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Introduction: Revisiting *Zainichi*

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1.

It was in the fall of 1990 that I began my journey as an anthropologist – firstly, of course, as a student. In the half-basement seminar room in Free School Lane, Cambridge, I remember presenting to my cohort class how I planned to approach Koreans in Japan, many among whom identified themselves as overseas nationals of North Korea despite not holding North Korean nationality. Most Koreans living in Japan in 1990 were immigrants from the period of Japan's colonial rule of Korea between 1910 and 1945 and their descendants, and most of them originally came from the southern provinces of the Korean peninsula. An account of this odd state of affairs – Korea remaining divided into mutually antagonistic regimes after four and a half decades of what was supposed to be a temporary national partition, and Koreans in Japan remaining as disenfranchised non-citizens of Japan after multiple generations of Japan-born Koreans – had to be delivered to my classmates, one half of whom came from the United Kingdom and the other from outside the UK – mainly from the British Commonwealth nations of the South Asian subcontinent, Africa, and Australia. There were a few European students as well, but none from Korea or Japan.

This class, euphemistically referred to as a "conversion" class, had been created for novice students like myself who had not studied anthropology as undergraduates, and had the objective of initiating us into the field of British Structural Functionalism, which was deemed an uncompromising doctrinal pillar of Social (not Cultural, as in the US) Anthropology. After one year's study toward a Master of Philosophy, about half of us would continue to pursue PhDs there at Cambridge. My audience was international, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and multi-racial, leading me to approach my topic with a strategy mixing political anthropology (one of the four modules we had to complete) with the anthropology of religion (another of the modules). My key ally in doing this was language: the fact that those Koreans in Japan learned the North Korean version of the Korean language in their independently-operated schools, despite their having been born in Japan and grown up using Japanese as their first language, was one of, if not the most important, pieces of ethnographic data that I was to rely upon. In this environment, children were

exposed to formulaic language used to display reverence to the Great Leader Kim Il Sung and were taught to identify themselves as overseas citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Most of these children would verbally identify themselves as "proud overseas citizens of the socialist fatherland." Once outside the school, however, they would freely blend into the cultural norms of the Japanese society surrounding them, fully immersed in market trends, popular media products, and so on (see Ryang 1997). Being a student at a Korean school in Japan in the early 1990s meant acquiring two sets of behavioral conventions governed by two almost diametrically opposed, or more precisely speaking, mutually denigrating, norms and ideologies. At the forefront of such duality existed language, or rather, languages: the North Korean version of Korean, and Japanese, either the standard form or a regionalized one depending on where in Japan the student lived. These schools were operated by Chongryun, a Korean organization in Japan that holds North Korea to be the genuine homeland of Koreans in Japan and fashions its schools' curricula after those of North Korea. The language of instruction was Korean and children attending the schools would become bilingual in Korean and Japanese. Yet, their bilingualism would be skewed toward greater proficiency in Japanese. This was because they were immersed in Japanese, their first language, when outside the school, including at home. Today, only an extreme minority of Korean children in Japan attend Chongryun schools, and even the teachers at these schools have a hard time using fluent Korean when instructing the children as they, too, grew up using Japanese as their first language.

Ever since the end of WWII, the Korean population in Japan has faced the following challenge: How to reconcile a desire to self-identify as Korean with a day-to-day existence in which the Korean language is absent. For example, immediately after the end of the war, Korean writers and intellectuals in Japan (self-)criticized the practice of writing in Japanese, the language of the colonizer, despite the fact that many of them were not able to write in Korean (Isogai 2015: 11). This tension derived from multiple sources. Due to national partition, compounded by the effects of Japanese nationality-related law, which remained colonial in nature vis-à-vis Koreans remaining in Japan for some time following the end of the war, Koreans in Japan faced uncertainty in relation to residential security and methods of legal identification. Due to the monocultural nature of the Japanese school system, which does not allow after-school programs for second or home languages, for example, the identity of Korean children attending Japanese schools (who are greater in number than those attending Chongryun schools) has never been given positive enforcement or healthy recognition – needless to say, this reflects deep-seated racial bias toward Koreans in Japanese society. In the case of individuals achieving positive self-identification as Korean after reaching adulthood, many lack the means to enact such an identity as, until recently, opportunities for learning the Korean language were limited (while ample opportunities were available for those interested in learning English, for example). Even in the case of Chongryun Koreans, as the proportion of Japan-born, younger-generation teachers at Chongryun schools continues to increase, Korean language

education has become (for want of better word) superficial, with students exhibiting heavily Japanized accents, their speech displaying a (sometimes fascinating) mixing of Japanese and Korean languages. Moreover, for political reasons, Chongryun Koreans tend to skew toward North Korea in their language use, a tendency that is manifested in their choices of vocabulary and inflection, for example.

The practical as well as emotional hurdles to asserting and appropriating one's Korean identity in Japan are captured in articles contained within this issue of *Transnational Asia*. Julia Hansell Clark examines a female Korean poet, Sō Shūgetsu, who lived in Osaka, Japan, the region of the country with the largest Korean population. Sō's work, written in Japanese, yet unapologetically conveying the Korean woman's struggle, is, interestingly, somewhat removed from the male-dominated diasporic discourse of nationalism and patriotism. Ran Wei's article sheds light on the possibilities when comparatively reading a story by Yi Yangji, an award-winning female Korean writer in Japan, who, despite the fact that her family had been naturalized as Japanese, continued the difficult journey in search of her truthful self, and work by Nakagami Kenji, an award-winning Japanese writer of *burakumin* (outcaste) origin, whose story captures the intricate psyche of a Korean boy growing up in Japan in close proximity to a *burakumin* family. Finally, Shota Ogawa presents a critical reading of the recent multilingual and multi-vocal production of *Pachinko* (Apple tv, Hugh 2022) based on the eponymous original novel by Korean American writer Min Jin Lee (Lee 2007). Ogawa's article indicates the global reach of the experience of Koreans in Japan, carefully delineating what is universally common in colonial and postcolonial immigrant life stories and what is uniquely solidified in the experience of Koreans in Japan. All of the articles touch upon, directly or indirectly, the issues of ethnic and host languages, the search for one's true self, and resistance to multiple layers of power (be it colonialism, sexism, ethnic violence, social discrimination, and poverty) through the assertion of one's own existence, life, and name. In the remainder of this Introduction, in order to frame these articles together, I shall present a short history of the emergence of what we now call *zainichi* Koreans as a conceptual object of inquiry in the current Anglophone academic discourse, before examining the term *zainichi* and the current situation faced by this group.

2.

Whereas a robust number of research monographs, data, scholarly articles, and other information sources on Koreans in Japan have existed in Japanese covering diverse areas of specialization ever since the postwar period, extremely few could be found in English until the 1990s. There is the famed report written by Edward Wagner during the US Occupation of Japan (Wagner 1951); three decades later, George De Vos and Changsoo Lee produced a substantive volume, showing that great potential existed for exploring this population (Lee and De Vos 1981). But, aside from their cameo-appearance in history books covering Japanese colonialism or postwar Japan, Koreans in Japan did not rise to the position of stand-alone research-worthy subjects in the western academe for some time.

My 1992 article, based on my master's thesis, "Indoctrination or Rationalization: The Anthropology of 'North Koreans' in Japan," was arguably the very first English publication that focused on Chongryun-affiliated Koreans in Japan" (Ryang 1992). It was followed by the now classic article on Korean literature in Japan by Norma Field, "Beyond Envy, Boredom, and Suffering: Toward an Emancipatory Politics of Resident Koreans and Other Japanese" (Field1993).

Field opens her article in a somewhat personal tone under the subtitle "On Writing about People Not One's Own" as follows:

> Born to a Japanese mother and an American father stationed with the occupation forces, I labored to be identified as an American in the postwar Tokyo of my childhood. [...] It is only belatedly that I became familiar with the contours of the history of Japanese colonialism, especially on the Korean peninsula [...] In the process I also developed an intense admiration for the politicality more reliably manifested by Koreans residing in Japan than by the great majority of Japanese. (Field 1993: 640)

It is interesting to compare that Field felt she needed to justify why she could and should write about people who did not share her own background; for me, the issue was the opposite: I had to justify why I was writing about my own people. For, in anthropology, the classical canon had it that an anthropologist had to arrive from across the ocean, like a stranger-deity, to be able to observe "objectively" what the native culture had to offer. The initial encounter between the two different cultures, the one of the anthropologist and the other of the natives, was the key to rendering the unintelligible intelligible. Such a formula is colonialist and imperialist in nature: There was a stark division of power between the anthropologist as the researcher and the natives as the researched, the judged, the measured, and the handled. These uneven relations, then, took a strange turn or two in my case, when studying Koreans in Japan who identified themselves as overseas nationals of North Korea, since I came precisely from the very midst of them, but returned as a researcher, equipped with western anthropological logic and vocabulary, and above all, writing in English.

The time when I conducted research among Koreans in Japan, at the very beginning of the 1990s, coincided with the apex of the wave of *nihonjinron,* the Japanese cultural uniqueness thesis. Beginning in the 1970s and reflecting the rise of Japan as an economic superpower that almost threatened U.S. economic hegemony while culturally remaining uniquely Japanese (according to the proponents of this thesis), leading advocates of *nihonjinron* argued that Japan's racial homogeneity and unique cultural traits had brought about this miracle (e.g., Nakane 1972; Doi 1971). Japanese Studies in the west, as it were, had begun as wartime enemy studies; it was Ruth Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* that paved the way for the tendency to "explain" Japan in terms of its possession of a cultural quality unlike that of any other nation – neither in the West nor in the East

(Benedict 1946). Needless to say, such a view was myopic at best (given that Japan's economy had burst in a big way by the mid- to late- 1990s) and chauvinistic at worst (insisting, as it did, on the superiority of Japan in the hierarchy of cultures, a claim reminiscent of its imperialist past). The academe was quick to respond, one of the most effective ways of countering such a thesis being to demonstrate that Japan was not homogeneous, and that it had always been populated by diverse racial, cultural, and linguistic peoples, including the Ainu, the Okinawans, and the Koreans, among many others (e.g., Lie 2001; Oguma 2021). The impetus to study Koreans in Japan endured in this intellectual climate.

That was thirty years ago. Today, in the twenty-first century, in the age of global social media and digital communication technology, Koreans in Japan, along with many other groups of research subjects, are studied in multiple different ways, involving not only foreign but also native researchers, traversing multiple languages, and across diverse academic fields, including literature, film studies, sociology, anthropology, and history (e.g., Dew 2016; Kim 2016; Isogai 2015; Song 2014; Lie 2008; Chapman 2007; Kawamura 2003; Ryang 2000). Furthermore, research work in this area as a whole is becoming increasingly transnational and transhistorical, moving beyond the Japan/Korea binary and colonial/postcolonial divide (e.g., Roh 2021; Yi 2018; Lie 2018b). Unlike thirty years ago, when Norma Field and I had to stop and justify, each of us in different ways, why we were studying Koreans in Japan, this type of justification itself now appears obsolete and even unhelpful, given the intense globalization and multi-regionality of academic researchers and subjects (e.g., Ryang and Lie 2009). Multivocal conversations involving Koreans in Japan themselves, documenting interaction with the researcher, and autobiographic work by Koreans in Japan also occupy important places in this area (Kim 2018; Ryang 2008). In this way, the study of Koreans in Japan has left its original shell of being a counterexample to research based on the assumption of Japanese homogeneity, confined within the framework of Japanese Studies, and now alludes to the possibility of forming its own subfield offering points of engagements that are useful when exploring questions that extend beyond the parameters of Area Studies.

3.

The reader will have noticed that I have avoided, so far, the use of the term *zainichi* 在日. This term, meaning "existing in Japan," does not, in and of itself, denote Koreans at all. It could be used to refer to any entities or peoples that exist in Japan that are non-Japanese. During the Allied Occupation (1945-1952), the US military stationed in Japan were called *zainichi beigun,* or US Army in Japan, for example. Following Japan's defeat at war, exercising their newly gained sense of independence and trying to shed off the colonial legacy, Koreans organized themselves politically. Reflecting what was then believed to be the temporary partition of their homeland, Koreans remaining in Japan referred to themselves as *zainichi chōsenjin,* or Koreans in Japan, *chōsen* being the name of the Korean peninsula and *not* the name of a nation or nation-state. When Japanese alien registration

law came into force in 1947, all persons whose original household registry existed outside of the archipelago were deemed non-Japanese. Since moving one's original household registry from the colony to Japan proper was not allowed during the colonial period, the household registries of Koreans in Japan remained in their birthplaces in Korea. Thus, Koreans in Japan now had to be registered as aliens, yet there was no nation-state that would identify them, since, as of 1947, neither North Korea nor South Korea was formally established as a state, and Japan itself was under the military occupation. Koreans in Japan entered the Japanese alien registration system with their *kokuseki* or nationality recorded as *chōsen* (朝鮮), but, again, this name simply denoted the Korean peninsula, and not any nation-state in Korea.

The fact that this name, *chōsen*, was used on their alien registration records became a challenge for Koreans remaining in Japan who supported South Korea after the establishment of the two separate states on the Korean peninsula in 1948. Whereas North Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was referred to in Japanese as *chōsen* (朝鮮), the Republic of Korea, or South Korea, was referred to as *kankoku* (韓国) or, more formally, *daikan minkoku* (大韓民国). On the other hand, the term *chōsen,* which derived from name of a legendary ancient Korean state, was also the name used by the Japanese colonial government-general of Korea or *chōsen sōtokufu*. Thus, those Koreans who identified with the Republic of Korea (numerically the minority at that time among Koreans in Japan) insisted that their alien registration be rectified. Typically, Koreans in Japan who supported North Korea politically would call themselves *zainichi chōsenjin,* while Koreans in Japan who supported South Korea politically would call themselves *zainichi kankokujin*. From the Japanese authorities' perspective, however, the terms *chōsen* and *kankoku* did not indicate any nationality – they only indicated that the person registered under those names originated from the Korean peninsula during the colonial period. It is precisely in this discrepancy or gap that we can identify the birth of the *zainichi* Korean: Not Korean, not Japanese, simply having originally come from the Korean peninsula and continuing to stay in Japan. In the early decades following the war, moreover, the Koreans themselves generally regarded their stay in Japan as temporary, believing that their sojourn there would end once Korea became one unified independent state and they would return to their homeland.

The alien registration system that Koreans were first registered into was a complex one. When Japan was defeated in 1945, there were about two million Koreans living in Japan. They had come to Japan for various reasons, including due to enforced wartime mobilization by Japan. Following the wave of postwar repatriation of Koreans to the Korean peninsula, as of March 1946, approximately 640,000 Koreans remained in Japan (Chong 2022: 10-11). In 1947, one day prior to the proclamation of the new postwar Constitution of Japan, the Alien Registration Imperial Ordinance (Imperial Edict No. 207; the final edict by the Showa Emperor), was issued, declaring that "Koreans would be seen

as, *for the time being*, foreigners" (quoted in Chong 2022: 62; the author's translation and emphasis).

In 1950, following the rise of two separate regimes on the Korean peninsula, and in the face of strong demand among Koreans supporting South Korea, *kankoku* (denoting Republic of Korea) registration became available, but it was not until 1965, when Japan and South Korea entered into formal diplomatic relations, that permanent residence in Japan became available for Koreans on condition that they opted for South Korean nationality. For a few decades, the majority of Koreans in Japan retained the term *chōsen* in the "nationality" column of their alien registration certificates, not only because many supported North Korea, but also because many were preoccupied with pressing issues of everyday life, such as putting the food on the table and paying the rent, although Chongryun made it into a political issue, equating *chōsen* registration with support for North Korea. Chongryun built a formidable organizational apparatuses, encompassing independent education system in Korean, an ideological machine expressing loyalty for North Korea's leadership, and a robust network of local branches administered by the central headquarters in Tokyo. Nevertheless, numerically speaking, the sum total of Korean children in Japan attending Chongryun schools never surpassed that of Korean children in Japan attending schools in the Japanese education system. Today, unlike at the height of Cold War tensions and North-South confrontation, Koreans in Japan are indifferent to the issue of identifying themselves politically with either government on the peninsula; the majority of Koreans in Japan hold South Korean nationality. It would be safe to state that the fact that one has South Korean nationality does not mean that one supports South Korea and shuns North Korea. Rather, this is related to the change that has occurred within and around Koreans in Japan over many decades, as I shall argue below.

Exactly when the term *zainichi* became the nomenclature that would denote Koreans in Japan and, more importantly, a name that captures their agency and self-identification, is hard to identify. John Lie identifies the rise of *zainichi* as ideology with the publication of the journal *Kikan Sanzenri* in 1975. Published by *zainichi* intellectuals, the journal criticized the homeland-orientation of Chongryun and its monolithic devotion to North Korea, and it became a turning point in convincing *zainichi* writers that *zainichi* life was worthy of writing about (Lie 2018a: 15; also Lie 2008). It was during the 1980s that younger second and third generation Koreans in Japan began openly questioning the need to embrace their parents' wish – that, one day, Koreans in Japan would return to their homes on the Korean peninsula. Faced with the ongoing prospect of national partition, which made eventual homecoming more and more unlikely, their overwhelming cultural and linguistic proficiency in Japan, and, conversely, their lack of Korean cultural and linguistic proficiency or, more directly put, their lack of emotional connection to the Korean peninsula, they began to identify themselves more as *zainichi* than as *chōsenjin* or *kankokujin*. In other words, they were beginning to see their future in Japan, where they had been born and raised, not in Korea, where they would have been strangers.

Such a stance was tangible in the concrete lifestyles of Koreans in Japan. Already, starting from the mid-1970s, the majority of marriages involving a Korean person in Japan were marriages between Koreans and Japanese, with more Korean women marrying Japanese men (Morita 1996). This trend continued, with the number of marriages involving a Korean female and a Japanese male increasing from 1,536 in 1970 to 8,940 in 1990 (Kōseirōdōshō 2020). Despite the ongoing disenfranchisement of Koreans in Japan in terms of citizenship, civil rights, residential rights, equality, and inclusion, by the 1980s, culturally and socially speaking, Koreans in Japan were rooted in Japan; it was in Japan that they would raise their families and choose their burial places. Not infrequently, today we come across the third nomenclatural option of *zainichi korian* or *zainichi* Koreans, which puts the emphasis on the dual pillars of Korean origin and Japanese residence, thereby moving further away from homeland politics and direct identification with either regime on the peninsula. By using the foreign borrowed word, *korian,* and thus avoiding the use of traditional Japanese words such as *chōsenjin* or *kankokujin*, this term also asserts neutrality in terms of their existence in Japan. Similarly, the term *zainichi* is gaining traction within the Anglophone scholarly milieu: In the subsection of the Association for Asian Studies website, *Education about Asia,* we find an entry: "Zainichi: The Korean Diaspora in Japan" (Lie 2009).

This situation reflects several sea changes involving mutually connected factors that have had a direct effect on the life worlds of *zainichi* Koreans. Firstly, *zainichi* Koreans did, belatedly, benefit from Japan's long period of steadfast economic growth. In contrast to the abject poverty, lack of access to education, housing challenges, and employment-related hurdles faced by first- and older second-generation *zainichi* Koreans in the 1950s and 1960s, younger second- and third-generation *zainichi* Koreans tended to enjoy greater success in acquiring better occupational skills. Ensuing gentrification saw the transformation of Korean shantytowns, and *zainichi* success stories began emerge from the world of business, the entertainment industry, and academe, including that of famed Softbank founder Son Masayoshi or Kan Sang Jung, a Tokyo University professor. Today, one does not have to look so hard to identify *zainichi* professionals in a diverse range of specialized fields in Japan.

Secondly, Japan's nationality law as well as other laws relevant to the residential security of *zainichi* Koreans underwent a few changes. Reflecting Japan's 1979 ratification of the International Covenants of Human Rights and its 1982 joining of the United Nation Refugee Convention, Japanese nationality, which had been discriminatorily withheld from children born to a Japanese mother on the basis of male-only gender-specific nationality recognition, became available retrospectively for individuals (including sections of the Korean population in Japan) whose Japanese heritage came from their maternal lineage. More directly, dramatic reforms were carried out with respect to alien registration law as well as immigration law, the two pillars of the legal mechanism controlling Koreans in Japan and determining their residential (in)security there. In particular, those Koreans (mostly Chongryun Koreans) who had not opted to obtain South Korean nationality were

now granted permanent residence in Japan (in 1982), greatly increasing their residential security there. Prior to this reform, ill health, poverty, homelessness, or political affiliation deemed subversive by the Japanese authorities could have been used as grounds for deportation – in this case, to South Korea, which was not a safe prospect for Chongryun-affiliated Koreans in Japan, due to South Korea's anti-Communism law, which could have led to their criminalization and imprisonment (see Chong 2022: 161-162). The permanent residential status of Koreans in Japan was further secured in the 1990s, a decade which also saw a dramatic increase in the number of Koreans there naturalizing as Japanese citizens. The year 1993 alone saw more than 10,000 Koreans in Japan being naturalized (Lee 2021: 28).

Thirdly, the country with which the majority of *zainichi* were associated today (see below), South Korea, underwent dramatic changes in the late 1980s and 1990s. Transforming from one of the most notorious and brutal military dictatorships in the world to a nation with a democratically-elected civilian government and a determination to join and then lead the globalization process through science and technology on one hand and the entertainment industry on the other, South Korea rose to become a center of popular culture and information technology. It did not take much for K-drama, K-pop, and K-cinema to command massive support among fans and followers in Japan by the early 2000s. The global popularity of South Korea's cultural products and icons, often recognized via top international prizes in cinema and the arts, unmistakably affected how *zainichi* Koreans were seen in Japan. As the Japanese public began to embrace South Korean culture, such as via Korean language acquisition or tasting Korean food, things Korean became "cool" and desirable in Japan.

Fourthly, there have been notable changes involving the demographics of the Korean population in Japan, including an increase in the number of old-timers or former colonial immigrants being naturalized as Japanese citizens and an increase in the number of new migrants from South Korea, reflecting the post-1988 liberalization of overseas travel rules for South Korean citizens. Such developments have reshaped the makeup of the Korean population in Japan, the original colonial immigrants and their descendants continuously shrinking in number. For example, Japanese Immigration Bureau statistics for 2020 documented the presence of a total of 426,908 persons with South Korean nationality in Japan, 274,107 of whom carried special permanent resident status, indicating that they were former colonial immigrants and their descendants rather than post-1988 South Korean immigrants. This figure of 274,107 reflected the considerably reduced size of the population of "old-timer" Koreans in Japan, which remained around 600,000 until the 1980s (Shutsunyūkoku zairyū kanrichō 2021: 190; Ryang 2010). As of 2020, only 27,214 were registered under the category of *chōsen* in the alien registration (Chang 2022: 11). In this sense, it would not be wrong to state that the boundaries of the term *zainichi* are porous, as it could easily include more recent South Korean immigrants to Japan and/or *zainichi* Koreans who moved on to settle in a third location, for example, the United States.

As such, this identification would not presuppose exclusivity and would be best understood transnationally.

4.

The preceding section needs to be accompanied with a reference to one important aspect of *zainichi* life: hate. And it is here that I return to the subject of language. For, the term *zainichi* in the vocabulary of hate speech positively occupies the place of something that should be disdained and held in contempt. In almost diametrical contrast to the positive image associated with dazzling South Korean entertainment icons, recent decades have seen a clear and rapid rise in hate speech and, sometimes, violent hateful behavior directed against *zainichi* Koreans. Reflecting the history of colonialism and postcolonial animosity between Japan and Korea, racial slurs and the language of ethno-denigration against Koreans in Japan have existed for a long time. False rumors about Koreans setting fire to and destroying Japanese properties cost thousands of Korean lives in the Tokyo area following the 1923 earthquake (Ryang 2007). In postwar Japan during the 1960s and 1970s, organized and brutal assaults of Korean high school students by Japanese high school students in public places, such as at railway stations, were witnessed frequently (Ryang 2016). But the recent rise in hate speech and hate crimes against Koreans is occurring as a reflection of complex relations of power where the colonizer-colonized binary no longer functions as a satisfactory explanation.

One notable event that became a dramatic overture for this trend was the 2002 revelation of past abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korean agents. At the first-ever summit meeting between the leaders of Japan and North Korea, held in Pyongyang in 2002, Kim Jong Il revealed to Junichiro Koizumi that North Korea had forcefully kidnapped some dozen innocent Japanese citizens from Japan's shores during the late 1970s and 1980s. 2007 saw the formation of an organization called *Zainichino Tokkeno Yurusanai Kai,* the name of which can be roughly translated as "the association for not tolerating special privileges for *zainichi.*" This organization has since held numerous street demonstrations and rallies demanding that "privileges" that *zainichi* Koreans enjoy, such as healthcare, be taken away, although it is silent about the tax payments and other contributions that *zainichi* Koreans make toward Japanese society. These developments reflected a radical rightward turn, the most prominent proponent of which being former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, advocating the revision of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution (which defines Japan as a peaceful nation and abstains the nation from unilaterally declaring war against other nations) and the revisionist re-writing of wartime history. The 2010s witnessed a rise in the number of hate crimes against *zainichi* Koreans that were associated with a wide variety of issues, including transitional justice, such as in relation to the comfort women system, a wartime sex slavery operation run by the Japanese military in which most of the victims were Korean women and girls, the threat to Japan's national security by recurring missile launches by North Korea, as well as more day-to-day issues, such as the right of *zainichi* Koreans to ethnic education.

More specifically, the public nature of anti-*zainichi* hate speech emerges not simply as the crude and unsophisticated expression of anger, but, more importantly, as an elaborate project involving the denial, elimination, or extermination of *zainichi*. According to a *zainichi* male respondent in his fifties who participated in a survey conducted by Human Rights Now Japan, he witnessed the following cries at an anti-*zainichi* street rally: "Koreans are maggots!" "Die, all Koreans!" and "Koreans are equivalent to cockroaches!" These were the words of participants at the rally as a portable microphone was passed around. Another participant in the survey, a woman in her forties, saw a smiling man pose for a selfie with a placard stating "Die, Koreans, cockroaches!" (Human Rights Now Japan 2014: 12, 14; see also Kin, Kyō, and *Zainichi Korian Bengoshi Kyōkai* 2019). Killing a Korean, in this equation, amounts to killing a cockroach.

The recent barrage of anti-*zainichi* hate speech in public places—as opposed to the previously more pervasive verbal attacks launched in anonymity on the internet — indicates that the nature of anti-*zainichi* sentiment in Japan is shifting. Participants in anti-*zainichi* rallies are not necessarily members of extreme hate groups, either. The almost spontaneous nature of their organization, singularly based on the desire to rid Japan of *zainichi,* appears to indicate a new direction in anti-*zainichi* sentiment in Japan, and this situation warrants concern. For, the logic that sustains anti-*zainichi* hate speech in public can be summarized as an extreme form of racism founded on zero-sum game reasoning, such as: "unless we kill them, they will kill us." There is a sense of crisis on the part of the perpetrators. It is this logic that sustained and institutionalized the operation of Auschwitz and other Jewish extermination camps by the Nazi regime in Germany. It is this logic that underscored the orders—to kill all males and rape all females—that was given and adhered to by Japanese soldiers when they invaded the city of Nanjing in 1937. In other words, this logic is separate from contempt or disdain: It concerns an existential crisis felt by the perpetrators. Seen historically, the current language of hate directed against *zainichi r*esonates with the intense hatred white people felt in the wake of the American Civil War, during the Reconstruction era, which culminated in the lynching of African Americans who had been emancipated. More recently, this way of thinking - that unless we kill them, they kill us - manifested in the 2020 killing of Ahmaud Arbery, a twenty-five-year-old African American man, by three white men in Georgia, who hunted him down and shot him to death, spouting hateful expressions and exhibiting hateful behaviors as they executed him. A jury found the three men had been motivated by racism and were guilty of a hate crime, while a separate trial found them guilty of murder, kidnapping, and other crimes (Fausset 2022).

This situation presents the Japanese state with a grave test. As Foucault states:

> In a normalizing society, race and racism is the precondition that makes killing accessible. […] If the power of normalization wished to exercise the old sovereign right to kill, it must become racist. […] When I say "killing," I obviously do not mean

> simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on. (Foucault 2003: 256)

In common with the sentiment expressed by Foucault in this quotation, I do not mean to say that this type of hate speech kills *zainichi* in a physical sense, unlike in the case of the false rumors that led to the killing of thousands of Koreans in Japan in 1923, but to argue that it effectively functions to facilitate the banishment of *zainichi* from Japanese society. How the current situation in Japan vis-à-vis *zainichi* Koreans further unfolds remains to be seen. Suffice it to state here that language of hate that *zainichi* Koreans are subjected to touches upon the identity crisis of the users of this language. As such, this language exists within the limits of Japan's sovereign order, in which *zainichi* Koreans, too, exist, thereby generating a structure in which *zainichi* Koreans' language of identity is destined to confront the language of hate. Moreover, even though the language of hate is uttered by individuals, the role of the state, as stressed by Foucault, cannot be overlooked. In this sense, the fact that the Tokyo Metropolitan government revised its customary practice in 2022 and did not issue its annual letter of condolences with respect to the Koreans who were massacred following the 1923 earthquake is of serious concern ("Kanto daishinsai 'gyakusatsu' meguri koikechijini sontaku" 2022). In 2013, the United Nations Committee against Torture recommended that the Japanese government denounce examples of hate speech by public officials in relation to "comfort women" issues, yet the government ruled that such types of recommendation were not legally binding and that, therefore, Japan was under no obligation to adhere to them (Human Rights Now Japan 2014: 7). Reference to a further argument by Foucault is relevant at this juncture: "…racism is bound up with the workings of a State that is obliged to use race, the elimination of races and the purification of the race, to exercise its sovereign power" (Foucault 2003: 258). This places the Japanese state squarely on the terrain of hate speech directed against *zainichi* Koreans. A future inquiry into the relationship between national sovereignty, the state, and hate speech on the one hand and *zainichi* Koreans' language of identity on the other will no doubt lead to a fruitful exploration of *zainichi* Koreans and their reality.

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