

*ZAINICHI:*

AN ANALYSIS OF DIASPORIC IDENTITY IN JAPAN

by

David C. Walker

Thesis Supervisor:

---

Peter Siegenthaler, Ph.D.  
Department of History

Approved:

---

Heather C. Galloway, Ph.D.  
Dean, Honors College

*ZAINICHI:*

AN ANALYSIS OF DIASPORIC IDENTITY IN JAPAN

HONORS THESIS

Presented to the Honors College of  
Texas State University  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements

for Graduation in the Honors College

by

David C. Walker

San Marcos, Texas  
May 2016

## CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: <i>Death by Hanging</i> and the Korean Variable.....	12
Chapter 3: <i>All Under the Moon</i> and the Shift to the “Post- <i>Zainichi</i> ” Era .....	23
Chapter 4: <i>Blood and Bones</i> and Nuancing the <i>Zainichi</i> Historiography .....	34
Conclusion .....	47
Works Cited .....	50

## Abstract

The *Zainichi*, diasporic Koreans left in Japan after the events of the Japanese colonial period and World War II, are seldom represented in Japanese media, reflecting their overall invisibility in Japanese society. “Japanese New Wave” film emerged in the post-war era as a cinematic movement that discussed many of the unresolved matters of World War II, including that of the *Zainichi*. Analyses of these films in relation to their historical and political context are sporadic and Japanese film often goes without discussion in Western academia. Using the films *Death by Hanging* (1968), *All Under the Moon* (1994), and *Blood and Bones* (2004), this paper analyzes the genesis, history, and slow wane of the Korean diasporic identity in Japan and attempts to use film as a means of presenting a Western audience with a snapshot of the *Zainichi* timeline and a look into the nature of diasporic identity. Ōshima’s 1968 film *Death by Hanging* details the origins of *Zainichi* insurgents, those who expressed their oppression through criminality and began the discourse on *Zainichi* identity in film by posing the question “What is a Korean?” *All Under the Moon* (1993) attempts to “rehumanize” the *Zainichi* as more than just a political issue or matter of public discourse, and 2004’s *Blood and Bones* reinvents this tactic in order to reclaim agency over the *Zainichi* historical narrative. Ultimately, the films display the creative and destructive natures of capitalism on identity and community and highlight some of the idiosyncrasies inherent in the geo-political and ethnic division of East Asia, all in the search for authenticity in representation of the *Zainichi*.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

World War II and the following post-war era of Japanese history are often discussed within the context of the characteristically intense wartime industrialization of Japan or the post-war leap toward capitalism and its relationship with westernization. Despite its inherent connection to these matters, the exchange of cultures and peoples that occurred between Japan and the Korean peninsula went with little discussion until the 1980's, even within Japan itself.<sup>1</sup> *Zainichi* (在日), translated as “residing in Japan,” is a term that has come to refer specifically to an ethnic minority of Koreans in Japan whose ancestors either emigrated from the Korean peninsula before the Second World War or were brought over during it as forced laborers by the Japanese Empire. Essentially, these Koreans in Japan are stateless people, stuck in a sort of forever “citizenship limbo,” with no homeland to which they can return and many without a desire to “return” anywhere. In the early years following World War II, the *Zainichi* were swept aside by the newfangled myth of an ethnically homogenous Japan, quickly stripped of their citizenship and residency, and consequently became a class of invisible people within Japanese society.<sup>2</sup> The topic of “the *Zainichi* problem” has evolved in the 21st century to a discussion primarily with political emancipation, assimilation, and especially representation of identity.

The question of *Zainichi* identity is a complicated and seemingly contradictory one. Although seemingly contradictory in nature, the rapid shift toward an industrialized Japan gave rise to an increase in the value of both internationalization and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Lie, John. *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008, 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-17.

preservation of “Japanese uniqueness.” In a quickly globalizing world, it became important to determine what it meant to be Japanese, and consequently, what it meant to be not-Japanese; these ideas were collected in a genre of literature called *nihonjinron*, or theories of “Japanese-ness.”<sup>3</sup> The idea of Japanese ethnicity, nationality, and culture came to be seen as an interwoven trifecta of “true” Japanese identity. Identities that violate this trifecta, even if only one clause, are seen as problematic to understand and decode. The *Zainichi* fail to fulfil the ethnic and nationalistic requirements of this trifecta, and yet culturally seem to be both simultaneously Korean and Japanese, and at other times, truly neither; that is to say, something new altogether. Further complicating things are the ideological divides present since immigration to Japan first began for Koreans, most noteworthy being the divide between those from South Korea and those from North Korea. In the contemporary era, the term “*Zainichi* identity” has become almost meaningless in that the understanding of identity has become a much more complicated narrative, one that simply cannot be lumped together as a uniform whole. One’s “Korean-ness” or “Japanese-ness” may hold varying levels of importance to the individual. By utilizing contemporary Marxist theory, I want to explore a sociological perspective of the Korean diaspora in Japan. In this chapter, I will use the Marxist ideas of class structure and exploitation of labor as described by Erik Olin Wright in his book *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*<sup>4</sup> to try and explain the historical background that initiated the arrival of a *Zainichi* identity, as well as the economic and social pressures that worked in similitude to both alienate and assimilate Koreans in Japan.

---

<sup>3</sup> Iles, Timothy. *The Crisis of Identity in Contemporary Japanese Film: Personal, Cultural, National*. Leiden: Brill, 2008, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Wright, Erik Olin. *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Though the acknowledgment of the *Zainichi* as a self-imposed identity would not arise until long after World War II, the events that ultimately brought Koreans to Japan and set the stage for a later realization of a *Zainichi* identity began in the early 1900s. I will present these historical events through the lens of class analysis and the concept of labor exploitation as a method of interpreting their significance to the emergence of identity and class-consciousness. As the Marxist cliché goes, “class struggle is the motor of history,” and yet, I want to refrain from an economic essentialist position that might imply that the *Zainichi* identity is the sole product of Japanese capitalism. In this brief introduction to the history of Koreans in Japan, I propose that because an ethnic working class of Koreans had existed in Japan since the 1900s, spawned from a history of unique labor exploitation that peaked during the World War II era, that the *Zainichi* identity began formation as early as half a century before World War II began. This class, however, would not begin to show signs of a shared class-consciousness until social pressures after World War II forced Koreans in Japan to see themselves as a group isolated from other working-class Japanese citizens and separate from ethnic Koreans in Korea.

In the early 1900s, Koreans immigrated to Japan in search of jobs; until 1920, Koreans in Japan numbered only in the thousands.<sup>5</sup> It was the Japanese labor shortages of the 1920s that drew many Koreans of varying levels of education and skill into Japan to work voluntarily in agriculture, construction, or mining (for considerably lower pay than Japanese laborers). While it is important to note that not all of those who emigrated from Korea in this time would have been unskilled laborers, their status as Koreans would

---

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

have prevented them from utilizing the education or skills they may have entered Japan with, as would it have also prevented them from entering a place of authority over Japanese nationals within the workplace. After the annexation of Korea into the Japanese Empire in 1910, Koreans both in Japan and outside of Japan were considered members of the Japanese Empire, and seen as “children of the empire.”<sup>6</sup> Still destitute and alienated from Japanese society, however, groups of Koreans began to gather in ghettos (*buraku*) and create the first Korean communities in metropolitan cities across the Japanese archipelago. Labor shortages in Japan only increased as the Japanese empire entered World War II, ultimately resulting in the enforced migration of Koreans as work slaves.

It is easy to recognize the exploited nature of Korean labor in Japan during one of the fastest periods of capitalistic industrialization in human history. It is important, however, in order to understand the eventual rise of a *Zainichi* consciousness, to first attempt to understand how Koreans of the pre-war era in Japan may have been exploited in a way that was uniquely distinct from other ethnically Japanese members of the unskilled working class. In *Class Counts*, Erik Olin Wright lists three criteria for classifying labor as exploited. The criteria that Wright lays out are as follows: one, that the exploiter’s material welfare is dependent on the exploited. Two, that some type of force, often one that involves property rights, prevents the exploited from controlling important productive resources. And three, the exploiter controls the fruits of labor created by the exploited.<sup>7</sup> The first criterion is easily fulfilled in that the success of the Japanese Empire relied greatly upon the exploited labor of work slaves; there is simply

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, Erik Olin. *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

no other fashion in which Japan could have managed an empire that spanned nearly all of East Asia while simultaneously industrializing at a breakneck speed on mainland Japan. The second criterion is of a more social nature and will play a key element in my assertion that the exploitation of Korean labor was somehow unique to that of the exploited Japanese working class after World War II. For now, all that is noteworthy is that before World War II there were very few differences between the ethnically Korean working class and the Japanese *burakumin*, descendants from Japan's feudal untouchables who faced a strong prejudice from Japanese society similar to that of the *Zainichi*. Nevertheless, even in the 1920s, ethnically Korean workers were paid only 70% of what their Japanese counterparts were making in the construction industry.<sup>8</sup> Without a doubt, there were minute differences between the experience of Korean and Japanese workers, but none significant enough to fulfill the second criteria in a way that would make Korean labor unique. Finally, that the ruling class of Japan controlled the fruits of the Korean working class labor is an obvious fulfillment of the third criterion.

My assertion is not that economic pressures alone resulted in the formation of *Zainichi* identity, but rather that economic and social elements worked in unison to put the *Zainichi* into the unique situation that necessitated the formation of a class. The status of Koreans in Japan as cheap laborers had already placed them within the unskilled working class of Japanese society. The question then becomes one of when this class of Koreans in Japan became conscious and first began to come together to support the interests of others within the class. The formation of the North Korea-aligned League of

---

<sup>8</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, 5.

Resident Koreans in Japan in 1945 and its South Korean counterpart in 1948<sup>9</sup> would seem to be a clear indicator of a new class-consciousness, as they served as the first organizations in Japan created by and for the *Zainichi*. One observes that Lie agrees in his book *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan)*, citing the era from August 1945 to August 1946 as year zero for *Zainichi* history.<sup>10</sup>

What events spurred this sudden move toward class-consciousness? Before World War II and until its end, Koreans in Japan were still viewed as members of the Japanese Empire and Korean men even partook in universal male suffrage beginning in 1925.<sup>11</sup> It was not until 1939 that Japan began “household registry reform,” a process by which Koreans in Japan would be encouraged to take Japanese names, coming “to experience double identity, manifested in the split between one’s original Korean name, and a newly created Japanese name.”<sup>12</sup> Incongruously, in 1947, the Japanese government forced non-ethnically Japanese residents to register as aliens, effectively forcing Koreans in Japan to forfeit their residency. In 1945, under the Allied Occupation, Koreans had lost their right to vote. The United States, governing Japan after World War II until 1952, sought to repatriate the Korean population in Japan.<sup>13</sup>

Recall the second criteria of Wright’s theory of exploited labor, which states that some type of force, often one that involves property rights, prevents the exploited from controlling important productive resources. After World War II, Koreans lost their Japanese citizenship, their only third of the “identity trifecta.” As non-citizens, they lost

---

<sup>9</sup> Ryang, Sonia. "Introduction: Between the Nations." In *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*, 1-21. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Lie, *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan)*, 36.

<sup>11</sup> Ryang, “Introduction: Between the Nations,” 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, 36-37.

all chance at earnestly controlling productive resources within Japan, and in turn, became alienated in a way that is unique from ethnically Japanese workers. Even in the case of *Zainichi* capitalists, they only are able to control the productive resources of other *Zainichi* and are forced to exploit the labor of their peers in the same manner that Japanese capitalists did. It is no mystery that in this period when Koreans in Japan first received the title of *Zainichi*, we begin to see the emergence of a class-consciousness, that is, a class that recognizes its members and begins to act (however successfully or unsuccessfully) for their own unified good.

It is important to understand the paradoxical rise of Korean nationalism that was stimulated as a response to Japanese colonialism during this era. Korean nationalism did not always exist in the way it does today; “the idea of being a Korean was foreign to much of the population living on the Korean peninsula before the twentieth century.”<sup>14</sup> Korea at this time did not have the economic means to stir up a popular national consciousness in the way that Japan had during the Meiji Era. However, Japanese colonialism, in displacing millions of Koreans, would inevitably give rise to Korean nationalism as a response. The diaspora of Koreans during the war era was not limited to those who came or were brought to Japan as many Koreans fled to areas of South East Asia, China, and the Soviet Union. After World War II, many Koreans would relocate to the Americas. The longings of diasporic Koreans to see Korea as an independent nation-state occurred only further incited the rise of Korean nationalism, and many of those who pioneered a national Korean consciousness were returnees from countries like the U.S.

---

<sup>14</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, 170.

and Japan<sup>15</sup>, such as those who incited the March 1<sup>st</sup> movement, a watershed moment in the fight for Korean independence from Imperial Japan.<sup>16</sup> In other words, it is somewhat difficult to divide the rise of diasporic identity in the *Zainichi* from the rise of general Korean nationalism as they occurred in similitude.

After World War II, the rise of Korean nationalism had led to an overall understanding among Koreans in Japan that repatriation was the only option, and during this time, indeed, many Koreans did repatriate. Many found, however, that the poor economic conditions in the Koreas after the war made finding work difficult and that maintaining the quality of life they had possessed in Japan was impossible. This was especially true for those who repatriated to North Korea; many were “shocked by the sheer grinding poverty they encountered on their arrival in the North.”<sup>17</sup> Those who repatriated to North Korea found themselves at the bottom of an incredibly hierarchical society; many, unable to speak Korean competently, were purged to labor camps, some never to return.<sup>18</sup> In 1965, Japan entered into a treaty with South Korea, acknowledging their government for the first time, and allowing Koreans in Japan to claim South Korean nationality and residential status in Japan. By 1970, sporadic repatriation left the communities of Koreans in Japan erratically distributed throughout Japan, and the *Zainichi* began to integrate from Koreatowns into mainstream Japanese society, more-or-less indistinguishable from those who were ethnically Japanese, serving to strengthen the

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>16</sup> Matsuo, Takayoshi, and S. Takiguchi. “The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part Two: The 1st March Movement and the Japanese Protestants”. *Modern Asian Studies* 13.4 (1979): 581–615.

<sup>17</sup> Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. "Freedom and Homecoming: Narratives of Migration in the Repatriation of Zainichi Koreans to North Korea." In *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, 56.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 60.

image of Japan as a monoethnic society. At this time, 75% of *Zainichi* in Japan had been born there and spoke Japanese fluently and most used Japanese aliases.<sup>19</sup>

The origins of the *Zainichi* are directly tied to the rise of capitalism and labor in Japan; before World War II, Koreans originally immigrated to Japan in search of paid labor, albeit underpaid, in Japan's thriving economic conditions. Later, during WWII, Imperial Japan forcefully migrated Korean workers into mainland Japan to meet labor shortages. Could one possibly make the argument that the necessity for the *Zainichi* to exploit one another under capitalistic pressures prevented the *Zainichi* from truly unifying? One may even go as far as to say that the *Zainichi* as a group of class-conscious individuals died off after the first generation, and that passing on the *Zainichi* identity to the next generation was stunted by the divided parties of ideology within the larger class of the first generation of *Zainichi*. The fragmented consciousness and ideological chaos between those who sided with North Korea and South Korea was exacerbated by Japan's recognition of South Korea and dismissal of North Korea in the 1965 Normalization Treaty<sup>20</sup>, and divides between those who opted to assimilate versus those who refused, or the entirely separate mindset of those who maintained dreams of repatriation, ultimately impaired the possibility of the second and third generation *Zainichi* emerging as a permanent, more united class within Japan. Alternatively, might one argue that assimilation and the dissolution of the *Zainichi* identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are more likely results of generational differences than the products of social alienation?

Questions concerning identity can be hard to answer by looking at historical fact alone; in order to understand the complexities of identity and class-consciousness, it is

---

<sup>19</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, 32.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

necessary to involve some depictions of the *Zainichi*. For the purpose of this thesis, film is the medium of choice. Through film, one is able to see the growth of characters and the way they interact with their social and physical environments, much like in a novel; however, film, unlike the novel, is able to force the viewer to see things in an arguably much more primitive way. A novel can present the consciousness of an individual from a single perspective, whereas film, in involving many different individual interpretations of writers, directors, actors, editors and so forth, leaves more within the realm of the subjective. Further, film, falling somewhat within the category of popular art, is able to either reflect or subvert the cultural mindset of a wider audience in a way that the novel could never hope to.

Films concerning the *Zainichi* are rare and randomly dispersed through about sixty or so years of Japanese cinema. In chapter two, *Death by Hanging* (1968) will be analyzed as a means of dismantling the idea of “Korean-ness” and “Japanese-ness” as a means to better understand the alienation of *Zainichi* Koreans from Japanese society. *Death by Hanging* marks the first step into reconstructing the *Zainichi* narrative as one not preoccupied with an image of *Zainichi* as the noble victim or the hardened criminal. Discussed in chapter three, *All Under the Moon* (1993) shows an even more humanized depiction of the *Zainichi*, and represents a new movement for the *Zainichi* in Japan: the “Post-*Zainichi*” era. Chapter four concerns *Blood and Bones* (2004). Although it is the most recent of all three films, its story actually begins in the 1920s and spans four decades. The film takes the ideology of the post-*Zainichi* era and applies it to a historical context. In the conclusion, I will analyze all three films together in an attempt to

understand the evolution of the discourse on *Zainichi* identity and the nature of diasporic consciousness in general.

## Chapter 2: *Death by Hanging* and the Korean Variable

A series of criminal, often-violent incidents involving the *Zainichi* beginning in the late 1950s brought the plight of the *Zainichi* out of the shadows and into Japanese public discourse and the media. *Death by Hanging* is a 1968 Japanese film about a young *Zainichi* man, R, who is to be executed by hanging for the rape and murder of two Japanese girls. Borrowing much of its story from one of the aforementioned real-life incidents, the film grapples with a few difficult philosophical, political, and sociological questions that were affecting Japanese society at the time. Finding an answer to these questions was vitally important to the director of *Death by Hanging*, Ōshima Nagisa, a key voice of the radical left in post-war Japan. The topics of the film include the death penalty and its relation to the dominion of the State, the significance of Japanese imperialism in post-war Japanese society, and the experience of Koreans in Japan as an ethnic minority. Despite the array of themes, the film is most often discussed only as a critique of capital punishment, something that perturbed Ōshima greatly enough that he once wrote specifically to “foolish critics” who saw this film as a work with only one theme.<sup>21</sup> A different interpretation of the film, one contingent solely upon the main character’s status as a Korean in Japan, would still violate the “one theme” complaint of Ōshima, but in an effort to both offset the imbalance and to avoid simply reworking any of the existing analyses of this film concerning capital punishment, I will attempt to analyze this film only in relation to the conversation of Koreans in Japan.

---

<sup>21</sup> Ōshima, Nagisa, and Annette Michelson. *Cinema, Censorship, and the State: The Writings of Nagisa Ōshima, 1956-1978*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992, 166.

On the day of R's execution, the hanging is in usual order to be carried out until the ultimate moment that he is finally dropped from the trap door with a noose around his neck. Twenty minutes after the attempted execution, he still has not died. Due to an interpretation of a stipulation within Japanese law, R cannot be executed until he has regained consciousness, leading the Japanese officials on site to decide to try to reawaken him. He eventually comes to, and it is revealed that R has lost his memory. Insistent on executing R, the group of Japanese men decide to attempt to cure his amnesia through a series of bizarre and twisted reenactments of R's life and the crime itself, ultimately culminating in another murder, this time by one of the execution's officiators, the Education Minister. The film then enters a more philosophical tone as R discusses his Korean identity and criminality with his "sister," a spirit-like Korean woman who appears from the corpse of the girl murdered by the Education Minister. Ultimately, R accepts his death and is hanged once again. When he falls from the trap door the second time, however, we see that the noose is empty.

In the film's introduction, we see things as they truly are. The documentary-like nature of the introduction and its robotic description of the execution room harkens back to the era of naturalism, a stark contrast against the rest of the film, which is absurdist and much more Brechtian in form. The realism of the opening scene also seems most rooted to the story upon which the film is based. Ri Chin'U, an eighteen-year-old *Zainichi* Korean, allegedly raped and killed two Japanese girls in 1958 and was later executed. Japanese media sensationalized the story, and it is often seen as a harbinger of later stereotypes of *Zainichi* criminality that would follow. Many, including Ōshima himself,

felt the crime and others like it were “a negative expression of Korean powerlessness”<sup>22</sup> in Japanese society. Exacerbating the powerlessness Koreans felt in Japanese society during this time, the “geopolitical struggle” between North and South Korea during the 1960’s had “convinced the majority of the *Zainichi* population that unification was by no means imminent, signaling the permanence of their fate in Japan”.<sup>23</sup> The self-realization of the *Zainichi* as permanent residents of Japan was the proverbial final nail in the coffin of the Korean diaspora. Without the promise of repatriation, the *Zainichi* were left with no “home” and an identity crisis. The loss of home and the loss of the Korean identity through pressure to assimilate were thought by Ōshima and his contemporaries to be among the main causes for criminality among the *Zainichi*. *Death by Hanging* is a surrealist simulation, a thought-experiment created by Ōshima to investigate the experience of Koreans in Japan within a realm separate from time, space, and reality. Ōshima, who sympathized greatly with Ri Chin’U, was attempting to answer, through film, the question of what made this man a sympathetic character in spite of his alleged crimes. The film’s disconnect from reality is perhaps the only way in which the filmmaker could hope to explain the apparent but often furtive connections between oppression and criminality.

The loss of identity, not coincidentally, is a major theme in *Death by Hanging*. The moment R is hanged, we can assume that he has lost his memory, and has thus lost his identity. Therefore, the film itself, as a metaphor and a thought experiment, does not actually begin until R is hanged because the split of R’s “soul” and body is the primary source of the film’s plot and main philosophical questions. Without his memory or

---

<sup>22</sup> Lie, *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan)*, 94.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

identity, R's body and existence are somehow still Korean, while his mind is somehow simultaneously not. The story of the film then becomes the task of reconnecting R's mind to his Korean body for the sake of seeing him die, and the film's characters take to this challenge in a variety of ways. His loss of memory after his hanging can be viewed as a sort of "rebirth" as a human, a blank slate with no identity, a metaphor for the rebirth of the *Zainichi* as a new identity in the world.

The significance of his name being R, rather than an actual Korean name, is possibly that it evokes the feeling of a mathematical proposition.<sup>24</sup> R, thus, becomes a blank slate, a "Korean variable" for the men to project their ideas of Korean-ness upon. Both the audience and R can never learn from these men "what is a Korean," but rather what Japanese society thinks a Korean is. In the reenactments of the Japanese men, R is made to be poor, uneducated, descending from a bad family environment, with a predisposition to carnal desire and violence. This may seem familiar to American audiences, as it is not altogether unlike that of the caricature of African Americans in the United States, a caricature that, like that of the *Zainichi*, has been used to propagate use of the death penalty and systematic oppression through the justice system. Ōshima makes a direct reference to this in the film when "we hear echoes of other nations where the state has murdered with racist motivations under the guise of law,"<sup>25</sup> both the United States and Germany being mentioned by name.

Significant also is the appearance of R's "home" during the reenactments; the walls, covered in newspaper clippings, place the Korean family "in a space of public

---

<sup>24</sup> Turim, Maureen Cheryn. *The Films of Ōshima Nagisa: Images of a Japanese Iconoclast*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 67.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

discourse”<sup>26</sup> and create an alienating atmosphere. Through the window, Japanese officials seated in front of a Japanese flag watch the scenes play out. Both the newspapers and the window create the feeling of being watched and draw out a feeling of “otherness” for the improvised Korean family. It also represents the inescapability of Japanese society for Koreans in Japan who, in going home, are still acutely alienated in seeing themselves as foreign in their own Japanese homes, watching Japanese media, and likely living in homes rented from a Japanese property owner.

The stipulation in Japanese law in the film stating that a man cannot be executed unless he is conscious may or may not have been a fabrication for the sake of the story. However, the message would seem to imply that the *Zainichi*, as people who were still unconscious, struggling in the search for identity, should not be executed in any circumstances. Although it is perhaps a moral stance, the fallible logic inherent in such a law is made apparent in its outcome. Instead of protecting the unconscious R, the law instead pressures the men to force a false consciousness upon him, telling him who he is as a Korean only so that he may be executed. In this, Ōshima is able to pinpoint some of the pitfalls in victimizing the *Zainichi*. The amnesiac R is, despite having no self-determined identity whatsoever, told by the Japanese officials that he is Korean. For R, left empty after his first hanging or “rebirth,” self-determination of his Korean identity is impossible. He simply has no concept of Korean-ness at all, or Japanese-ness for that matter, only understanding that being Korean somehow makes him different from the Japanese men. Before he is inundated with the overwhelmingly racist opinions of Japanese society, it is likely that R would never have questioned his otherness at all. The

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 73.

source of his “Korean-ness” is a mystery to not only him, but also the officials themselves, who remark that explaining the man’s ethnicity to him would be much easier if he was of African descent, being that there are no real phenotypical differences between Koreans and Japanese. The idea of “authentic Japanese-ness,” Lim Youngmi writes, is “an implicit and invisible racial construct materialized through lineage,”<sup>27</sup> and thus it is impossible for the men to prove in any physical way that R is Korean. His “Korean-ness” is simply an understood constant, an aspect of his identity that simply exists for its own sake. Despite being *Zainichi* himself, R, in his state of amnesia with a lack of identity, is a metaphor for the *Zainichi* experience, especially those born past the second generation, as they have no concept of “Korean-ness” and no real way of receiving information about Korea from sources not influenced by a Japanese bias.

The film very plainly states one of its key themes when R, in a state of amnesia after his failed hanging, poses the question, “What is a Korean?” The question could very well serve as a description of the film’s main theme. The characters of the film quickly discover they are unable to answer R’s question, and instead, a crash-course improvisation ensues as a means of teaching the young man what a Korean is, or rather, what he is. While the characters in this film perhaps never stand a chance at actually answering this question for R, their actions and behavior inadvertently provide insight into Japanese society and the position of Koreans in Japan.

The answer he receives, as one might imagine, is incredibly skewed, sprinkled or sometimes drenched in brazen racism or stereotype. The men insist to R that he grew up

---

<sup>27</sup> Lim, Youngmi, “Reinventing Korean Roots and Zainichi routes: The Invisible Diaspora Among Naturalized Japanese of Korean Descent,” In *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, 82.

in a destitute, volatile household with an abusive and alcoholic father and a mute mother. They intentionally play down some of the uncooperative facts that they know to be true of R, such as the fact that he was well-read and taking classes at night school. As the men reenact these stereotypes and caricatures of Koreans in Japan, R begins to act along with them, assuming the roles that they would have him believe he should. This is a completely direct, presentational metaphor. That the understanding of *Zainichi* as an ethnic minority is informed so strongly by comparisons to “Japanese-ness” robs the *Zainichi* of their autonomy over their own identity. *Zainichi* identity is, in this sense, doomed to exist in a binary relationship to Japanese identity. By no accident, the men who officiate the execution are employed by the various pillars of organized society: education, law, religion, and the military. When given the opportunity to redefine the life of an individual who is more or less a blank slate, these men, acting as the symbolic hands of Japanese society, instead place R back into his social class, awaiting execution.

The question arises as to why these men prefer the death of R to his rebirth. Pulled out of the metaphorical context, the question becomes: Why does society remain oppressively hierarchical in nature at the expense of those that suffer? Are the Japanese officials operating maliciously, for their own benefit, or simply maintaining the status quo? Based on their depiction in the film, it seems fair to evaluate the officials as acting without thinking critically and simply maintaining the status quo. Despite the fact that they clearly have accepted a number of different stereotypes of Koreans to be true, they are seemingly unaware of the offensive nature of these stereotypes—they simply believe them to be true. Ōshima may have been asserting that the intangible nature of racial

division between Koreans and Japanese requires a blind faith that requires one to act without thinking.

Herein lies the infinite nature of systematic oppression. Society directly pushes the individual into a state of oppression and then creates a caricature of the oppressed as a means toward maintenance of the status quo. The oppressed individual is led to see their life with two paths, either reenacting a life based on stereotype, or, having been presented no other alternative to those stereotypes as inevitability, to violate the status quo. If they choose the status quo, they forever receive punishment for violating some form of criteria that originally placed them in the “other” category. The alternative, in violating the status quo, is also punishment, in this case, capital punishment. In this film, the men see R’s identity as a split dichotomy. Either he is R, a Korean who must be executed, or he is no longer R, the Korean, and therefore cannot be executed. There is no alternative reality where he is somehow both Korean and not to be executed. In this, even the men in the film have inadvertently conceded that there is an undeniable connection between R’s status as a Korean and the crime he is alleged to have committed. Consequently, R cannot be executed until he accepts his identity as Korean, and yet, those who mean to execute him have determined the nature of this very identity itself. The impossibility of societal oppression becomes an inescapable cage that inhibits the development of an identity or a self. Even in a state of maintaining the status quo, however, the human mind continues to imagine.

In one of the improvisational scenes, R is asked for spending money by his “little sisters” but instead tells them to close their eyes and leads them through an imaginary tour of Tokyo where “everything is free, no shopkeepers.” R, existing as a stereotype in

the role-play of the Japanese officials, still exhibits the tendency to imagine a reality in which he is not oppressed. In this case, R has imagined a world “beyond capitalism.”<sup>28</sup> Later in the film, R states, “I only have the desire to combine the real and the imaginary.” By analyzing this scene in light of that single line, Ōshima’s opinions on how criminality could manifest itself from the depths of oppression are apparent. The oppressed mind, held back from the opportunity for growth, begins to imagine a new reality in which its potential no longer withheld. This splits the mind between two realities, one that denies its growth, and the constructed, which provides limitless opportunity. When these two realities become muddled, the expression of the self-originated reality is always to be criminal or deviant in nature because it exists only to violate the societal forces that were responsible for its inception. In the case of R and his little sisters, imagining a shop as a place where “everything is free” would likely be expressed in the form of stealing in a capitalistic reality where most certainly nothing is free.

In the case of R, or rather Ri Chin’U, it was his disenfranchisement from Japanese society that placed him in a position of “sexual poverty” or “sexual unfitness,” both of these terminologies having been used by Ōshima in his writings.<sup>29</sup> With his status as Korean marking him as an undesirable of Japanese society, R is left to explore his sexuality within his own mind, as an individual. He describes a process by which his fantasies, originally only sexual in nature, become darker and more violent, eventually finding himself fantasizing about murder and rape. His fantasies of “sexual fitness,” can only be merged into the reality of his life by incorporating an element of violence as coercion. The film asserts that the only way to combine the two realities, the self-

---

<sup>28</sup> Turim, *The Films of Nagisa Ōshima*, 75.

<sup>29</sup> Ōshima, *Cinema, Censorship, and the State*, 238,242.

conceived reality of sexual prosperity and the true-reality of his status as an undesirable, is through the act of rape.

What is to be made of the ghostlike sister who appears to console R through a series of philosophical dialogues? Despite the contrast of her pro-Korean statements to the “oppressed criminal” rhetoric of the Japanese officials, her words do not seem to resonate any more strongly with R than those of the men. In fact, “the claim made by R’s sister figure that his crimes are a revolt of the oppressed Koreans against... Japanese society is denied by R himself.”<sup>30</sup> The failure of either extremist rhetoric to explain the actions of R or resonate with him as an individual is perhaps the first nuanced depiction of the too-often polarized predicament of the *Zainichi* in the film. Up to the arrival of R’s sister figure, the political commentary of the film is largely critical of the Japanese officials and their poor understanding of R, but in R’s denial of the sister figure’s justifications, it is shown that Korean nationals are similarly not able to understand the plight and actions of the *Zainichi*.

This film was instrumental in initiating the “post-*Zainichi*” era because it was the first to propose the question of *Zainichi* identity as something to be decided by the individual. R’s resistance to both the essentialist narratives of both the Japanese men and his “sister” reinforce the power of the individual to maintain agency over their own identity and actions. Both the Japanese men and R’s “sister” are interested less in R the individual than they are in attributing his crime to explanations that serve to further their own political agendas.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ko, Mika. *Japanese Cinema and Otherness: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japanese-ness*. London: Routledge, 2010, 140.

*Death by Hanging* questions the validity of a society that places the individual into a social hierarchy yet endorses a political system that treats all individuals as equal. Social inequality prevents the individual from conceiving an identity in the way that those who are otherwise liberated are capable of doing. The absence of an identity, in the film, is reason enough to spare a life. Beyond its relation to capital punishment, however, the film creates a narrative of the *Zainichi* experience, telling the story of a lost identity and the search to find it.

### Chapter 3: *All Under the Moon* and the Shift to the “Post-Zainichi” Era

*All Under the Moon* is a 1993 comedy directed by Sai Yoichi, who, unlike the director of the film discussed in Chapter 2, is *Zainichi* himself. The child of a *Zainichi* Korean father and a Japanese mother, Sai’s film *All Under the Moon* presents a charming picture of “secret Japan,” that is, working-class immigrants in Japan who make up the hidden, multicultural side of Japanese society and who are absent from much Japanese film. In the film, a *Zainichi*-owned taxi company, Kaneda Taxi, struggles to stay afloat through a series of financial obstacles and tribulations. The film’s main character Tadao is a *Zainichi* man who works as a taxi driver and falls in love with a Filipina woman who works at his mother’s karaoke bar. While the absurd *Death by Hanging* concerns a *Zainichi* man under extraordinary circumstances, *All Under the Moon* is primarily a depiction of the lives of ordinary *Zainichi* Koreans in early 1990s Japan. *All Under the Moon* marks the beginning of a shift into the “Post-Zainichi” era, a break from the previous era of *Zainichi* literature that, rather than presenting stories primarily concerned with war-era anecdotes of victimhood or the “search for stable subjectivity,”<sup>31</sup> instead asserted that *Zainichi* fiction should tell stories of complex, varying *Zainichi* identities in order to deconstruct the caricature of the “noble victim” in favor of more humanized characters. And yet, in spite of the film’s lighthearted and ordinary, slice-of-life nature, there are still political ideas lingering in the film’s background, possibly remnants from the novel upon which it is based, Yang Sok-II’s *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* (1981). Whereas *Death by Hanging* was a film created with the indisputable intent to display Ōshima’s

---

<sup>31</sup> Ko, Mika. *Japanese Cinema and Otherness: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japanese-ness*. London: Routledge, 2010, 147.

certain political opinion, *All Under the Moon* differs in that the viewer must infer any political message taken from the film. Although subtle, the film is sprinkled with a few instances of direct commentary on capitalism and uses humor and satire to comment on the dissolution of the *Zainichi* community in Japan occurring during the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The film's main character still does endure discrimination based on his ethnicity despite his relatively high socio-economic status and the less prejudiced social climate of Japan in the early 90s; however, this does not serve as the film's focus. In the (arguable) absence of any strong political agenda, the re-humanizing depiction of *Zainichi* Koreans in 1990s Japan is both novel and inherently valuable to any discussion concerning the *Zainichi* in that it takes *Zainichi* Korean characters out of a "noble victim" context and places them into the ordinary. Unfortunately, being "ordinary" in 1990s Tokyo, where the previous success of the Japanese economy had completely changed the social and cultural spheres of Japan also meant having to navigate the alienating landscape of the world as changed by capitalism. By incorporating Marx's theory of alienation as described in his original manuscripts into an analysis of the film's themes, I will attempt to show how the film depicts the process of alienation of man from fellow man under capitalism.

By 1992, around 10,000 *Zainichi* Koreans were choosing to naturalize, or become Japanese nationals, each year. For some, this drastic move toward assimilation signaled the end of the *Zainichi* as a separate ethnic class in Japan.<sup>32</sup> Inversely, however, the need for *Zainichi* to remain in the "ethnic closet" had waned significantly, and the tradition of passing as Japanese was no longer considered to be customary. In the 1990s, the majority of *Zainichi* were the second- and third-generation children of those who had

---

<sup>32</sup> Lie, *Diaspora Without Homeland*, 170.

initially emigrated (enforced or otherwise) from Korea; typically holding both Korean and Japanese names, they almost unanimously spoke Japanese as their first language and were then indistinguishable from their ethnically Japanese peers. The slow dissolution of *Zainichi* prejudice was without a doubt a step forward for Koreans in Japan, yet some *Zainichi* intellectuals worried about the long-term social consequences of assimilation for the *Zainichi*. For some, being *Zainichi* was a fundamental part of one's identity, and leftist *Zainichi* intellectuals like Kang Sangjung would advocate a pan-Korean identity somewhat akin to the pan-African identity proposed by Malcolm X during the civil rights era of American history.<sup>33</sup> Others would encourage assimilation and forfeiture of any feigned sense of attachment to their Korean ancestry. Whatever the case, in the early 90s it was apparent that the polarized understanding of *Zainichi* identity as being something entirely separate from Japanese identity had been foregone in favor of a more complex and delineated understanding of identity for Koreans in Japan. While it was ultimately the forces of capitalism and the demand for cheaper labor that were responsible for the initial displacement of Koreans in Japan that formed the *Zainichi* and necessitated a community and consciousness, these same forces of capitalism would puzzlingly be driving forces for the dissolution of the *Zainichi* as a community only decades later. In the 1990s, events were being put in motion that would ultimately lead to what John Lie calls, a "Post-*Zainichi* Generation," or an era in which the varied personal identities of Koreans in Japan, primarily those of the second and third generations, could no longer be (and likely never should have been) lazily lumped together as homogenous by the word "*Zainichi*."<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, 137.

<sup>34</sup> Lie, *Diaspora Without Homeland*, 168.

One's Korean ancestry had come to hold different levels of significance for the descendants of the original *Zainichi*.

The main character of *All Under the Moon*, Tadao is a sort of “average Joe” who is representative of the second and third generations of *Zainichi* as described above; he embodies the nature of the “Post-*Zainichi* Generation.” Tadao is completely indifferent toward Korean culture; instead he is more self-interested and seemingly not concerned with anything but finding a woman to have sex with. At the Korean wedding early in the film, Tadao is seen against the backdrop of traditional Korean songs and dance trying to pick up three separate *Zainichi* women for sex. Each woman turns him down, and it is clear that this sort of behavior is characteristic of Tadao; he is a hilariously hopeless and rather unsuccessful womanizer.

Later in the film, when he is trying to pick up Connie, a Filipina woman who works for his mother, he tells her a false story of how his brothers died of malnutrition after World War II in an attempt to make an appeal based on his understanding of the oppression he assumes Connie feels as a foreigner in Japan (disregarding the fact that Connie never made any such complaint). In a similar fashion to how the Korean wedding is nothing more than a hunting ground for women to Tadao, the events of World War II that ultimately brought his family to Japan are significant to him only insofar that they can become powerful pickup lines. It seems that he feels no more connected to the events of World War II than any other Japanese young man in the 1990s; he is an ordinary, sometimes likeable, sometimes unlikable womanizer. His character, an immature man riddled with flaws and a self-serving attitude, is a far cry from a character like R of *Death by Hanging*, whose human characteristics or personality are entirely forgone in favor of

communicating Ōshima's political message. Whereas R is a "Korean variable" whose motivations are primarily attributed to societal forces and a political agenda, Tadao is a living, breathing, and imperfect human character with humanistic objectives.

Tadao's ambivalence toward his Korean community or traditions or self-interestedness are not unique to him but instead appear to be the standard among the other young *Zainichi* Korean characters seen in the film. At the wedding, for instance, Tadao's former classmate, now an up-and-coming moneylender, uses the wedding as an opportunity to strike a business deal, despite him telling Tadao, "For today, we're just former classmates." Similarly, one of the young women Tadao attempts to pick up, a college student, becomes temporarily responsive when she thinks she may be able to network with Tadao, who misleads her into thinking he works at a more prestigious job. Similarly, the wedding also becomes a battleground of the political differences between supporters of North and South Korea. When only North Korean songs are sung, a presumably South Korean-identified *Zainichi* man complains that he is being "oppressed" and that South Korean songs must also be sung at the wedding. Although the conversations between the guests do occasionally dip into Korean language, it is notable that all the business deals, pick-ups, and most of the political arguments all happen in Japanese.

The wedding scene is unique to the rest of the events of the film because it is the only time we see the *Zainichi* characters come together in any way that seems representative of Korean culture. One cannot help but feel, however, in spite of the aesthetically hyper-Korean elements of the wedding<sup>35</sup>, that the affair is equally Japanese.

---

<sup>35</sup> Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 151.

The wedding delivers an image of the *Zainichi* community that is as ostensibly Japanese as it is obviously Korean. The disjointed nature of the event and its attendees, however, foreshadows later events in the film. Even at this early point in the film, it is clear that the *Zainichi* characters in the film, especially Tadao and his former classmate, are somehow in a state of unrest, whether political, in business, or, for Tadao, in their love life.

One explanation is given later in the film when Tadao's former classmate, the moneylender, comes to Kaneda Taxi. He tries to convince Tadao to work for him, and Tadao remarks that he does not like moneylenders, to which the man replies:

Koreans just don't have a spirit of self-sacrifice. What I want is to use the money I make from lending for the unification of Korea. The money I make belongs not to me but to society. Koreans only think about themselves and their relatives. That's the downside of capitalism. I'm prepared to lose all my money to end our people's tragedy and build a unified nation! Believe me!

Tadao seems unconvinced, and cracks a crass joke about his former classmate. At first, this scene seems to reaffirm Tadao's indifference to being *Zainichi* and self-interestedness. In the next scene, however, the moneylender tells his business associates and the owner of Kaneda Taxi:

We're a new generation of *Zainichi* businessmen. We're the children of capitalism. Damn unification!

He is revealed to be a snake in the grass, utilizing the pro-*Zainichi* rhetoric only in order to recruit (likely underpaid) *Zainichi* workers like Tadao. It is interesting to suppose the intention of including a satirical character such as this.

In his "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," Karl Marx first detailed the ideas of "estranged labor," a process of dehumanization faced by workers in the capitalist cosmos, on which all subsequent Marxist theory concerning alienation is based. In Marx's theory of estranged labor, the laborer (under capitalism) becomes alien to

oneself and one's own "species being," or what it means to be human, in a process that begins with losing control over one's own creative autonomy. The process of alienation first begins with alienation of the laborer from the product they are creating. When a laborer creates a product of labor to which she has no attachment or autonomy over, the only achievement of that labor is the product itself. As the laborer has no control over the product created, nor is she capable of seeing herself within what has been created, ultimately all that has occurred is the creation of a material good. The laborer, with no meaningful ties to the object, sees it as something foreign, a power not under her control. This results in a loss of self for the worker, and landslides as the laborer, now numbed during the process of labor itself, continues to create more products of labor, ever increasing the mass of the world of objects alien to her.<sup>36</sup> A human mind subjected to create something for a purpose other than the calling of their human nature, creation not driven from one's inner ambition but rather an outside force: that is the beginning of alienation.

Being that Kaneda Taxi is not involved in the production of material goods but rather a service, the original manuscripts of Marx may seem inapplicable. The process of estranged labor, however, does not apply only to the act of production. One must sell their time and labor, as with production, yet in the service industry, one must also sell their personality or identity. Consider the know-it-all Japanese customer in Tadao's taxi who, after noticing Tadao's Korean name, insists on talking about Korean social issues and politics with the otherwise uninterested Tadao. Because he is working, Tadao cannot simply leave the conversation but must instead continue to cheerfully humor the man

---

<sup>36</sup> Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. New York: International Publishers, 1964, 3.

who appears far more interested in Korean issues than does Tadao. In the case of Connie, who works as a hostess at a Karaoke bar, her personality is also for sale, especially to horny male customers. She is told by Tadao's mother not to complain about sexual harassment from customers and to instead keep encouraging them to buy more drinks. The individual loses a sense of autonomy over their own social interactions when their conversation and personality become for sale. Although not the primary concern of this paper, it can be assumed that as both working-class members and capitalists of society, the characters in *All Under the Moon* are alienated from their labor and one another in a variety of different ways. Simply put, not a single character in the film appears to enjoy or derive a sense of fulfillment from his or her job.

The primary concern of this paper in reference to Marx's theory of estranged labor is with his fourth type of alienation: the alienation of man from fellow man.

(4) An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labor, from his life activity, from his species being, is the estrangement of man from man. When man confronts himself, he confronts the other man. What applies to a man's relation to his own work, the product of his labor and to himself, also holds of a man's relation to the other man, and to the other man's labor and object of labor.<sup>37</sup>

I believe that this form of alienation is primarily responsible for much of the conflict that drives the film: the inability for characters in the film to see other characters as human beings, seeing them instead only as resources. Characters like Tadao's mother and the moneylender are uniquely alienated in their inability to see human beings as anything more than resources. This aspect of alienation also plays into the forces that drove *Zainichi* assimilation and the dissolution of community between *Zainichi* Koreans at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

---

<sup>37</sup> Marx, *Economic and Political Manuscripts*, 4.

A moneylender epitomizes the idea of a capitalist, but rather than including this character as a way to demonize self-interested capitalists in favor of those who dedicate themselves to the *Zainichi* cause and unification of Korea, the moneylender's rehearsed and falsified speech on that exact topic invalidates and satirizes the possibility of a selfless *Zainichi* dedication to the cause of Korean unification. Like Tadao, the moneylender utilizes the victimhood of his ancestors to achieve an objective. In this sense, he really does not present a contrast to Tadao at all, simply a man with an objective different from Tadao's womanizing tendencies, namely, that of accruing capital. *All Under the Moon* gives the impression that all the members of this *Zainichi* community, or at least the younger generation, are trying to capitalize off of one another in some way. Even Tadao's mother, who actually does send money back to her family in Korea, is still an unashamed capitalist, owning her own business, exploiting cheap immigrant labor, and living in a lavish home. Rather than convey a more leftist message like the false rhetoric of the moneylender (that the *Zainichi* should band together and work for the good of their community and society), the film seems to present the facts as though the whole pie is rotten: even the "pro-*Zainichi*" mindset is poisoned by capitalism and ripe for exploitation. According to the events of the film, there is a lurking danger in appeals to shared identity in a capitalist environment.

Later in the film, this theme is repeated after the turning point when Kaneda Taxi begins to fail. Despite the lack of funds and the imminent doom of Kaneda Taxi, the employees insist they be taken on a recreational trip that they were earlier promised by their boss. The men are completely apathetic toward the poor state of their company and have no intention of working until they are paid and given the trip they were promised.

Initially, it appears to be only more self-interest and inconsideration. Later, however, Kaneda, the owner of the taxi company, tells Tadao, “We Koreans should help each other out,” in an appeal to get Tadao to consider the good of the business over himself, to which Tadao replies, “Why? I’m only your employee.” At this point in the film, “helping each other out” would best be translated as, “working for free until the company is back on its feet.” Kaneda, as a business owner, a capitalist, and a man with dreams of owning his own golf course, is employing an appeal to Tadao’s identity as a *Zainichi* Korean, just like the moneylender.

While compared to his more commercially interested peers Tadao may seem more honest, it is important not to forget that Tadao too has used his Korean identity as a dishonest way to achieve an objective. In this sense, Tadao is certainly not a character created to serve as an example of what the director feels a *Zainichi* Korean *should* be. In the film’s early project proposal, it is specified that the film wanted to “create the main character neither as a poor, beautiful Korean, nor as an explosive Korean Yakuza, but a cheerful, funny, and even lovable man who is just like ourselves.”<sup>38</sup> Director Sai also stated that he set about making the film as a story that would not depict minorities in Japan as “weak,” as well as stating that he wanted to satirize the perception the *Zainichi* have of themselves as “poor Koreans suffering from the legacy of Japanese colonialism.”<sup>39</sup> In this sense, the film goes quite well with the historical timeline of the *Zainichi* as written by John Lie. Lie rejects the received “tragic” and “triumphant” nature of the *Zainichi* narrative, and instead, while fully acknowledging the reality both of those

---

<sup>38</sup> Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 147.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

words play in the history of the *Zainichi*, focuses on a much more “nuanced” vision of the *Zainichi* timeline.<sup>40</sup>

In essence, both *All Under the Moon* and the “post-*Zainichi*” era can be characterized by the word *nuanced*; both reject a vision of the *Zainichi* condition in terms of extremes and embrace the re-humanization of the *Zainichi*. *Zainichi* identity, morality, and future determination are all nuanced, complex, and resist a simplified narrative. *All Under the Moon* even nuances the relationship between capitalism and the future of the *Zainichi*, showing it as both the destructive force against a sense of unity and as a tool used by a deceptive *Zainichi* left to exploit other *Zainichi* Koreans. What is present in *All Under the Moon* is the resistance toward essentialism in favor of a political agenda; instead, in this film the characters are put first. *Zainichi* Koreans are no longer simply a political topic or a “Korean variable” but are presented in such a way that actual conclusions about the political, economic, or ethical implications of Koreans in Japan can be drawn by the audience.

---

<sup>40</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, xi.

#### Chapter 4: *Blood and Bones* and Nuancing the *Zainichi* Historiography

*Blood and Bones* is a 2004 film directed by Sai Yoichi, director of the film discussed in chapter 3, *All Under the Moon*. Both films, incidentally, are based on novels written by the *Zainichi* novelist Yang Sok-II. This film, whose narrative begins in 1923, tells the story of Chunpei Kim, a North Korean man who immigrates to Japan in search of factory work before World War II. Told from the perspective of Chunpei's son Masao, *Blood and Bones* paints a grim picture of familial life in a *Zainichi* ghetto. Chunpei terrorizes and runs the ghetto with an iron fist, using acts of extreme violence and coercion to maintain his power, eventually opening up a fish-cake factory in which he exploits the underpaid labor of fellow resident Koreans. Using the money from the fish factory, he becomes a loan shark, lending out large sums of money at high interest rates and again using violence to see that his money is repaid. Along the way, he very publically takes a number of mistresses, who give birth to several illegitimate children. In the film's conclusion, Chunpei returns to North Korea, donates all his acquired fortune to the North Korean government, and dies in the company of one of his illegitimate sons.

In *Blood and Bones*, Sai boldly rejects the received historiography of *Zainichi* victimhood<sup>41</sup> and the dichotomy of *Zainichi* identity as an antithesis to Japanese identity. In reclaiming a sense of agency over the *Zainichi* narrative, this film does not tell a story in which *Zainichi* and Japanese identities are shown overtly to be in conflict nor are *Zainichi* individuals defined by their otherness. Instead, the story focuses on conflict between *Zainichi* individuals completely independent of mainstream Japanese society. Of course, the *Zainichi* characters do live a life of strife and poverty based on or influenced

---

<sup>41</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, 6.

by their status as Koreans in Japan, yet the characters in the film do not seem to recognize or acknowledge a position of victimhood. In lieu of this, the film instead focuses on presenting issues that exist autonomously within the *Zainichi* community. The theme of patrilineage and hyper-masculinity (often manifested as violence) are found throughout the film and could be said to be its main theme. Rather than focusing on the relationship between *Zainichi* and Japanese colonialism or Imperial Japan, more prevalent in this work is the relationship between *Zainichi* historiography and Japanese capitalism. Sai Yoichi uses this film to both resituate the historical timeline of the *Zainichi* into a place that denies reducing the struggles of *Zainichi* individuals to a simplified and disingenuous “honest, weak, oppressed” narrative, as well as rehumanize the original generation of *Zainichi* by exploring their experiences and lives. In the absence of this caricatured theme, the film is able to analyze *Zainichi* history and identity while remaining separated from the “binary relation between *Zainichi* and Japanese” identities.<sup>42</sup>

The film’s story, despite spanning multiple decades, rarely exits the *Zainichi* ghetto as its singular setting. The ghetto is fixed in time; the dilapidated houses and stores remain virtually unchanged over the course of the film. Frozen in time, the static location in which most of the film takes place stirs feelings of seclusion or inescapability that set the tone for the rest of the film. As mentioned earlier, *Blood and Bones* never concerns itself with depicting mainstream or ordinary (ethnic) Japanese society, nor does it ever give direct mention to it or related feelings of otherness or alienation in its characters; however, the poor, never-improving conditions in which the characters exist communicate a certain reality for the *Zainichi*. The lack of any representation of

---

<sup>42</sup> Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 142.

mainstream Japanese society in the film is a simple reality based on the perspective of the film's narrator, Masao. Masao, as with any *Zainichi* Koreans living in a *Zainichi* ghetto during the World War II era, simply did not exist in the world of visible Japan. Because of the obvious difference in dress, food, or language, ethnic interaction between Japanese and Koreans in the World War II era would have been considered highly taboo. As a response, "Koreans formed an enclave economy...which was largely operated by and for co-ethnics"<sup>43</sup> and gathered in ghettos like the one in the film. It makes sense that residents of a *Zainichi* ghetto would not benefit significantly from the post-war economic successes of Japan. Even into the present era, improvement in the lives of *Zainichi* individuals is slow, often even regressive. In July 2014, for example, the Japanese Supreme Court ruled that *Zainichi* individuals, promoted since the 80s to the status of "special permanent resident" (*Tokubetsu Eijusha*) were not entitled to apply for Japanese welfare, a matter that had until then been a grey area left to the discretion of local governments.<sup>44</sup>

In the opening scene of *Blood and Bones*, Chunpei is shown as a young man arriving in Osaka on a ship from North Korea. The passengers on the ship are almost unanimously clad in white, evoking feelings of cleanliness or purity. In contrast, the shore of Osaka is covered grey with smokestacks and air pollution. To Chunpei, however, it is a beautiful sight. This scene, his face captured in awe of the industrial titan that is Osaka, is markedly one of the only moments in the film in which he is depicted as

---

<sup>43</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, 8.

<sup>44</sup> Otake, Tomoko. "Ruling Denying Welfare for Foreign Residents Finds Homegrown, Biased Support | The Japan Times." Japan Times. October 17, 2014. Accessed April 16, 2016.

truly happy. The visual metaphor of white contrasted to grey and cleanliness to pollution illustrates a perceived sense of purity in those who immigrated to Japan from North Korea, untouched by Japanese Capitalism. We then cut into the future and see Chunpei as a grown man, returning from a long absence. He is violent, short-tempered, and frightening as he rapes his wife on screen in front of his young daughter, Hanako. As the audience, we are left to wonder what occurred between these two points in time to make Chunpei the man he is.

The film, however, completely resists the temptation to make Chunpei a sympathetic character. Despite the societal forces that no doubt made Chunpei the man whom he is, the film is unconcerned with telling that portion of his backstory. As stated in the introduction, *Blood and Bones* is a film based on a novel written by *Zainichi* Korean author Yang Sok-II. As the book is still unavailable in English, it would be too much of an undertaking to supplement the discussion of the film by reading (or translating) the book in its entirety. There do, however, exist English analyses of the novel, such as Noboru Tomonari's *Configuring Bodies: Self Identity in the Works of Kaneshiro and Yan*, which analyzes the importance in *Blood and Bones* of the physical body "as an expressive form that defines the main character's relationship to those around him." Tomonari gives a bit of insight into the differences between the novel and the film, especially in how they individually depict Kin Chunpei.

The book presents Kin as the product of difficult circumstances: the circumstances of migrant Korean workers in Japan, and of the colonial Korea that prompted him to migrate in the first place. These account for his magnificent body—grown strong through hard work and resistance—and also for his

nihilistic, total reliance upon it.<sup>45</sup>

Critics of the film have drawn attention to this omission, questioning the significance of the film's depiction of a character who is almost banally evil with seemingly no given reason as to why. Indeed, within the film, no direct reason is ever given for his violence. There seems to be a very calculated significance in this. Had Sai wanted to create a more sympathetic character, he could have easily done so. This, however, would have conflicted greatly with his intention for the film, chiefly, his resistance against depicting the *Zainichi* as agentless variables in the equation of Japanese Imperialism. If the audience were to empathize with Chunpei as the victim of unique *Zainichi* oppression, the story would lose its significance completely, as would many of its themes. Of course, Chunpei is not simply evil for the sake of being evil; however, for Sai, blaming Japanese Imperialism is low-hanging fruit and preempts any discussion on the film's depiction of its true destructive force: capitalism. If the audience were to validate Chunpei's violence and immorality as simply the ultimate result of societal oppression or Japanese Imperialism, the film would simply be reiterating the (once progressive) ideology that was championed in Ōshima's *Death by Hanging*. However, just as in Sai's *All Under the Moon*, the destructive force in the lives of the *Zainichi* is not the legacy of Japanese imperialism, but instead the pursuit of capital and its exploitative nature.

In the film's final scene, Chunpei, having repatriated to North Korea, is shown in his deathbed. Before he passes, he is shown reflecting over one memory, of his arrival in Japan, presumably the only time in his life he was ever truly happy. From the boat, we are shown again the imagery from the opening scene: a shipful of North Koreans clad

---

<sup>45</sup> Tomonari, Noboru. "Configuring Bodies: Self-identity in the Works of Kaneshiro Kazuki and Yan Sogiru." *Japanese Studies* 25, no. 3 (2005): 257-69.

mostly in white, and the grey smokestacks of industrial Osaka. How poignant that this image, so beautiful to the young Chunpei, is also the last image he sees before his death. The implications of this image highlight Chunpei's fascination with the material world and economic prospects. Before his death, it is not his wife, his mistresses, or his children that he thinks about, but instead the polluted air off the shore of Osaka. Masao, in a bit of narration, remarks that despite his father donating all his money and goods to North Korea upon repatriation, Chunpei never lived for anyone other than himself. In the end, however, perhaps Chunpei was never living for himself either, but instead an idealized fantasy of wealth and capital gain.

Peppered throughout the film are a few more references to the alienating nature of capitalism. A scene in the fish-cake factory, for example, shows *Zainichi* laborers overworked, in poor conditions, and mistreated by their boss (one worker even has his face burned with charcoal by an enraged Chunpei.) Another image from the film shows Hanako's husband gambling at her funeral. There is something confronting and revolting about the image of a husband gambling at his own wife's funeral. Chunpei's eventual role as a moneylender almost seems to be an easy grab at the topic of capitalism; when there is a moneylender character involved, it is as though an inherent comment on capitalism must be made, regardless of intention. Chunpei's moneylending eventually results in the suicide of one of his clients who jumps off a bridge, and near the film's conclusion, Chunpei sells a different client's debt to the Yakuza, essentially dooming the client to death if he cannot repay it. In these scenes, human life is shown to be something that can be given monetary value within the mind of Chunpei, who does not appear to

feel any guilt in being complicit in the death of either the man who committed suicide nor the one he sold out to the yakuza.

Through the character of Chunpei, Sai is able to confront “*Zainichi* narcissism” or what he believes is a mindset among older *Zainichi* individuals that perpetuates a self-image of the *Zainichi* as the unique victims of the legacy of Japanese imperialism. For Sai, taking back agency over the *Zainichi* narrative includes also taking responsibility for the role *Zainichi* individuals played in being complicit in both Japanese capitalism and imperialism. It is for this reason that the *Zainichi* in this film are not depicted unvaryingly as victims of Japanese imperialism; in fact, many are shown to support it. In an early scene in the film, some men from the village are shown singing “Nippon Danji,” a wartime song of Imperial Japan. Chunpei’s brother, Shingi, goes as far as to assault a young *Zainichi* man who cries out, “*Mansei!*” This cry is a reference to the March 1<sup>st</sup> movement, a watershed moment in the fight for Korean independence from Imperial Japan.<sup>46</sup> After assaulting the man physically, Shingi has this to say:

You bastard, spitting on an imperial soldier. In this time of crisis as sons of the emperor, Japanese and Koreans must fight as one. Have you no shame? Try that again, you moron.

That Koreans, both those living in Japan and in Korea, supported the Japanese Imperial army is historically accurate, as John Lie notes:

The received *Zainichi* historiography exaggerates the elements of constraint and force. The Japanese empire—including the economic transformation that uprooted the peasantry—is certainly a condition of possibility for the Korean diaspora in Japan. But it should be seen, at least in the 1920s and 1930s, as

---

<sup>46</sup> Matsuo, Takayoshi, and S. Takiguchi. “The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part Two: The 1st March Movement and the Japanese Protestants”. *Modern Asian Studies* 13.4 (1979): 581–615.

facilitating opportunities in Japan as much as destroying livelihoods in Korea. Kyōsei renkō [enforced migration] is not synonymous with *Zainichi* origins.<sup>47</sup>

In showing how many first generation Koreans were supportive of the Japanese war effort, Sai presents a more nuanced version of the over-simplistic narrative of *Zainichi* victimhood showcased in films like *Death by Hanging*. That is not to say, however, that Imperial Japan is made to be innocent in the events of the film, but rather that the *Zainichi* are included as partially complicit in the wartime actions of Imperial Japan. After the war ends, a scene portraying a fight outside Masao's junior high school shows a throng of college-age *Zainichi* men berating the older generation, including Chunpei's brother who served in the war.

*Zainichi* Korean man: You were an MP on Cheju island, weren't you, Shingi? I could turn you in to Occupation GHQ as a war criminal!  
Shingi: What choice did I have? I had no country!

The men then begin to brawl outside the junior high as the schoolchildren chant for Korean independence from the windows. The scene is arguably the only overtly sympathetic treatment of the difficult position held by *Zainichi* Koreans like Shingi who immigrated to Japan before World War II. Already experiencing the beginnings of nationalistic limbo, as well as the ideological divides emerging between first- and second-generation *Zainichi*, the choice to fight on Japan's side during World War II was no doubt a difficult choice to make. Yet Japanese imperialism "found many adherents among Koreans" and "for some ethnic Koreans, the day of [Korea's] liberation was a day of defeat."<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Lie, *Zainichi: (Koreans in Japan)*, 7.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

In Tomonari's literary analysis, he includes a translated portion of the novel that explains the origin of its title:

In a song sung by a Korean shaman, there is a saying that "blood is inherited from a mother, and bone is inherited from a father." Korean fathers often say to a son "you are my bone"; words expressing their patriarchal relationship. This is based on an understanding that blood also derives from bone. What it implies is that the blood and meat of the dead who is buried in earth will rot, but the bones will remain. There is a saying that blood is thicker than water, but bones are thicker than blood.<sup>49</sup>

This quote from the novel brings a new light to the importance and presence of the theme of patrilineage and the masculine in *Blood and Bones* that cannot be understated. While Tomonari's literary analysis of the novel's portrayal of the body makes for a good discussion for the novel, it is a difficult idea to transplant into an interpretation of film without further development. While portraying the body as holding a buried relationship to the circumstance of one's life in the novel is accomplished by the author's obvious attention to describing the body in great detail (including the bodies of not only Chunpei but also his victims), the film takes a different route while still remaining faithful to the same goal. The body, as the physical manifestation of one's self and the trials one has endured, is a communicative entity. Is Chunpei's tendency toward violence and coercion somehow related to the physical performance of masculinity? There appears to be a connection between the performance (and in some cases overperformance) of masculinity and the feminization and infantilization of colonized individuals. This tendency of the colonizer to attribute or project feminine or childish characteristics onto the colonized can

---

<sup>49</sup> Yan, Sogiru. 2001. *Chi to hone*, quoted in Tomonari, Noboru. "Configuring Bodies: Self-identity in the Works of Kaneshiro Kazuki and Yan Sogiru." *Japanese Studies* 25, no. 3 (2005): 257-69.

be observed in a variety of colonial contexts,<sup>50</sup> but even within the history of Japanese film depicting the *Zainichi*, this tendency is observable. After all, the myriad of films depicting the *Zainichi* as weak or powerless could be said to be Sai's main impetus for creating films about the *Zainichi* in the first place.

Chunpei is a character who over-performs masculinity. In communication, he is characteristically silent and unfeeling and his use of language is purely utilitarian, more often than not taking the form of commands. His medium of self-expression is usually communicated through violence. Take, for example, the scene occurring after the death of his daughter. Chunpei invades the funeral service and begins demanding to see his daughter whose corpse is very clearly on display. He then attacks his daughter's husband and an all-out brawl breaks out among the mourners. That Chunpei cannot successfully communicate his feelings or thoughts through a medium other than violence is evident in his inability to do so throughout the entire film. Chunpei communicates through violence as an over-performance of masculinity.

His status as *Zainichi* psychologically emasculates him, robbing him of all power in the social sphere outside of his Korean community. As a response to this limitation, he must over-perform masculinity in an attempt to stabilize a power dynamic in which he ultimately can prevail. This begins first in the home, which can be observed in his abusive familial relationships. His obsession with capitalizing and exploiting his peers is also rooted in his search for the reclamation of his power. What are the implications of a character who over-performs masculinity, and how does this tie in to the capitalism-critical themes of the film?

---

<sup>50</sup> Sinha, Mrinalini. *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

First, there is the connection in patrilineage, which as noted above, is present even in the origin of the film's title. Certainly, Chunpei's obsession with conceiving a competent male heir is a theme that runs throughout the entire film. When a young Masao vomits after seeing his father ingest rotted meat covered in maggots, Chunpei laments that his wife has spoiled Masao and that he must conceive another male heir, one whom he will raise himself. In the scene in which Chunpei's mistress is giving birth, Chunpei is elated to know that she has given birth to a son after a series of daughters, and in the film's conclusion, the only human being with whom Chunpei has maintained a connection is the very son whose birth brought him so much joy. To Chunpei, a competent heir is a material good through which he can extend his legacy, both physically through the inheritance of his capital gains and business, but also through the process of child rearing. As the film's title and accompanying origin story explain, the father passes on his bones, the undying, strong, and structural component of the body. Through acts of violence, the tradition of abuse and coercion can be passed on from Chunpei to his son, and the perceived weakness he sees in Masao is credited to his mother's failure in "spoiling" him. In this, the performance of masculinity and the inheritance of private property have a direct connection; it is not enough that Masao simply be biologically male, he must also contain certain masculine qualities in order to be seen as competent.

The second way in which capitalism and performing masculinity are shown as being interrelated is seen in Chunpei's foil character: San-myung Jang, a young, intellectual, and leftist man with whom Chunpei's daughter, Hanako, is in love. Jang is the polar opposite of Chunpei; he is a poet, an intellectual, and politically minded, shown

to be concerned with the political condition and unification of Korea. He is much more feminine than Chunpei, and even compared to the other workers in the fishcake factory seems physically weaker. The contrast between these two characters caricaturizes capitalism as something violent, unthinking, and powerful while conversely portraying communism as being feminine, intellectual, and physically weak. This contrast is seen in another film depicting the *Zainichi*, 2001's *Go*, which contrasts the film's main character, the cool and violent, yet undeniably more assimilative Sugihara, to the dorky, weak, and leftist intellectual Jong-II, Sugihara's best friend. The implications intrinsic in these foil character relationships stress the inextricability of the connection between capitalism and violence.

By resituating the historical timeline of the *Zainichi* into a realm that is less plagued by a self-image of victimhood or a patronizing depiction of "noble victims," *Blood and Bones* takes the logic Sai utilized in *All Under the Moon*, the "post-*Zainichi*" resistance against previous *Zainichi* narratives, and applies it more radically to a historical context rather than a contemporary one. The extraction of *Zainichi* characters and conflict from the context of ordinary Japan allows for more introspection on the history of the *Zainichi* and reimagines a more accurate historical depiction that is not purely contingent upon a status of otherness or the perceived cause-effect relationship of Japanese Imperialism and *Zainichi* identities. The film still remains critical of Japanese Imperialism, yet reminds audiences that many pre-World War II Koreans in Japan did in fact support the Japanese war effort, and even served as soldiers. Moreover, by beginning the story in the era before World War II, when many Koreans immigrated to Japan in search of work, the problems faced by the *Zainichi* are decontextualized from forced

migration and World War II, and allow a different criticism to be made, primarily, one upon capitalism. Without the constant comparison of *Zainichi* characters to ethnically Japanese characters in the film, introspection into the identities of *Zainichi* characters can exist without a compare-and-contrast methodology, such as the importance of masculinity to Chunpei and his tendency to over-perform it. In all, the film is most noteworthy in that it delineates the history of the *Zainichi* in a way that avoids bias or oversimplification in favor of furthering any political agenda.

## Conclusion

In *Death by Hanging*, R asks a seemingly simple question that brought the discourse of Korean identity into Japanese film: “What is a Korean?” In the face of internationalization, uncertainty about the significance of “Korean-ness” or “Japanese-ness,” both by outside spectators and by members of the *Zainichi* class themselves led to a long, continuing discourse that has taken place throughout literature, academia, and film. *Zainichi* individuals continue to expound upon one another’s entries into this discourse and further progress the understanding of identity and its relationship to nationalism, ethnicity, and culture. The history of film depicting the *Zainichi* can best be described as a search for authentic representation. Directors like Sai Yoichi have risen to the occasion in an attempt to resituate the *Zainichi* historical narrative as well as to reclaim a sense of agency over identity, however it shouldn’t be assumed as a given that either of his films discussed in this thesis were received well by the *Zainichi* community as a whole. In fact, some *Zainichi* intellectuals and activists claimed Sai was playing the role of the clown in an attempt to appeal to Japanese audiences, and thus viewed *All Under the Moon* quite poorly.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, *Blood and Bones* has endured its fair share of criticism for its ruthless depiction of the *Zainichi* as violent and criminal, often relating it back to earlier *yakuza* film.

A common theme present in all three films is the role of capitalism in the timeline of the *Zainichi*. It is hard to connect the rise of the *Zainichi* and capitalism without defaulting to a form of economic essentialism, but it is understood that the necessity for cheap labor brought more Koreans into Japan than any other single cause. The necessity

---

<sup>51</sup> Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 148.

to impose class hierarchy, too, serves to maintain a status quo of cheap laborer and those who stand to profit from exploited labor. The social alienation of Koreans in Japan, however, played an equally important role in shaping the *Zainichi*, as seen most clearly in *Death by Hanging*.

Another trend present in all three films is the focus on male characters and the experiences of *Zainichi* men. Without a doubt, as seen mostly clearly in *Blood and Bones*, the role of masculinity and patrilineage within the *Zainichi* family unit is a significant and shared element of the discourse on *Zainichi* identity. One wonders, still, how the perspectives and experiences of *Zainichi* women will ever surface in the world of film where female voices still go largely unheard. The controversial and often discussed issue of comfort women in Japan, women who were brought (possibly by force) from various Asian countries to work as sex workers for the Japanese army, is often discussed in light of the personal narratives of those who survived it. Certainly, Korean women in Japan experienced a certain reality that must have been markedly different from their husbands, sons, and brothers. Take, for example, Chunpei's wife in *Blood and Bones*. Out of all three films, she is arguably the most fleshed out of the female *Zainichi* characters presented, but imagine a film that more earnestly dedicated itself to her half of the story. One can't help but feel after watching these three films that the narrative timeline of the *Zainichi* as presented through film is missing a crucial half to the story.

In this sense, one cannot view these films as definitive depictions of *Zainichi* identity, opinions, or ideology, but rather as part of a larger dialectic that is constantly seeking to uncover the truth in the experiences and identities of the *Zainichi*. As time progresses, more voices will contribute to this discourse and the search for subjective

truth will continue. This seems to be the nature of diasporic consciousness or identity politics in general. Any time a group of diasporic people can begin a dialogue on a shared identity, it is quickly discovered that the meaning of said identity has already forked and begun branching out into new, individual identities that are as unique and complex as the individuals who possess them. Oftentimes, these identities and their definitions are perpendicular to one another. An aspect that all three films indisputably share in common is their innovative approach to depicting *Zainichi* characters. In the same way that Sai came to make films that satirized and deconstructed the ideas of *Zainichi* novelists and filmmakers to come before him, a voice of the next generation will no doubt rise to complicate and add nuance to the ideas present in his films. Although only mentioned briefly in chapter 4, 2001's *Go* is one such film. Its depiction of a male *Zainichi* lead as being seen as "cool" and desirable by a female Japanese peer is certainly a step in a new direction from these three films which largely depict the *Zainichi* as being sexually unfavorable or unsuccessful through means other than violence. The concept of what it means to be Korean in Japan is constantly evolving because the search for a sense of subjectivity within the individual is reflected in the larger search for subjectivity within the class of individuals they belong to and the art they create. Because of the complex and variant nature of identity, the discourse for Koreans in Japan will continue in pursuit of authenticity.

## Works Cited

- Iles, Timothy. *The Crisis of Identity in Contemporary Japanese Film: Personal, Cultural, National*. Leiden: Brill, 2008, 31.
- Ko, Mika. *Japanese Cinema and Otherness: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japanese-ness*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Lie, John. *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- Lim, Youngmi, "Reinventing Korean Roots and Zainichi routes: The Invisible Diaspora Among Naturalized Japanese of Korean Descent," In *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, 82.
- Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. New York: International Publishers, 1964.
- Matsuo, Takayoshi, and S. Takiguchi. "The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part Two: The 1st March Movement and the Japanese Protestants". *Modern Asian Studies* 13.4 (1979): 581–615. Web.
- Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. "Freedom and Homecoming: Narratives of Migration in the Repatriation of Zainichi Koreans to North Korea." In *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, 56.
- Ōshima, Nagisa, and Annette Michelson. *Cinema, Censorship, and the State: The Writings of Nagisa Ōshima, 1956-1978*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992, 166.
- Otake, Tomoko. "Ruling Denying Welfare for Foreign Residents Finds Homegrown, Biased Support | The Japan Times." Japan Times. October 17, 2014. Accessed April 16, 2016. [http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/10/17/national/welfare-rollback-underway-ruling-empowers-xenophobes/#.VwP0nnAn\\_Bp](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/10/17/national/welfare-rollback-underway-ruling-empowers-xenophobes/#.VwP0nnAn_Bp).
- Ryang, Sonia. "Introduction: Between the Nations." In *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*, 1-21. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- Sinha, Mrinalini. *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Works Cited (continued)

- Tomonari, Noboru. "Configuring Bodies: Self-identity in the Works of Kaneshiro Kazuki and Yan Sogiru." *Japanese Studies* 25, no. 3 (2005): 257-69.  
doi:10.1080/10371390500342758.
- Turim, Maureen Cheryn. *The Films of Ōshima Nagisa: Images of a Japanese Iconoclast*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 67.
- Wright, Erik Olin. *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- "Yoichi Sai." Midnight Eye Interview: June 01, 2010. Accessed April 16, 2016.  
<http://www.midnighteye.com/interviews/yoichi-sai/>.