

The Colonial History Goes Cyber: The Rise of Anti-Zainichi Korean Sentiments in Twenty-First Century Japanese Society

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Abstract

While anti-Korean sentiments have been historically seen among the Japanese, the animosity toward “Koreans in Japan,” or “Zainichi Koreans,” has gained another momentum in contemporary Japanese society. This paper analyzes the recent rise of anti-Zainichi Korean sentiments by focusing on the role of the Internet. In so doing, the ways in which Zainichi Koreans have been dehumanized in Japanese cyberspace are examined to reveal how the Internet is functioning as a mode of production that exacerbates hate-speech practices against Zainichi Koreans. At the same time, this paper emphasizes that the history of Japanese colonization of Korea is a basis for “Zainichi Nintei,” a specific discriminatory representational practice enacted by Japanese Internet users, especially (but not limited to) Internet right-wingers in the country, to disproportionately target Zainichi Koreans. By illustrating how this discriminatory representational practice leads to the relentless production and reproduction of the othering discourse against Zainichi Koreans, this paper reveals the connection between the colonial history and Japanese cyberspace.

Introduction

From the 2000s onward, the discriminatory discourse of othering directed against Koreans in Japan (Zainichi Korean 在日コリアン; hereafter referred to as Zainichi Koreans) has gained momentum in Japanese cyberspace. Despite the fact that they are not the largest group of foreign citizens residing in Japan, Zainichi Koreans are disproportionately targeted by xenophobic hate speech online¹. This animosity against Zainichi Koreans is commonly known as part of the Kenkan 嫌韓—literally, “anti-Korean”—phenomenon in contemporary Japanese society.

This paper investigates how and why Zainichi Koreans have been targeted in Japanese cyberspace. Although scholars have examined the relationship between the Internet and the Kenkan phenomenon, they have done so by dealing with anti-Zainichi Korean sentiments as a part of the larger contemporary xenophobia. Scholars have argued that xenophobic remarks are viciously expressed by a group of Japanese people called Netto

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¹ The Hate Speech Act of 2016 was legislated and enacted to prevent hate-speech acts against ethnically non-Japanese people residing in Japan in general. However, this act was originally drafted to protect the dignity of Zainichi Koreans who are particularly targeted for discrimination. Regarding this law, more discussion will follow.

Uyoku ネット右翼, or Netouyo ネットウヨ (Internet right-wingers) both online and offline toward non-Japanese others including but not limited to Zainichi Koreans.²

This is where this paper intervenes, and thus it departs from the following research question: while there are many so-called others who are allegedly threatening Japan's national security and the lives of the Japanese, how and why are Zainichi Koreans particularly targeted in Japanese cyberspace? To answer this question, this paper will illustrate the historically structured mechanism behind the discriminatory othering discourse against Zainichi Koreans.

Literature Review

Scholarly works have demonstrated how specific characteristics of online communication have facilitated the recent rise of the Kenkan phenomenon by focusing on the discriminatory othering discourse against Zainichi Koreans. According to political scientists Kohari Susumu and Cho Kyucheol, for instance, anonymity secured on the Internet is what exacerbates hate-speech practices against Zainichi Koreans in cyberspace. They argue that anonymity allows some Internet users to freely express Kenkan sentiments without being identified (Kohari & Cho167).³ In addition, based on the canonical work by Sara Kiesler, Jane Siegel, and Timothy W. McGuire, social psychologist Taka Fumiaki points out that remarks made online against Zainichi Koreans are more likely to become inflammatory. Without the information about others' facial expressions and body language signals that would make for smooth communication, he argues, those remarks often become excessively intensified (Taka 2015, 138).

Taka also problematizes the cross-referential communication process online. According to him, a vicious cycle is in operation in Japanese cyberspace: some inflammatory remarks against Zainichi Koreans are made by a number of Internet users on certain online bulletin boards; those accusations are treated as "news sources" and quoted by other Internet users on their blogs or other online bulletin boards; others who have read them in turn make other inflammatory remarks about Zainichi Koreans (Taka 2015, 188). Consequently, the discriminatory othering discourse against them proliferates online with some degree of verisimilitude.

Other scholarly works focus on the networking function of the Internet. Studies done by sociologist Higuchi Naoto and anthropologist Yamaguchi Tomomi are two examples. They reveal that YouTube or Niconico ニコニコ (a Japanese online video sharing service)

² Who Netouyo are is yet to be conclusively identified among critics. On the one hand, some critics define Netouyo as a group of "social losers" who feel marginalized in reality and release their stress online. On the other hand, some scholars argue against this definition and point out that Netouyo are not necessarily losers but rather relatively well-off, ordinary citizens. For related scholarly works, see the following works: Yasuda Koichi, *Netto to aikoku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2015); Higuchi Naoto, *Nihongata haigaishugi* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2014).

³ Their theorization fits to the notion called "group polarization," which is the analytical model used by legal scholar Cass Sunstein in *#Republic: Divided democracy in the age of social media*. By this model, he argues that, when the degree of the freedom of speech increases through anonymity, Internet users tend to go extreme in making decisions.

has connected together disparate people who would not encounter with each other in everyday life otherwise. Higuchi and Yamaguchi further argue that this networking has gone beyond cyberspace and spread to the streets of Japan to the extent that it formed a racist social movement led by ultranationalist extremist political groups such as *Zainichi Tokken wo Yurusanai Shimin no Kai* 在日特権を許さない市民の会 (hereafter *Zaitokukai* 在特会), which is translated as the “Citizens’ Group Refusing to Tolerate Special Rights for Koreans in Japan.” This group organized large-scale hate-speech demonstrations in major cities in Japan, and members of *Zaitokukai* recorded those demonstrations and uploaded videos online. As Higuchi reports, not a few people watched those videos, became fascinated by them, and decided to join this group (2012, 12).⁴ Those people were motivated by *Zaitokukai*’s inflammatory videos uploaded online.⁵ If it were not for the Internet, those people would neither get acquainted with each other nor gather together for aggressive nationalist demonstrations. In this sense, *Zaitokukai* is a “web-based organization” (Ibid., 8).

Studies about the role of the Internet in the recent rise of anti-Zainichi Korean movement have been done as such. And yet, there exists a scholarly lacuna in them. To be more specific, the question of how and why Zainichi Koreans have been particularly targeted has not been fully investigated. For instance, although Taka utilizes statistics to confirm that Zainichi Koreans are receiving more inflammatory aspersions such as “Zainichi Koreans are criminals” or “Zainichi Koreans are rapists” than any other group of foreign citizens residing in Japan are, he does not elaborate on how and why this has become the case (Taka 2015, 59). Higuchi’s explanation is not satisfactory either. In his argument, Higuchi shows that many Japanese people feel threatened by the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in terms of “national security,” and this fear undergirds the animosity directed toward Zainichi Koreans—who are ethnically considered a part of not Japan but Korea (Higuchi 2014, 26-7). Higuchi’s argument, however, does not explain why it is not, for instance, the Zainichi Chinese 在日中国人, but Zainichi Koreans who are targeted. After all, in terms of economic and military power, the People’s Republic of China is supposedly the major threat to Japan and thus, if his argumentation is valid, it is Zainichi Chinese people who would receive inflammatory aspersions as much as—or more than—Zainichi Koreans do.

In addition, the extant literature often does not take the specificity of Zainichi Koreans into account. The discriminatory othering discourse against them is often discussed as a part of the larger xenophobic proclivity widely seen among the Japanese, despite the fact that Zainich Koreans are often the primary target. In fact, Higuchi deals with animosity directed toward them as a major example of what he calls the

⁴ The number of membership of this group was about 11,000 at its peak in the early 2010s.

⁵ Journalist Yasuda Koichi interviewed some participants of *Zaitokukai*’s demonstrations. One of them was a woman in her late 20s. While acknowledging that she had been an ordinary office worker with no political interest, she said, “A sense of crisis was evoked in me by in particular *Zaitokukai*’s videos ... When I realized, I joined their demonstrations with the flag of the Rising Sun” なかでも在特会の動画は、私に強い危機感を与えてくれました ... そして気がつけば私も日章旗を持って街宣に参加するようになっていきました。 See Yasuda 2015b.

“Japanese-style xenophobia” (Nihongata Haigaishugi 日本型排外主義) targeting not only Zainichi Koreans but also other non-Japanese citizens including East Asian peoples and immigrant workers from South East Asia. Likewise, Yamaguchi proposes a similar argument that attends to general xenophobia rather than dealing with the specific discrimination against Zainich Koreans:

“You (Zainichi) Koreans are cockroaches! Get out of Japan! Throw them into Tokyo Bay!” Waving giant Rising Sun flags, the speaker screams the chant into a megaphone, joined by rally participants parroting him. This scene is common at rallies held as part of the new right-wing, national chauvinistic, racist, and xenophobic movement that emerged in Japan in the mid-2000s...This movement is all part of a notable surge in online xenophobic discourse since 2000, which has been tied to numerous attacks on people of Korean and Chinese ancestry, a trend particularly prominent on Japan’s largest anonymous message board, 2channel (Yamaguchi 2013, 98).

At first, Yamaguchi highlights someone’s shout dehumanizing Zainichi Koreans as cockroaches. Yet, she subsequently conflates it with the attacks on people of Chinese ancestry, arguing that this dehumanizing statement was symptomatic of a larger xenophobic movement.

All in all, the extant literature successfully illustrates how the Internet has facilitated the discriminatory othering discourse against so-called others in general by focusing on Zainichi Koreans. Scholars have theorized the Internet as the mode of production that facilitates certain kinds of (de)human(izing) relations in contemporary Japanese society, particularly adversary to Zainichi Koreans. And yet, while the Internet is functioning in a specific manner vis-à-vis Zainichi Koreans, scholars have not investigated how and why this specificity about and of “Zainichi Koreans” is caused.⁶

Notes on Theoretical Frameworks and Methodology

In order to follow and further develop the aforementioned discussion of the extant literature, this paper offers a historical review of the Kenkan attitude among the Japanese. In the first half of the 20th century during which Imperial Japan colonized the Korean Peninsula, along with other Asian peoples, Koreans were discriminated against as colonial subjects, despite the fact that they were “integrated” as Japanese subjects. By tracing what the Japanese said against the Koreans during this period, and attending to the contemporary representations of Zainichi Koreans produced online, I will describe the ways in which this discrimination against those who were ethnically Korean and yet

⁶ As a result, in the extant literature, the harmful discursive settings surrounding Zainichi Koreans are not sufficiently examined. For instance, sociologist Matsutani Mitsuru who attempts to identify the tendency among the Netouyo casually dismisses their discriminatory remarks. Although they are disconcerting, he argues, those remarks do not have a major impact on Japanese society as a whole and thus are not to be worried about as of now (Matsutani 2019, 67). As such, scholars often undermine how specifically Zainichi Koreans are being damaged.

“integrated” Japanese subjects have been continued and escalated with the advent of the Internet.

In other words, I will employ historical perspectives throughout the paper. While following the theorization of the Internet as the mode of production that exacerbates hate-speech practices against Zainichi Koreans, I will historicize those practices to address how and why Zainichi Koreans are disproportionately receiving inflammatory aspersions in Japanese cyberspace and by extension, in contemporary Japanese society. As a technological innovation, the Internet has enabled various dehumanizing representations to be spread. Yet, it is important to note that some of them are historically conditioned. It is precisely because of certain historical specificities that certain discriminatory othering representations are proliferated online today. The purpose of this paper is to identify the historical specificities based on which Netouyo carry out a particular representational practice and spread dehumanizing representations online against the group of Zainichi Koreans, but not other groups of foreign citizens. By doing so, this paper will reveal the rhetoric and logic that Netouyo are using in Japanese cyberspace.

Some have already historicized the longer trajectory of the Kenkan phenomenon online. Sociologists Kurahashi Kohei and Ito Masaaki, for instance, point out that the form and content of the othering discourse spread online today already existed on the print media in the 1990s.⁷ These sociologists argue that the media culture at that time was the key to understand the Netouyo culture as of now. Building on this insight, this paper further goes back in time to the early to mid-twentieth century and aims to illustrate the deeper continuity between the past and the present.

In order to achieve the above points, I will use a variety of archival materials. Primary sources such as reports published in some major newspapers in Japan in the first half of the 20th century will be referred to. In addition, in order to examine the discriminatory othering representations against Zainichi Koreans online, this paper will turn to the “encyclopedia” of major online bulletin boards, analyzing what has been said about them. While numerous anti-Zainichi Korean, dehumanizing statements have been made in Japanese cyberspace, those statements have often been dismissed by scholars as nonsensical, racist gibberish (Kurahashi 2018, 10). However, as repulsive they are, those statements are the very examples of anti-Zainichi Korean, dehumanizing representations and thus constitute an archive to examine this online phenomenon.

A Brief History of Discrimination against Japanese Koreans

In Japan, the Kenkan racism, namely, the discrimination against people who are ethnically Korean, was a national project in the early 20th century. In 1910 when the Japanese with an imperial ambition annexed the Korean Peninsula, Koreans became

⁷ See Kurahashi Kohei, *Rekishī shūseishugi to sabu karuchā* (Tokyo: Seikyusha, 2018) and Ito Masaaki, *Netto uha no rekishi shakaigaku ネット右派の歴史社会学* (Tokyo: Seikyusha, 2019).

“national” subjects governed under the guidance of the emperor of Japan. Being only nominally “national,” they were marginalized as second-class citizens under the Japanese rule that lasted until the end of World War II. During this time when Japan was building itself as an empire, the demand for labor also soared. Consequently, Koreans were brought in to Japan as a resource of cheap labor (Ha, J. 2010, 436-37). In particular, they were exploited in the spinning industry, which was known as a lower-class labor market where people had to endure low wages and long hours (Ha, M. 1997, 80-84). The Korean workers whose political and social rights were denied, as historian Leo T.S. Ching points out, were “simultaneously constructed as subjects of the Japanese nation and as objects of exploitation by Japanese colonialism” (Ching 2001, 106).

As Imperial Japan proceeded with such a discriminatory national project, its general public explicitly expressed their hatred toward “Japanese Koreans.” On newspapers published in the first half of the 20th century, there were many reports on how Naichijin 内地人 (people of the inland Japan, or the Japanese) discriminated against Hantōjin 半島人 (people of the peninsula, or Koreans) in demeaning manners. For instance, in the 1910s, many newspapers identified the proclivity among the former to humiliate and dehumanize the latter: “Nowadays, we Japanese see Koreans as if they were illegitimate children, or inferior citizens. The Japanese tend to alienate Koreans” (*The Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* 1919)⁸; “Some Japanese people quite often despise Koreans and ignore their legal rights” (*The Jiji Shinpō* 1919)⁹; “Denigrating Koreans as sub-humans, the Japanese make unreasonable demand from Koreans and beat them up if it is not met ...” (*The Yomiuri Shimbun* 1919)¹⁰. Around this time, just because these workers were ethnically Korean, many of Hantōjin had to receive unlawful treatment and even violence, despite the fact that they were Japanese nationals on paper. Clearly, for the Japanese, Hantōjin were not Japanese/human enough to deserve humane treatment and respect.

This proclivity did not subside over the years. On May 25th, 1924, *The Osaka Asahi Shimbun* still noted that Hantōjin were generally considered “ungrateful, ignorant, dirty, and lazy.”¹¹ A decade later, the situation remained the same: “Naichijin look down on Koreans and behave as superiors” (*The Keijō Nippo* 1934)¹² Government reports also showed how the Japanese perceived Koreans in a negative way. For instance, in 1943, an officer on duty at the military headquarter of Imperial Japan in Korea analyzed that “the disdain for Koreans [was] still prevailing among the Japanese.”¹³ In addition, in 1944, a government official recorded that “Naichijin’s aversion or discriminatory feeling against

⁸ 現在我国民 ... は、鮮人を見ること継子の如く、劣等国民の如し。鮮民 ... を疎外せんとするの風あり。

⁹ 兎角朝鮮人を蔑視し不法に彼等を待遇するの傾きがある。

¹⁰ 劣等人種と軽蔑して無理な註文をなし、応ぜざれば鉄拳を振ったり...。In addition to these newspaper articles, many similar reports were published in 1919. In Japan, Korea(ns) received attention in this year. 1919 was when an independent movement called the March 1st Movement was organized in Korea against the Japanese colonial rule.

¹¹ 恩知らずである、無学である、不潔である、怠惰である。

¹² 朝鮮人に接触する内地人が ... 彼らを蔑視し ... 優越感を振廻す。

¹³ 依然たる朝鮮蔑視の思想の横行。See “Daitōa kensetsu to chōsen minzoku no mondai,” 大東亜建設と朝鮮民族の問題。

Koreans [were] intensifying”.¹⁴ According to these reports, at least from the annexation of Korea in 1910 to the end of WWII, Hantōjin continued to be publicly humiliated and dehumanized by Naichijin.

The inhumane acts of violence against Hantōjin are also recorded in the testimonies by Koreans who were forcibly brought to Japan. A coalmine worker, for instance, painfully reminisced his dire “working” condition:

...I was forced to work until night, when I could not see the tip of my shovel... In any case, I was beaten up every single day for whatever reason (by Japanese overseers). Since I was beaten up too much, one day, I tried to count how many times I would be punched. It was 72 times on that day...The food given to us was also terrible. Beans drained of oil were the main dish, and the inside of these beans was rotten and blackened...Since the work was too exhausting and the food was as such, some people died from overworking and malnutrition (quoted by So Kyong-sik 1989, 12-3).¹⁵

As this testimony illustrates, the Japanese treated Hantōjin not as fellow national subjects but as the exploitable and even disposal labor power for the construction of an empire.

During the time of Imperial Japan, this kind of discrimination was practiced not only against Koreans but also against other Asian peoples. Although Imperial Japan was building the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere,” the Japanese did not see non-Japanese Asians as equal members of the empire. As historian John Dower argues, the racist belief that the Japanese are the most superior ethnic group “destined to lead Asia forever” was commonly held by many Japanese people (Dower 1987, 275). They, therefore, naturally considered other Asian peoples as inferior. In fact, by treating them in humiliating and dehumanizing manners, Imperial Japan was able to inhumanely conquer other parts of Asia without feeling remorse and expanded its hegemony in the region.

The defeat of Imperial Japan in 1945 changed the situation, at least ostensibly. In the post-WWII Japanese society, it became difficult to openly hold dear to the aforementioned racist belief; racist expression in public became politically incorrect. Consequently, racist sentiments toward other Asian peoples were “repressed” among the Japanese. In particular, as journalist Yasuda Koichi points out, the Japanese more or less shared a recognition that Zainichi Koreans are the victims of the Pacific War and thus, it was a kind of social taboo to speak ill of them out loud (Yasuda 2015a, 276).¹⁶

¹⁴ 内地人の朝鮮人に対する蔑視乃至差別感は ... 激化して居る。See “Honpō naisei kankei zassan: Shokuminchi kankei daiikkan,” 本邦内政関係雑纂／植民地関係 第一巻。

¹⁵ ...夜、スコップの先が見えなくなるまで働かされた。...とにかく、毎日なにかといっではなぐられた。あんまりなぐられるので、ある日、ためしに一日何回なぐられるか数えてみたことがあるんだけど、その日は七十二回だった。...食べ物がかたひどくて、油をしぼったあとの豆かすが主で、この豆かすは中が腐って黒くなっていました。...とにかく重労働のうえ食事もそんな状態だったので、過労と栄養失調で死ぬ人もでた。

¹⁶ This does not mean that discrimination and racism against Zainichi Koreans were not harsh in the postwar period. Legally and socially marginalized, they were deprived of rights in terms of social security, social welfare, employment, and so forth. Japanese state policy was discriminatory toward Zainichi Koreans,

This kind of “repression” continued, and the public displays of the extreme hate speech against Zainichi Koreans were rarely seen until recently. Yet, with the advent of the Internet, the course of the Kenkan racism has changed once again. As documented in the extant literature, some Japanese Internet users openly express discriminatory othering remarks particularly against Zainichi Koreans in cyberspace and further transmit those remarks to many other unspecified Internet users. For instance, some Netouyo call Zainichi Koreans “罪日韓国人/朝鮮人” (*罪日 Korean*) by replacing Zainichi Koreans’ “Zai” 在 with “罪,” a Chinese character pronounced as “Zai” but meaning “crime.” Through this play on word, those Netouyo denounce Zainichi Koreans as criminals. In addition, Zainichi Koreans are often humiliated and dehumanized because of their Korean ethnicity in the following expressions: Reipu Minzoku (a rapist people レイプ民族); Chōsen Hito Modoki (Korean subhumans チョウセンヒトモドキ); Gokiburi Minzoku (cockroach people ゴキブリ民族).¹⁷

What is more, some othering representations of people who are ethnically Korean are also used to elevate the Japanese as opposed to Zainichi Koreans. One of those representations is Unkorian [shit(ry) Korean ウンコリアン].¹⁸ As Mary Douglas theorizes, excretions function as informative pointers of cultural boundaries precisely because of the excretions’ outcasted status. By being excluded, excretions circumscribe the realm of the included as constitutive outsides. In the case of Unkorian, therefore, the Japanese are being defined as sensible subjects, while Zainichi Koreans are being othered, or abjected, as feces.

Zainichi Nintei 在日認定

What is important to note here once again is that the advent of the Internet does not explain why Zainichi Koreans are particularly targeted for inflammatory aspersions. To answer this question, one must think not only about the technological development but also about another factor, which is a representational practice known as “Zainichi Nintei 在日認定” (identifying Zainichi Koreans). It is a particular mode of representation made possible only because of the history of the Japanese colonization of Korea, and it is Zainichi Nintei that makes Zainichi Koreans disproportionately susceptible to humiliating and dehumanizing remarks such as “Zainichi Koreans are criminals” or “Zainichi Koreans

forcing them to be fingerprinted as if they were all suspected criminals. Zainichi Korean activists fought for years to improve the conditions that their community faced in Japan. See, Strausz, Michael, “Minorities and protest in Japan: The politics of the fingerprinting refusal movement” [*Pacific Affairs* 79, no. 4 (2006): 641-56].

¹⁷ These examples are from Han J Wiki *ハンJ Wiki*, a website similar to Wikipedia that is intended to create an “encyclopedia” about the online bulletin boards against Koreans including Zainichi Koreans. On this “encyclopedia,” there is an entry titled “Netouyo ga tsukau sabetsu yōgo ichiran” ネットウヨが使う差別用語一覧 (The list of the discriminatory terms used by netouyo), which includes a list of discriminatory othering expressions against Zainichi Koreans. Han J Wiki is a product of collective effort to primarily document Netouyo’s racist activities against people who are ethnically Korean on 5 Channel 5チャンネル, the largest Japanese hub website consisting of numerous bulletin boards, Twitter, and YouTube. As such a material of collectivity, this encyclopedia constitutes an archive to think through the Netouyo culture.

¹⁸ See “Netouyo ga tsukau sabetsu yōgo ichiran.”

are rapists.” This representational practice is defined as an act to “arbitrarily identify someone as a Zainichi Korean.”¹⁹ To be more specific, when something bad happens, some Internet users in Japanese cyberspace would quickly react to the incident by immediately identifying that “someone” who causes that “something” as a Zainichi Korean with no firm evidence.

Examples of Zainichi Nintei are rampant in Japanese cyberspace. For instance, on May 6th, 2018, when a football player X of Nihon University made a national headline for the late tackle that he had committed against the quarterback of the opponent team of Kwansai Gakuin University, some Internet users instantly suspected that X had Korean origin. As his tackle caught national attention as an unsportsman-like, intentional, and criminal act of violence, some Internet users assumed that only a person with Zainichi Korean background would be capable of such a crude move, as exemplified by the following comments made on major online bulletin boards in Japanese cyberspace: “he (i.e., X) must be a Zainichi Korean. A Japanese person wouldn’t do such a nasty tackle”²⁰; “I don’t really want to blame Zainichi Koreans, but he doesn’t look like a Japanese person.”²¹

A month after the tackle incident, similar accusation was repeated for another incident related to a violent act. On June 9th, 2018, a man randomly stabbed passengers of a bullet train with a machete. Two female passengers sitting next to him were suddenly assaulted and seriously injured; one male passenger, who came to rescue them, was stabbed to death. Right after the news was out, a number of Internet users in Japanese cyberspace imagined and identified the culprit as a Zainichi Korean, based on a baseless reason that no one can commit such a horrifying crime other than Zainichi Koreans.²²

For Zainichi Nintei, incidents do not necessarily have to happen in reality. This representational practice is also often used to spread “fake news” about Zainichi Koreans. One example would be Zaitokukai’s fabrication. Unsurprisingly, this group also blindly attacked Zainichi Koreans by making use of Zainichi Nintei. On one occasion, some members of Zaitokukai came up with the “news” about the “Korean Occupation Army” (Korean Shinchū Gun 朝鮮進駐軍), claiming that the following photographs taken in 1949 were the historical evidence:

¹⁹ See “Zainichi nintei.”

²⁰ コイツ在日朝鮮人だろう。日本人はそんなことはしない。 See “Akushitsu takkuru no amefuto senshu no honsho ga gachi de yabai.”

²¹ あんまり在日のせいにしたくないけど、日本人に見えない。(Ibid.). On 5 Channel, X became identified as a third generation of *Zainichi*. See “Nichidai amefutobu.” It was also reported that the then-coach of the American football team of Nihon University ordered this player to physically hurt the quarterback of the opponent team. Subsequently, this coach also became identified as a person of *Zainichi*: “With no doubt, they are Zainichi Koreans. In particular, the coach’s behavior was exactly what Koreans would do” 絶対在日。特に監督の考え方が朝鮮人そのもの。(Ibid.).

²² See “Sōkōchū no tōkaidō shinkansen no shanai de sasareta.”

「朝鮮進駐軍」をご存知ですか？

1945年(昭和20年)以後に、現在特別永住権を持つ在日一世(朝鮮・韓国人)、もしくは現在日本に帰化または、半島に帰化した朝鮮人によって作られた犯罪組織を指します。終戦後彼らは、日本各地で婦女暴行・窃盗・暴行・殺人・略奪・警察署や公的機関への襲撃・土地建物の不法占拠・鉄道や飲食店での不法行為など様々な犯罪を引き起こしました。自称「戦勝国民」であると主張し、自らを「朝鮮進駐軍」と名乗り、各地で徒党を組んで暴れ、凶悪事件を起こしました。GHQ(連合国総司令部)の資料にあるだけでも最低4千人の日本人市民が、朝鮮進駐軍の犠牲となり殺害されたとされています。



今の朝鮮総連となる「在日朝鮮人連盟中央総本部」武装集団「朝鮮進駐軍」総本部。

全国各地で武装した在日朝鮮人「朝鮮進駐軍」と名乗る集団の総本部でもある。



朝鮮総連本部を警備する近畿を所轄する在日朝鮮人警備隊。

3万人もの朝鮮進駐軍は戦後の混乱を利用し、旧日本軍から盗んだ銃や日本刀で武装し、軍服を着込み全国で組織化を行いました。「在日朝鮮人連盟総本部」(上写真)は後の「在日本朝鮮人連盟」で、更にこれが「在日本大韓国民団」と「在日本朝鮮人総連合会」に分かれ、これが現在の「民団」と「朝鮮総連」となります。

(Screenshot from Yasuda 2015a, 286)

In these photographs, armed men in uniform are captured. They are standing in front of the headquarter of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan in Tokyo. According to Zaitokukai, Zainichi Koreans formed a criminal organization called the Korean Occupation Army and committed a variety of criminal acts such as “rape, theft, assault, murder, looting, raids against police stations and public buildings, squatting, illegal conducts in trains and restaurants, and so forth,” and these armed men in uniform in the photographs are members of this organization (quoted in Yasuda 2015a, 284-86). However, the fact is that these men are not Zainichi Koreans; they are Japanese armed police officers who came to inspect the Korean headquarter in Tokyo.

This kind of scapegoating is not historically unprecedented. After the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, the “fake news” that Hantōjin were going to commit heinous crimes and riots was spread. Rumor had it that Hantōjin were setting fire and poisoning wells in Tokyo.²³ As a result, local Japanese citizens formed vigilante groups. With the help of the police and the military, those vigilante groups massacred many of Hantōjin.

When some incidents (are said to be going to) happen, Zainichi Koreans has

²³ See, for instance, Yohino Sakuzo, *Dokumento: Kantō daishinsai* ドキュメント：関東大震災 (Chiba: Sōfukan, 1993), 169-75.

historically become the target. Zainichi Nintei is a modern mode of scapegoating, and it is enacted in ways to falsely and violently accuse Zainichi Koreans in Japanese cyberspace. While the accusations through this representational practice against Zainichi Koreans are nothing but stereotypical, some Internet users nevertheless assume that Zainichi Koreans are always already prepared to do evil against the Japanese, and hence repeat and reinforce Zainichi Nintei and perpetuate the derogatory image of Zainichi Koreans by repeatedly denouncing them.

The Historical Basis of Zainichi Nintei

Zainichi Nintei is almost always baseless and yet, it gets circulated. Arguably, this is the case because Zainichi Koreans “retain” the ambiguous positionality among the Japanese. It is, in other words, almost impossible to distinguish the former from the latter, and thus it becomes possible for Netouyo to use Zainichi Koreans as scapegoats for the Japanese.

This indistinguishability derives from the history of the Japanese colonization, by which Zainichi Koreans have come to exist. As discussed above, while being nominally incorporated into Imperial Japan as its subjects, Koreans were marginalized as objects of exploitation, or as the labor power fulfilling the demand of the empire. Among them, there were those who had nowhere to go but Japan because they were deprived of land in the process of colonization. There were also those who were requisitioned and forced to come to Japan for the continuation of the empire’s imperial project. Those Koreans became later known as Zainichi Koreans.²⁴

Similar to the formation of immigrant societies throughout the world, many of them were, at first, job bachelors and thus the Korean community initially consisted of men. Over the years, Korean workers gradually brought their family members from the Korean Peninsula and started their lives in Japanese society. It is worth mentioning once again that many Koreans came to Japan not because they wanted to but because their life was, explicitly or implicitly, dictated by Japan’s imperialism in one way or another. The movement of people and labors from the Korean Peninsula to Japan for a “better life,” likewise, was compelled or determined by the economic structure introduced and created through the Japanese colonization. Even after the defeat of Imperial Japan, or even while the Korean Peninsula underwent the process of decolonization that quickly turned into a civil war and then, as intervened by the United States and the United Nations, the Korean War, many of those Japanese Koreans, involuntarily or willingly, “remained” in Japan as subjugated subjects and came to be known as Zainichi Koreans. Although the Japanese government attempted to send them back to the Korean Peninsula after WWII, the colonial history has kept many Koreans tied to Japan, and

²⁴ For the history of Zainichi Koreans, see So Kyong-sik, *Kōminka seisaku kara shimon ounatsu made* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989). He attributes the forced migration of Koreans from the Korean Peninsula to Japan in the first half of the 20th century to the enclosure of farming ground in Korea by the Japanese government, the development of Japanese capitalism, and the wars (5-9).

many of the Koreans who were in Japan by the end of the war, remained in Japan after the war.²⁵ In addition, many of those who, willingly or not, went back to Korea subsequently came back to Japan because they could not smoothly adapt to Korean society (Park 2017, 64-80).

The degrees of assimilation into Japanese society between Zainichi Koreans and so-called Gaijin 外人 (foreigners) differ. For instance, most of the Zainichi Chinese who constitute the largest group of foreign citizens residing in Japan are “new comers,” since many of them did not start their lives in Japan until the 1980s. In the 1980s, the number of the Zainichi Chinese were less than 100,000. In 2015, however, their population reached more than 700,000 (Yamashita 2017, 251). As this statistical shift illustrates, the Zainichi Chinese are relatively new to Japanese society.

In contrast to them, Zainichi Koreans have “managed” to assimilate themselves into Japanese society for decades. On the one hand, a considerable number of Zainichi Koreans have been naturalized so far. Every year, about 10,000 Zainichi Koreans rescind their Korean nationality in order to obtain Japanese citizenship (Higuchi 2014, 57). On the other hand, for those who keep their Korean nationality, they usually use Japanese names called Tsūmei 通名 to ease their social life in Japan.²⁶ These names are registered in local municipal governments and have legal binding power. In terms of language, having had such a long history in Japan, most of the Zainichi Koreans are native speakers of Japanese; for later generations, it is often the case that Japanese is the only language that they are able to speak. On top of all that, in terms of physical features, hardly any racial difference between the Japanese and Koreans can be distinctly identified. In short, unlike other groups of foreign citizens in Japan, it is almost impossible for one to definitively single out Zainichi Koreans in Japanese society, except for when they themselves come out in terms of their ethnic identity.²⁷

This makes significant contrast with the following scene of colonial subjection that Franz Fanon experienced:

“Look! A Negro!” It was a passing sting. I attempted a smile.

“Look! A Negro!” Absolutely. I was beginning to enjoy myself.

“Look! A Negro!” The circle was gradually getting smaller. I was really enjoying myself.

“*Maman*, look, a Negro; I’m scared!” Scared! Scared! Now they were beginning to

²⁵ In 1959, the Japanese government officially claimed that only 258 Koreans were forcibly brought to Japan; others willingly just came. See “Taihan jiyū ishi de kyojū.” This claim is still repeated by some right-wingers when they attempt to absolve the Japanese government from any misdeed against Koreans. However, those right-wingers fail to take the subordinate colonial relationship between Japan and Korea into consideration. As colonial subjects, Koreans’ so-called “free will” was always already dependent on, or restricted by, Japanese control.

²⁶ Tsūmei itself is a product of the Japanese colonization of Korea. Under the Japanese rule, Koreans were forced to use Tsūmei. In 1940, the Japanese government issued a policy called Sōshi-kaimei 創氏改名 that made it compulsive for Koreans to adopt Japanese names.

²⁷ From time to time, because of this impossibility, the revelation of one’s Korean ancestry is highlighted as one of the epic moments in many works of Japanese popular culture. See, for instance, *Go*, a film directed by Yukisada Isao based on the novel with the same title written by Kaneshiro Kazuki, and a novel *Chōsen daigakko monogatari*: 朝鮮大学校物語 written by film director Yang Yong-hi among others.

be scared of me. I wanted to kill myself laughing, but laughter had come out of the question.

...

I was responsible not only for my body but also for my race and my ancestors. I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features; deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas, slave traders ...

(Fanon 2008, 91-2)

This scene was caused by Fanon's incapability of passing. As a black man, he was not able to assimilate himself into the Western society dominated by white-skinned people. The skin color of Fanon/his fellow black peoples makes him/them stand out among whites as the target of fear and discrimination. In contrast, Japanese colonizers and the Korean colonized illustrate a mechanism of colonialism that is not entirely dependent on the ostensible distinguishability between the colonizers and the colonized. In other words, the colonial relationship between the Japanese and Koreans is different from that between the whites and the blacks, based on which the Western postcolonial theory has been developed. In terms of skin color and physical features, the colonized Koreans would have been able to easily pass as Japanese citizens.²⁸ What is more, in addition to visual resemblance, many of Zainichi Koreans are able to linguistically and legally pass as Japanese citizens.²⁹

Anxious about such indistinguishability between the Japanese and Koreans, some Internet users in Japanese cyberspace attempt to find some features that would give away the identity of Zainichi Koreans. One of those features is the shape of eyes. Some claim that people with Korean blood lineage have more slanted eyes, compared to the "pure" Japanese. In addition, a myth is widely shared that there are some sets of patterns in the Tsūmei of Zainichi Koreans. According to this myth, these patterns would help one identify Zainichi Koreans out of the Japanese. For instance, rumor has it that names that include specific Chinese characters such as "金" and "徳," and names that are bilaterally

²⁸ The passability of Japanese Koreans was already recognized in the time of Imperial Japan. Novelist Nakajima Atsushi highlights this passability in "Toragari," a canonical work of Japanese colonial literature, in the following manner: "And now, before the story of the tiger hunt, I must talk about my friend. His name is Chō Taikan. As you can tell by name, he is a Hantōjin. Everyone said that his mother was a Naichijin. I might have personally heard about his mother from him, or it might have been that I just made such an assumption on my own. Although Chō and I were very close friends, I never had a chance to see his mother. In any case, he was fluent in Japanese. And, he often read novels and such, so he even knew expressions of Edo-dialect that Japanese boys in the colonies had never heard. So, no one could uncover at first glance that he was a Hantōjin" さて、虎狩の話の前に、一人の友達のことを話して置かねばならぬ。その友達の名は趙大煥と云った。名前で見るとおり、彼は半島人だった。彼の母親は内地人だと皆が云っていた。私はそれを彼の口から親しく聞いたような気もするが、或いは私自身が自分で勝手にそう考えて、きめこんでいただけかも知れぬ。あれだけ親しく付合っているが、ついで私は彼のお母さんを見たことがなかった。兎とに角かく、彼は日本語が非常に巧たくみだった。それに、よく小説などを読んでいたので、植民地あたりの日本の少年達が聞いたこともないような江戸前の言葉さえ知っていた位だ。で、一見して彼を半島人と見破ることは誰にも出来なかった。(74).

²⁹ This does not necessarily mean that Zainichi Koreans willingly "choose" to pass as Japanese citizens but rather are forced to do so. Otherwise, Zainichi Koreans are likely to be legally and socially discriminated against.

symmetrical (e.g., “金本” and “高本”) are most likely Zainichi Korean Tsūmei.³⁰ In reality, however, it is almost impossible to definitively identify Zainichi Koreans by their physical features or names.³¹

Due to such impossibility, some Internet users can arbitrarily denounce Zainichi Koreans. Whenever Netouyo like and as they see fit, Netouyo can blame Zainichi Koreans through Zainichi Nintei for doing evil as surrogates for potential Japanese law- and norm-breakers, or can blame Zainichi Koreans as plainly evil ones. Enabled by the history of the Japanese colonization of Korea, this representational practice leads to the limitless production and reproduction of the othering discourse against Zainichi Koreans. In other words, they become scapegoats disproportionately targeted for discrimination online today precisely because of the legacy of the colonial history dating back to the early 1900s.

Conclusion

In part as a response to the recent rise of the discriminatory othering discourse against Zainichi Koreans, the Japanese government passed and enacted the Hate Speech Act of 2016 *ヘイトスピーチ解消法* to deal with hate-speech movements. The effort of the Japanese government, however, has not effectively stopped them.³² In fact, on June 5th, 2016, two days after the enactment of this law, a hate-speech demonstration was organized on the street of the city of Kawasaki in the greater Tokyo metropolitan area. This city is commonly known as one of the Korean towns in Japan, or as a place where many Zainichi Koreans reside, and this hate-speech demonstration specifically targeted them. It was organized by a man called by his online name “Isoroku Papa” 五十六パパ; he called out to other Internet users about his plan for the demonstration. Even with the Hate Speech Act of 2016, this kind of hate-speech movement does not stop. On October 7th, 2018, once again in Kawasaki, a demonstration against Zainichi Koreans was carried out by some people agitated online to gather on-street.

³⁰ See the following links: “‘Namae ga sayū hitaishō nara zainichi’ wa honto?” “名前が左右対称なら在日”は本当? (Is it true that “those names that are bilaterally symmetrical are the ones of Zainichi Koreans?”), <https://jigensha.info/2018/01/31/koreaname-1/>, (accessed October 25, 2019); Zainichi no tsūmei de ichiban ōi myōji wa?” 在日の通名で一番多い名字は? (What is the most common family name among Zainichi?), <https://jigensha.info/2018/02/09/koreaname-2/>, (accessed October 25, 2019).

³¹ Because of this impossibility, celebrities with slanted eyes and certain names are often identified as Zainichi Koreans, without any other concrete evidence. For instance, comedian Tomizu Masa トミーズ雅 was once accusingly singled out as one of Zainichi Koreans because his eyes were slanted and his family name was the one that was supposedly common among many Zainichi Koreans. In addition, Masa was from a place in Osaka where many of the residents were Zainichi Koreans. Masa, therefore, came out and, with some counter-evidences, publicly made a statement that he was a person with Japanese ancestry. See “Zainichi nintei” for more information.

³² This effort is probably not enough from the beginning. This law remains conceptual in the sense that it entails neither a prohibitive clause nor a punitive clause against actual hate-speech practices. Under the Hate Speech Act of 2016, ultranationalist extremists can still verbally attack Zainichi Koreans (and other groups of foreign citizens) as they wish, as long as they refrain from resorting to physical violence. While the national law remains conceptual, the city of Kawasaki is taking a more progressive step. For the first time in the nation, the Kawasaki municipality is planning to enact an ordinance against hate-speech acts with prohibitive and punitive clauses in 2020.

These incidents indicate that the Internet is facilitating anti-Zainichi Korean phenomenon in contemporary Japanese society. As the extant literature illustrates, precisely because of the Internet, it has become more than possible for some Japanese to express discriminatory othering remarks against Zainichi Koreans in cyberspace, and further transmit those remarks to a larger number of other unspecified Internet users. However, it is important to note that this is not the whole story, as the story has its own histories. One must be aware of the fact that, behind the contemporary facilitation of the anti-Zainichi Korean phenomenon via the Internet, there is the historical specificity, namely, the history of the Japanese colonization of Korea. The colonial history and technology are intertwined with each other in the production and circulation of anti-Zainichi Korean representations in Japanese cyberspace and in contemporary Japanese society.

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