justice, 1985)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that the English translation made available by the Japanese consulate, not the Law itself, dates from 1985. (Technically speaking, for those seeking the original, it is Law No. 147 of 1950, which has been amended by Law No. 268 of 1952, and Law No. 45 of 1984.)

delineates requirements for naturalization that seem on face value not to discriminate against persons for being Korean-descended, one's descent can indeed come into play in real-life negotiation with certain case-workers as in practice the discretion of the Minister of Justice translates into the discretion of case-workers assigned to the applicant's file<sup>3</sup>. For example, although exhibiting Koreanness is at present not formally deemed grounds for rejecting a *zainichi* applicant, in practice, officials may ask neighbors questions about applicants' cultural practices or apparent Koreanness/Japaneseness to determine how likely they are to 'fit in' among the Japanese people (Matsubara/*The Japan Times*: Apr. 20, 2001). The assessment of the assayer is crucial, and applicants need to be aware of satisfying more than the letter of the law.

As an example, David Aldwinkle, assistant professor at Hokkaido Information University in northern Japan, a white American, renounced his American citizenship and became legally Japanese. In the process he acquired the Japanese legal moniker "Arudou Debito". Arudou was concerned about his own application, as he had heard of ministry workers probing applicants' kitchen supplies to see if they ate like a 'real Japanese', and he knew of Korean-descended children being warned not to be seen playing with Korean dolls (Matsubara/*The Japan Times*: Apr. 20, 2001). Arudou reports that the Ministry official in charge of his case confirmed his fears of such practices, telling him in response to his concerns about whether and how he needed to demonstrate his Japaneseness that successful candidates cannot seem "too strange" as a Japanese (Matsubara/*The Japan Times*: Apr. 20, 2001). He was very relieved when Japan finally admitted him, because,

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<sup>3</sup> Although the Ministry no longer formally requires a Japanese name or the denial of (former) ethnicity, the professor of sociology and renowned *zainichi* issues expert Yasunori Fukuoka recommends that the current naturalization process be made less discretionary, and instead provide clear and consistent standards for the assessment of qualifications (Fukuoka in Hiroshi Matsubara/*The Japan Times*: Apr. 20, 2001)<sup>3</sup>. Fukuoka suggests that, "while the true intention behind the current naturalization practice by the ministry is unknown", the current process "is obviously only harassing many foreigners and thus discourages them from becoming Japanese" (Fukuoka in Matsubara/*The Japan Times*: Apr. 20, 2001).

“under the label of ‘good behavior’, they could check almost everything about applicants and their ‘Japaneseness’” (Arudou, in Matsubara/*The Japan Times*: Apr. 20, 2001).

In spite of these difficulties in particular cases, Chung (2003) and Kashiwazaki (2000) suggest that, overall, the current trend in Japanese politics is to more readily confer citizenship and nationality on the third and fourth generation *zainichi* providing they duly abandon their Korean nationality and satisfy the state that they are fully committed to Japan to the exclusion of Korea. (The acceptance of Japanese nationality is premised on the prior or simultaneous rejection of one’s former nationality, as Japan both equates nationality with citizenship, and disallows dual nationality/citizenship.) This is confirmed by the *zainichi* I have spoken with who have successfully changed their nationality in recent years, and seems to be expected by the (mostly twenty to thirty year old) *zainichi* I’ve spoken with who anticipate successfully changing their nationality in the near future. Just as Meiji Japan modeled its constitutional monarchy after that of Prussia, it also based its nationality rights on the same policy of *jus sanguinis*. In Germany, as in Japan, this has often posed some difficulties for members of long-established families who might wish to join the nation as equal citizens. In Germany, as in Japan, a system for discretionary naturalization developed, but vague, perhaps overly discretionary criteria, while superficially appearing reasonable, could be used to restrict those of socially denigrated descent, in practice. While in Germany, the condition of a person’s admission serving the ‘public interest’ was left up to officials to interpret, often with discriminatory results, the ‘public interest’ has in recent decades been reinterpreted such that incorporating long-term residents is now viewed more favourably (Kashiwazaki, 2000: 15). The same trend appears to be underway in Japan, at least with respect to *zainichi*. However, the criterion of ‘good behaviour’ may still be interpreted in

a culturally exclusionary way that denies naturalization to those who do not exude a convincing aura of Japaneseness in the assessment of certain case-workers

Soon after beginning this thesis, I learned from the Japanese consulate that Japan, in great contrast with the care with which it tracks the origins of aliens, could offer me no statistics on the race, ethnicity or descent of naturalized Japanese nationals and their offspring. The reason I was given was that naturalized Japanese and their offspring become Japanese in all respects on state paperwork. Turning to the existing sociological literature, I found that I was not alone. The works of the most meticulous researchers of *zainichi* issues I was able to gather to my side could only offer their best approximations of how many naturalized *zainichi* live in Japan, based on the same stumbling block<sup>4</sup>. Although one's descent may still somehow be found out in social situations at the street level, in contrast to the pre-War strategy, the Japanese state currently seems to abet the shielding more than the discovery of non-Japanese descent among its nationals. In other words, the new strategy may be far more assimilationist at the state level than the pre-War strategy, if the goal of both is viewed as absorption into Japan proper, as the pre-War strategy preserved a crucial difference in documentation through which the Korean-descended could easily and perpetually be distinguished among the nationals of Greater Japan. At the same time, the government manages to retreat from any written substantiation of its intent to either squash Korean identity or ethnicity (the overtly stated intent of the pre-War policy) while implicitly promoting ethnocultural assimilation.

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<sup>4</sup> Eiji Oguma has spent decades researching Japanese minority issues and has access to all manner of Japanese language resources in Japan, yet declared himself unable to arrive at a figure, citing the same reason that I regrettably have to: the Japanese government registers naturalized citizens as Japanese by all statistical markers (Oguma, 2002: 351, n5). However, Fukuoka, by assembling brochures published by the Ministry of Justice, demonstrates that in excess of 204 622 have naturalized thus far (Fukuoda, 2000: 292, n25), but the number of their offspring cannot be known. These brochures demonstrate that the rate of *zainichi* naturalization has steadily accelerated, reaching approximately ten thousand per year by the late 1990s (Fukuoda, 2000: 292, n25; Ryang, 2000:6). Though it may slow, it is possible that the bulk of the *zainichi* minority will be naturalized as Japanese citizens (once again) within several decades if it does not.

## The Symbolic Division of the Korean Peninsula in Japan

Following the Korean War (1950-1953) and the subsequent partition of Korea, two “Korean” nationalities emerged in the Japanese government’s taxonomy of Korean-descended, non-naturalized *zainichi*. The Japanese government, although only officially recognizing the existence of the South Korean government, legally bifurcated its internal “Korean” population into North and South Koreans (or, more precisely, citizens of either the non-existent, defunct, pre-colonial state of Chosun<sup>5</sup> or the Republic of Korea<sup>6</sup>). Again, persons born in Japan—the elders among them having formerly been Japanese citizens—found themselves consigned to another state. Those who did not ‘migrate’ to ROK on paper would remain as ‘citizens’ of a non-existent state (Chosun).

In 1965, *zainichi* were permitted to obtain a “permanent resident” status only after applying for formal South Korean nationality, which led to many *zainichi* registered as *Chosenjin* ‘migrating’ to a (more pragmatic) formal designation as South Korean nationals (Ryang, 2000: 4; Kashiwazaki, 2000: 23). Another 250 000 *zainichi* still considered “North Korean”, or citizens of the extinct state of Chosun, remained effectively “stateless”, without “civil status, or overseas travel documentation until the early 1980’s”, when the United Nations Refugee Convention (1981) successfully pressured Japan to extend equivalent residence privileges to those who had not yet formally adopted South Korean nationality (Ryang, 2000: 4 [quotation], 6).

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<sup>5</sup> “Chosen” is the Japanese transliteration of the Korean word “Chosun”, or ‘land of the morning calm’, a traditional name for pre-annexation Korea. I generally transcribe this formal pronoun into Latin script by following the Korean pronunciation, except for those moments when I am referring to the use of the word in Japanese discourse (such as in discussing such concepts as *chosenjin*, (or “Chosun-people’), where the transliteration of the Japanese pronunciation seems more constructive.

<sup>6</sup> Abbreviated as ROK, but perhaps better known in English by the conventional short form, ‘South Korea’.

By the mid nineteen-nineties, non-naturalized *zainichi*, whether considered North or South Korean, were again eligible for some basic social services such as the national pension plan (Kashiwazaki, 2000: 28).

The preceding is a very brief sketch of how many Korean-descended persons in Pre-War Japan and their descendents became *zainichi* after Japan's defeat in World War Two, and hopefully begins to give the unacquainted reader some sense of the historical emergence of the circumstance of *being zainichi*. By acts of Japan's post-War governments, hundreds of thousands of Korean descended persons in Japan were severed from Japanese national status and became Korean citizens. When Korea was partitioned, they were likewise divided. Many have since re-acquired the legal status of Japanese nationality for themselves and their descendents through Japan's naturalization process. In 1999, the Japanese government estimated the number of non-naturalized *zainichi* to be 528 450 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1999, First and Second Report on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination June 1999, Introduction, 23). The number of those who have (re)acquired Japanese formal nationality, and their descendents, is far more difficult to estimate<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Even the ever-meticulous Eiji Oguma, who has spent decades researching Japanese minority issues and can access all manner of Japanese language resources in Japan is unable to arrive at a figure. The Japanese government registers naturalized citizens as Japanese by all statistical markers (Oguma, 2002: 351, n5). It is only possible to tally the current total (post-Meiji) extra-Japanese descent (outside of contemporary Japan) of persons who are not citizens, which Japan *does* very carefully track and monitor. Unfortunately, such figures merge *zainichi* with recent Korean migrants. However, we can discover by assembling some of the brochures published by the Ministry of Justice that more than 204 622 *zainichi* have naturalized thus far (Fukuoda, 2000: 292, n25). We can add to this the figure Oguma cites of 630 000 non-naturalized people with formal Korean nationality as of 2001, adjusting for a small portion of recent Korean migrants (Oguma, 2002, 351, n5). Oguma's best estimate of the *zainichi* population is unfortunately within the massively soread span of between 600 000 to one million *zainichi* (Oguma, 2002, 351, n5).

### **Special (im-)Permanent Residents**

Although in common practice both the naturalized and non-naturalized may be referred to as *zainichi* when their Korean descent is identified, for the contemporary Japanese state in its official correspondence, naturalized Japanese are Japanese in every respect, and non-naturalized *zainichi* are now referred to by the term “Special Permanent Residents”.

Following several years of negotiation with the government of South Korea, Japan granted the new status of “Special Permanent Resident” to third generation Korean residents and their descendents in 1991. Law No.71 of 1991, The Special Law on the Immigration Control of Those Who Have Lost Japanese Nationality and Others on the Basis of the Treaty of Peace with Japan (sometimes referred to as "the Immigration Control Special Law"), promulgated on 10 May 1991, was intended to grant some rights beyond those that a non-*zainichi*, non-citizen legal resident of Japan holds in recognition of the generally life-long residences and multi-generational establishment of *zainichi and zainichi* families in Japan, and in light of the historical ‘misfortune’ of their status. It does not, however extend to them the full rights of Japanese nationals, such as suffrage or the right to leave and re-enter Japan without a permit. Like other foreigners in Japan, non-naturalized *zainichi* may be refused reentry if they exceed the maximum validity period<sup>8</sup> of a reentry permit required of all non-citizens leaving Japan with the intent to reenter and retain their current status. So the changes engendered by the new “Special Permanent Resident” category, though certainly favourable, do not guarantee a permanent place in Japan for those who do not successfully transfer to Japanese national status. Re-entry rights equivalent to a citizen of Japan can only be achieved by naturalization, with its

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<sup>8</sup> For most foreigners with permission to reside in Japan, the maximum validity period of a re-entry permit is one year while holding a valid resident status. For third generation Korean residents and their descendents, it is now four years, with the potential to extend the validity by one extra year by application from outside Japan.



perhaps implicitly expected, though never explicitly acknowledged as requisite, renunciation of Koreanness.

By 1996, there were 1 415 136 registered “foreigners” living in Japan, and 46.4%, or 657 159 of them were formally registered under either North or South Korean nationality (Fukuoka, 2000: 21). Fukuoka estimates that 550 000 of these are *zainichi* by his definition<sup>9</sup>, and the slim remainder more recent migrants from post-War Korea (Fukuoka, 2000: 21). Fukuoka’s 1996 estimate is slightly higher than the Japanese government’s 1999 estimate of 528 450 (non-naturalized) ‘third-generation’ Korean residents and their descendents (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1999, First and Second Report on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination June 1999, Introduction, 23). This may be due to differences in definition, but it may simply reflect the recent rapid pace of those changing their nationality to Japanese<sup>10</sup>. Slightly above a half million persons are currently covered by the still-tenuous legal status of Special Permanent Resident, though the number appears to be shrinking due to naturalization<sup>11</sup> through individual applications and the children of *zainichi* securing Japanese citizenship by being born into marriages where one partner is legally Japanese.

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<sup>9</sup> Fukuoka defines his use of the Japanese term *zainichi* as “(1) ethnic Koreans who came to Japan around the time of the Second World War, or earlier, and have lived there ever since, and (2) their offspring, who have been born and raised in Japan and basically look upon Japan as their permanent place of residence” (Fukuoka, 2000: 271 [Preface note 2]).

<sup>10</sup> Fukuoka notes that 8, 244 naturalized in 1984, 10 327 naturalized in 1995 (Fukuoda, 2000: 292, n25), and both Sonia Ryang and Fukuoka note that 9 678 did so in 1997 (Ryang, 2000:6).

<sup>11</sup> Although Japan does not release statistics on the descent of its naturalized citizens, it can be ascertained from compiling various Ministry of Justice Bulletins on the naturalization of *zainichi* that more than 204 622 have naturalized thus far (Fukuoda, 2000: 292, n25).

## Chapter 2 - Theory

### Constituting the Nation and Imagining National Identity

In 1867, the Meiji Revolution ended the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate and a new political order and conception of the Japanese nation emerged in Japan. Under the Tokugawa order, the sovereign emperor in Kyoto had been merely a reverential and religious figurehead, either protected or perpetually imprisoned by the Tokugawa shogunate, depending on how one interprets the situation. The laws for noble families – the *Kuge Sho Hatto*, dating from 1615, even prohibited the emperor and his courtiers from leaving the palace grounds and entering the rest of ‘their’ royal city, Kyoto, stipulating that nobles were “strictly forbidden, whether by day or by night, to go sauntering through the streets or in places where they have no business to be” (*Kuge Sho Hatto*, cited in Mason and Caiger, 160-161). Though the *shogun* was formally regarded as at most a regent, the Tokugawa order granted him all of the effective powers of state, including the right to restrict the movements of his nominal superior, the formal sovereign. This came to an end with defeat of the last Tokugawa *shogun* by revolutionaries with a new vision for Japan, when the architects of the Meiji Revolution cleansed any tint of their disloyalty to the *shogun* by reference to a higher allegiance to the young emperor referred to by his honorific, regal name, Meiji.

The Meiji-era reformulation of the Japanese nation was innovative, and incorporated elements of the Tokugawa and pre-Tokugawa past with newer ingredients gleaned from the West to create something quite original: a new Japanese nation-state. Though now viewing the West as not only a fearsome competitor but a possible model

for a new social and political order, the concept of a new Meiji-era nation-state of Japan was nonetheless promulgated as if it were a solidification or real-world manifestation of the myth of the eternal empire, itself represented as having been under the rule of the eternal emperor since the beginning of time. Ironically, the pretext for the new, in many ways Western-like state was to be the restoration of the imagined past.

Kosaku Yoshino, associate professor of sociology at Tokyo University, calls Meiji Japan's instituting myth of the eternally ruling imperial family a "historicist" vision, and suggests that such myth making and construction of historical visions are crucial in the instituting of a new nation-state and sense of nationality (Yoshino, 1998: 14). As Yoshino suggests, during this early stage of constituting the new Japanese nation-state, "Meiji Japan combined traditional familism and state Shinto to create the mystique of an imperial lineage unbroken from time immemorial and to stress the unity of Japanese subjects on the basis of the invented historicist vision" (Yoshino, 1998: 14).

Yoshino suggests that the creation of the Japanese national identity is best seen as having gone through two distinct stages coeval with the effective establishment of this new Japanese nation-state. The first, which Yoshino calls "primary nationalism", involves the laborious efforts to institute a new Japanese nation and nationality after the conclusion of the Meiji revolution in 1868, and the second, "secondary nationalism", supports the continued maintenance of the established Japanese nation-state, nationality and nationalism, after the first stage was largely a *fait accompli*.

In the 1860s, the instituting of the Japanese nation and the concept of Japanese nationality was based on the promulgation of a myth of the primordial emperor, who was attached to all of his subjects as a benevolent father to his appreciative children. The 1890 *Imperial Rescript on Education*, which was distributed to every educational institution in

Japan to be installed in a conspicuous place alongside the Emperor's portrait<sup>12</sup>, reveals the instituting of this primary nationalism among the population, and also something of the character of this early, "primary" Japanese nationalism. It states that:

Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting, and have deeply implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. [...] should emergency arrive, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers. The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching of bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. (Attributed to the hand of the emperor Meiji, reprinted from Tsunoda, de Bary and Keene, 1958: 139-140)

Documents such as the *Imperial Rescript*, by emphasizing such terms as filial piety or filial duty, portray the Japanese as an extended family of blood relatives under the auspices of the deified benevolent father figure or clan-head of the emperor. This portrayal appears quite archaic, such that the untrained observer could easily conclude that it merely represents a vestige of lingering medieval Japanese ideology somehow surviving Japan's passage into the modern era. However, this formulation was carefully constructed by Meiji political strategists after painstakingly studying what they saw as the successful constitution of nationality in the dominant Western European powers of the day (Oguma, 2002:xx; 362-3 n2). As Oguma suggests, leading Japanese intellectuals sent abroad explicitly to learn how to bring Japan successfully into the modern age returned and "introduced to Japan the European concept of a 'national' unification where all nationals of the state were seen to be members of a common community that transcended feudal status and domains, as well as the theory of the social organism that justified a

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<sup>12</sup> This installment was arranged partly so that students and teachers could perform such national rituals as bowing to it, and simultaneously, the emperor's portrait.

unity headed by a monarch, and merged these new ideas with the Edo period [1615-1867] nativism to produce the national polity theory” (Oguma, 2002: xx).

The constituting of Japanese nationality in the new nation-state involved a very deliberate emulating of the nationality constructions of militarily and economically powerful European nations with a special focus on those that had retained effective authority for their monarchs<sup>13</sup>. As Oguma’s (2002) *A Genealogy of Japanese Self-images* most fastidiously illustrates, the instituting of Japanese nationality in the late eighteenth and early twentieth century emerged uneasily from the diligent work of historians, politicians, social scientists and others by relying on a mixture of ancient myths, the anthropology and social science of the day, as well as the full deployment of new national state organs such as the new state printing houses and the national primary educational system. In the Japanese case, something akin to Benedict Anderson’s (1991) concept of the nation as an “imagined community” emerged from this concoction, expressing itself more through the imagery of the family (Yoshino, 1998: 20, Oguma, 2002:363 n2) than did its European counterparts, yet serving the same purpose and aiming at the same effect of a sense of unity and connection under the new national banner. In Japan, the effect of instituting the imagined ties of all Japanese to the nation and to each other was explicitly designed by the intellectual and political elites with the hope that it would emulate Western European imperial nationalism, creating the same effects, while presenting a conservative, imperial Japanese face<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> In Germany, the monarch still retained considerable power. Japan sought a model of a vigorous, successful and indomitable nation with an empowered monarchy. This is why Japan’s Constitution, for example was largely based on that of Prussia’s constitutional monarchy (Oguma, 2002: xx).

<sup>14</sup> The particular Japanese case of the “imagined family” (Yoshino, 1998: 20) is concordant with Benedict Anderson’s (1991) concept of the nation as an “imagined community”, but it is interesting to note that in the Japanese case, it was specifically engineered for this effect by intellectuals who carefully studied and sought to emulate the construct of Western European imperial nationalism and the sense of national identity that seemed to contribute to the vigor and power of Western European imperial states such as Prussia.

Yoshino distinguishes this difficult and conscientious work of constituting the Japanese nation and nationality from what he calls “secondary” Japanese nationalism, which he suggests is more about maintaining the distinction between “us” and “them” in Japan, *after* the “us”, or the Japanese national identity, has been successfully constituted.

For Yoshino, in this secondary stage, the historicist vision becomes less central to the project of asserting nationality as “the historical nation is taken for granted” (Yoshino, 1998: 14). Now, the “symbolic boundary concern focusing on contemporary cultural differences” (Yoshino, 1998: 14) becomes the focus rather than the justification for, or the imagined origins of, Japanese nationality. The “symbolic boundary process of organizing significant difference” (Yoshino, 1998: 14) between Japanese and non-Japanese *after* the successful establishment of the Japanese nation-state and its conceptualization of nationality, Yoshino suggests, requires the skills of the “pop sociologist”, more than the historian or chronicler of ancient myths (Yoshino, 1998: 14).

I concur with Yoshino’s suggestion that in Japan the familial origin myth has receded from discourse, and is even widely refuted, but nonetheless assumptions based on the myth and practices based on those assumptions perpetuate and build upon one another (Yoshino, 1998). It is as if like some of those buildings in the 1995 Kobe earthquake that only sank down one story, but did not topple when the first floor disintegrated, the superstructure of Japanese nationality has somehow survived the collapse of its (mythological) substructure. Thus, as Yoshino puts it, although the original myth, based on the idea that Japan was a “family-nation (or family-state) of divine origin”, and that “members of the family-nation were imagined to be related by blood to one another and ultimately to the emperor” (Yoshino, 1998: 19) would now seem

ludicrous to most contemporary Japanese, “the nation as “imagined family” (or kin group) has remained alive in the sub-conscious of Japanese people” (Yoshino, 1998: 20).

Yoshino’s distinction between primary and secondary nationalism develops in part in response to what interviewees in his contemporary research into Japanese attitudes toward the exclusion of the Chinese and Korean descended minorities told him. Yoshino reports that his Japanese participants frequently expressed that Korean or Chinese descended persons cannot become Japanese. However, when he reminded them that many famous sports stars and entertainment figures in Japan are descended from Korea, but have acquired Japanese citizenship and are often considered Japanese, they agreed that they might indeed somehow become Japanese, *as long as nothing reminds one that they are not Japanese* (Yoshino, 1998: 23). Yoshino’s work suggests that perceptible evidence of descent outside of contemporary Japan, even several generations ago, might render it difficult to conceptualize a person as a part of the Japanese “imagined family”, while an absence of explicit reminders eases this operation of the imagination.

Yoshino’s distinguishing of “secondary nationalism” from the “primary nationalism” instituted in the Meiji era it extends from is driven by his observation that the stage of maintaining symbolic boundaries between “us” and “them” can remain viable despite the significant collapse of the foundation it was built upon<sup>15</sup>. Yoshino’s discussions with his participants also suggest that Japanese lay people can become befuddled when confronted by a need to reconcile their conclusion about who can be Japanese with the now overturned premises for it (Yoshino, 1998: 23). The after-effect of the origin myth having evaporated may be some conceptual confusion for ordinary Japanese discussing how the current symbolic boundaries of a national identity draped in

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<sup>15</sup> In other words, the origin myth of an imagined extended family may still operate robustly, whether refuted or not, as an almost invisible ground to the subsequent logic of “secondary nationalism”.

the imagery of blood relations is logically justified. However, this is not a common exercise in daily life, while the *defense of the conclusion* about the symbolic boundary is.

I agree with Yoshino's suggestion that the contemporary context in Japan involves more a defense of the symbolic boundaries of Japanese identity, which implies that a contesting of the details of its form, such as who precisely can be included among 'the Japanese' would be more viable than challenges to the existence of the identity itself, however untenable or even unpopular the case for its foundation may now be. However, Yoshino fails to mention that the symbolic boundaries can shift tremendously within this framework such that the construct of a Japanese family-state does *not necessarily* bar the possible inclusion of the Korean descended. The inability to imagine the inclusion of the Korean-descended in the Japanese 'family' in fact requires a further step of extricating Japanese lineages as unique, distinct and unitary and on that basis rejecting the inclusion of Korean descent in it, and this was not always a feature of the imagined nation of Japan.

Take for example this excerpt from a book published in 1942 by the Social Education Department of the Japanese Ministry of Education:

The Japanese nation did not originally emerge as an homogeneous nation. Rather, it was formed in ancient times through a fusion and assimilation into the Japanese nation of aboriginal peoples and those who came from the continent, and was formed through the cultivation of a strong belief that all were members of the same nation under the Imperial Family. (Ministry of Education, reprinted in Oguma, 2002: xxvi)

Though there was some debate about the topic from the time of the establishment of Meiji Japan in the 1860s until the end of the Pacific war in 1945, the position that came to dominate Japanese intellectual circles, and which is reflected in textbooks used in Japanese public schools during the twentieth century up until the American victory in the Pacific War, was that the Japanese were a radically mixed people who had *become* a family through their communion in the Empire (Ogura, 2002). Migrants from Korea and



China were frequently mentioned as chief contributors to Japan's admixture both in ancient and more recent times (Ogura, 2002).

The influential philosopher and economist Ukichi Taguchi suggested in 1889 that:

In ancient times, many Korean people migrated to our country. Some gained official positions in the bureaucracy, others became peers, and many established villages in some parts of the countryside. Afterwards Japan began to associate with China, and many Chinese immigrants were naturalized as Japanese. At that time, Korea and China undoubtedly possessed a higher civilization than Japan, and it was beneficial for Japan to have immigrants from those countries. Once they became naturalized and joined our nation, they became no different from our countrymen. (Taguchi, in Ogura, 2002: 20)

Although Taguchi's position that Japan had always had significant immigration and hybridity, and had in the past and could continue to benefit from incorporating Koreans, Chinese and others had notable and vehement opponents it was to become not only the dominant position in intellectual circles by the 1930s, but concordant with many statements by the Japanese government on the inclusion of Koreans (Ogura, 2002).

By the 1930s, Japan was well on its way to building an extended Pacific Empire through the conquest and annexation of other Asian lands. Positions similar to that taken by Taguchi could serve the Empire as a convenient way of justifying Japan's twentieth century militarist expansion not as the invasion of foreign lands, but as a reclaiming of the Japanese people's motherlands and a re-gathering of the distantly related brothers and sisters of the Japanese people into a larger and re-united extended family.

It is likely not coincidental that with defeat resulting in the loss of Japan's pan-Asian Empire the tendency of state organs and intellectual elites to emphasize this pan-Asian nature of the Japanese national identity vaporized. Only after defeat in World War Two did the myth of homogeneity begin to become the dominant discourse on Japanese national identity (Befu, 2001; Oguma, 2002). In light of Japan's defeat by Westerners and

the loss of Asian territory once mapped as 'Japan' the portrayal of the Japanese as a unique people long isolated from and having difficulty interfacing with others due to their isolated uniqueness steadily became more common than that of a radically mixed people, poised to embrace all Asia in an expanding imperial family-state (Befu, 2001; Oguma, 2002). As Japan's territory shrank, so did its symbolic kinship boundaries.

As far as the inclusion of persons of known Korean descent is concerned, the "symbolic boundary" of the Japanese "family-state" (Yoshino, 1998) has been re-drawn radically since Meiji times to explicitly include those of known Korean descent, and later to implicitly exclude them. More recently, the state seems to have opened a way to permit the possible reincorporation of the descendents of those cast out from Japanese nationality due their post-Meiji Korean descent who have remained in Japan as Japanese again, through naturalization. However, as Yoshino's work suggests, the people of post-War Japan may have some difficulty at times imagining their incorporation within the new, less extensive imagined family. I suggest what Yoshino fails to mention is important: the current reduced imagination of the nation's kinship boundaries is related to the conception of Japan being reduced to much smaller territorial limits.

The Korean descended in Japan have at times been subjected to intense state pressure to become Japanese, and have also been, and are at present, subjected to being excluded from being Japanese and assigned to an external national identification as Koreans, regardless of their legal status. In the current context, a *zainichi* person becoming a Japanese national does not equate to her fitting into the contemporary imagination of the Japanese national identity. Then, there is the option the contemporary Japanese state provides of Korean descended persons being designated as Korean Special Permanent Residents and themselves and their descendents being allowed to remain in

Japan. Though this may place one's identification in the eyes of Japanese even more squarely as a member of the "Koreans", it does not necessarily foster a sense for the *zainichi* person of identifying with Koreans from Korea more so than the Japanese among whom one has spent one's entire life. Admittedly, the *zainichi* do not have a national identity *as zainichi*. No coalescing of state power and institutions akin to what drove the concept of Meiji Japan into the imagination of Japanese citizens ever went into the project of constituting a *zainichi* nation. However, their transit between Japanese and Korean national identities may give them a transnational identity or identification by others that is neither Korean nor completely Japanese, but uniquely *zainichi*.

John Lie (2000) suggests in response to his study of the *zainichi*:

The search for certainty in something as complex, confused, and changing as personal identity seems misplaced. The endeavor, which probably belongs more properly in the realm of the aesthetic or the spiritual, finds social scientists out of their depth, seduced as they might be by the goal and deluded as they might be about their effectiveness. (Lie, 2000, 206)

My conceptualization of '*zainichi* identity', however, results in something quite unlike the concept of identity outlined by John Locke, which Lie cites (Locke, in Lie, 2000: 198). Locke, concerned with what gives continuity to human consciousness, conceptualizes identity as what "unite[s] remote Existences in the same person" (Locke, in Lie, 2000: 198). Much of what people intend by using the word, "identity" may correspond with this influential, classical source and its conception of identity as a sort of glue uniting and/or grounding the self, or as a core of selfhood. In contrast, by the '*zainichi* identities' of my participants, I refer to the variable and conflicting 'self-representations' concerning national identity described by participants in the interviews.

Although 'self-representation' may sound entirely personally determined, emanating purely from the (isolate) individual, the identities we socially assert for

ourselves before others are disregarded and socially meaningless if we cannot successfully establish effective recognition of them in our relations with those others. As well, it would be pointless to establish identities without a need to distinguish ourselves (from others), or without others to represent a self to while engaged in some (social) practice. Crucially, the identities we assert in speaking to others, however sincerely felt, are also portrayals of self in the context of a responsive audience.

Significant to the national identities of *zainichi* is that some of the ingredients of identities linked to nationality are conferred or imposed by historical establishments and institutions, peers, classmates and any others who may find such things as our descent significant to which national identity category we can be declared, assumed or imagined to fit in. Equally significant is that although persons may accept or reject an ingredient as properly belonging to what they propose is a meaningful representation of themselves, they often find themselves unable to cast off what others see as properly identifying them. This is another aspect – identity almost in the sense of an identity card - what identifies us in the eyes of others. Even though a *zainichi* may not feel that they ‘identify with’ Korea, they may nonetheless be other-identified as a ‘Korean person’.

Although the ingredients of identity include what we put forward as representing ourselves and try to make those around us accept as significant in identifying us, as we attempt to establish what we would like to be known as, others may attempt to differently establish us, and as such, we are never autonomous in establishing our identities *before others*. Identity is a cooperative social practice. Similar ideas were explored long ago by Erving Goffman, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), though under the rubric of ‘performed selves’, rather than ‘portrayed identities’. Goffman summarizes his concept of the ‘performed self’ as such:

In this report the performed self was seen as some kind of image, usually creditable, which the individual on stage and in character effectively attempts to induce others to hold in regard to him. While this image is entertained *concerning* the individual, so that a self is imputed to him, this self itself does not derive from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his action, being generated by that attribute of local events which renders them interpretable by witnesses. A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation—this self—is a *product* of a scene that comes off, and is not a *cause* of it. (Goffman, 1959: 252)

Like Goffman's 'self', the identities of my *zainichi* research participants are ever-tenuous, established and challenged simultaneously from within and without. Moment to moment, my participants negotiate social identities attached to their persons that are always open to further moments of renegotiation and imposition. The *zainichi* participants in my research absolutely take part in constructing 'their' identities with respect to nationality, but these often unstable identities are never absolutely and without question under their autonomous control as they unfold in real life, social contexts.

*Zainichi* persons' national identities are claimed, negotiated and imposed products with great significance to others in Japanese society. However, the short but indolent answer to Lie's challenge <sup>16</sup>, that *zainichi* identity, however messy it may be, is worthy of study due its import in Japanese social relations, is no escape. The core question remains: is Lie right to point out that the instability and tangled character of identity can make *zainichi* identity a deficient peg upon which to hang an analysis?

I find (as no doubt Lie did through his own experience as a researcher of *zainichi* issues) that the national identities my *zainichi* participants represent to me fluctuate,

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<sup>16</sup> To recap, John Lie suggests:

The search for certainty in something as complex, confused, and changing as personal identity seems misplaced. The endeavor, which probably belongs more properly in the realm of the aesthetic or the spiritual, finds social scientists out of their depth, seduced as they might be by the goal and deluded as they might be about their effectiveness. (Lie, 2000, 206)

As a consequence, Lie suggests that the *zainichi* identity is a poor subject to examine in order to better understand actual *zainichi* persons.

alternate, and even radically contradict one another over the course of an interview. Yet I think Bourdieu's concept of the "scholar in the machine" expresses more lucidly than Lie does the potential threat studies of *zainichi* identity face, subsequent to the researcher confronting this identity tangle<sup>17</sup>.

Bourdieu suggests that social scientists often commit "the most serious mistake in the human sciences" by "plac[ing] the models that the scientist must construct to account for practices into the consciousness of agents, to operate as if the constructions that the scientist must produce to understand and account for practices were the main determinants, the actual cause of practices" (Bourdieu, 2002ii: 133). This underpins the difficulty Lie<sup>18</sup> is trying to point out – researchers of '*zainichi* identity' may impose onto participants a stable (and often shared, or communal) *zainichi* identity that suits the purposes of organizing their enquiry, and collecting the actions of individual *zainichi* under a heading (eg: '*zainichi* identity politics'), but the sociological product or category of *zainichi* identity may in the process be granted an agency and/or solidity, continuity, etc., that may not be reflected in the actual observation of the far less definite identity practices of *zainichi* participants<sup>19</sup>.

There is an implication in Lie (Lie, 2000, 206) that the organization social scientists require to arrange data in order to reach sensible conclusions may not be feasible with such an instable matter as *zainichi* identities defying all attempts to recognize and trace a logical pattern, and Bourdieu points out the difficulty with what then follows – any organization we can accomplish may be imposed not only over but

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<sup>17</sup> I believe this is also what Nonini and Ong caution against with respect to assuming/ascribing a stable, unitary, diaspora Chinese identity (Nonini and Ong, 1997: 24-25).

<sup>18</sup> And Nonini and Ong, with respect to 'Chinese identity' (Nonini and Ong, 1997: 24-25).

<sup>19</sup> I appeal to the principal of charity, here. I will get to the 'less definite' aspects later in this work.

*against* the reality of the lives and self-understandings of *zainichi* persons<sup>20</sup>. Combining Lie and Bourdieu's cautionary remarks, researchers of *zainichi* identity might be tempted to disregard what does not aid in keeping *zainichi* identity constructs unitary, but rather, threatens to disrupt the organization of the primary category or subject of the analysis (the *zainichi* identity), endangering the project of converting what is observed and captured in writing into a product of social science. However, I suggest that the valid warnings of Bourdieu and Lie do not fatally imperil research into *zainichi* identities<sup>21</sup>.

I employ Erving Goffman's sociological classic, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), dusty with age though it may be, because I find Goffman's approach of making the 'self' he sets out to observe "a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it" (Goffman, 1959: 252) constructive. Having conceptualized the 'self' this way, Goffman's work can more cogently proceed to assess presentations of 'selves' as various observed, performed products emanating from a person. I suggest that *practiced* identities, like Goffman's performed selves, can be similarly conceptualized as constructs taken up, wielded, and discarded by persons as part of practices wherein these identities are symbolically meaningful for a particular social context.

Nonini and Ong (1997) explicitly "reject the conventional assumption that a person simply 'has' or 'possesses' an identity", as "different identities—gender, race, nationality, subculture, dominant culture—intersect in and constitute an individual" (Nonini and Ong, 1997: 24). *Zainichi* identities, however, can also be conceptualized as the multiple and contradictory constituting *practices* engaged in by *zainichi* persons, and there are some reasons why a qualitative study focusing in detail on (admittedly

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<sup>20</sup> We should consider to what extent scholars convert the practices of living *zainichi* into evidence of the scholar's unreal agent: either a stable personal *zainichi* identity or a reified *zainichi* communal identity.

<sup>21</sup> And here I am intentionally using the plural *identities* to denote multiplicity.

momentary, contradictory, etc.) acts of self-representation by *zainichi* persons as variable practices might be fruitful for understanding the place of these representations of national identity at the micro-level in the lives of particular *zainichi*. While coalescing *zainichi* identities *en masse* to establish general trends of *zainichi* self-representation (perhaps naming one the typical ‘*zainichi* identity’) is not without its place in social science (or politics, for that matter)<sup>22</sup> a smaller scale qualitative enquiry permits an exhaustive assessment of the very vacillation in *zainichi* individuals’ identity representations. I suggest that there is equal value in examining this micro-level fluctuation very closely. A conceptual disconnect from the Lockean concept of identity as a sort of unity binding the self and its projections together is a prerequisite to this type of examination.

Having assumed an approach wherein identities as the various and fluctuating observed *representations* furnished by *zainichi* fall among my units of analysis for a detailed qualitative study of their representation practices concerning national identity I see valuable evidences of a flexibility and transformative capability in the varying self-representations of a person’s identity where others might feel their project threatened by changes, incongruities and contradictions observed in participants’ identity representations<sup>23</sup> as anomalous outliers threatening the lucidity of the general trend of representation. I suggest that the import of *zainichi* employing contradictory practices of

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<sup>22</sup> This may indeed be unavoidable for a more macro-level analysis of identity, such as *zainichi* grouped *en masse* to cooperate in some purpose of common interest to many, more or less like-minded *zainichi* (eg: when mobilized in popular social movements or political activism for *zainichi* rights, etc.), just as it may be for those attempting coalesce participants’ experiences to sketch the ‘average *zainichi*’.

<sup>23</sup> Perhaps a fit analogy would be that even if a person’s various versions of one story contradict each other so much they fail to be convincing, it would not discredit a detailed sociological examination of that person’s various practices of telling the story differently in differing contexts or before different audiences.



identity representation, *over time*<sup>24</sup> should not be overlooked, as even radically contradictory statements can appear valid when the dimension of time is restored<sup>25</sup>.

### **Transnational Employments of Cultural Capital**

As the situations my participants find themselves in force them to recognize the sustained salience of national identity in an increasingly interlinked world, I suggest that while linkages between once practically distant worlds transform those worlds, the purview of nations and nationality is *transfigured* rather than superceded or dissolved. Koichi Iwabuchi suggests that the term transnational is fruitful for describing contexts where “flows neither fully displace nationally defined boundaries, thoughts and feelings, nor do they [sic] underestimate the salience of the nation-state in the process of globalization” (Iwabuchi, 2002: 17). Nationality may be detached from the soil mapped as a nation-state, and the salience of nationality is not necessarily lost by this physical separation.

Nonini and Ong suggest that it is no longer necessary to assert the “Middle Kingdom as the ultimate analytical reference for an understanding of diaspora Chinese” (Nonini and Ong, 1997:12). In other words, an examination of contemporary Chinese subjectivity or ‘Chineseness’ need not have the historical or geographic Middle

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<sup>24</sup> The scholastic view may distort the testimony of identity by its tendency to convert what is observed unfolding in time into a (timeless) fact of social science. A person, after all, most likely does not try to construct an identity representation to serve as a (stable) ‘social fact’ concerning her existence, but rather to serve as a tool needed to engage in a practice at a given moment in the unfolding of her life. Various contexts, challenges and difficulties face her *over time*, perhaps requiring differing strategies and even contradictory forms of self-representation to navigate successfully, profitably, intelligibly, safely, etc..

<sup>25</sup> Take, for a fictional example, a resistance fighter in Vichy France who assumes the role of a nurturing, even doting mother at the conclusion of the conflict. Seen divorced from time, she may be a killer, a liar, a saboteur, a nurturing and trustworthy person, a giver and sustainer of life. This seems less contradictory when context and the dimension of time are restored to her as they confronted her in her lived experience. The possession of her various representations then becomes not only intelligible, but perhaps even admirable and heroic. We may even begin to see a logical consistency to her assumption of various states that easily escapes us in the absence of the dimension of time, which may make them appear to contradict one another.

Kingdom, nor even its traditional “lifeways’ or values, as their epicenter. Rather, China is “one among sites within and across which Chinese transnational practices are played out” (Nonini and Ong, 1997: 12). In discussing the Chinese diaspora, Nonini and Ong (1997) take great care to situate “Chinese transnational practices in the ether of airspaces, international time-zones, migrant labour contracts, mass media images, virtual companies, and electronic transactions, and operating across all recognized borderlines” (Nonini and Ong, 1997:12). The transnational perspective may be fruitful for the examination of my participants, who, having practiced identities partly grounded on Korean and Japanese nationality in Japan for much of their lives, are now engaging in the negotiation of national identity on another continent, in Vancouver, Canada.

For my participants, such national identifiers as “Japanese”, and “Korean” have been altered by their transnational or liminal nationality, but they have not lost significance<sup>26</sup>. Although for the most part spending entire lives in Japan, as they exist in legal or social location in abeyance between the new post-war states of Japan, the extinct state of Chosun, or the Republic of Korea, an interesting question previously raised but not answered by Sonia Ryang (2000) is, are *zainichi* transnationals (Ryang, 2000: 11)?

*Zainichi* may seem to make anomalous transnationals, as most<sup>27</sup> inhabit their transnationality primarily within the territorial purview of the Japanese nation state. However, according to Chikako Kashiwazaki (2000), Japan’s *zainichi* have “developed a basic stance that is best reflected in the term *teijugaikokujin*, or permanently settled foreigners” (Kashiwazaki, 2000: 28). I would suggest that for now we keep an open mind about how well this reflects the stance *zainichi* persons today have toward their self-

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<sup>26</sup> As Roger Rouse suggests, “the transnational has not so much displaced the national as resituated it and thus reworked its meanings” (Rouse in Iwabuchi, 2002: 17).

<sup>27</sup> Though not those in my own research.

representations of their national identity (as this will be discussed in more detail in the interview component of this thesis), but I concur that the concept of *teijugaikokujin*, or permanently settled foreigners, does seem to reflect well how the status with respect to the Japanese state of those who have not changed nationality is best viewed<sup>28</sup>.

Sonia Ryang suggests:

As long as their life in Japan, with their cultural marginalization and second-class citizenship, necessitates the daily negotiation between the two homes [Japan and Korea], they remain, paradoxically, homeless in a double sense. For of their two homes, neither is viable in terms of residential security and full-fledged civil and national membership. And if so, the reality of double homelessness needs to be recognized. (Ryang, 2000 ii: 51)

Ryang suggests that this double homelessness experienced *in Japan* may itself be considered a kind of transnationalism (Ryang, 2000: 11). Emerging from the political space of post-War Japanese-Korean relations, the Korean-descended residents of Japan who are called *zainichi* are born into and inhabit a space between two national identities, and may traverse two nationalities even without leaving Japanese soil. As even those who have naturalized as Japanese citizens and plan never to leave Japan may be called Korean or *zainichi* when their descent is discovered, the tentativeness of one's secure placement within the category of Japanese can be very durably imposed in spite of one's full embeddedness in Japanese society and attachment to Japanese soil. So in this sense, transnationality is imposed on even the naturalized *zainichi* who choose never to leave the territory of Japan, although unlike most transnationals discussed in the literature, *zainichi* transnationality occurs primarily within the geographical space of Japan.

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<sup>28</sup> This is also reflected in the Japanese government's recent coining of the term, "Special Permanent Residents", to refer to them, although as previously mentioned, the permanency is largely moot, as the right to remain "permanently" is easily lost if one stays outside of Japan for more than a few years. (It seems tautological to suggest that one's permanency is assured, as long as one does not briefly leave.)

It was also Sonia Ryang who first suggested the possibility of forging a fruitful connection between Ong and Nonini's (1997) work on the transnationalism of diaspora Chinese, and the situation of *zainichi* Koreans (Ryang, 2000i: 11). Transnationalism may aid in situating the formation, maintenance, sharing and potential shedding of *zainichi* persons' national identities in the course of traffic and interchange between Japan and Vancouver, Canada, in that it addresses the transcendence of the national as specifying confinement in a mapped nation or secure national identity while embracing the maintenance of social identifiers grounded in nationality and identity *practices* referencing national categories during radical global transit and relocation.

How do these doubly (in terms of locating both their national identity and physical locale) transnational *zainichi* see themselves? How did they construct their national identities in Japan, in relation to Japan and Korea? How do *zainichi* construct, maintain and describe their national identities while staying in Vancouver? Does time spent in the environment of Vancouver, BC, Canada, give them a different frame through which to see, or construct and maintain their national identities? If so, how so? How is their national identity framed or re-framed, in this context? Here, I initially felt that I needed to break new ground, but I found a partial remedy to the difficulties of the context I faced by digging into the sources upon which Ong and Nonini's work was grounded.

The frequent employments of the term *practices* in Ong and Nonini's work on transnationals are reliant on a Bourdieuan conception of 'practice' as *allodoxa*. As I employ the term *practice* in much the same way in this thesis, I am obliged to sketch the intellectual heritage of the concept, which stems from French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *practice as practice*. Bourdieu suggests that,

The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively

recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principal of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented toward practical functions. (Bourdieu, 2002i, 52)

Defining the central Bourdieuan concept of *habitus* aids in understanding what Bourdieu means by 'practice'. *Habitus* is perhaps most economically defined by Bourdieu in *Practical Reason* (2002) as, "the space of dispositions" (Bourdieu, 2002ii, 7). In *The Logic of Practice* (2002i) it is in one instance summarized with only slightly less brevity as, "a system of dispositions common to all products of the same conditioning" (Bourdieu, 2002i, 59). *Habitus*, however, is perhaps most completely defined elsewhere in his *The Logic of Practice* as:

Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles that organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (Bourdieu, 2002i, 53)

Rather than being 'steered' by an explicit prescriptive, the fulfilling of various roles in social relations during the very practices of everyday life may be overwhelmingly directed by prior patterning of the body's practices which then over-determine subsequent practices with great efficacy without seeming to impose on agents the offense of the explicit, undisguised commands that words such as orthodoxy or instruction imply. For Bourdieu, *Habitus* is "transmitted through practice, in the practical state, without rising to the level of discourse" (Bourdieu, 2002i, 73), as previous embodied practices become implicit in the seemingly most "natural", further practices of bodies.

This is in part what Bourdieu intends to convey in sometimes referring to his theory of practice via the seemingly redundant phrase 'practice as practice' (Bourdieu, 2002i,

52). Practice (verb) may not always make perfect, as the old saying suggests it does, but it does frequently achieve an embodied acculturation that makes the continuance of that practice (noun) seem effortless, and ‘natural’. For Bourdieu, allodoxic submission, behaviour conforming to an order (or non-coincidentally consistent with one’s location in a social order), not overwhelmingly due to obedience to prescription (orthodoxy), but to obedience to the often almost unnoticed, life-long training of the body’s practices informing further practices, emerges from the body’s transit through repeated practices. *Habitus* may seem self-born and “natural”, but is “embodied history, internalized as second nature and so forgotten as history” (Bourdieu, 2002i, 56).

Bourdieu restores to the body much of what other theorists attribute to obedience to instruction, ideology, or other processes of contemplative thought. However, he does not suggest that the human becomes an automaton. Being intelligent creatures capable of altering patterns, the Bourdieuan theory of practice suggests that we can and do break from practice as it has formulated our thought and behaviours, but that this can leave us uncertain as to how to act, and feeling ‘out of our skins’, whereas continuing in practices concordant with our structured disposition requires little conscious effort. It also suggests that we may lack the skills and emotional structuring of a ‘comfort zone’ to profitably initiate an engagement in alternative patterns of behaviour with the physical and mental ease of a long-time practitioner, however much we esteem forms outside of our conditioning we perceive as viable for us. We may need to engage in any new form of practice as if an infant again.

As we grow from birth to adulthood, it may not be primarily from such things as state documents or proclamations from superiors that we first learn of our status in social relations, what roles or national identities we should then adopt, or what is or is not

feasible behaviour for us, socially. Much of our behaviour is guided by embodied experience, with practices building on prior practices, rendering the products of acculturation to one's situation a "natural" feel. What is in fact structured by the state, or history, seems to us, post-acculturation (or post-socialization), as if structured by nothing.

Bourdieu suggests that to a great measure, this, not prescriptive orthodoxy, is how we come to have a national identity such as "Englishness" ingrained in us (Bourdieu, 2002ii: 46). Likewise, although the state of being *zainichi* was prescriptively imposed decades ago, for the second and third-generation *zainichi* youth born into this context it may appear as just a natural feature of their being or everyday life in Japanese society. As an example from my own research, one of my participants seemed at first unable to say when he had come to realize that he was a *zainichi* in Japan. He finally furnished the answer "Um...ah...natural".

Interestingly, 'being *zainichi*', though a recent historical product imposed by the state, can seem a natural condition in spite of its implication of a foreign person lingering in Japan seeming at variance with a life-long acculturation in Japanese cultural practices. In a slight break from the usual thrust of Bourdieu's argument, I suggest that it is important to realize that the patterns we are born into and then further accultured to *do not* always leave us feeling comfortable in our skins. At times, they may seem untenable, even after a lifetime practicing them. However, another idea concordant with Bourdieuan assumptions does seem to fit my evidence: one might be more prone to seeing this as an accident of one's birth, rather than something imposed upon one (e.g.: by the state).

Although as with transnational theory, some adjustments and modifications are called for in response to the data furnished by my participants, an employment of Bourdieu's theory of practice proves fruitful for the discussion of *zainichi* identities in

Vancouver. My confidence in this is greatly reinforced by the applicability of Bourdieu's associated concept of embodied cultural capital.

### **A Theoretical Basis for Embodied Cultural Capital**

Some may be bemused by a person's combination of a longstanding interest in studying the Japanese language with an equally longstanding ambivalence about ever traveling to Japan. However, in light of the transnational context previously discussed we should consider whether the two pursuits are necessarily connected as if they *must* belong together in the contemporary world. Subsequent to my small investment in learning rudimentary Japanese, I have vastly widened the scope of media products I can appreciatively consume *in Canada*. At such times, I feel culturally "richer". However, in far more situations in my multiethnic Vancouver neighborhood where I am the only Japanese-as-a-second-language speaker in a cluster of Japanese native-speakers, I am painfully aware that an extreme 'poverty' in the requisite 'cultural capital' is revealed by my limited practice of Japanese as the imperfectly acquired language of an utter novice.

Two things are interesting about this seeming digression. One is the transnational aspect: the practice of Japanese culture has spread across the globe, and is vibrant far away from the soil of Japan. It is not only disembodied cultural artifacts from Japan that have traveled, however. One can easily meet scores of Japanese citizens and ex-patriots at any time of the day while taking a short walk around the vicinity of my downtown apartment. So, part of my reason for employing this seeming digression is to highlight the contemporary *transnational* context my participants and I find ourselves in. The other reason is to point out that some are relatively richer or poorer in certain forms of (globally distributed) cultural capital.



The sociological recognition of an alleged ‘richness’ or ‘poverty’ of ‘accumulated capital’ acquired through acculturating practices may have its conceptual precedent in Karl Marx’s *Capital* (Marx, 1990), wherein Marx suggests: “capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with dirt and blood” (Marx, 1990: 926). However, for elucidations of how capital may be ‘invested’ via cultural ‘inheritances’ or attainments, I turn to the more recent canon of Pierre Bourdieu, and in particular, Bourdieu’s concept of embodied cultural capital.

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) suggests that cultural capital can exist in an *embodied*, state, understood as “an investment”, or “acquisition”, “converted into an integral part of the person” (Bourdieu, 1986: 244-5). In Bourdieu’s conception, cultural capital is not exactly analogous to monetary capital, but rather, monetary capital is just one radically liquid and transferable form among the myriad forms of capital an actor can accrue and append to her person in a way that creates profitable social effects. The convertibility of any capital is less certain the less accepted (for exchange into profits) the form is in particular fields of action, and in this respect, as they say, ‘cash is king’. In contrast to money, cultural capital is much more constrained to profits of membership, distinction, or potential authority in smaller, guarded fields and networks both producing and recognizing various evidences of one’s possession of that capital (Bourdieu, 1986: 245), and so, may be less ‘liquid’ (universally convertible) than the more globally recognized of currencies<sup>29</sup>. As with cash, however, an unequal distribution of ‘cultural capital’ permits the distinctiveness of its more endowed recipients in circles recognizing its value,

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<sup>29</sup> For an example illustrating a failure of embodied cultural capital to create a profitable effect, non-Japanese speakers may not give due credit for one’s masterful use of Japanese, as they have no means to assess it and determine the relative weight of the one’s practice of it.

and also its usefulness as a ‘distinguishing’ capital worthy of acquiring and putting to use within fields that do recognize it as both a marker and a medium of distinction.

For a clarifying analogy using the Japanese context, speaking or looking like a Japanese can serve as embodied cultural capital that might help one to establish ‘profits’, such as easing one’s rightful membership or participation in various practices in Japanese society. The ability to speak like a Japanese may be easier to acquire than looking like one. Such things as dress and hand-gestures and other movements of the body *can* be acquired, which may carry a person some distance toward asserting this second form of cultural capital – looking Japanese. However, whether this is successful in distinguishing the person as rightfully ‘belonging’ to the category of Japanese has a lot to do with what a person is trying to claim and from whom in Japanese society<sup>30</sup>.

In the current context, forms of cultural capital are becoming, like corporate entities, NGOs and other institutions and organizations, increasingly multinational. Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini’s (1997) work focused on the abilities of Chinese-descended persons to establish cultural affinities within China and simultaneously in regions far from China via practicing an embodied Chineseness, successfully reaping profits of membership and distinction from all the various realms they embed themselves in (Nonini and Ong, 1997; Ong, 1999). The transnational distribution of cultural capital dislocates certain features associated with the ‘national’ from the physical soil of national territories, permitting even such possibilities as establishing one’s cultural affinity with Japan and the Japanese while never having set foot in Japan, perhaps to reap rewards of

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<sup>30</sup> It will take more cultural capital to be widely recognized (or misrecognized) as a person rich in Japaneseness ( the various markers that make one appear as a likely Japanese national in others’ eyes) by most Japanese nationals in very intimate contexts over extended periods of time than to briefly ‘fit in’ as a nameless consumer in a crowded sidewalk in Tokyo.

membership and distinction in other places where Japanese culture is practiced, such as in Japanese diaspora communities.

As with my attempts to communicate with those who are primarily Japanese speakers, but know some English as well, there exists flexibility with respect to cultural practices involving embodied ethnocultural capital in transnational contexts. Often one holds cultural capital in more than one area, or capitals recognized as ‘profitable’ forms in one ‘market’ or another, but these particular forms of capital cannot be assessed equally in all markets one encounters<sup>31</sup>. In my case, I am able to demonstrate the possession of far more capital relevant to ‘profitably’ being distinguished as an English speaker or recognized as a Canadian due to my lifelong acculturation in English speaking environments and my lifelong residence in Canada. Nevertheless, I have acquired some flexibility to ‘profitably’ (or successfully) use my limited acquisition of Japanese language where English will not suffice, or where a demonstration, however weak, of Japanese cultural affinity may be received warmly, such that I can ‘profit’ from it<sup>32</sup>.

This flexibility of accumulating cultural capital is a core feature of the transnational context, where cultural practices once considered attached not only to a nation but to the soil of a national territory have been freed from national territorial boundaries. Practitioners of various cultural skill-sets end up interfacing, which can give rise to a profitability in a person’s flexibly using one set of practices or another. A person’s

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<sup>31</sup> Take, for example, one’s inability to assess the relative quality of speech in a language one does not know.

<sup>32</sup> As for bowing in the Japanese manner, although I cannot remember explicitly learning the manner and times to do this, I now sometimes bow ‘instinctively’ or ‘naturally’ without any conscious thought or explicit attempt when greeting people from Japan in Japanese or leaving the company of Japanese speakers (and perhaps more surprisingly and incomprehensibly, even when I speak to Japanese people on the phone), due to my decade and a half long exposure to Japanese cultural contexts in Vancouver. My cultural capital in this regard, though small, is building through exposure and practice, seemingly without the conscious effort of explicit training, but thankfully, in light of my limited skills, I still have the flexibility to resort to the practices in which I possess much more embodied cultural capital where this secures me an equal or greater profit in the Canadian context (such as speaking English).

possession or non-possession of this capital cannot be assumed, but is demonstrated through practice (for the skilled practitioner, often without much thought). The acquisition is made by repeated practice, often with seemingly equal absence of conscious effort<sup>33</sup>. Nonetheless, as with other forms of capital, the recognition of one's poverty is a possible outcome.

The nexus of transnationalism, cultural capital and practice may prove very useful for our discussion of the self-representations and identity formation and maintenance practices of Korean *zainichi* in Japan, and perhaps especially so for those now residing in Vancouver, Canada. The *zainichi* in this study may have left the soil of Asia, but have not 'left it behind' in the mindscape<sup>34</sup>. Although my *zainichi* participants were born in Japan, they should not be assumed to have assimilated to an undivided identity as either "Japanese" or "Korean" prior to leaving the geographic space of Asia. Perhaps most interestingly, though the identities of *zainichi* have responded, usually overwhelmingly, to their (usually life-long) existences in Japan, their identification by others as *zainichi* is greatly attached to a nationality stemming (albeit generations ago) from Korea.

The *zainichi* of Japan are expert practitioners of the Japanese cultural practices that have enveloped them and structured their lives since birth, but for my participants, Canada now offers a third context of place for identities to be practiced. This thesis employs transnationalism and the concepts of cultural capital and practice to investigate how *zainichi* represent and come to terms with their national in this third context of place.

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<sup>33</sup> The best supporting example may be the unschooled acquisition of cultural practices by children immersed in a culture, while the prime exception that comes to mind is a late-comers' acquisition of new cultural practices in adolescence or adulthood, often with difficulty and the result of more skilled practitioners seeing her as having an incomplete proficiency.

<sup>34</sup> Although remaining in Canada is an attractive option for many, as I will discuss later, most see Vancouver as merely a temporary stop, and plan to return to Asia in the near future.

## Chapter 3 - Data Sources and Methodological Approaches

### Methodological Approach

When I first encountered *zainichi* persons in Vancouver, I was confounded by their fluctuating and seemingly contradictory national identity representations. I decided to examine this more closely as a sociological enquiry, but was unsure how to build theory and method for an identity involving so much apparent contradiction, flux and instability. In John Cresswell's *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*, I encountered Cresswell's suggestion that grounded theory studies (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987) are often useful for such a shifting context (Cresswell, 1998:56). This appealed to me both as it seemed promising for the problem at hand and as I had long wanted to work with the grounded theory model<sup>35</sup>.

I began conducting a literature review on the subjects of transnationalism, identities, nationality and Japanese and *zainichi* identity in sociology, and on the history of Japanese nationality, national identity and the establishment of the *zainichi* in Japan through both historical and sociological works incorporating historical information. This stage should not be viewed as 'preliminary' as it continued throughout all other stages as new material came to my attention or as what my participants told me led me to question components of my theoretical approach. Corresponding to a 'grounded theory' approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987), I have tried to ensure that my conclusions would have the

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<sup>35</sup> My interest in it stems from the possibility that building the theory from interviews may allow participants to have a 'hand', however albeit indirect, in the construction of the theory that is to be applied to them in the final product.

full benefit of what my participants told me to the extent of refining and reformulating not only theory but the inclusion of sources in the historical literature review, as well.

I learned much as a participant observer at monthly meetings of a Vancouver-based *zainichi* support group, “Zainichi-Canada”. During this phase of data collection my role could best be characterized as “participant as observer” as described by Creswell (2003) wherein I intended my role as participant to demand the greater portion of my attention over my role as observer (Cresswell, 2003:186). I became an active member of the Zainichi Canada group. As this is a informal group that meets at unscheduled occasions for tea or dinner, this largely meant that I entertained with *zainichi*, spouses of *zainichi*, and others interested in the issue and engaged in usually casual and congenial conversations about being *zainichi*, minority issues in Japan, and sometimes about unrelated issues, such as their families and jobs, etc. In my role as observer, I tried my best to understand their opinions and feelings on being *zainichi* in Japan, and how they represented their national identity to me in different contexts, and this also often helped me in formulating and refining my theoretical perspective and possible interview questions. Perhaps most importantly, these meetings permitted me to meet and familiarize myself with those who became participants in this research project.

Further participant observation with the emphasis on observation (Creswell, 2003) was carried out via semi-structured interviews. I conducted face-to-face interviews with willing *zainichi* residing in the Vancouver, BC, Canada metropolitan area. This involved inviting *zainichi* who attended the Zainichi Canada meetings to participate in my research project. Initially, I utilized open invitations, announced to the whole group at meetings. I would then make appointments with those who expressed an interest in participating. However, as the early selection tended toward young people, following the advice of

Swanson (1984) to balance the later selection process on the basis of protecting the grounded theory methodology from theoretical distortion due to demographically skewed selection, I began to make a special effort to reach out to the older *zainichi* whose absence might skew my findings towards the young, while attempting to keep the gender balance equal (Swanson, 2001:84)<sup>36</sup>. Finally, I was able to achieve a reasonable balance where the men and women were equal in number, and the (mean) average age ratio of men to women was 32.25 : 33.75, and my data also appeared saturated<sup>37</sup>.

The interview process involved recording participants' responses to my questions, while simultaneously allowing them to discuss on tape their own views outside of the format of my questions. I asked questions that I structured beforehand, but also allowed myself to be led by participants into any additional discussions that they felt were relevant to the subject of their own identities as *zainichi*. The interviews were conducted in cafés, which provided a convenient meeting place, but also lent a casual feel to the experience that I hoped would contribute to their comfort level.

I did prepare a list of questions I wanted to ask all participants. However, as I have tried to construct my methods along a 'grounded theory' approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987), I encouraged interruptions to the neat sequence of my prepared questions, and also encouraged my participants to elaborate on their statements and wander off topic when they felt it was relevant to do so. At the same time, I also asked them questions that I had not prepared that suddenly struck me as interesting in response to what they were telling me. At the end of each interview, I would say such things as

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<sup>36</sup> Older *zainichi* are unfortunately very hard to find in Vancouver. I had always hoped to find a *zainichi* woman 55 years or older, of lower socio-economic class, but was unable to do so, let alone convince one to participate. On the other hand, the older males I discovered were uniformly of relatively high socio-economic class. Most were unwilling to participate, but incorporating more of them would hardly have helped me to keep a balance in age, gender or class in any case.

<sup>37</sup> With the exception of what a senior female aged fifty or older could have added. I regret this deficit.

“use this time to say what you would like us to know about this issue”, or “what do you think... what is your opinion?” I hoped that this would furnish me with a massive wealth of data, much of it unanticipated, which I could then code to formulate and revise my theoretical approach<sup>38</sup> once audio recordings of these interviews were transcribed.

I employed the grounded theory methodology (Straus, 1987; Becker, 1998) of grouping and coding my data as I found overlaps and congruities in what I was told, and also as I appended the exceptions that seemed to contradict emerging themes at the end of each tentative subsection. In this, I was greatly assisted by word processing technology, as it also allowed me to splice segments that I had compiled from my historical literature review into my own musings based on the observation of meetings, and then to add them to the roughly coded citations from my interview participants where they seemed congruent with one another. Throughout the process, gleanings from the extensive theoretical literature that suddenly seemed to correspond were also incorporated (Cresswell, 1998: 86). From this grew a massive but ramshackle primary text, requiring a further fusing of like subheadings and intensive editing to restore to a reasonable size and coherency for a Masters thesis.

Although the coding categories and their contents shifted, merged and divided myriad times, from this process I was eventually able to perceive patterns in my data<sup>39</sup> that suggested a greater applicability of one theoretical perspective over another to the various coded categories and their contents, and to the work as a whole. A theoretical model began to take shape in response to the overlaps in the interviews and their congruity with

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<sup>38</sup> Some respondents took more advantage of this opportunity than others, however, with a few furnishing only short responses to the direct questions while others furnished interviews that took more than a day to transcribe.

<sup>39</sup> This included themes that I had not at all anticipated, such as the commonality of the identity as ‘almost Japanese’, and a failure to feel meaningfully connected to Korea.



the literature that permitted a final editing process of turning some theoretical misfits into critiques of how and why they misfit, and 'running with' the theoretical perspectives that proved congruent with what both the literature and my participants suggested.

Aside from employing Swanson's (1984) suggestion to attempt to balance the later selection process on the basis of protecting the grounded theory methodology from theoretical distortion due a skewed selection, I do not deem my own process as offering much of an innovation on the methodology of grounded theory as long ago espoused by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Rather, it is an enactment of it that might have been cumbersome and taken centuries or a large support staff prior to the age of fast computers and effective word-processing technology. It is still cumbersome to pursue this strategy, but I suggest that it is well worth it as it allows participants a 'foot in the door' of theory making<sup>40</sup>. Certainly, this task has become easier with the advance of technology, such that it no longer breaks the back of the solitary researcher (literally and figuratively, if one utilizes only paper files).

### **My Participants**

All of my interview participants fit my operative definition of *zainichi*. Their selection involved their confirming that they were descendents (born in Japan) of Korean migrants who settled and established themselves in Japan during Japan's twentieth century colonial subjugation of Korea, before the end of the Pacific War in 1945. Although my intention was to pursue a small-scale qualitative enquiry into the national identity representations of a small number of *zainichi* staying in Vancouver in great detail, I

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<sup>40</sup> I say 'foot in the door', as the theory utilized is still constructed by sociologists, but in this way, the participants do strongly influence the choice of theory and the shape of the final text.

nonetheless hoped to achieve a diverse sampling concerning gender, age, and class. In some ways, I was able to achieve this above my expectations. My participants are precisely half women and half men. The age range of the group spans from 20 to 58, with the mean age ratio of men to women being 32.25 : 33.75.

In other ways, my pool of participants reflects the fact that I am not trying to sketch the 'average *zainichi*' national identity, but to engage in a qualitative, micro-sociological examination of the *myriad* national identity representations of *zainichi* in Vancouver Canada, which admittedly focuses on a pool too small to produce quantitative reliability as an indicator of the average *zainichi* experience, or to produce a snapshot of the typical *zainichi* from Japan. The following characteristics do not necessarily assist a project attempting to sketch what the mean or median *zainichi* identity is, but do represent a great diversity nonetheless.

As for class, two own and operate successful businesses, while the rest were employees, visitors or students. Among non-owners, one of the employees holds a job as a college teacher of Japanese language and culture, while two others are doing restaurant and café work as part of their short-term working holiday visa. One is solely a student in an English program, while those on the working holiday visa also incorporated English studies into their stay. As far as their status in Canada is concerned, five interviewees were permitted to stay in Canada on the basis of short-term visas while only the two business owners were secure in their Canadian residency.

There is some potential for mobility among the others that may not be clear by stating the legal status in terms of such definite categories as 'visitor': the college teacher can stay in Canada so long as she maintains her teaching position, but is uncertain whether to do so, while one of the 'visitors' is considering pursuing permanent

residency/citizenship status via her marriage to a Canadian citizen. While student/workers clearly tended to be younger than the owners or the one professional and had less income, there is some ambiguity in their classification as many of the workers spent a considerable amount of time as students, as well as touring the area as visitors. One of the owners surreptitiously<sup>41</sup> holds both a Canadian and Japanese citizenship, while the other was reluctant to provide the precise details of his current legal status in Canada and Japan, but referred to himself alternately as Canadian, and Japanese, indicating, though not with any certainty, that he may be 'in the same boat'.

<b>Males</b>						
Name	Age	Student?	Labourer?	Professional?	Owner?	Unemployed?
Kay	58				+	
George	35				+	
Taka	25	+	+			
Kao	20	+				+
Mean:	32.25					

<b>Females</b>						
Name	Age	Student?	Labourer?	Professional?	Owner?	Unemployed?
Yuki	38					+
Sooja	37					+
1 <sup>st</sup> Interview	30			+		
Hiroimi	24	+	+			
Mean:	33.75					

### **English as an Interview Medium**

Most of my participants would readily acknowledge having a lower competence in English than myself, for whom English is a first and primary language of communication.

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<sup>41</sup> Japan does not allow dual nationality.

In defense of the use of English in the interviews, I suggest that for my participants, their relative skillfulness in English primarily impacts the perceived gracefulness of their expressions in English for native speakers, thereby clearly marking them apart as non-native speakers. My participants heard my appeal for volunteers for this study in English and they responded to it by expressing their willingness in English. I do not see my participants' statements as incomprehensible. Their expressions carry viable and *invaluable* data, as much as anyone else's expression in English does, but are marked by features of a Japanese speaker in transition to acquiring standard English, such as using the present perfect form of a verb for a past action (likely favoured over delaying to think of the proper form), or dropping the subject of a sentence (which is permissible in Japanese once one believes the subject to be established and understood).

Versus the use of English I admit that English is an incompletely mastered language for most participants. Although I have passed a formal Beginning-level Japanese language class, I regretfully acknowledge that this has not enabled me to understand complex statements laden with subtleties in Japanese. As I am not able to digest Japanese with a sufficient degree of comprehension to conduct my analysis in a way that I feel best suits my particular use of the grounded theory approach, which is very dependent on primary contact with participants, I elicited data from my participants in my own tongue, although the occasional Japanese term did slip into our interactions.

Although avoiding introducing translational violence to subjects by inadvertently limiting their expressions is a problem I am sensitive to, I was confronted with imperfect English language proficiency rather than incapacity of expression. Were it impossible to transfer meanings between 'alien fields' we must deny many transmissions daily achieved, however tenuously, between different places and cultures operating in different

languages (Burbules and Rice, 1991: 408). As Burbules and Rice suggests, active engagement in overcoming translational difficulties, rather than “abandoning the effort because it is assumed to be futile”, is a more fruitful response to the challenge proffered by situations wherein there is enough sameness to make communication between ‘alien’ fields possible, albeit problematic, but enough difference to make it “worthwhile” by potentially enhancing knowledge in the interfacing worlds (Burbules and Rice, 408)<sup>42</sup>.

Via tone of voice, facial expression and pauses my participants signaled to me that they were seeking my approval or confirmation for their pronunciation of difficult words. Such moments tend to ‘ethnificate’ the speaker (Murakami, 2001<sup>43</sup>), rather than annihilate their intended meaning. Day suggests that certain discursive enactments in cross-cultural exchanges reveal our relative location with respect to an ethnicity (Day [1994], in Murakami, 2001<sup>44</sup>). I suggest that my encounters with my *zainichi* participants in Vancouver similarly highlighted who is the native speaker of English and who of Japanese, just as they also highlighted who knew more about what it is like to live as a *zainichi* in Japan and who was the Canadian researcher trying to fathom this. In interviews we both agreed to partake in, we sought rapport, and so helped each other to simultaneously establish both better insight and smoother English, while in the process marking who is socially positioned as the better resource for each.

I often found myself in a context reminiscent of Murakami’s interview with a British ex-POW who had been held in a Japanese forced labour camp in World War Two

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<sup>42</sup> Indeed, many of my closest and most satisfying personal relationships in the multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic neighborhood I live in, including that with my long-term partner, who is herself imperfect in English proficiency, would be impossible were this not so.

<sup>43</sup> Murakami borrows this concept from Day, Dennis (1994). “Tang's Dilemma and Other Problems: Ethnification Processes at Some Multicultural Workplaces”. *Pragmatics* 4, Pp.315-336.

<sup>44</sup> See note 43, above, for Murakami’s source.

(Murakami, 2001), wherein they understood each other, though the conversation clearly defined who was the 'Brit', and who the Japanese:

Ted refers back to the topic "little box" in line (l. 16, "then you got (.) your little box (.)") and a brief pause at the end for his pursuit of the interviewer's response. Then, in line 18 he specifically asks the interviewer to reply to his question ("your *bento*, was it?"). The way this is responded by the interviewer indicates that makes Ted's question with the Japanese word '*bento*' directly relevant for the interviewer, and therefore interactionally nominates the interviewer to take the next turn. The Japanese word, *bento*, the English equivalent of lunch box, ethnifies the interviewer as Japanese, someone who is assumed as culturally informed and linguistically competent on the topic in progress. Joint construction of what *bento* means interactionally accomplished: the interviewer displays her knowledge by offering a gloss in English (l. 19, "hum, lunch [box]"), which is completed by Ted with his embodied action (l. 21). This joint construction of what *bento* means not only ethnifies the interviewer, but also constitutes a mutual understanding of the particular past at issue. (Murakami, 200: 6)

My participants reached out to me in similar interactions, checking with me about the right word choice at times, and watching my eyes to see if we were still 'with one another'. In this, I may be greatly assisted by having been an ESL teacher for a long time, and by having a Japanese partner, but I think it is my duty to acknowledge their gracefulness in *helping me accomplish this*, rather than disavow that my participants furnished me with meaningful statements. Murakami attempts to highlight the "moment-by-moment process in talk where people's cultural understanding and knowledge are displayed, shared and established as relevant" (Murakami, 2001: 10).

In Murakami's interview with Ted,

[...] the participant ethnifies the interviewer and seeks her alignment to do a work on potentially problematic statement and claim. In turn the interviewer's accommodation to the ethnification is registered as part of the interactional upshot, collaborating to the interviewees' accountability work. (Murakami, 2001: 10)

In part, a mutual communicative dependency occurs when the interviewee and interviewer are not equal in linguistic prowess for the language the interview is

conducted in and draw contextual meaning from different backgrounds, but where the interviewee offers invaluable resources that the interviewer acutely desires to acquire. More importantly, I suggest that my participants express themselves extremely well in English, though perhaps not always in the aesthetics of the standard form that would lead native speakers of English to mark their expressive capacity as 'alike'. As Burbules and Rice suggest, although "irreconcilable and incommensurable difference" is possible in spite of our best attempts "there is no reason to assume it" (Burbules and Rice, 1991: 409), provoking isolationism. I encourage my readers to engage in this discourse, and as such, I do not 'correct' my participants' grammatical errors in their citations.

### **Structured Questions**

The questions I prepared beforehand and asked of all interview participants were as follows: How would you describe your relationship to these three countries: Korea? Japan? Canada? How did you come to know yourself as a *zainichi*? (*Dono youni shite jibun ga, zainichi dato iukoto ni kizuitano desuka?*) What was it like for you to live as a *zainichi* in Japan? Do you feel that your concept of yourself as a *zainichi* changes? How so? Can you give some examples/ tell some stories? What benefits does the *zainichi* identity offer, in Japan? What are the costs (*furi*) of being known as a *zainichi*, in Japan? What are the costs or benefits, if any, of a *zainichi* identity in Canada? Do you feel that your concept of yourself as a *zainichi* has changed as a result of staying in Canada? What support does the Zainichi-Canada group offer, and how does this effect, or help shape your identity? How do feel about your experiences with the group? How do you feel about discussing *zainichi* issues in the environment of Canada? Does your understanding of your identity as *zainichi* change, in Canada? If so, how so? If you plan to return to

Japan, do you feel that your identity as *zainichi* will have been changed by your experiences in Canada? If so, how so?

### **Ethical Considerations**

For ethical reasons, it was necessary to ensure the explicit consent of all interview participants whose contributions were to be utilized in the study. In the interview stage, this was ensured via the signing of a written waiver. Participants were guaranteed that they were able to withdraw at any point during the study. The use of a pseudonym in place of proper names was available to protect anonymity for those who desired it. (Most did do so.) The request to be assigned a pseudonym in place of a *bona fide* legal name could be made at any time during the study. My participants chose their own pseudonyms<sup>45</sup>. Finally, participants were given ample opportunity to contact myself via email and telephone for the purposes of making enquiries, reviewing transcripts or raising any concerns about the study.

My primary units of analysis were the reported descriptions of lived events and the representations of the subjective experience of them for participants in interviews, as captured in transcriptions of such interviews. To those who furnished me with this data, I am forever grateful, because I know that for them, it was more than just data.

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<sup>45</sup> This practice resulted in one rather interesting name: "First Interview"!



## Chapter 4 - Analysis

### Koreans in Japan?

My eldest participant, Kay, at 58 years old, is a second-generation *zainichi* who clearly identifies as a Korean. He declared to me with conviction, “I believe that even if I have to struggle, maintaining my Korean identity is more valuable”. However, although he could tell me easily about his difficult relationship with Japan and his relationship to Canada, Kay had great difficulty answering the question, “what is your relationship to Korea”? This difficulty was far more marked among my younger participants.

Perhaps partly because of the tone of the literature I read before engaging in this project, it was surprising for me to hear young *zainichi* able to talk at length and with enthusiasm about Canada when in many cases their stays here had only been for a few months out of their lives, and yet be so unable to find much to say about a relationship with Korea or Korean culture. Many (usually very short and laboured) responses involved having Korean passports, being aware that Korea was a distant source of DNA, or the noting of such seemingly trivial things as eating *kimchi* (a Korean spicy pickled condiment) at family dinners. It often seemed as though my participants had to struggle very hard to come up with *any* response. My youngest participant, Kao, a twenty-year-old English student, holds a Korean passport, but nonetheless told me when I pressed him on his response to the question of his relationship with Korea:

[David: Ah, ok. So, Korea is just your... DNA?

Yeah.

[David: The home... home of your genes?]

Yeah.

[David: Un. Ah... You don't feel a close relationship?]

Yeah.

[David: Ah... ah... when you describe your relationship to Korea

Yeah?

[David: ...you can't tell... more than citizenship?]

Ah...difficult! I can't describe!

Although they may often be identified with Korea by others in Japan I often found myself listening to my *zainichi* participants talking of Korea as a distant, foreign country, and Koreans from Korea very much as alien others. Often, my participants expressed a great disconnect from Koreans, and at times, even an ambivalence about that disconnect. As George Shimizu, a 35 year old businessman, told me:

Uh, Korean people, you know, I really have no opinion. I don't really care about Korean people, you know, they have their own set values – I don't care. I'm happy for them, but do I abide by them? Not really.

Almost flippant expressions such as this were not universal among my participants, but a great disconnect from Korea and Koreans *did* seem incredibly common. Of all my questions, I was surprised to find that the relationship they felt to Korea was the hardest for my participants to answer.

First Interview, like some of Fukuoka's participants, represents herself as a *zainichi* person, which she suggests evades the categories "Korean" or "Japanese":

Oh, I don't know, well, like if somebody ask me, "who are you, right now", who I am, right now... Ah, I don't know, but I can't say I'm Japanese, right? So, I can't say I'm Korean, ok? I'm no Canadian, of course. So, I have to say *zainichi*, right? Well, well, I'm *zainichi*! So, so I... maybe I answer that way.

[David: and for you, do you feel like *zainichi* means, uh, Japanese and Korean?]

Ah! Totally different thing!

[David: ...or Korean in Japan....]

Yeah... so it doesn't fit in any category.

[David: Right. I like that!]

(laughing) Yeah, it's hard to fit anything!

Is *zainichi* a traversing of the symbolic boundaries of Japan and Korea, an alternate form of inclusion in the Japanese national identity, or a third thing, separate from a representation as Korean and Japanese? As over the course of an interview it would appear momentarily to be one and then the other, being *zainichi* is perhaps all of these<sup>46</sup>.

I was intrigued, however, when Hiromi, a young second-generation *zainichi* woman of 24 years, in Vancouver on a working holiday visa, referred to “*zainichi* culture” as if living as a *zainichi* offered her an autonomous way of life alongside Japanese and Korean culture, because Hiromi also very clearly sought to identify herself to me as 100% Japanese on every occasion we discussed these issues, and told me in the same interview that *zainichi*, “have no difference from Japanese”. Although this seems contradictory, for Hiromi, *zainichi*, at least of her generation (the second), are for all intents and purposes Japanese people, but something about their circumstances may nonetheless furnish them a unique set of experiences that then *perhaps* engenders a distinct *zainichi* cultural mindset, or *zainichi* experiences and practices that differ from their neighbors.

There are some people for whom a representation of themselves as *zainichi* in the sense of a third thing, saliently apart from Korean and Japanese, calls into being a more steady ground for a distinct *zainichi* culture, lifestyle, or at least a relatively constant ‘*zainichi* identity’. Two of my respondents in particular seemed ambivalent about being assigned to one nationality or the other. They also struck me as unusually happy to be *zainichi* – perhaps happier than they would be if forced to become unequivocally Japanese or Korean. Both First Interview and Taka expressed to me a great measure of pride in their Korean descent while seeming to find equal gratification in their full acculturation to Japanese practices. Interestingly, both are also third generation *zainichi*.

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<sup>46</sup> If we view representations of the self as practices assumed for practical purposes of the person traversing various circumstances over time, this flexibility in representations of the self is perhaps not surprising.

As Taka told me when I asked him why he thought his experience as a *zainichi* was one of the best and least problematic of all the *zainichi* I had talked to, “if I think about I’m not Japanese, going to worse”. However, he immediately followed this with, “I always think about, oh, I got a two culture. I’m lucky, more than every Japanese!”

Taka’s representation of his national identity includes being half and half<sup>47</sup>, and, other times, simultaneously *fully* Korean and *fully* Japanese. As for how he answers when someone on the street asks which he is, he told me, “Sometimes I say Korean. Sometimes I say Japanese. Sometimes I say Korean Japanese”.

Taka does *not* consider himself familiar with Korean culture. As he told me:

I don’t know much about Korean culture, because my mother was born in Japan, also my father too. ‘Cause they are kind of *zainichi*, right? They don’t know about Korean very much. That’s why they can’t teach me about. That’s why I don’t know much, but I tried to understand Korean culture. That’s why I went to Korea once. I was try to learning Korean too, but it’s too hard (laughs). Very hard!

Taka learned late in life that he was Korean descended. He was already a teenager when his parents told him. However, he acknowledges that he *sensed* his family was somehow different from those around him, before he ‘knew’. As he related the story to me:

Fifteen, yeah, maybe fourteen. Fourteen, thirteen. I didn’t know that, but ah...I... I was... I was thinking... a little different than the other Japanese person. Yeah, because, my mom every night served kind of Korean food, and some words I learned from my mother – it’s not Japanese! But I was thinking, it’s Japanese. Right? Like a...I gotta go back! (goes back into the café to attend to a personal matter - returns) Yeah, that was funny! And then I realized that I was Korean Japanese, yes. But I... I have no big shock. That’s “So what?” It’s like that.

Although I spoke to too few such persons with this level of confidence in a specifically *zainichi* identity—not Japanese or Korean exclusively, but a space that is perhaps between or perhaps both—to say how significant this is, I noticed that Taka and

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<sup>47</sup> Not entirely a Korean, or entirely a Japanese, but a combination including elements of both.

First Interview seemed perhaps the most content with their situation in Japan. What others may term a problematic identity, or nationality crisis, they generally represented to me as being interesting, or, in Taka's case, even amusing<sup>48</sup>.

First Interview, like Taka, is very proud of her Korean heritage. Unlike most of my other participants, she told me she never hid her Korean-descent from those around her. At thirty years of age, she has never used a Japanese name, and has no intention to do so. She believes that being forward and open about the fact that she is a *zainichi* has contributed to her not feeling uncomfortable in Japanese society. As she told me:

I'm sorry that some *zainichi* people always have that sort of fear, that 'if somebody find out I'm *zainichi*' will have a result. I never have such a cost, because... because, 'I... I'm like... I'm having a crisis', they say, 'if I'm caught', but me, I say 'I'm *zainichi*', because I'm using a Korean name, so I never, I never... felt that fear.

Taka seems to have found a peculiar coziness in not fitting explicitly within the boundaries of a Japanese nor Korean national identity to the exclusion of the other and shines among my participants in being able to answer all of my questions touching on nationality almost dismissively with a generous, contented smile. When Taka told me: "Cause, I was... I was a little different, I was in Japan, so people called me, 'Oh, you are a little strange! You are not exactly Japanese, but you are not exactly Korean' y'know", he expressed it as an amusing, rather than hurtful incident. After speaking with him many times at *zainichi* meetings, at the coffee shop where he works, and in chance encounters on the streets of Vancouver on several occasions I came to very much enjoy his unfailing humour, which shows through in how he represents his national identity. As Taka says:

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<sup>48</sup> Further research should seek to explore the extent to which portraying to the world a relatively stable identity as a *zainichi* either between, fusing or combining Japanese and Korean identity, remains correlated with contentment in Japan when tested against a larger pool of participants. I would also be curious to see, perhaps via large-scale quantitative analysis, if this is a common stance for third-generation *zainichi*.

I'm Taka... that's it! (laughs) Yup. [...] I'm cool. I'm from Japan, I was born in Japan, but I'm Korean. Ah – how to explain, sometimes? Ah... when I went to a Korea, every... every people asked me in Korean, but I can't speak Korean, right?

[David: Yeah.]

And people would say, “why are you trying to... be Japanese?”

[David: Yeah?]

But I was born in Japan, so, that's only half... Japanese.

[David: If a Canadian asks you, “Ah, are you Japanese” what do you say?]

Oh, yes! Sometimes I say Korean, sometimes I say Japanese. Sometimes I say Korean Japanese. [...] But Korean and Japanese looks similar. That's why people get complicate. “You are Korean, or Japanese?” It's like that.

[David: Kind of both - maybe.]

Yeah. Right. Exactly.

[David: What do you think – maybe *zainichi* is a third thing?]

Um-hym. Third thing! Yeah! Right! Right! Just between Korean and Japan. Maybe there is some islands – haha-haha! Yeah!

Speaking to Taka and Hiromi made me wonder if *zainichi* exist in another national space that is not Japanese nor Korean, but akin to, as Taka says, “some islands” – a distinct and yet interfacing space between Japanese and Korean.

Taka seems to relish much of what underlies transnationality. He told me of being amused rather than disturbed when his brother suggested that staying in Canada may be eroding his Japaneseness. At the same time, he evidently takes great pride in his attainments of Japanese culture. He seems not too concerned that he lacked a strong enough sense of Koreanness to be accepted as a Korean in Korea, although he did attempt unsuccessfully to learn the language, and also tried to learn Korean culture from his parents (although he told me they couldn't teach him much, as they themselves knew too little). This could be interpreted as Taka seeking to achieve a perhaps belated acculturation to Koreanness, as he discovered his descent from Korea only a decade ago, but this would have to be contextualized with the fact that Taka seems to enjoy absorbing all he can of other cultures as well. When we were discussing his exposure to cultures in Canada, he remarked, with a facial expression and posture that conveyed to me an

enormous amount of confidence, “I know the Korean way, and all Chinese way, and all Canadian way, so I understand everything.” Though this may overstate his true, trans-cultural prowess, I do believe it is close to his self-concept!

Perhaps more than any person I have ever met, Taka represents himself as someone striving to be a citizen of the world. He loves life in Canada, but I believe that no country can hold him with certainty at this point in his life. Yet Taka is not becoming de-cultured: he is proud of his Korean heritage, as well as all his subsequent cultural attainments. He is, however, one of the few for whom the literal sense of the word *zainichi* with its implication of a temporary sojourn seems to apply well to his own self-representation, and what he wishes to become. Taka seems to enjoy not being ‘grounded’ in a single national identity.

Taka, at 25 years old, is young, and evidently enjoying what experiencing the world outside of Japan has to offer him, and represents a form of youthful, wandering *zainichi* experience that seems almost dismissive of *zainichi* suffering. At times, Taka seems to represent his *zainichi* lack of embeddedness as a kind of transnational ‘floating world’, from which one can select and draw up the good things from more solid and situated lands below, truly living in the ‘ether of airspace’, as Nonini and Ong call transnational space (Nonini and Ong, 1997:12). He feels ‘luckier’ than those whose birth or experience in Japan presents them only one apparent way to represent their national identity.

Will this change if Taka returns to Japan and tries to create a stable, adult working life there? Though the responses of some older *zainichi* who had trouble acquiring employment or housing imply this, for now, it is difficult to say. There is also the possibility that any discriminatory treatment in Japan Taka encounters could reinforce his sense that he is a *zainichi*, rather than a Korean or Japanese person. For example, one

*zainichi* interviewed by Fukuoda, Kim Myung-mi, went to Korea to experience a Korean university, although her Korean language skills were at best “modest”, on arrival (Fukuoka, 2000: 200). Her fondest memories were ultimately of making friends with other *zainichi* she found there (Fukuoka, 2000: 201). As Myung-mi suggests,

We understood each other [...]. I made friends with some mainland Korean people as well [...], but in the end they don't really accept you [...]. At first I tried really hard to get on with them, but at bottom they think we're quite simply Japanese. (Kim in Fukuoka, 2000: 201)

When this lack of embeddedness in ‘Korea’ is paralleled by an exclusion from ‘the Japanese’, what results for some people, such as Kim, is a sense of being ‘driven into’ a transnational, communal *zainichi* identity, almost akin to a national identity, by necessity:

Since they won't accept us, no matter how hard we try, I don't see much point in struggling to be Korean. And since we're not Japanese either, though we live in Japan, we might as well get used to thinking of ourselves as *Zainichi* Koreans and concentrate on getting along with each other. (Kim in Fukuoka, 2000: 201)

This response seems to exhibit a particularly stable identity as not Japanese or Korean, but a third thing - a *zainichi*. The difference for my participants who feel this way, thankfully, is that they seem to represent their motivation to take this position as stemming from pride in their descent and the culture of their ancestors, rather than the bitterness of ostracism<sup>49</sup>. Taka was happy to naturalize as a Japanese citizen, mentioning the civil rights this gave him in contrast to his mother (who has not naturalized), such as the right to vote, but nonetheless often represents himself in a space of ambiguity either between or else encompassing the symbolic boundaries of Japan and Korea.

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<sup>49</sup> Taka also occasionally represents himself as an ‘almost Japanese’, or a ‘half Japanese’, but any lack of belongingness implied by this self-definition doesn't seem to trouble him at this stage of his life.



### “Almost Japanese”

My participants have faced frequent attempts to slot them within the symbolic boundaries of Korea or Japan. Their allotment as Koreans, however, is challenged in practice because, as Taka and Myung-mi found when they visited Korea, their practices of language, body language, and indeed all of their behaviours seem to some of their Korean critics to be far too Japanese and insufficiently Korean<sup>50</sup>.

Over the course of an interview, when they struggled to represent themselves with respect to national identity, most of my participants tended to shift between describing themselves as Japanese and *not quite* or *almost* Japanese. This has notable exceptions, such as my oldest participant, the second-generation *zainichi* Kay, who says he becomes Japanese when socializing with Japanese friends or entertaining at a Japanese bar, but still overwhelmingly views himself as a Korean person who was born and raised in Japan. In contrast, a representation as Japanese or almost Japanese is much more common than as Korean for my generally much younger participants<sup>51</sup>.

The youngest of my participants at twenty years old, Kao, suggests:

Oh... um... I think I'm almost Japanese. [...] Um, I don't know Korea, so, I'm almost Japanese, but nationality is Korean.

‘Almost Japanese’ is an incredibly common way among my participants of (momentarily) representing their national identity. Often, as with Kao, these self-representations as ‘almost Japanese’ are attached to momentary descriptions of the self as fully Japanese with the singular exception of having a Korean, rather than Japanese, legal nationality. However, it is clear that this is actually more than a matter of being Korean only on paper, but otherwise fully Japanese, as the ‘almost’ plays out in their relations

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<sup>50</sup> My participants have met many Koreans from Korea in Vancouver. Could this be the reason the expression, “I am Korean” was surprisingly rare among my participants in their self-representations?

<sup>51</sup> Even Taka, mentioned one page previous, uses this formulation frequently.

with others in their daily lives. For the best stretch of interview I captured that clarifies how this plays out not only for participants' internal national identity representations, but in those negotiated with others in Japan, I turn to my discussion with Sooja Kim.

Like most of my participants, Sooja represented herself to me as 'almost Japanese'. She has a Korean legal nationality, and so carries a Korean passport in Canada. She suggests:

I feel that I'm almost Japanese because I was born in Japan and grew up in Japan I went to Japanese schools and I cannot speak Korean. All friends of mine say to me that they feel I am really Japanese and why I do not change a nationality from Korean to Japanese. This story tells that some of Japanese people also think I am Japanese rather than Korean. [...] On the other hand, I feel Korea is one of closest *foreign* countries in the world even though I have Korean citizenship because I cannot tell Korean histories and I do not know Korean customs exactly and I cannot speak Korean. So that's why I cannot communicate with people in Korea. Some of relatives of mine are in Korea, and I can visit Korea much easier than other countries and I love to visit them, but when I tried to express my emotion or thoughts to them, it's much harder than speaking English. In fact, my ex-roommate [in Canada], a Korean lady, said to me that she felt I was Japanese rather than I was Korean. This shows that probably I cannot belong to Korea because of miscommunication in Korean. To me, I also a member of minority groups in Korea.

Due to the fact that one's identity representations must be negotiated with others, however, "I am *almost* Japanese", though already a limitation on the statement, "I am Japanese", must be further qualified. As Sooja also says:

When I was a child, some classmates of mine sometimes told me that I should have gone back to Korea because I was Korean. At that time, I thought I was really not Japanese. If I have not a midwife license in Japan, probably it was hard for me to find a job in Japan because of not Japanese nationality. When I visited some relatives of mine in Korea, they asked me why I could not speak Korean and they said to me I should have studied Korean. Also when I showed my passport in Korea, flight attendants talked me in Korean but I could not understand about it. These all things makes me be confused and sometimes struggled.

Her conclusion?

I usually feel that I cannot belong to both Japan and Korea. I still have a nationality crisis.

This 'nationality crisis' can play out in many ways, and even travel with the person far from Japan and Korea. For a pertinent example, *zainichi* in Canada often have trouble getting service from embassy and consulate staff. If they are legally South Korean, like Sooja, they will be obliged to carry a South Korean rather than a Japanese passport. So, when in Vancouver they are occasionally forced to obtain consular services from the South Korean, rather than the Japanese consulate. However, they are very rarely able to speak Korean. Many of my participants told me of feeling very frustrated and out-of-place when dealing with the South Korean consulate, as often the consular staff can speak limited English and very fluent Korean, but not much, if any, Japanese. Some also spoke of difficulties in explaining their national identity to Canadians or of being reluctant to tell Japanese-Canadians, even those born in Canada, that they were of Korean descent.

Another participant, First Interview, arrived in Vancouver four years ago, and now works as a Japanese language and culture teacher. For now, it appears she will remain in Canada. She says of her experience as a Japanese language teacher in Canada:

I think because, because of my job, I'm teaching Japanese, right now, so um I have to... do some research on Japan a lot, and I look at Japan a lot, and I kind of represent Japan in culture. Ah, but I... well, I told my students say, like I'm Korean, but my first land is Japanese, but my background is like... Korean culture. So, I'm not hundred percent Japanese! (laughing) I say like that! (laugh) But, so I, as I say, I have to do research on Japan, and yeah! So, yeah! I feel funny! ...To representing Japan in the classroom.

Clearly, First Interview has the skills and background to explain Japan and Japanese language and daily life to foreigners. Nonetheless, she feels 'funny' to stand up before others as a symbol of the Japan she is symbolically excluded from.

### Perceived Costs of Being *Zainichi* in Japan

Kao is a 20 year old *zainichi* currently studying English in Canada, who hopes to acquire Japanese nationality. When I asked about the costs and benefits of being a *zainichi* in Japan, he told me of the employment discrimination he fears he will face when he returns to Japan if he cannot both change his legal status and conceal his Korean descent:

Ah... so there are many bad stereotype for *zainichi* in Japan, and uh... and uh... uh... it's difficult to get a job, this I am Korean, Yeah.

[David: So, ah, practical problems?]

Yeah.

[David: Yeah. Yeah. Being... Japanese would be easier?]

I think.

[David: Yeah. How about benefits? Any benefits?]

I don't know.

[David: Nothing?]

Yeah. I think nothing.

My oldest participant, Kay, at 58 years old, insists he would never consider changing his nationality to Japanese “probably because I can't forgive the Japanese who are prejudice and a Japanese society that allow racial discrimination”, but nonetheless, told me much the same thing:

In Japan there is no benefit to being *zainichi*. If you tell people you are *zainichi* or tell them your real name, there is absolutely no benefit.

As for costs, Kay could list many:

When I was young, I grew up feeling a sense of oppression. When I graduated from university, it was hopeless to look for a job as a normal [PhD] graduate would. I knew other non-Japanese who had P.h.D. worked with a fry pan in their hand or as a truck driver. Thus, I knew, for me there was only one option: to start a small business. When I started my business I pretended to be Japanese. That is how cold Japanese were to non-Japanese living in Japan (*zainichi*).

Even owning the business was not a complete escape. As Kay told me:

Some of my workers quit my company just because I am Korean. Japanese do not want to work under a Korean.

Kay, who unfortunately is not particularly optimistic about an improvement in the treatment of *zainichi* in Japan in the near future, has his own theory, based on his personal experience, as to why *zainichi* are treated this way:

First of all, Japanese laws and social systems have countless discriminating rules. These rules are based on Japanese attitudes towards those countries. An example that I encounter: if you go by the name *zainichi*, then many people will not rent an apartment to you, and often they demand you have a Japanese sponsor, despite the fact that I have the same face and speak the same language as Japanese do. Today, many long-term foreigners are becoming Japanese and are able to look for a job like normal university graduates. However, I am doubtful they will be able to advance in society as equals, with the exception of those with excellent talent.

This sense that *zainichi* have ‘the same face’, but are finally discriminated against only because of their symbolic or imagined attachment to Korea is not unique to Kay, or the members of his generation. Hiromi, a much younger woman at 24 years old, now working in a restaurant and studying English told me even more explicitly that:

Even though they [*zainichi*] were born in Japan and they have no difference from Japanese, they can't get some social security or can't ask bank for bank loan or sometimes they are refused to live in apartments, just because they have Korean passports.

Besides serving as testimonies of discrimination, these statements point out that in everyday encounters, *zainichi* can neither be visibly identified as such by other persons in Japan, nor recognized by any difference or deficiency in their practice of Japanese language or culture. Perhaps the best evidence of this can be seen in how many *zainichi* are able to successfully conceal their descent and pass as Japanese by more distant descent, unless the occasion requires documents that reveal one's non-Japanese status or Korean descent. (Such occasions include acquiring a job or apartment in Japan.) When they are ‘found out’ as *zainichi*, however, they often suffer malevolent consequences, which include, but extend well beyond employment, economic and housing issues.

Another of my participants, Sooja Kim suggests:

There are some disadvantages to be known as a *zainichi* in Japan such as going to schools with a long and distinguished history, getting hired at a prestigious company, or sometimes getting married to Japanese people.

In fact it may not only be marriage, but also dating with Japanese from pre-Meiji Japanese descent that is perilous for persons identified as *zainichi*. While marriage may involve dealing with the prejudices of extended family members, even romantic love can be upset by one partner's revelation of being *zainichi*, quite apart from any interference from those outside of the couple, such as family members. George Shimizu lost a steady Japanese girlfriend whom he told me he really loved when he confessed to her that he was Korean-descended, and seems to have worried a great deal in high school about other consequences if his classmates had known<sup>52</sup>.

George still actively keeps the secret of his descent from business partners today.

Basically in the business world, I have no intention of telling all my business associates in Japan that I am Korean-Japanese, so... So, I am not going to tell them, because, my livelihood is on the stake, here. I don't want to take any chances, so... Financially, it's a financial thing, for question number eight. It hasn't really cost me anything because I haven't **told** any... anybody.

And even in Canada...

[...] even though there are a lot of people who **are** Korean-Japanese they don't say, to other Japanese-**Canadians** they are *zainichi* because of the same fears.

As for why George would not reveal his Korean descent to his business associates or other persons of Japanese descent for whom the category might be salient, he answered my question in this way:

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<sup>52</sup> Here, again, we need to recall that the *zainichi* cannot generally be considered a visible minority group in Japan. Due to the similarity in appearances and behaviour, it is quite possible for a person who is Japanese by distant (unknown, pre-historical or perhaps most importantly, pre-colonial) descent to fall in love with what she or he believes to be the same, only to be surprised upon discovering the potential lover is indeed a 'closeted' *zainichi*. Many *zainichi* navigate their lives in Japan by passing as unequivocally Japanese not only before strangers, but also friends and other close intimates, over long periods of time.

[David: Do you think it would cost you, if you told them?]  
Um... it's a risk that I'm not willing to take. I do not want to find out.  
Um... My livelihood is on... y'know, basically to me money talks, and that's it. You know. I mean, if... If I did tell them, that if I was *zainichi*, an' if I... did lose my business, I would probably resent myself being a *zainichi* and I would probably hate it. And I don't want that to happen, so... I rather not say.

Not surprisingly, in light of his comments above, George had much the same to say about the benefits of being known as a *zainichi*: "For me, nothing. (sigh.) Nothing. It's more of a handicap. Um. It's a burden to explain it all the time. Um, so really, there is no real benefit to it." Unfortunately, in a study wherein I faced a myriad of paradoxes in national identity constructs, I found a great universality to this enquiry. Detriments were many and easy to list for my participants, whether they represented themselves as content in their skins as *zainichi* in Japan or not.

The tangible costs to being *zainichi* range from the sensation of 'feeling funny' while in a position to serve as a representative of the country of their birth, to the mental confusion of suffering a 'nationality crisis' and the tedium of the social difficulties one faces in justifying one's place with respect to nationality before others in Japan and abroad, to the very serious impacts on life-chances caused by discriminatory practices in housing and hiring in Japan. All these costs are related to difficulties in the construction of both one's internal representation of identity, and one's identification by others in a cultural context where national identity representations as either Korean or Japanese matter very much. Just as at the state level there can be no hybridity in the category of Japanese, in Japan 'real' Japanese is often seen as unequivocally Japanese. Descent from Korea after the Meiji period clearly excludes one from the imagined Japanese family-state. However, for the *zainichi* on the street level, the reality of a need to navigate between Korean and Japanese national identity constructs is more complex, creating

sociologically interesting, but often painful moments of social negotiation. Not being a visible minority, *zainichi* are often able to represent themselves to others successfully as within the category of Japanese, though always at the risk of being ejected from it.

### **Being Bullied**

During the very first interview I did for this thesis, it was brought to my attention that *zainichi* suffer from incidents of being more overtly bullied for their *zainichi* descent:

Well, when I was in elementary school, bullying was a part of life, unfortunately. [...] Of course not always happy memory! Because, you know, obviously, I use Korean name, so people can tell I am Korean, right? So, um, there is some bullying, of course.

A few of my participants mentioned incidents of being bullied in school, not only by students, but in one case by a teacher as well. Although such incidents seem to be primarily a feature of life for some people up until the end of high school<sup>53</sup>, Eriko Aoki (2000), discussing cases of bullying in schools against *zainichi* for their descent, including some that led to the *zainichi* victims committing suicide, reports that:

In general, cases of cruel bullying occur not in the lower grades, but in advanced grades. Reported cases of discriminatory behavior against Korean [read as Korean descended, or *zainichi*] children are also found mainly among older children in advanced grades. (Aoki, 2000: 158)

I was surprised by how strong my participants who were bullied seemed, with respect to how acts of bullying based on their Korean descent may have harmed them. Though some might suspect 'denial', all of them seemed surprisingly dismissive of any impact it may have had on their adult lives or current sense of well being. With the possible exception of George Shimizu bitterly relating the story of losing his girlfriend, It seemed

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<sup>53</sup> After high school, it is the economic discrimination and other less overt forms of bullying effecting life-chances, such as education, government services, employment and housing that seem to be of far more concern to my participants.



as though all of my participants who mentioned experiences of bullying and more overt discrimination by classmates in Japanese schools wanted to represent this to me as just a natural part of growing up in Japanese public schools, and not of any special consequence for the practice of their lives today or for their current identity as *zainichi*. They seemed to be telling me: if it had not been for their ethnic difference, perhaps it would have been something else?

Nonetheless, as evidence that it represents a more serious and widespread problem, the Japanese government has taken note of such incidents, and felt it was of enough concern to establish committees to look into the discriminatory treatment and violence done to Korean-descended students in and on their way to schools. There has even been a state-led propaganda campaign including posters and pamphlets in recent years to discourage Japanese people from mistreating Korean-descended persons due to their descent. Some of these campaigns have involved specifically targeting the areas around schools and major transportation systems used by school children, as they have been identified as among the likely targets of violence against Korean-descended persons in Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1999, First and Second Report on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination June 1999, Article 4, 57 (B)).

I applaud the resilience and forbearance toward tormentors demonstrated by my participants in this respect, but surely, as the Japanese government itself acknowledges, this harm done to children based on their descent is rightly considered a serious social menace in contemporary Japan, and a red flag against its minority-majority relations.

### ***Zainichi* Identification as Symbolic Deficit or Social Detriment**

All the participants I spoke with identify grievous costs to being known as *zainichi*. George's statement points out that these costs can also travel with *zainichi* outside of Japan to diasporic communities such as the Japanese-Canadian community in Vancouver, Canada. It is universally difficult for my participants to furnish benefits to being known as *zainichi*, regardless of whether they are proud of their descent or not, or whether or not they would like to naturalize or remain as "Special Permanent Residents" in Japan. Even Taka and First Interview, who seemed happy to be *zainichi*, and Kay, who construed his refusal to naturalize as a stand against Japan's treatment of *zainichi*, couldn't list any benefits to being *zainichi* in Japan.

I have never considered myself a disinterested researcher, so I readily admit that I found it lamentable that my *zainichi* participants, whether content to be *zainichi* or not, seemed unanimously unable to perceive a benefit to being or being known as *zainichi* in Japan. This is after all the country of their birth, and the country most *zainichi* hold the most loyalty towards. In spite of the fact that I have a lot of good to say about Japan and the Japanese that unfortunately does not fit within the parameters of this thesis, I find it painful to see the *zainichi* rejected in many ways by a country and society that most of them express a deep affection for.

Curious about the Canadian context for *zainichi*, I also asked my participants if they could perceive any benefits to being *zainichi* in Canada. Sooja Kim was the only participant who was able to suggest a benefit in response to the question "what are the benefits of being *zainichi* in Canada?" However, even this benefit seemed to carry with it a contradictory disqualification. She suggests:

As a benefit, the *zainichi* may be able to join the communities of both Korean and Japanese. Also, as a disadvantage, they may not join both Korean and Japanese communities in Canada.

I interpret this paradoxical statement of Sooja's as meaning that one can appeal to membership in both diasporic communities and yet fail to be fully accepted in either. Her conclusion reflects the lack of belongingness associated with being neither unequivocally Japanese nor Korean, and underscores how this imposed transnationality in national identity in the social context in Japan can travel with one to new continents, effecting one's belongingness, or lack of belongingness in diaspora Japanese or Korean communities, such as those in Canada.

This may be one of the most unfortunate aspects of transnationalism for those identified as *zainichi* in Japanese cultural circles worldwide. More than the celebration of national identity can be preserved as ideas grounded in nationality drift from their soils of origin. Along with luggage, language, dress, songs, cultural festivals and habits such as bowing, prejudices grounded in national identity constructs can survive a journey across the Pacific and thrive elsewhere<sup>54</sup>.

### **Hiding behind a Japanese identity**

As we have seen, there are some costs to being identified as a *zainichi*. As a result, some *zainichi* engage in a life-long exercise of active concealment of their descent. These are the 'closet *zainichi*'. Perhaps the participant in my study who was the most concerned about being 'found out' as a *zainichi* was Kao (a pseudonym). It is his hope to become a

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<sup>54</sup> However, to put this into context, I would suggest that this is not an issue of Canada being corrupted or tainted by the importation of outside prejudices as that claim would require an uncontaminated Canada that has never existed. For example, the continuance of European-derived prejudices against the aboriginal nations in Canada on the very soil they have inhabited since before recorded history is an extension of the prejudices that earlier European settlers and colonizers had of these nations at the time of first contact into the contemporary era. Canada emerged, tainted with discrimination from the first moment.

full-fledged citizen of Japan, which would make it more difficult for others to unveil that he is of Korean descent, and exclude him from the 'imagined family'. For now, he is hiding as best he can, and his best has been remarkably effective. Kao has managed to conceal that he was *zainichi* from all his peers for as long as he can remember, and he fully intends to continue this practice in his adult life. As well as seeming the most effective at concealing his descent among my participants, he struck me as the most committed to a strategy of perpetual concealment. He hopes this will be facilitated by becoming a Japanese citizen in the near future. Kao told me, "Uh...I... I don't stay in my way. I am... I am a *zainichi* Korea. My friend, everybody knows I am Japanese [...]".

Although Kao's attempt to distance himself from identification as a *zainichi* seems to me atypically passionate, what *is* common among many of my participants is a sense that proclaiming a *zainichi* identity would be 'staying in one's own way', limiting one's opportunities and life chances, and doing clear and preventable harm to oneself and one's likelihood of living the most enjoyable life open to one in Japan. It is not lost on those who pursue the practice of concealing their Korean descent that the practice itself may be damaging, but they may see it as the lesser of two evils. As Yuki explains:

I think that hiding something is not good for your mental health. (laughs) Yeah. And... I guess. [...] And... and...of course if you don't want to hide, you can appear, right? But I don't think it's a good idea, because some people don't like Korean. Some people which I think actually enjoys this mess against Korean. That's mean. So I think it's kind of... I think hiding, it's good protection, I think, for some people. [...] Yeah! But, so I can't tell... hiding background or bullying is more damage to mental health. [...] Yeah! So I don't know which does more damage. I think it's hiding is... hiding is more... I think it's hiding is less... less than damage to mental health. (laughs) I don't know! I don't know!  
[David: It's your choice, right?]

**It's my fear!**

Yuki confided to me that she had experienced some bullying at school as a child, mostly in the form of racial taunts and differential treatment. Although she doesn't feel

that these incidents were a major concern in her life, and even blames her ‘personality’ for why she might have been especially targeted, it is clear nonetheless that she eventually preferred a practice that would effectively prevent her being bullied verbally, economically or otherwise, due to her symbolic connection to Korea.

As an adult, it seems to be primarily the differential treatment Yuki anticipates in economic and state service matters that induce her to conceal her Korean descent. She sees both the expression of a Korean identity and the concealment of it as damaging to ‘mental health’, but is now nonetheless fully committed to the practice of active concealment. She has firmly made her choice in her internal self-representation that she is Japanese. Now she is interested in making that official, for all the outer world to see. Like Kao, Yuki is also leaning toward changing her nationality to Japanese. Like Kao, it is primarily a way to make the concealment of her descent more complete, in order to avoid the social and economic costs of being identified as a *zainichi*.

Yet Yuki, at 38, is almost twice as old as Kao, who is only 20. Just as I felt compelled to admire the skill involved in Kao’s ability to totally conceal his descent to the world outside his family, I was impressed by the genius Yuki demonstrated through her ability to carry this concealment into middle adulthood without changing her nationality. Yuki discussed with me some of her techniques of concealment, as well as furnishing her justifications for them:

Just hide my background.

[David: Un... Hide your background?]

Yup.

[David: Um-hymn. Is it easier, or...?]

Easy! Because... why? Because I can put my... uh, because I can go to work and uh, school find job and then, and also I can get... EI? EI? Unemployment... insurance? And also... pension. Pension polis (policy?) Yeah! Almost you can get almost paper, in Japanese name. Yeah! And also, yeah of course, bank card and credit card. No problem! (laughs)

[David: Un... But if you used the Korean name? Is it different?]

In front?

[David: Yeah... if you used the Korean name instead? Ah... is it going to be more difficult... to get the papers?]

Ah... because I never tried to apply for a credit card in the Korean name. So, I don't know. Because, ah, I think when you apply for a credit card, I think you should write... ah... your originality.

[David: Ah, yes!]

But I never wrote... ah, It's true! (laughs) Because just I wrote Nagasaki. Yes! That's it!

[David: Ah, smart!]

Yeah! Yeah. I think it's smart! (laughs)

[David: whatever works, right?]

Yeah! It works! No problem! Because I know! I...I know pretty much how I hide well, and how it works. Yeah. And also I can put my Japanese name in my driver's license, too, but, uh, both... both, Yeah.

[David: Good.]

Yep.

[David: Just makes things a little simpler?]

Yeah.

Like Kao, Yuki seems to have been incredibly effective at concealing her descent, although unlike Kao, she only became effective in this practice a little later in life. So while Kao has no memory of being identified as *zainichi* by peers or colleagues in situations outside of his family, Yuki does hold such memories as being openly bullied for being *zainichi* in her childhood. Yet Yuki has arguably accomplished what Kao fears he cannot, in managing to conceal her Post-Meiji Korean descent from employers, banks and creditors, and even government authorities this long into her adult life. It is not exactly a lie for Yuki to say she originated from Nagasaki, but she is aware that it may succeed in deflecting the questioner from securing what she believes they are truly seeking - a response about nationality that might bring her discriminatory treatment.

Interestingly, Yuki doesn't see incidents such as the overt bullying of her childhood as what now spurs her to conceal her *zainichi* descent and legal status or to seek full acceptance as a Japanese. Rather, like Kao, it is practical concerns such as her need to navigate the 'bread and butter' issues of daily adult life in Japan, and to

rationalize her paperwork when she goes abroad, that she cites as what spurs her to both conceal her Korean descent and consider abandoning her Special Permanent Resident status in favour of Japanese legal nationality.

Kao stands alone among my participants as a *zainichi* concealing his Korean descent without the memory of a painful moment of being discovered. This is a remarkable achievement as some of his most sensitive government paperwork is in his legal, Korean surname. He strikes me as an unusually thoughtful and intelligent young man. It seems fitting that he plans to be a teacher. So, it is with the greatest respect for him that I suggest that his lifelong attempt to maintain total concealment seems to give him a considerable case of the nerves at times. Kao himself acknowledged this. When I asked him if there was stress in hiding his background, Kao answered: “Very stress!”

I cannot count how many times Kao asked me if I thought that what he said to me would somehow go back to harm him in Japan. I could not promise him any more than that I would relate his story as he told it to me, and that he could use a pseudonym to distance himself from any repercussions. He looked me deep in the eyes and studied me for what seemed to me a long, frozen minute before he signed the waiver giving me permission to interview him. I have met many *zainichi* with the same qualms who flat out balked at signing a waiver, and so, could not participate<sup>55</sup>. I could tell Kao really wanted to tell his story. Having learned of my study, he took the initiative to contact me, as I had not met him before. He duly signed the waiver and told me his story. Nonetheless, I got

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<sup>55</sup> I am bound by ethics policies that require me to obtain the written consent of my participants to be interviewed. This waiver contains a section explaining who can participate, which is essentially a definition of a *zainichi* person. Unfortunately for my project, many of the *zainichi* who wanted to contribute something to my work have spent entire lives avoiding documenting on paper that they are *zainichi*, and were not willing to sign such a document. This in fact became the biggest stumbling block for the execution of the interview phase. Many saw this requirement to acknowledge that they were knowingly participating, which no doubt was crafted to protect participants, as being against their best interests, as it also contained a signed acknowledgement that they were among the ‘target population’ for the study. This acknowledgement is precisely what many of them had so many spent years avoiding.

the distinct impression that he didn't really want this story to be *his* story, or more precisely, a story that could be attached to his Japanese name.

I cannot help but wonder if perhaps our interview was a kind of cathartic release for Kao. (Is this why he contacted me?) I also cannot imagine the pressure of keeping such a closely guarded secret so successfully from so many people and for so long. He may have no painful memory of a moment of being discovered, but I am quite sure Kao has a perpetual pain from the unending practices required to never be discovered. Some aspects of *zainichi* suffering may show up best in qualitative studies. Along with housing, employment and educational opportunities, we need to bear in mind such things as anxiety, stress, discomfort, and as First Interview put it, 'feeling funny' that can mitigate against the *zainichi* living the best life possible. The choice of whether to hide one's descent or not is also in great measure based on an assessment of what would *feel* better.

George Shimizu, a 32 year-old owner/operator of a business, seems more representative than Kao or Yuki of my participants who employ the strategy of hiding their descent in public. His concealment seems more partial than Kao's or Yuki's. He often socializes with other *zainichi*, and in these circles has no trouble identifying himself as such. Before other Japanese, he was occasionally 'found out', and even told me of 'confessing' on at least one occasion of his own accord. However, he carries the pain of having lost a longtime, steady girlfriend in Japan when he told her of his Korean descent during this moment of confession, and seems to have worried in high school about the social consequences if his classmates had known. George actively keeps the secret today from many Japanese-descended business partners and friends in Canada, though he selectively reveals his descent to others he feels confident will not discriminate against



him for it. Even in Canada, *zainichi* such as George may continue to prefer hiding their descent from the local Japanese diaspora:

[...] even though there are a lot of people who **are** Korean-Japanese they don't say, to other Japanese-Canadians they are *zainichi* because of the same fears.

### **The Effect of Canada on *Zainichi* Identities:**

Vancouver has a very diverse ethnic and linguistic mix. There is a large ethnic Korean population, and many of them are recent, first generation immigrants. There is also a large Korean international student population, especially in the West End, a neighborhood in the downtown core of the city. A big part of being in Canada for my participants was the opportunity to see this large Korean-from-Korea population in Vancouver, and to enjoy the businesses that cater to the ethnic Korean community. One would be mistaken to think that this experience would feel familiar for the *zainichi* as they are Korean descended. In fact, this engendered much surprise and astonishment.

First Interview told me:

That's a big part, and also, the... the way I look at Korea, uh, even Japan is physically closer, but I feel... I feel, uh, like Korea is closer, to me, in Canada, 'cause so many Korean immigrants, and so, like visible, in Vancouver, especially, and also, lots of Korean-Korean food, directly imported from Korea, in around in Vancouver, and also nice Korean restaurant, and ah... Korean supermarket and grocery store. We we... I don't know. Maybe it's changed, but I... we didn't have those sort of things in Japan... Korean Korean kind of things! So, well we do have some Korean restaurants, but it's so Jap... Japanized! Y'know? (laugh) So, they change some taste, flavour to Japanese... Japanese people... so that Japanese people like it. So, they change a little bit, Japanese way. But here, everything is so Korean, so I like that! So, I (indiscernible) to Korea and I (indiscernible) to Japan, so... yeah, I think it's a great feeling.

First Interview seemed to enjoy the experience very much. It gave her a new perspective on what Koreanness might be. Though now many thousands of kilometers farther from

Korea than she had ever been before, she could nonetheless feel closer to Korea in her mindscape. Another participant, Yuki, was finally able to learn from a Korean woman she befriended in Vancouver how to spell and pronounce her Korean name. Ironically, though physically far more distant from Korea, many *zainichi* are not only able to find in Canada a new perspective on being Korean, some even portray it, like First Interview does, as an authentic Korean experience they felt was lacking in Japan.

Another participant, Hiromi, however, felt that her identity was very much shaken by her experiences meeting Koreans who had recently come from Korea in Vancouver.

Hiromi told me:

It has been changed, I was thinking that I was a Korean more than a Japanese but since I went to Canada, I realized that I actually didn't know a real Korean culture. That was kind of shock for me.

Meeting Koreans from Korea was unsettling for Hiromi's sense of being Korean.

*Zainichi* like Hiromi seem to feel a great contrast between themselves and the Koreans in Vancouver who came from Korea recently. This can cause them to question their identity and other-identification as Koreans. Hiromi came to Canada with an identity partly based on a representation of herself as a Korean that was heavily shaken in confronting Koreans from Korea and the diasporic Korean immigrant community in Canada. Yuki also had this experience. She laughed as she told me, "Yeah! Just living in Canada just con...more convinced me, I'm Japanese". Some of my *zainichi* participants seemed to be thinking, upon confronting Koreans in Canada, if this is what a Korean is

like, and I am different, than what am I? Do I have the requisite cultural attainments to consider myself, and be considered Korean?<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Although this greatly understates the salience of national identity for most *zainichi*, in some ways, this reaction resembles a person who held a self-representation as a great billiard player questioning the validity of this self-representation after facing repeated defeats competing against highly skilled persons in a billiard competition. Suddenly, a consideration arises that maybe one's attainments of billiard skills are not so complete as one believed the day before. One may then wonder, "How can I have considered myself a contender? Is my belief that I was a great billiard player a mere fantasy?" Of course, one may retreat from the claim that one is a great billiard player, one may seek the skills to become one with renewed enthusiasm, or one may re-define what a great billiard player is, but at that moment, a salient and inescapable challenge to one's self-image may be felt, nonetheless. National identity is about much more than skills, but this 'skill component' in the expectations of the audience of an identity claim, or requisite cultural capital in the practices expected by a person claiming to be a practitioner of a certain identity, may often be under-theorized, or even taken for granted. Consider also the insult often leveled against Asian-descended Canadians in Vancouver by other Asian-descended persons, when they are seen as weak in the cultural capital of their 'heritage' identity and strong in Canadian cultural capital, that they are 'bananas' – yellow (Asian) on the outside (skin) only, but containing only white (Caucasian) on the inside.

## Chapter 5 - Conclusions

Nationality has not left us as a significant feature of identifying ourselves and others. My *zainichi* participants engage in multiple and contradictory national identity representation practices as they cross oceans and continents in an increasingly interfaced world.

“Korean” identification is significant in Japan, and identification as Japanese, Korean or *zainichi* seems to also have significance for various non-*zainichi* persons in Canada.

Unfortunately, this may even lead to Japan’s specific discriminatory practices being maintained and continued in some circles in Canada, perhaps a more malicious side to the transnational context, which is under-attended to in the bulk of the literature on transnationalism<sup>57</sup>.

For *zainichi*, nationalism, like nationality, is challenged. Some of the *zainichi* I have spoken with, like my participant Kay, exhibit a sort of Korean nationalism that is not weakened by the fact that they admit to feeling somewhat alienated from Korea and Korean customs, and suffer notable discomfort in interacting with Koreans from Korea. Other *zainichi* exhibit a kind of Japanese nationalism in moments such as rising quickly to Japan’s defense when Japan is criticized for its treatment of *zainichi*. The sense of intense loyalty some *zainichi* feel to the nation of their birth is not weakened by the fact that they are often rejected by Japanese as aliens. However, to be *zainichi* is to exist as if on a pendulum, swinging from Japanese, to Korean, and not resting on either. This makes

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<sup>57</sup> Again, this does not ‘taint’ Canada, which *began* with anti-aboriginal sentiments, eurocentric biases, etc. It may, however, introduce new, reformulated varieties of discrimination that emerge historically after the construction of Canada, as the specific *zainichi* identity is a post-War phenomena based in part on a reformulation of colonial relations established in the early twentieth century. A similar example might be the transnational spread of discrimination based on the divide between Indians and Pakistanis.

every position one takes with respect to either national identity likely to be challenged internally and in negotiation with others. The national identities of *zainichi* are transitory. Some *zainichi*, like Taka, may enjoy a transnational ambiguity and multiplicity of one's own or other s' perceptions of one's national identity and allegiances. Others do not. Yet it is difficult to escape completely from this transit between national categories without denying or concealing one's descent, so long as the symbolic boundary separating the Japanese people from those who are not imagined as Japanese is conceptualized the way it currently is in Japan. In other words, *zainichi* transnationalism has emerged as very much a product of Japanese nationalism.

Nonini and Ong (1997) suggest that it is no longer necessary to assert the "Middle Kingdom as the ultimate analytical reference for an understanding of diaspora Chinese" (Nonini and Ong, 1997:12), as China may be only "one among sites within and across which Chinese transnational practices are played out" (Nonini and Ong, 1997: 12). As I began my research, I wondered how Korean cultural practices might play out in similar ways in my diasporic Korean participants, with perceived 'Koreanness' acting as a bridge between the Koreans of the Korean peninsula, the Korean community in Vancouver and the *zainichi*. However, in contrast to what I expected to find, only Japanese cultural capital was successfully exploited by the *zainichi* I spoke with.

In much of the literature I read concerning the *zainichi* at the outset of engaging in the writing of this thesis, the buzz word seemed to be Korean diaspora and I encountered such statements as that young *zainichi* currently "actively debate ethnic identity, [and] diaspora politics [...]"(Ryang, 2000: 6). Somehow, statements such as this, by emphasizing ethnicity and diaspora, gave me the expectation that living as a Korean in Japan was going to form more of a basis for my participants' self-representations than it

actually seemed to. Among the majority of my participants I encountered an almost complete failure to relate culturally to Korea or feel a sense of being ‘Korean in Japan’. This was perhaps the most marked among the youngest *zainichi*, who are as much as three generations removed from a life lived in Korea, and found its singular, near absolute contradiction in my eldest participant, Kay, who very poignantly represented himself to me primarily as a Korean person born and living in Japan.

Repeatedly, I saw *zainichi* feeling at times painfully disconnected from the symbolic boundaries of Japan, but much more thoroughly yet far less painfully disconnected from Korea. In retrospect, this should not have surprised me. So few of my participants had tangible, practical links to Korea. A few had visited there. Some knew who their increasingly distant relatives in Korea were, but others did not. In contrast to their near total disconnect with daily life in Korea, all of my participants experienced a life thoroughly embedded in Japanese society. Few had found practical reasons to form an active relationship between themselves and Korea in their daily lives. So although some, such as Kay, First Interview and Taka, mentioned being proud of their descent and a few expressed some interest in Korea, “Korean” for my participants more often seemed to mean little more than their legal status on documents, or the way they were identified by other people in Japan.

Kay, my oldest participant, told me that “Korea or Korean race is the basis of my identity, but I was born and educated in Japan”. With apologies to those such as Kay for whom it means much more in terms of their identity, it soon became clear that “Korean” was usually little more than another way of saying “*zainichi*” or “Korean-descended resident of Japan” for most of my (generally much younger) participants. Even for those who strongly identified with their Korean descent and felt some connection to Korea,

such as Kay, First Interview and Taka, it was often a pride in their *descent from*, rather than a sense of practiced *cultural affinity with* the peninsula that they conveyed to me. For most of the (generally much younger) *zainichi* I have met, it seems that Korea represents not only a foreign country but a foreign culture as well, and even Kay professes that he feels “an uncomfortable sense with Korean customs”.

Overwhelmingly, I saw *zainichi* of all ages, classes and genders wondering how they can reconcile themselves with the current imagined, symbolic boundaries of the “Japanese”. I also see much evidence of my participants wondering how they can best negotiate their national identity in other countries they travel to. Matters of practical concern to daily life are overwhelming. How can they best explain their national identity intelligibly to others? How can they acquire the paperwork that will best facilitate their livelihoods? How can they reduce the troubles and obstacles in their daily lives?

There are many *zainichi* who more actively practice their connection to Korean culture. However, for most of my participants, it is largely an issue of having acquired formidable Japanese cultural capital (and generally equally large deficits in the capital necessary to portray a Koreaness that could gain them distinction or membership in Korea or a Korean diaspora) while being other identified as symbolic representatives of Korea by their neighbors in Japan. While for many writers, transnationalism offers a fruitful basis for the discussion of viable diasporic cultural practice over the globe, I found that my *zainichi* participants very seldom represented themselves as (culturally) members of a Korean diaspora. Most of the *zainichi* I have met in Vancouver practice Japanese culture and feel distant from Korean cultural practice, but carry a symbolic attachment to Korea. A few take pride in this symbolic attachment to Korea, and I

applaud this, but feel obligated based on my observations to report that many also resent and seek to escape it when it becomes a magnet for discrimination<sup>58</sup>.

The transnational perspective is important for this study as the *zainichi* exist in perpetual transit between national categories. However, *zainichi* do make anomalous transnationals in many regards. Not only is the *zainichi* transnationalism Ryong refers to<sup>59</sup> practiced primarily on the territory of Japan, but the lifelong 'sojourns' of many *zainichi* in Japan may be influenced by the same instrumental factors motivating other transnationals to be highly globally mobile. It is possible that Japan offers what seems like the best recompense for most *zainichi*. Although the *zainichi* face discrimination in Japan, Japan is also the country where they have the most ties of friendship and close kinship. In Japan, their life-long practice as members of Japanese society (providing such cultural attainments as the perfection of Japanese linguistic skills, etc.) supports their survival, and in general, their educational attainments, work experience and other qualifications are better recognized. Neither Korea nor Canada can offer *zainichi* these benefits to the same measure. In terms of national identity, my respondents are overwhelmingly concerned with how they can justify their place in relation to Japan, as Japan's impositions of national identity (Japanese, Chosun, ROK, *not* Japanese, etc.)

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<sup>58</sup> I write 'applaud' and 'obligated' to convey that this is an insertion of my personal standpoint. I both acknowledge this, and stand by it. I find it lamentable that circumstances should urge anyone to regret identification with their own descent. I am very aware that my own experience as a 'Charter group' (British and French-descended majority) member in Canada, and as a Canadian sociological researcher of minority exclusion and suffering pre-structures this view of mine to a great extent, and I neither pretend otherwise, nor apologize for it, as to write otherwise would insincerely abjure my authorship.

<sup>59</sup> Sonia Ryang suggests of the *zainichi* that:

As long as their life in Japan, with their cultural marginalization and second-class citizenship, necessitates the daily negotiation between the two homes [Japan and Korea], they remain, paradoxically, homeless in a double sense. For of their two homes, neither is viable in terms of residential security and full-fledged civil and national membership. And if so, the reality of double homelessness needs to be recognized. (Ryang ii, 51)

Ryang suggests that this double homelessness may be considered a kind of transnationalism (Ryang, 2000: 11), even for *zainichi* who remain on Japanese soil.



render their lives problematic not only in Japan, but in transit through other countries, such as Canada and Korea, as well.

Akin to the abilities of Chinese-descended persons to establish cultural affinities within China and simultaneously in regions far from China via employing embodied Chinese cultural capital (Nonini and Ong, 1997; Ong, 1999), *zainichi* are able to expend their Japanese cultural capital in other places than Japan and may represent themselves as Japanese successfully not only in Canada, but in Japan as well. This seems to be assisted by the *zainichi* not being physically distinguishable from the Japanese, and generally not practicing different manners of dress, facial expressions, gestures or other movements of the body that might more easily set off Koreans from Korea as perceptibly different.

While when confronting Koreans from Korea many *zainichi* find themselves rejected as Koreans because they act ‘too Japanese’, the Japaneseness projected by *zainichi* requires little or no conscious effort as it is a result of life-long acculturation. Taka was quite right to feel a bewildering sense that he was being wrongly accused when Koreans in Korea found fault with him and asked him, “why are you acting Japanese”? To act Japanese would seem the ‘natural’ result of lifelong practices in Japan building upon prior practices in a way that accultures him to Japaneseness, and to stop this ‘act’ would perhaps be impossible, as he does not have the requisite cultural capital to convincingly practice other alternatives such as ‘acting Korean’. The *zainichi*, excluded from the Japanese conceptually, are very much ‘of Japan’ in practice.

I find that Bourdieu’s cultural capital concept applies especially well to my participants’ acculturation to Japanese society. My *zainichi* participants were daily

practitioners of Japanese culture from the time they were born<sup>60</sup>. Their cultural practices, which result from a lifelong immersion in Japanese society and in general differ very little from the Japanese persons around them, ensure that Japanese cultural capital is embodied and inculcated deep within them. This is why when *zainichi* decide to conceal their identities as *zainichi* and pass as Japanese of distant Japanese descent most are able to pull off this social effect with very little difficulty, even in intimate contexts over long periods of time. The practices leading people to perceive them as Japanese are nearly inseparable from their persons, not only because Japanese culture provides their primary language and categorization or symbolic systems, but because Japanese cultural practice has been a sort of backdrop to the world as they know it from the time they were born, thus providing virtually the entire perspective through which they see the world and both pre-structuring and engendering practices seemingly appropriate to, and “natural” for, various contexts in Japanese social intercourse.

### **History Embodied, and Then Forgotten as History**

At one moment in our interview, my youngest participant, Kao, seemed unable to say when he had come to realize that he was a *zainichi*. He finally gave the answer “Um...ah...natural”. My oldest participant, Kay, more readily told me much the same: “As long as I can remember I was conscious that I was not Japanese”. Among my participants, such statements as having had an awareness of being *zainichi* from “the day I was born” (First Interview), or knowing that they were detached from the Japan that is their birthplace for as long as they can remember, were common.

Interestingly, it seems that *zainichi* don’t need to be taught explicitly that they are

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<sup>60</sup> Bourdieu, I hope the reader will recall, suggests the *embodied* form of cultural capital is understood as “an investment”, or “acquisition”, “converted into an integral part of the person” (Bourdieu, 1986: 244-5).

*zainichi* and tend not to remember a moment when this was impressed upon them and instituted as a fact of their lives. As Bourdieu suggests, without an explicit prescriptive or the offense of the undisguised commands that “orthodoxy” implies, *habitus* seems self-born and “natural”, but is “embodied history, internalized as second nature and so forgotten as history” (Bourdieu, 2002i, 56). Although the *zainichi* experience is a relatively recent historical product<sup>61</sup>, it was nonetheless largely structured before the birth of the people confronting its current institution. Thus, whether or not the legal or social condition of being *zainichi* in Japan strikes an outside observer as an odd state of affairs, it likely would not seem as much so to one born into the context of Japanese social relations unless something somehow forces one to consider its oddity<sup>62</sup>. This may be why *zainichi* seem more inclined to be aware of painful acts of personal mistreatment than the fact that the state or society has rendered them apart as denizens rather than citizens (reversing the pre-War imposition obligating them to be Japanese citizens), thereby exposing them to such differing, discriminatory treatment<sup>63</sup>.

Although the fact of their circumstances as persons excluded from the current symbolic boundaries of ‘the Japanese’ may not need to be explicitly taught to them to be sensed and begin to direct without explicit instruction such behaviours as concealing one’s descent, *zainichi* experience may need to be interrupted as much as anyone else’s—perhaps by an act of education—for *zainichi* to become aware of precisely *how* or *when* the circumstances that currently maintain their differences in rights and employment,

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<sup>61</sup> Stemming, as noted elsewhere, from after Japan’s defeat in the Second World War.

<sup>62</sup> One may, for example, suddenly begin to feel more Japanese after meeting Koreans from Korea, and question the basis of the *zainichi* distinction that separates one from the general Japanese population. Or perhaps one might read a sociological paper such as this one, which suddenly renders problematic what one had taken for granted in one’s native surroundings.

<sup>63</sup> It is also interesting to note that the more overt acts of personal mistreatment that *do* draw the attention of *zainichi* to an unfairness about their circumstances as *zainichi* (such as schoolyard bullying) are also often those that the Japanese state openly discourages its citizens from committing against its *zainichi* population.

educational, or accommodation chances came about<sup>64</sup>.

### **Neither Japanese, Nor Korean**

All of my participants shared one thing– a vacillation in declaring themselves unequivocally Japanese or Korean. Assessing my *zainichi* participants’ self-representations related to national identity is very much an exercise in handling paradoxes and contradictions, and John Lie’s warning<sup>65</sup> may be seen as pertinent in this regard, as were one to attempt to construct a unitary *zainichi* identity out of my data it could at best produce a sketch of an ephemeral, median *zainichi* identity muddled with endless footnotes and qualifications. However, I suggest that this is not only less surprising, but less perplexing, less of a challenge to sociological understanding, and less indicative of *zainichi* confusion if we view identity representations as contextualized social practices occurring over time during the unfolding of various circumstances in the practice of everyday life. National identity claims are in part posited to navigate various circumstances, or else imposed on one by others attempting to rationalize certain practices in socially embedded contexts. They do not emit from isolate individuals abstracted from a presence in a social context, and certainly not removed from the unfolding of time. This is why they may resist one-word responses on a questionnaire form: such as “my national identity is as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_”, and on the communal level, they may resist an over-simplified reification, such as “*zainichi* have constructed an identity as

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<sup>64</sup> Such knowledge would certainly aid *zainichi* in contesting *zainichi* suffering, and perhaps constructing a new relationship with the Japanese state. I hope this work can contribute to that venture.

<sup>65</sup> John Lie suggests that:

The search for certainty in something as complex, confused, and changing as personal identity seems misplaced. The endeavor, which probably belongs more properly in the realm of the aesthetic or the spiritual, finds social scientists out of their depth, seduced as they might be by the goal and deluded as they might be about their effectiveness. (Lie, 2000, 206)

\_\_\_\_\_”. Even the proudly Korean Kay told me that he is Japanese when spending time with Japanese friends. This is not necessarily utilitarian. As all of my participants’ various representations, as Korean, Japanese or *zainichi*, are in their own right faithful to one set of evidence or another, I suggest that the selection of one over the other in various contexts merely reflects the practical aspect of practice.

As in Japanese society an identification as either Korean or Japanese is significant to one’s social inclusion among Japanese people and also to one’s opportunity and life chances, *zainichi* may feel pressure from within or without to sustain one identity representation or the other in various moments and contexts. Although some of my participants do resolve this by largely representing themselves either in a third (demi)nationality or as Taka put it, some (metaphorical) islands at a mid-point between Japan and Korea, or by asserting a hybrid nationality that refutes the Japanese state’s assertions that this is not possible<sup>66</sup>, and seem to maintain this *zainichi* stance fairly comfortably against many challenges, the perceived supportiveness of being Japanese for one’s life chances seems to ensure that it is a Japanese identity that will usually be turned to by *zainichi* in negotiating such crucial moments as securing employment, or finding a new apartment, etc., in Japan.

Most of my participants stated very clearly that they were certain they did *not* see themselves as Korean. Most also very easily told me that they saw themselves as Japanese, but such statements *always* came with qualifications and reservations. I was often told directly and simply, and even with a measure of national pride, “I am Japanese”, but there would come a time in every such interview when this confidence in representing the self as Japanese would suddenly dissipate. Though some tended to

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<sup>66</sup> Dual nationality is not permitted, statistics define the naturalized as “Japanese” and mask extra-territorial descent, etc.

represent themselves as not Japanese, not Korean, but *zainichi*, and one stated clearly that “Korean race is the basis of my identity” (my eldest participant, Kay), overall, the most common expression I heard concerning the self-described nationality of my participants was, “I am *almost* Japanese”. Even those who desired, strived for, or had already secured Japanese citizenship seemed to feel a need to qualify the statement “I am Japanese”. Perhaps the greatest commonality that stands out for me is the very qualification that for most of my participants makes the claim of being Japanese perpetually incomplete and partial, even after naturalization. Many *zainichi* seem to want to say to me that they *do* feel like they are Japanese, but nonetheless seem to perceive that this claim, especially prior to naturalization, but even afterwards, is illegitimate or socially unsustainable<sup>67</sup>.

It may be more difficult for *zainichi* to interface with the Korean, than the Japanese diaspora, as they often lack sufficient cultural capital to act appreciably Korean, in the eyes of those in Korea or elsewhere outside of Japan who identify themselves as Korean. Such contact with Korea and peninsular Koreans may even make some *zainichi*, like Hiromi and Yuki, decide that they are not Korean at all. It should not be assumed that the connection that feels native or natural due to their embodied cultural capital is unproblematically with those with whom they share a distant historical descent. The transnational flows of *zainichi* in Canada may remain viable, with *zainichi* aided by time-space compression utilizing their connections to distant lands based on cultural capital, except that for those *zainichi* I have met, this is generally more through their attachments to and intercourse with Japan, rather than the Korea they are identified with. Their own sense of national identity, and their identification by others, often differs.

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<sup>67</sup> I suggest that this is linked to the reduction of the boundaries of the imagined Japanese family-state after world War Two.

The *zainichi* are often symbolically attached to Koreans in Korea and to the practices of the people living in the Korean states on the peninsula in the minds of Japanese *regardless* of their level of cultural capital in practices that could convince Koreans from Korea of their Koreanness, the degree to which they identify with Korea, and their level of care or concern about things Korean. The *zainichi* are practitioners of Japaneseness *par excellence*, without any betters in Japan, who are *perceived* as Koreans *in Japan*, though not necessarily recognized as such by Koreans in Korea or by the Korean diaspora in other countries.

In writing “young Koreans in Japan” we may fail to convey a nuance to our audience that is, or that ought to be, known to researchers intimate with the lives of young *zainichi*. I am not suggesting that the living connection to Korea is now dead among young *zainichi*, but rather that it is all too easily assumed and its import may thereby easily become exaggerated. I suggest that this ought not to be taken for granted especially for the youngest of the *zainichi*, who may now represent the third to fourth generations of their families in Japan.

In confronting the difficulties my participants face, Korea is not best viewed as a sort of epicenter that *zainichi* are a satellite of. Although historically, the origin of the difficulties my participants face emerged from the strife-ridden interaction between Korea and Japan, in terms of painful disruptions in the practices of *zainichi* and Japanese people today, the conflict is now largely between the *zainichi* as anomalous (almost, half, or partial) Japanese, and exclusionary practices based on one’s attachment to denigrated lines of descent. Even if many *zainichi* have become weak in the skills required to benefit from intercourse between Korea and Japan and are as strong as anyone in the skills needed to both survive in Japan and pass as Japanese, they continue to be (frequently or

infrequently) identified as Koreans in Japan, regardless of their skills, documentation or self-representations when their descent is found out. Researchers ought to be wary of repeating the ease of the conflation made by some Japanese citizens who discriminate against Koreans in attaching *zainichi* identity to an ethnic continuity of the lifeways of the Korean peninsula, and disconnecting them from the subjective perception of a native attachment to Japan, Japanese culture, and even a national identity as a Japanese person.

*Zainichi* may use their Japanese cultural capital of Japaneseness to conduct business with the overseas Japanese diaspora, as George Shimizu does, or to teach Japanese language and culture to the people of other countries, as First Interview does. I uncovered pronounced evidence of the transnational flexibility of their embodied Japanese cultural capital assisting *zainichi* in Vancouver. In this regard, the conceptual nexus of *Japanese* cultural capital and transnational theory is very helpful.

Bourdieu suggests that to a great measure, the transmission of *habitus* through cultural practice is how we come to have a national identity such as “Englishness” ingrained in us (Bourdieu, 2002ii: 46). So what might *zainichiness* be? Although superficially, it would seem for a great many of my participants that they have only truly practiced Japanese culture to any great measure, I do not want to convey that impression. A closer examination reveals that many who are trying the hardest to postulate for themselves a Japanese identity are in fact ingrained in a practice peculiar to *zainichi* – the art of concealing one’s descent to prevent one’s identification as a *zainichi*.

This strategy of concealing Korean markers under a Japanese cloak is incredibly common among the *zainichi* I meet. It is reliant not only on a full acculturation to Japanese cultural practices, but also on a few other tricks of the trade, such as signing certain applications a certain way so as to receive documents and forms only in one’s



Japanese name such that one is not easily other-identified as a *zainichi*. Most of these practices centre around the day-to-day need to evade the challenges and discrimination *zainichi* may face due to being symbolically linked to Korea and Koreans in Japan. Along with furnishing further evidence that people may exploit the symbolic capital of national representations for practical concerns in daily life, such practices as assuming Japanese names while seeking employment or a new place of residence in Japan serve as a reminder that one's comfort in being socially *identified* as *zainichi* is not always the same as in identifying (as an internalized moment of self-representation) as a *zainichi*. I find this confirmed in my own work with my participants.

While the *zainichi* are apparently as rich as anyone in Japan in embodied Japanese cultural capital, they carry what one might consider a 'symbolic deficit' in that they often lack formal Japanese national status with its associated symbolic inclusion in the category of Japanese in Japan, and also in that all *zainichi* may be symbolically attached to the Korea they often know little more than about than their Japanese neighbors.

There has been a lot of bad blood between Korea and Japan over the centuries. On several occasions over the past few hundred years Japanese armies ravaged Korea. In the early half of the twentieth century, Japan not only colonized and then annexed Korea, but initiated an ultimately failed attempt to eliminate Korean national identity, hoping to absorb all that is Korean (language, land, people) into Japan. In recent times, however, there are also repeated incidents with North Korea appearing as the aggressor against Japan, such as the abduction from Japan of some Japanese nationals, and the test firing of unarmed missiles toward and over Japan (adding weight to North Korea's constant threats of future nuclear strikes on Japanese soil). These events keep the Japanese people on edge with respect to Korea and Koreans.

There is also a measure of background discrimination against all Koreans as the people of a lesser nation, which is perhaps tied to the history of Japan imposing itself as the military, colonial and more recently economic superior in the region. Korea, as a result of many factors combined has a low or detrimental symbolic weight in the eyes of the Japanese. The *zainichi*, however they might represent themselves, are symbolically attached by many Japanese to a Korea they fail to respect as an equal, and in some cases, even show antipathy toward. This is why I introduce the phrase ‘symbolic deficit’: if the masterful use of Japanese cultural practices can serve *zainichi* as capital, the recognition that one’s descent is Korean seems at times to counter this effect, acting almost as a deficit against one’s embodied cultural capital. Yet I do not term it a ‘cultural deficit’, as that might suggest a lack of acculturation. Rather, it is a deficit held as if to one side of the acquisition of Japanese cultural capital that is socially imposed against one’s accumulation of Japanese cultural capital due to one’s symbolic attachment with a denigrated descent from Korea, and one’s falling outside of the contemporary imagined symbolic boundaries of Japanese nationality.

I suggest that what underpins Japanese practices of suddenly ‘garnishing’ one’s cultural capital, or of the benefits one may have accumulated due to successful acculturation upon the discovery of what we might call a perceived symbolic deficit based on post-Meiji era descent outside of the current boundaries of Japan, is very much what my eldest participant, Kay, pointed to when he told me, “First of all, Japanese laws and social systems have countless discriminating rules. These rules are based on Japanese attitudes towards those countries.” Although my work may illustrate a great disconnect between many contemporary *zainichi* and Korea, this does not mean that *zainichi* do not equate precisely to Koreans in the minds of some Japanese, just as they are often, though

not always, Koreans on legal documentation. The denigration of Koreans often translates almost thoughtlessly to the denigration of *zainichi*. Since the territory once called Chosun was reassigned from a mainland portion of Japan to Korea, the symbolic boundary of Japanese nationality was likewise retracted, and the descendents of colonial era Koreans were symbolically 'restored' to the (now foreign) Korean peninsula. I think Kay is quite right to suggest that due to this, whatever Japanese think of the peninsular Koreans will to a large extent transfer to the bodies of *zainichi*.

I hope the reader will recall that Kay also mentioned his Japanese employees did not want to work for him once they apprehended his Korean descent and citizenship. Koreans and the Korean descended seem to be symbolic underlings in the mindscape of many Japanese. However ill founded the concept of the supremacy of the Japanese over Koreans is, for one who accepts this concept, either consciously, or on an unwitting level, placing oneself on a rung below one's social underling can seem or feel socially degrading. I suggest that symbolic Koreanness can engender a *severe* 'deficit' that is frequently held against one's equal inclusion in Japan. One may have acquired over a lifetime of immersion in Japanese society a cultural capital in Japanese cultural practices that is surpassed by no one, but still lose the effect of inclusion this can provide one upon the discovery of one's (often largely symbolic, rather than practiced) Koreanness. However, I think that portraying this as if the result of a kind of carefully calculated mathematics is somewhat misleading, as it overstates the thoughtful, calculated nature of the discrimination against *zainichi* in Japan and among the Japanese diaspora.

The attempt to prevent this symbolic deficit from being held against them *may* explain why so many try to conceal their *zainichi* identities, allowing them to appear within the symbolic boundaries of Japanese nationality unless their post Meiji-era extra

Japanese (based on Japan's current borders) descent is somehow 'found out'. Indeed, without the symbolic connection being established by exposure to some information of this descent, it will generally be assumed by most Japanese that *zainichi* are fellow Japanese. The Japanese, in an odd way, can also be almost 'charitable' about this. As Yoshino's work suggests, many Japanese have no problem with treating known *zainichi* as Japanese, and imagining them within the 'family', so long as there are no constant reminders (such as a Korean name) of their post Meiji-era extra Japanese (based on Japan's current borders) descent (Yoshino, 1998<sup>68</sup>). For most young *zainichi*, there is little way for Japanese people around them to realize they are *zainichi* during most everyday activities in their lives, if they choose not to 'step out of the closet' and be identified. Many seem to prefer total concealment of their descent, because exposure to the fact of one's *zainichiness* can abruptly change the way one is treated. As my youngest participant, Kao told me, "I don't stand in my way".

However, I suggest that many of Japan's discriminatory practices operate on a level that is much more closely related to why my Japanese-Canadian friend is often mistakenly assumed to be able to speak Japanese, the language of his ancestors in Japan, although no one assumes that I can speak Gaelic, the language of my almost equally distant ancestors in Scotland. Makabe's (1998) qualitative study of third generation descendants of Japanese-Canadian immigrants suggests that they are frequently asked where *they*, personally, immigrated from, and that this malpractice makes many of them feel excluded from the conception of the nation. There is a certain ease with which white people in Canada are seen as Canadians from Canada that seems not be equally extended

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<sup>68</sup> The post-War reformulation of the boundary, however, is more correctly attributed to my fusion of Yoshino's perspective and terminology with the insights of Oguma (2002) and Fukuyama, 2000 concerning the collapse of the heterogeneous view of the Japanese, and the rise of the new myth of homogeneity.

to Asian-descended Canadians. Although my family came to this Western province of Canada in my lifetime, while my friend's ancestors arrived in the Vancouver area over one century ago, no one has ever imagined that I am an immigrant here. Perhaps because Canada was originally constituted as a British country, and only became formally instituted as a 'multicultural' society in 1971, a failure in the national symbolic structure mitigates against the full inclusion of Asian faces in the conception of the Canada of one hundred years ago, such that those with Asian faces appear in the imagination 'naturally' as recent immigrants<sup>69</sup>. There is a widely held difficulty in imagining the diversity of the Canadian past. Similarly, the symbolic boundaries of Japanese nationality seem to exclude the possibility that those with post-Meiji extra-Japanese descent can be *contemporary* Japanese, based on the echo-effect of the Japanese state's own critical constituting and reconstituting moments – the Meiji imagining of the nation, and the loss of the Empire at the conclusion of World War Two.

All of my participants, whether they proclaimed openly that they are *zainichi*, or hid their descent from Korea, had many close, personal friendships with Japanese persons from pre-Meiji (or historically unknown) Japanese descent. Not all Japanese transfer whatever ill feelings they have about North Korean missile attacks to *zainichi* neighbors and classmates. The life of *zainichi* in Japan would be torturous indeed, were this the case! Just as the Japanese people should not be portrayed as chaste, the proposition that all Japanese people daily, consciously plot to cruelly thrash the Korean-descended innocents on Japanese soil distorts the mental operations underpinning Japanese discriminatory practices with respect to average Japanese in the twenty-first century.

The Japanese state, though it can benefit from hard-hitting criticism, often reveals an awareness of *zainichi* as co-habitants with a rightful (if ambiguous) place in Japanese society who should not be viciously mistreated due to their Korean descent. In 1999, the government of Japan admitted to the Convention that:

57. In relation to Article 4 of the Convention, there were a number of incidents of harassment and assaults against the Korean students across Japan from the spring to the summer of 1994. They included discriminatory words and behavior against female students of Korean schools, discriminatory graffiti in railway station restrooms and incidents of assault by ripping *chima chogori* (Korean ethnic dress), to all of which the Government paid great attention in the light of the protection of human rights. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination First and Second Report June 1999, Article 4: 57)

In reporting details of the incidents to the Convention, the government even very explicitly recognized the symbolic conflation made by some Japanese people of peninsular Koreans (and the aggression of the North Korean government in particular) to the bodies of *zainichi* persons in Japan:

(b) Moreover, after North Korea's launch of the missile in August 1998, six cases of harassment to Korean schools and students in Japan were reported to police by the end of December 1998. These six cases include the following: one female Korean student had her school bag cut in the train (Tokyo); one male Korean student was punched in the stomach on his way to school (Tokyo); a female Korean student had her hair pulled on her way to school (Aichi); a Korean female student had her hand slashed at a railway station on her way home (Tokyo); and two Korean schools in Osaka and Gifu had graffiti scribbled on the walls. [...] After North Korea's launch of the missile in August 1998, there occurred many cases throughout Japan which could not be overlooked in light of human rights protection. For example, discriminatory words or behavior, or graffiti on public facilities voicing out against Korean children and students in Japan. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination First and Second Report June 1999, Article 4; 57 (b)

Indeed, the government went further in this report, coming to the same conclusion that I have, that this is the primary reason driving *zainichi* to conceal their *zainichiness* in Japan as a way of shedding the detrimental effects of this symbolic connection:

Under such circumstances, some Korean residents in Japan use Japanese names as common names in daily life for fear that they may face prejudice or discrimination if they use their native Korean names. The Government is seriously concerned that misguided prejudice and discrimination, which are counter to the principle of equality of all persons, still exists among the Japanese people. (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination First and Second Report June 1999, Introduction 3:33)

When I meet Japanese citizens socially, I never conceal what I am researching. Many of the non-*zainichi* Japanese I have met agree that Japanese society and the state needs to change, somehow, to better accommodate the presence of *zainichi* in Japan<sup>70</sup>. However, there seems to be some difficulty in conceptualizing how problems emerge, what sustains the discriminatory treatment, or what strategies may best resolve the more pernicious and painful issues satisfactorily.

There is not a *unanimous* drive *inherent* in members of the Japanese race to ‘bash *zainichi*’. Such oversimplification does not lend itself well to formulating real-world solutions. Out of the thousands of Japanese people I have met, and the hundreds with which I have discussed the issue of *zainichi* suffering I seldom encountered those who defended differential treatment for the *zainichi* for their descent. A more balanced explanation than apologetics or demonization is needed to enhance sociological understanding of how and why the *zainichi* face widespread and pernicious discrimination in Japan, and why it seems to flow so easily, almost thoughtlessly, out of Japanese social relations. How could a country so well-known for its hospitality and good manners harbour such a deeply ingrained problem, for such a long time? Why is it so hard to undo this state of affairs that so many of the Japanese I meet seem to both

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<sup>70</sup> For example, some feel that nationality should be separated from citizenship, or that dual citizenship ought to be permitted. Others feel that the mistreatment itself needs to be attacked through stronger anti-discrimination legislation, or educational campaigns. There is a range of suggested strategies, but my point here is that it *is* a topic many consider.

acknowledge *and regret*? I suggest that a systemic pattern of what I like to call *zainichi* suffering<sup>71</sup> has arisen in Japan partly through a malfeasance in the state's wielding of symbolic power. The post-War definition of the *zainichi* as Koreans somehow 'misplaced' in Japan, or being slow to respond to the severing of Korea and return 'home', has translated into a symbolic deficit held against cultural capital for persons in Japan descended from Koreans that mitigates against recognition of their accomplishments as equivalent members of Japanese society.

The ultimate and most basic application of the state's symbolic power with regard to *zainichi* began with the historical series of enforcing Japanese nationality, ripping it away, and then subsequently keeping *zainichi* formally Korean and without question not Japanese, unless they become symbolically 'ethnic Japanese'<sup>72</sup> through the process of naturalization. Indeed, the certainty that someone identifying or identified as a Korean cannot be simultaneously Japanese can translate into even those who have naturalized and become formally Japanese being treated as Koreans, often in a discriminatory way, if the fact that they or their forbearers were naturalized is found out. At the symbolic level, *zainichi*, whatever their level of acculturation to Japanese society, and whatever their self-representations might be, will remain "Korean" in the eyes of many Japanese neighbors. Consequently, they will suffer from the combination of well-publicized events that disrupt peaceful relations between Korea and Japan, a long-standing Japanese prejudice against Korean people as underlings on the Asian military, political and economic scene, and as a potential threat to the safety of the Japanese nation.

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<sup>71</sup> This term encompasses the results of objective factors such as housing and employment discrimination, etc., and also the harder to measure but equally pertinent factors such as stress, uncertainty, lost friendship and love, emotional distress, etc.

<sup>72</sup> One is then an unequivocal, unmarked Japanese on paperwork, in statistics, etc. In this respect, from the point of view of someone who wants very badly to become recognized as completely Japanese, the state may be more accommodating, post-naturalization, than its citizens.



The responses to my queries varied, but in sharp contrast to their relationship to Korea most of my participants had much to say about their relationship with Japan. Interestingly, it is in their responses to my question “what is your relationship to Japan” wherein I most often saw my *zainichi* participants, regardless of their legal status, declaring “I am Japanese”. However, this should not necessarily be viewed as an unquestioned embrace of Japan as their warm, receptive Mother country. As George Shimizu told me:

Really, again, I have a love-hate relationship in Japan, but I take away good things about what it is to be Ja...Japanese.

Did George lose his train of thought or need to wet his dry palette with his tongue in the middle of referring to himself as Japanese, or did he balk momentarily at saying it?

I could often see small linguistic hints of an uncertainty or insecurity in claiming Japan as a ‘mother’, ‘father’, or ‘home’ country, and also in declaring oneself Japanese. I soon began to wonder why so many *zainichi* I spoke with frequently left large pauses between such utterances as “I am...” and “Japanese”. Certainly, they had no trouble forming or uttering the word “Japanese” in contexts outside of their identity. Nor did they have trouble with the grammatical structure “I am X”, as in “I am hungry/tired/happy/a teacher”. I found this apparent trepidation in expression at these moments interesting in light of the Meiji imagining of Japan as a family, and the post-War reformulation of the symbolic boundaries of Japanese nationality to exclude the (historically recent, or Post-Tokugawa) mainland descended.

Kao responded to my question about his relationship with Japan this way:

Ah... I think, Japan is my... my... has become my... my home country.  
So ka? (Akin to “so it is?”/“Is that how it is?” in Japanese.)

Kao, a 20 year old international student, holds a Korean passport, but aspires to change his nationality to Japanese. His determination to become legally Japanese is stronger than that of any other of my participants, as is his sense that he is thoroughly, culturally Japanese. His use of a phrase that implies some measure of surprise or doubt about Japan as his home certainly does not come from a loyalty to the Korea that he seems utterly ambivalent about, or to the *zainichi* status he told me he hopes to abandon as soon as possible. I suggest that were he to fill out a survey on his national identity and cultural affiliation, we would miss something interesting about the way he expresses his thoughts in a conversation. As Kao told me:

Because I think I... I back to Japan, and I live in Japan all my life. I will get married to Japanese, I feel, so... I'm almost Japanese. Yeah. My mind Japanese.

I would suggest that the timidity and tentativeness of Kao's assertions of his Japanese identity, despite that he is by far the most certain of all of my respondents that he not only is fully, culturally Japanese, but is absolutely committed to being fully recognized, socially and legally, as Japanese, is likely due to the other-imposed aspects of negotiating one's identity. His life in Japan has informed him that it is out-of-step to do so, in a conversation revealing his Korean descent.

Bourdieu suggests that national identity is principally conferred by the state. As Bourdieu suggests,

[...] all the acts meant to carry legal effect, such as certificates of birth, marriage, or death, etc. , all manners of public summons as performed with the required formalities by the appropriate agents (judges, notaries, bailiffs, officers of *état civil*) and duly registered in the appropriate office, all these facts invoke the logic of official nomination to institute socially guaranteed identities (as citizen, legal resident, voter, taxpayer, parent, property owner) [...]. By stating with authority what a being (thing or person) is in truth (verdict) according to its socially legitimate definition, that is, what he or she is authorized to be, what they have a right (and

duty) to be, the social being that they may claim, the state wields a genuinely *creative*, quasi-divine, power. (Bourdieu, 2002ii: 52)

What grounds this perhaps commonplace statement of Bourdieu's into his larger theory of practice, and into this discussion, however, is how, "the state makes a decisive contribution to the production and reproduction of the instruments of construction of social reality" (Bourdieu, 2000i: 54) to such an extent that persons are predisposed to speak, act, and even think with the categories as imposed by the state on daily life (Bourdieu, 2000i). Do my respondents balk at claiming a Japanese nationality because of a sense that they are usurping state power illegitimately in identifying themselves as Japanese? Although this may be an over-simplification assigning too much influence to the state, versus bullies, bigots, etc., Kao may not feel *invested* with the authority to confer upon himself a Japanese national identity against a state and social order he grew up within that contradicts and *over-rules* any attempt to do so. It may not be coincidental that his manner of speaking neatly reflects the clash between the Japanese identity he wants to express and both his formal legal nationality and his misfit with the commonly imagined symbolic boundary of Japanese nationality, construed as pre-Meiji, intra-Japan descent. The practice of Kao crossing the symbolic and state-legal boundary in his expression of national identity may be out of step not only with recognized authority, but with what appears do-able against the backdrop of a life lived in a social context where one cannot name oneself Japanese simply because one and one's ancestors lived their entire lives there, or because one has lived one's entire life *as* a Japanese. Instead, one may feel obligated to retreat to the claim that one has only lived *as if* a Japanese.

This is not to say that at that moment, Kao, sitting in a coffee shop in Vancouver, Canada, consciously feared retribution from the Japanese state on the other side of the Pacific. Rather, Kao, fully committed to Japaneseness on a conscious level, nonetheless

seems to intuitively shy away from the claim, “I am Japanese”, and retreat instead to “my mind [is] Japanese” as though his mind, more than his self (or, to use his own halted and then retracted expression, his “I”), is something he is able to construct and vocalize representations of to his liking, regardless of citizen-to-state or social negotiation.

For Bourdieu, as I mentioned previously, *habitus* is “transmitted through practice, in the practical state, without rising to the level of discourse” (Bourdieu, 2002i, 73), as previous embodied practice becomes implicit in the seemingly most ‘natural’, further practices of bodies. As Bourdieu suggests elsewhere:

Each agent has a practical, bodily knowledge of her present and potential position in the social space, a ‘sense of one’s place’ as Goffman puts it, converted into a *sense of placement* which governs her experience of the place occupied [...] and the way to behave in order to keep it (‘pulling rank’) and to keep within it (‘knowing one’s place’, etc.). The practical knowledge conferred by this sense of position takes the form of emotion (the unease of someone who is out of place, or the ease that comes from being in one’s place), and is expressed in behaviours such as avoidance or unconscious adjustments [...]. (Bourdieu, 2000:184)

It is difficult to say for certain what lurks behind these frequent breaks in speech performance and the seeming collusion they have with the state’s instituting power over formal national identity, and Japanese society’s sense of primordial Japanese as true Japanese. We can, however, take note that the frequent interrupted, halted and qualified statements of *zainichi* representing themselves in relation to being Japanese *do conform* with the objective situation of being *zainichi* in Japan as originally imposed and continually maintained by the state, and as all-too-commonly reflected in practices of social discrimination and othering by members of the Japanese citizenry. This concordance between both the social-symbolic and legal boundaries thwarting the inclusion of the *zainichi* among the Japanese, and the limits of ‘comfortable’

representation claims by *zainichi* as within the category of ‘Japanese’ may be a fruitful area for further research by sociolinguists.

Even though the difference between *zainichi* and other persons born in Japan is generally not perceptible in every day life, just as Korea has been divorced from Japanese territory, the *zainichi* are symbolically divorced from Japan, often construed at all levels—official and pedestrian—as a racially and ethnically homogeneous nation. This has implications in various fields of action. For one thing, *zainichi* seeking integration into Japanese society seem to feel compelled to effectively distance themselves from the un-Japanese taint of post-Meiji Korean descent. Even documents proving one is now a *bona fide* Japanese national can fail to achieve the impression that one is *fully* Japanese as the separation of Korean descent and a ‘real’ Japanese is very poignant on the symbolic level. One may feel compelled not only to change nationality, but to conceal and even deny one’s descent after the change in legal status to be treated in a way that makes one feel fully included as a Japanese. Documents can only help one to mask the descent that is the justification for the break from one’s belongingness within Japan, and which, when demonized as it often is in Japan, becomes grounds for discrimination. The symbolic after-effects of the necessary break of *zainichi* from the Japanese nation are not only painful, but very pernicious. If one commits to this strategy of avoiding discrimination, one can escape many of these painful moments. However, one then needs to avoid ‘slips of the tongue’, careless documentation, or other habits that might lead others to suspect a Korean affiliation.

The symbolic boundaries instituted by the constituting of a nation as a creative act of imagination (Anderson, 1991) and projected thereafter as a kind of ‘secondary nationalism’ (Yoshino, 1998) are crucial in this regard. The nation may be imagined on

the basis upon which it was constituted, even long after the constituting myths are undermined intellectually (Yoshino, 1998). The symbolic boundary *can* shift thereafter within the basic framework, such that in the case of *zainichi*, they and their ancestors (and Koreans in Korea) can move in and out of imagined inclusion in the Japanese ‘family-state’. At present many Japanese have difficulty imagining the inclusion of persons descended from migration into post-Tokugawa (post-1867) Japan as fully Japanese, such that, as Sooja Kim told me, “To live as a *zainichi* in Japan is like belonging to minority groups or having a little bit strange status in Japan”.

For the *zainichi*, any easing in the potential for imagined, symbolic inclusion in Japan may seem a great step forward. However, a new extension of the symbolic boundaries to include the *zainichi* would need to take the Japanese context and the political and discursive environment of Japan into consideration. While *zainichi* social movements seeking the effect of greater inclusion in Japan need to be very sensitive to this pre-structured context, understanding the flexibility of the symbolic boundary over time may offer some hope.

For one thing, the Japanese myth of homogeneity is actually not the ancient and unbroken national representation of the Japanese it is often assumed to be. Rather, like the *zainichi* concept, its institution as a pseudo-fact about contemporary Japan stems more properly from Japan’s defeat at the end of World War Two (Oguma, 2001: 298-320). Prior to, and during the War, Japan was widely construed by both academics and the state in Japan as a greatly mixed nation, and the Japanese were construed as a radically mixed people (Oguma, 2001)<sup>73</sup>. It is easier than most people may realize for the

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<sup>73</sup> In fact, over the decades Japan built its colonial empire, the policies of annexing other Asian nations were repeatedly justified as Japan reclaiming the original homelands of its radically mixed, pan-Asian Japanese people (Oguma, 2002).

Japanese state to conceptually justify the place of the Korean-descended among the Japanese people *based on traditional Japanese sources*, such the works of eminent Confucian scholars who hundreds of years ago traced the Japanese people's (and occasionally even the Imperial family's) ancestry from Korea (Befu, 2000: 64-5)<sup>74</sup>.

Fukuoka (2000) maintains that most Japanese currently perceive a what Fukuoka calls a "pure Japanese", as a person who can be unambiguously characterized as being Japanese by three variables or markers: Japanese by distant, historical, familial lineage; Japanese in cultural affinity, and Japanese in formal state-sanctioned nationality (a legal, non-alien Japanese)<sup>75</sup>.

As Harumi Befu suggests,

Herein lies the difficulty of basing Japan's national identity on the primordial homogeneity of the ethnic Japanese: such an identity automatically excludes other ethnic groups from citizenship in a cultural sense and ignores their contributions. Because the ethnic Japanese are not only numerically but politically dominant, however, they are able to impose their ethnic primordality as the official identity of the nation, ignoring divergent primordialities of ethnic minorities. (Befu, 2001: 84)

I suggest that Befu also correctly articulates what follows from this:

This definition of the Japanese, based as it is on Japanese ethnic homogeneity, excludes Koreans and other minorities from the fold [...] to be culturally Japanese means to be Japanese-Japanese, not Korean-Japanese or Ainu<sup>76</sup> Japanese. Where primordial and civic sentiments contradict each other, civic sentiments yield to the primordial ethnic definitions of Japanese nationality. Koreans who insist on their civil rights

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<sup>74</sup> For example, in the ninth century, imperial chroniclers traced one-third of Japan's aristocratic families from mainland Asia, primarily Korea and China (Oguma, 2002, xxix).

<sup>75</sup> 'Pure non-Japanese', for Fukuoka, are those of non-Japanese lineage who have internalized Japanese culture, and hold 'foreign nationality'. He employs two other categories, however, to refer to the *zainichi* that are the primary focus of his (2000) *Lives of Young Koreans in Japan*:

1) "Zainichi Koreans with Japanese Upbringing" refers to people thoroughly inculcated in Japanese culture by having been born and raised all of their lives in Japan, but who are of a familial lineage stemming from Korea, and who do not hold Japanese citizenship.

2) "Naturalized Japanese" refers to those of foreign lineage, who have internalized Japanese culture and hold Japanese legal nationality.

<sup>76</sup> The Ainu are an aboriginal people on the Northern Japanese island of Hokkaido.

are thus refused those rights because they are not ethnically Japanese.  
(Befu, 2001: 85)

This is another way of expressing what I have been referring to as a symbolic exclusion of the post-Meiji Korean descended from the imagined boundaries of a family-state conceptualized according to pre-Meiji descent from the post-War boundaries of Japan. To add to Befu's point, I would suggest however, that it is not only civil rights that are thereby effected, but fundamental human rights as well, as even the discourse of the Japanese government with the United Nations attests to. It also concerns the injured feelings of bullied schoolchildren and those who have lost friends and lovers upon the discovery of one's descent. The detrimental effects extend to a myriad of things, such as the loss of George Shimizu's girlfriend, Kay's loss of his employees, immeasurable damages to the feelings of individual *zainichi* and the damages to life chances evident in various matters such as a reduction in options for employment, education and housing.

For naturalized *zainichi* the current symbolic exclusion from the Japanese people once their descent is recognized may seem especially cruel. The state is satisfied of one's Japaneseness, but the neighbors may not be. A modification in the discourse of homogeneity in contemporary Japan would no doubt assist many persons in representing their place in the Japanese nation. However, a new way of conceptualizing and expressing the place of the Korean descended in contemporary Japan would need to distance itself from the previously mentioned endeavors to justify Japan's annexation of Asian countries, including Korea, and to many, this might seem like opening a can of worms. Considering its historical attachment to Japan's expansionism and imperial ambitions, the re-emergence of a pan-Asian descent discourse, for example, may make not only the Japanese people, but the people of other countries around Asia uncomfortable. Avoiding this connection may indeed be a large part of the reason that



Japanese discourse now shies away from these once pivotal pan-Asian theories of the Japanese nation, and instead flees to their opposite, the myth of homogeneity.

Japan need not necessarily reassume something akin to its pre-War, pan-Asian national identity. Rather, I suggest that Japan may benefit from a more modest attempt to tangle with how to avoid making upwards of a million of its residents, many of them now citizens, feel ex-communicated unless they successfully conceal their descent. A first step for a democratic state such as Japan would be to recognize that the inability to incorporate Koreans into the popular imagination of Japanese nationality has not in fact been conceptualized in the way it is today from time immemorial. From this, a more moderate attempt could be to suggest that the perpetual place of the recently Korean descended will not “break the family”, so to speak.

### **Naturalization**

In spite of the imagined borders or symbolic boundaries between the descent-based categories of Korean and Japanese in Japan, as Kashiwazaki suggests:

By the 1990s [...] the vast majority of Koreans in Japan were Japan-born. Intermarriage between Koreans and Japanese increased. The old “repatriationism” became almost non-existent. Many continue to be interested in the situation on the Korean peninsula including the prospect of reunification, but they have little wish to join either north or south in actuality [...]. (Kashiwazaki, 2000: 28)

The *zainichi* are becoming increasingly enmeshed in Japanese society, if not into its ‘symbolic boundaries’ or ‘imagined family’ (Yoshino, 1998).

Kashiwazaki also suggests that full citizenship may “become an even more attractive option if the equation between nationality and ethnonational identity were substantially weakened” (Kashiwazaki, 2000: 30). Erin Aeran Chung, however, (2003)

interprets the recent easing of the restraints on *zainichi* seeking Japanese nationality as a way for Japan to eliminate the *zainichi* through assimilation, simultaneously silencing what has historically been Japan's strongest political voice for the fair treatment of its minorities by erasing their non-Japanese ethnic identity (Chung, 2003). This hardly seems an extremist interpretation for those familiar with the Japanese government's taxonomy of Japanese and non-Japanese, which, if not effecting erasure, does include a conflation of nationality, ethnicity, race and culture in the conceptualization of a Japanese, such that naturalization seems very much to serve the intent of absorption.

The onus in post-War Japan for those whose ancestors were forced to be Japanese as part of an assimilation strategy, but who now wish to re-acquire this status for themselves and their descendents, may still implicitly, if not explicitly, include the renunciation of the ethnicity of one and one's descendents, and it certainly includes the symbolic loss of Koreanness on paperwork<sup>77</sup>. If so, the common theme may indeed, as Chung suggests, remain the assimilation of Koreans into Japan. The difference is that rather than imposing nationality to coerce assimilation, the post-War strategy asks one to request, declare and demonstrate assimilation, with the impetus that if one does not, one may remain ex-communicated from Japanese national status, and one and one's descendants may remain socially identified as *zainichi* – outsiders perpetually within.

The difference between the strategies is not as inconsequential as it may at first appear when we focus overmuch on the common thread of an attempt to assimilate. One might suggest that there is little difference in the *ends* sought for the (colonial) Korean-descended born on Japanese held territory through these different means of assimilation. I

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<sup>77</sup> Soon after beginning this thesis, I learned from the Japanese consulate that Japan, in great contrast with the care with which it tracks the origins of aliens, keeps no statistics on the race, ethnicity or descent of naturalized nationals and their offspring. Naturalized Japanese and their offspring become Japanese in all respects on state paperwork.

would suggest that the primary difference between the strategies is the transnational *zainichi* space of transition (which can in fact be a life-long, even multi-generational state of being in transit, for those and their descendents who do not naturalize) that is maintained (inducing the state of being in *zainichi* transnational space), which creates a different form of life, with its own unique practices<sup>78</sup>. As well, a fully naturalized former Korean, by no longer being registered in Seoul apart from her Japanese neighbors, is permitted to recede much more completely into identification<sup>79</sup> as a member the Japanese people, if she desires, than was ever possible in the pre-War period. In this, the Japanese often seem to extend a odd form of “charity”, by allowing one to be imagined within the symbolic boundaries of the Japanese nation and nationality, so long as one does not make the process of imagination problematic by displaying noticeable reminders of one’s post-Meiji descent from the Korean peninsula (Yoshino, 1998: 23).

Erin Aeran Chung interprets this as the death knell of the *zainichi* as *zainichi* in Japan, and as the state’s destruction of Japan’s largest and most vocal minority through assimilation. As Chung suggests:

Because of the dominant discourse within both the Korean community and Japanese civil society equates nationality with ethnocultural identity, the naturalization of the Korean population in Japan would be equivalent to the Korean community’s extinction. (Erin Aeran Chung, 2003: 44)

I cannot entirely disagree with this position of Chung’s. Japan’s naturalization process seems to have historically promoted such an outcome, and at the rate of approximately 10 000 naturalizations per year, the status of Special Permanent Resident, at least, may indeed be doomed to extinction by naturalization in this century. However, whether this will actually succeed in eliminating the *zainichi* identity or silencing the Korean-

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<sup>78</sup> Such as the practice of concealing one’s descent, using Japanese names, etc..

<sup>79</sup> A recognition *by others* as a Japanese.

descended community in Japan is a more open question. This depends on many factors, but as a contrary argument, one could point to the survival of Korean ethnic communities in many countries where the Korean descended have been granted citizenship. Or, one could point to persons such as my participant, Taka, who acquired Japanese citizenship, but nonetheless views himself as a *zainichi*, a Japanese, and a Korean, and includes considerable and vocal pride in being Korean among his complex, transnational identity make-up. Just as naturalization need not equate to ‘abandonment’ of one’s Korean identity, it also will not necessarily silence those who want to continue to press for better treatment for Japan’s minorities. As a darker piece of evidence, one might also introduce the discrimination against the Korean-descended who have already naturalized as Japanese citizens. Their mistreatment mitigates against suggestions that naturalization can be assumed to equate to the *zainichi* disappearing into unmarked Japaneseness, and citizenship need not silence their outcry against such mistreatment. The Korean descended community in Japan, and its role in rallying for better treatment of Japan’s minorities, is likely threatened more by factors that make Koreanness something socially shameful for young *zainichi* than it is endangered by naturalization, itself.

It is up to young *zainichi* and not analysts how they would like to resolve the issue of their status, identity and ethnicity in Japan, and whether or not they wish to either rally for minority rights, or disappear into unmarked Japaneseness. After all, it is they who will suffer the social and personal gains or losses of the paths and identity constructs they choose to utilize. As the Japanese state accepts *zainichi* more readily as Japanese citizens, *zainichi* need to consider what form of relationship they *would like to establish* with Japan in the future, and how best to accomplish it. Do they want to be unqualified, unmarked Japanese, Korean-Japanese, *zainichi*, or to construct some new identity? Do

they wish to use their considerable numbers to push for a more tolerant Japan, or simply quietly lose the taint of being identified among the minority?

*Zainichi* have seen primarily two options open to them in recent decades – naturalize and be assimilated (a comfortable and attractive option for many who primarily seek a reprieve from discrimination), or maintain the identity that exposes one to harmful discrimination. I have engaged in this study partly out of a hope that it may contribute to the development of a third way – a way wherein *zainichi* can be incorporated harmoniously into Japanese society that both allows *zainichi* to live with dignity *and* shows due honour to their ancestors and the land of their descent. However, in the end, it is not up to writers such as myself who gaze at Japan from across the Pacific to decide the best strategy either for the Japanese nation or individual *zainichi*.

When they are identified as ‘un-Japanese’ Koreans in Japan, *zainichi* lose some of the benefit of the Japanese cultural capital embodied in them, and have a symbolic detriment attached to them. A thaw in the chilly relationship between Japan and the two Koreas would greatly ease the tensions that tend to transfer to the bodies of *zainichi* due to their symbolic conflation with Korea and Koreans, combined with a denigration of Koreans and things Korean in Japan. Were Korea to be seen in a more positive light in Japan, one’s perceived connection to Korea may be viewed more favourably.

Chosun (a traditional name for Korea) means the land of the morning calm. Japan’s equivalent traditional poetic nomenclatures include the well-known ‘land of the rising sun’. Surely there must be some way for the morning calm to co-exist peacefully with the rising sun. It is my personal hope that this work can contribute to that rising of a new, calm dawn of harmonious social relations for all the people living in Japan. In spite of all the obstacles, ‘imagined’ and yet very real, as I sat on the beach in Vancouver

recently with a group of both *zainichi* and non-*zainichi* friends from Japan and we smiled collectively, gazing eastward at the rays of light glittering off the undulating waves that now separate us from their mutual birthplace, I felt we might be not be waiting in vain to see the dawn of that day. It is no simple affair to undo the more debilitating effects of 'embodied history forgotten as history' (Bourdieu, 2002i, 56), but we should not assume its impossibility while there is something worthwhile sharing.

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