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***A Zainichi* Korean Education**

Past, Present and
Future of *Chōsen*
Schools in Japan

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要旨

朝鮮学校とは在日本朝鮮韓国人に対して朝鮮語（韓国語）で民族教育を実施することを目的とし、在日本朝鮮人総連合会（以降：総連）という団体により運営される日本全国に展開される教育機関のことである。日本にある様々な中華学校、インタナショナルスクール、ブラジル人学校の一部、フランス人学校などと同様に、法的には日本の学校いわゆる一条校の認定を受けず、各種学校として認可されている。朝鮮学校は朝鮮半島、特に朝鮮民主主義人民共和国（北朝鮮）の文化、言語、歴史、地理を教えているが、同国の教育制度を実施しているわけではない。しかし、かつては、当時の国家主席であった金日成の「革命的な児童期」や「金日成の家族の功業」という科目が存在するほど、主体（チュチェ）思想という北朝鮮の政治思想を中心とされ、生徒たちが北朝鮮の次世代として育まれていた。それはなぜか。

1910年から1945年にかけて大日本帝国の植民地だった朝鮮半島から多数の朝鮮人が自分の意志で、もしくは、戦争に伴う人手不足を補うために強制連行された労働者として渡日した。1945年の敗戦後、当時日本にいた200万ほどの朝鮮人の大半は解放された朝鮮半島に帰った。一方で、一部は様々な理由で戻らないことを決意したり、や帰国を延期したりすることにした。そこで、将来帰国しようと思っていた在日朝鮮人家庭の子供、特に日本に生まれて朝鮮語が話せなかった子供に対して、帰国に向けての“文化的・言語的な準備”を提供する目的で、朝鮮学校は誕生した。その当時は朝鮮民族教育が特定の政治思想を強要しなかったが、在日朝鮮人の大半が労働者階級に属し、貧困な生活を送っていたため共産主義を支持していた朝鮮人が多く、朝鮮学校を建設した在日本朝鮮人連盟（朝連）も左派の団体だった。これらの理由により、戦後、共産主義者に対するの恐怖が高まってきたことを受け、日本を占領していた連合軍最高司令官総司令部（GHQ）は、朝連も朝鮮学校も解散させた。

その後GHQの占領が終えた1952年に締結されたサン・フランシスコ講和条約により在日朝鮮人がそれまで持っていた日本国籍は喪失した。その結果、在日朝鮮人の教育権利が失い、在日朝鮮人がどのような教育を受けるかは日本政府の問題ではなくなった。この状況の中で1955年に旧朝連の会員に結成された総連は、朝鮮半島の分断から形成された北朝鮮の当局と密接な関係を結び、日本で朝鮮民族教育を再開した。日本全国に色々な朝鮮学校を建設する要因となったのは1950年代の終わりから始まった北朝鮮帰国運動だった。実はその時に在日朝鮮人は在留外国人として、国民健康保険をはじめ、

福祉サービスから完全に排除されていたため、日本の生活の貧困から避難し北朝鮮に移住しようとする運動が強まっていた。そこで、北朝鮮に行く準備のためということもあり、前述の北朝鮮を中心とするカリキュラムが実施されていた。

しかし、徐々に在日朝鮮人の法律・文化的な同和が進むにつれて、北朝鮮人は飢饉をはじめとして様々な困難な状況を経験し、在日朝鮮人の二世以降の世代が行ったことのない朝鮮半島との薄い関係を感じていたため、1993年に教育課程の大きな改正が行われた。現在、朝鮮学校は生徒たちが将来に北朝鮮に移住する前提を放棄し、北朝鮮について教えるにもかかわらず、その国の政治思想からある程度離れてきた。今、この学校は自らの民族に誇りを持ちつつ、日本の社会に積極的に貢献する生徒たちを育成することを目指しているため、日本の自治体との協力や日本の大学入学試験に必要な能力を養うことなどに力を入れている。

朝鮮学校だけでなく、日本の外国人学校の状況はどのような状況なのか。最近、国際教育における関心が高まり、外国語能力が高く評価されるようになったため他の国にルーツを持っていない日本人の中にもバイリンガル教育を実施する民族学校に自分の子供を通わせたい保護者が増えてきた。つまり、日本の中華学校や韓国学校（総連と関係がなく韓国に提携する学校）の環境が多様化され、日本に歴史的に滞在していた民族の学生のみならず、最近渡日した移民たちや日本人の学生もこの学校を通いはじめた。ただ、国際社会において北朝鮮が極めて低い地位にあることから、朝鮮学校は植民地時代の朝鮮半島から渡日した人々の子孫しか通っていない。そのような人々が徐々に減少するに伴い入学者も減ったから、色々な学校が閉校せざるを得ない状態になった。加えて、拉致問題、日朝関係悪化の影響を受け、他の外国人学校とは異り、日本政府に高校無償化や大学における出願資格（入学資格）についての政策の対象から排除された。

本稿では朝鮮学校の過去・現在・未来をめぐりながら、どのくらい北朝鮮との関係が強いかを問わず、北朝鮮の国際的な地位が改善しない限り、朝鮮学校の困難な現状も改善しないということについて論ずる。

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INTRODUCTION

The expression '*tabunka kyōsei*', translatable as 'multicultural coexistence' or also as 'cohabitation between many cultures', has been appearing more and more often in many Japanese government's policies and guidelines. It refers to the integration into Japanese society of a growing population of foreign residents who, as in any process of migration, represent a challenge but also a big source of opportunities for contemporary Japan. Of the many nationalities that compose nowadays Japan's foreign population, one is constituted by Koreans – the so-called *Zainichi* Koreans, i.e. Koreans residing in Japan – and not only by recently arrived South Koreans, but also by the descendants of the people who migrated to Japan from the Korean peninsula while this territory was a colony of the Japanese Empire, from 1910 to 1945.

Amidst the current situation, where Japan is dealing with the integration of immigrants coming from completely different cultural backgrounds and Japanese schools are confronted with the task of providing an instruction to children totally unable to speak Japanese, why should we be concerned with the education of a foreign community that has been residing in Japan for more than five generations? The *Zainichi* Korean community has a history of more than a century, and of course, as Japan witnessed big changes throughout the 20th century, this community as well greatly evolved, and has now become much more integrated into Japanese society than before. Yet, many are convinced that the oldest *Zainichi* Korean communities are still far from being fully accepted in Japan. As in the words of Chung:

Although new immigrants have become increasingly visible in Japanese society, oldcomer¹ Koreans and their history continue to remain largely invisible. Whereas Korean identity among newcomers embodies the exotic, that of oldcomers is not only “too close to home”, but also signifies an episode in Japan's history that most would rather forget.²

Moreover, regardless the possible existence of unresolved prejudices towards the oldcomer Korean minority, recent years have also witnessed the enactment from the Japanese government of discriminatory policies targeting the ethnic schools where a part of this community is being

1 Roughly speaking, “oldcomer” refers to the *Zainichi* Koreans who migrated to Japan during colonial times, from 1910 to 1945 and their descendants, while “newcomer” indicates Koreans more recently migrated to Japan. A more detailed explanation of the terms will be done in chapter 1.

2 CHUNG, Erin Aeran, “The Korean Citizen in Japanese Civil Society” in Soo im Lee, Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, Harumi Befu (eds.), *Japan's Diversity Dilemmas: Ethnicity, Citizenship, and Education*, Lincoln, iUniverse, 2006, pp. 125-149, cit., p. 127.

educated. In fact, Japan's lately strained diplomatic relations with North Korea have led to real acts of retaliation – such as limited access to university or total lack of financial support – from the Ministry of Education with respect to these schools, which for historical reasons, have been linked to the country of Kim Jong Un.

For the above reasons, which also directly connect to the current political relations between Japan and North Korea, I believe that the study of Korean ethnic schools and how the *Zainichi* Korean community is being educated is extremely worth of interest nowadays. Furthermore, as mentioned by Chung, few people know the history behind the formation of *Zainichi* Korean communities and I myself was surprised to learn about the existence of educational institutions on Japanese soil that have ties to North Korea. How did such a situation emerge?

The biggest network reuniting various *Zainichi* Korean associations is centered around the 'General Association of Korean Residents in Japan', abbreviated to Chongryun ('*chōsen sōren*' in Japanese) which, since its emergence in 1955, has been affiliated to North Korea, sometimes even acting as a mediator between the socialist regime and Japan, given the lack of diplomatic relationships between the two countries. Amongst its many activities, Chongryun is also the central organ administering the seventy-nine *Chōsen* schools located throughout Japan. What kind of educational institutions are *Chōsen* schools?

First of all, the name *Chōsen* – which appears in the Japanese name of Chongryun as well – is the Japanese reading of the Chinese characters composing the name *Joseon*, the term historically used in many Asian languages to indicate the Korean peninsula as a whole. *Chōsen* schools aim at fostering a Korean ethnic education, thus they teach to children in Japan with roots in the peninsula, Korea's language, culture, history and geography. All the subjects, with the exception of Japanese and English language classes, are entirely taught in Korean, and Chongryun is responsible for printing textbooks and deciding the content of the curriculum. There is at least a *Chōsen* school for every level of schooling, from kindergarten to university, with the subdivision of grades reflecting that of Japanese schools, thus four years of primary school, three years of middle school, three years of high schools, and four years of university. However, *Chōsen* schools do not follow the Japanese national curriculum, although their current curriculum presents not few similarities, and they are not categorized as Japanese schools by Japan's Ministry of Education. Furthermore, they do not follow the North Korean national curriculum neither, despite North Korea's culture and history being featured extensively in lessons; in fact, *Chōsen* schools are a product of the *Zainichi* Korean community, and their educational system is shaped by Chongryun's directives.

The way *Chōsen* schools and Korean ethnic education emerged in Japan is strictly connected to the history of *Zainichi* Koreans and their migration from the peninsula. The Empire of Japan

incorporated Korea as a colony in 1910 and maintained its rule over it until 1945. In the period encompassing these thirty-five years, either on their own free will or upon coercion as forced laborers, thousands of Koreans arrived and settled to Japan. In August 1945, when Japan was defeated in World War II and Korea was subsequently liberated from colonial rule, it is estimated that about two millions of Koreans were living in Japan. The majority of these people repatriated to Korea immediately after the end of the war, but many others (roughly 500,000 people) chose to stay in Japan or to postpone repatriation to a later moment. Korean ethnic schools arose specifically with the purpose of teaching the Korean language and culture to people intending to repatriate, and especially to Korean children born in Japan who had in some cases zero to little proficiency in Korean; in other words, these schools were supposed to offer a cultural and linguistic preparation in light of an upcoming return to the peninsula.

The League of Koreans (called *chōren* in Japanese), the predecessor of Chongryun, founded in the immediate post-war, was the organization responsible for starting Korean ethnic education in Japan, also thanks to the widespread support it enjoyed from the *Zainichi* Korean community. At its onset, Korean ethnic education was not marked by a specific political orientation, yet since the majority of Koreans in Japan belonged to the most underprivileged tier of the working class, many of them sympathized for communist ideals and the League as well was a leftist organization. For this reason, mounting fears of a communist expansion through Asia convinced the Allied occupation forces, which governed Japan from 1945 to 1952, to crack down on Korean ethnic schools and to forcibly dissolve the League in 1949. In the following years, Korean ethnic education ceased to exist in Japan until the big changes triggered by the Treaty of San Francisco of 1952. According to the provisions of this treaty, Koreans in Japan lost their Japanese nationality that they had possessed until then as Japanese colonial subjects. This meant that *Zainichi* Koreans were not entitled anymore to the right of receiving a compulsory education; this in turn led to a situation where, as long as Koreans did not interfere with the law and Japanese political affairs, the Japanese government was not concerned with what type of education they were receiving.

In the wake of these circumstances, in 1955, ex-members of the defunct League formed the Chongryun, established a strong relationship with North Korea, born in 1948, and took over the legacy of Korean ethnic education by founding *Chōsen* schools throughout Japan. What partly drove the erection in great numbers of these institutions was the program of repatriation to North Korea which ran from 1959 to 1984 and helped a total of 93,340 *Zainichi* Koreans to settle in the socialist country. The program, not free from criticism and sometimes carried out in suspicious circumstances, was supposed to provide *Zainichi* Koreans with a chance to escape the harsh living conditions in Japan, where until the 1980s foreign residents, including Koreans, did not have access

to the national health insurance and to welfare services.

In light of the possibility of settling to North Korea, *Chōsen* schools could offer a linguistic and cultural preparation. For this reason, *Chōsen* schools' educational mission in the past was overtly focused on North Korea and was permeated by the country's political ideology; the curriculum included subjects such as 'Childhood of Kim Il Sung'³ or 'Revolutionary Life of Kim Il Sung's Family', and students were raised as the next generation of North Korea. The political ideology conveyed at school served also the purpose of fostering solidarity around Chongryun, which defined its members not as “*Zainichi* Koreans” but as “overseas North Korean nationals”.

However, as the Korean community became more integrated in Japanese society and accrued its wealth benefiting from Japan's huge economic growth, less and less people became fascinated by the idea of moving to North Korea, which instead was experiencing poverty and a severe famine in the 1990s. Moreover, the advent of new generations increasingly more attached to Japan rather than to the peninsula, triggered a shift in *Chōsen* schools' educational philosophy which culminated in the reforms of 1993. Nowadays *Chōsen* schools have abandoned the idea that their students will live in North Korea and instead strive to raise individuals who will live as proud Koreans (*Chōsenjin*) in Japan. Now, not only do these schools seek cooperation with Japanese local municipalities but have remodeled their curriculum in order to offer a suitable preparation for Japanese universities' entrance examinations.

Chōsen schools are not the only example of Korean ethnic education in Japan. In fact, despite in a much smaller number, there are also South Korean schools affiliated to the Mindan, the other big *Zainichi* Korean association which has ties to South Korea. Furthermore, in Japan there are several other types of foreigners' schools including English-medium international schools, Chinese schools, Brazilian schools, and so on. This variegated landscape has in recent decades continually diversified upon the influence of globalization and the continuous arrival of new immigrants to Japan. With a surging interest in international education and the almost imperative necessity in the labor market of being proficient in English and even other foreign languages, many foreigners' schools in Japan, thanks to the advantage of offering a bilingual education, have expanded beyond the traditionally targeted ethnic minority coming to include both Japanese people and recent immigrants who keep increasing in Japanese population trends.

The first chapter of my research specifically unfolds from this point through an analysis of the current situation of Japan's foreign population. It will then continue with an investigation on the status of foreign schools in Japan and their challenges, which will help us framing the study on *Chōsen* schools. The second chapter deals with the history of *Zainichi* Koreans and the

3 The founder of North Korea and grand-father of the current leader Kim Jong Un.

characteristics of the initial examples of Korean ethnic education up until the Treaty of San Francisco in 1952. The third chapter continues the historical narration with the birth of Chongryun in 1955 and explores *Chōsen* schools' pre-1993 curriculum, when subjects were centered on the figure of North Korea's former leader Kim Il Sung and school life was dominated by North Korean political propaganda. Additionally, the chapter discusses the program of repatriation to North Korea and the great change in living conditions experienced by the *Zainichi* Korean community during the second half of the 20th century. The fourth chapter takes ourselves to the present time with an analysis of *Chōsen* schools' current curriculum and an observation of school life in three selected *Chōsen* institutions in the Kansai area, through the fieldwork conducted by Japanese scholars in their visits to the schools.

Finally, the fifth chapter examines more in-depth the current challenges that *Chōsen* schools need to face and, reconnecting to the first chapter, compares their situation as well as survival strategies to those of other foreigners' schools in Japan. In light of *Chōsen* schools' actual conditions, possible future trajectories for these schools are examined as well as the expectations that *Chōsen* educators place on their students. Through a comprehensive investigation of *Chōsen* schools' past, present and future, this study aims at understanding how these schools' educational mission has changed throughout their history.

The future of *Chōsen* schools appears to be quite uncertain with little chances to develop. In fact, unlike other foreigners' schools which were able to diversify their students populations, *Chōsen* schools, due to their affiliation to North Korea, a country which does not entertain political and economic relations with Japan and many other nations, have not been able to attract South Korean immigrants and Japanese students. The schools solely rely for enrollments on the descendants of the *Zainichi* Koreans who came to Japan during the colonial era or before the Treaty of San Francisco in 1952. However, this community is dwindling and is increasingly integrating into Japanese society as witnessed by a continuous decline of enrollments in *Chōsen* schools.

Like many foreigners' schools in Japan, *Chōsen* schools are equally penalized by the designation as 'miscellaneous schools' which situates them out of the Japanese education system, implying, among the other things, a lack of government financial assistance which obliges these schools to rely on tuition and to run on extremely low budgets. Yet, *Chōsen* schools have in recent years been specifically sorted out among the other foreigners' schools and excluded by policies aimed at implementing a better integration between the Japanese education system and miscellaneous schools. *Chōsen* schools have been excluded from regulations provisioning for money aid directed at needy students who attend foreigners' high schools, and a *Chōsen* school's high school graduate is still required to go through a lengthy procedure to become an eligible

applicant for Japanese public universities. These targeted decisions from Japan's Ministry of Education stem from the extremely strained diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea, recently plagued by delicate issues such as North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens.

In conclusion, no matter how strong or weak *Chōsen* schools' connection to North Korea actually is, and despite their curriculum having radically changed from the past propaganda tones, I believe that the future of these schools lies in the improvement of relations between Japan and North Korea, as well as in the amelioration of the status of the latter within the international community.

NOTES ON LANGUAGE USE

The word *Zainichi* is a Japanese term that literally means “in Japan”, or “living in Japan”. In the Japanese language, it is used in couple with names of specific foreign populations to indicate the portion of those populations living in Japan. Therefore, in addition to Koreans, there may be *Zainichi chūgokujin* (Chinese residents in Japan), *Zainichi amerikajin* (American residents in Japan), *Zainichi itariajin* (Italian residents in Japan), and so on. Thus, in this study, ethnic minorities in Japan are called either “*Zainichi*” or alternatively “residents”, for instance *Zainichi* Koreans or Korean residents, or also *Zainichi* Chinese or Chinese residents.

What is instead the Japanese word for “Korea”? As we know, the Cold War has also involved disputes on names themselves, and the two states of North Korea and South Korea eventually took possess of different names to refer to the all Korean peninsula over which they both claim legitimacy. Nowadays the Democratic People Republic of Korea (DPRK), hence North Korea, uses the historically most widespread variant *Joseon* (also transcribed as *Chosŏn*) to translate “Korea”, while the Republic of Korea (ROK), i.e. South Korea, calls itself *Hanguk*⁴, taking the name from the Korean Empire (1897-1910), the political entity ruling the peninsula before Japanese colonization, officially called *Daehan Jeguk* (literally “the Great Empire of Han”), where *Han* itself was a revival of an old term used for Korea in the past.

Japan recognizes South Korea as a sovereign state therefore, when referring to South Korea, Japanese people employ the term '*Kankoku*' which is simply the Japanese reading of the Chinese characters composing *Hanguk*. On the other hand, North Korea is not recognized by Japan and, as a consequence, the socialist country is called '*Kita Chōsen*' (literally “North *Joseon*”), whereas the whole Korean peninsula is referred to as '*Chōsen hantō*' (literally “*Joseon* peninsula”). Koreans in Japan might be called in Japanese either '*Zainichi kankokujin*', '*Zainichi chōsenjin*' or even '*Zainichi*

⁴ The official native name for the DPRK is *Chosŏn Minjujuŭi Inmin Konghwaguk*, whereas the official native name for the ROK is *Daehan Minguk*.

kankokuchōsenjin'. Sometimes, in order to avoid any political connotation, they are also referred to as '*Zainichi korian*', using the Japanese transliteration of the English word "Korean". To this already intricate naming customs, further complications are added by the fact that both North and South Korea use different names to refer to the state on the opposite side of the parallel, often in order to highlight their adversary's illegitimate rule.

As regards this study, I use the label "Korean ethnic schools" to indicate the educational institutions founded by the League between 1945 and 1949, as well as the totality of schools in Japan today that offer a Korean ethnic education, including Chongryun-affiliated *Chōsen* schools and Mindan-affiliated South Korean schools. I decided to adopt the naming "*Chōsen* schools" to distinguish these schools run by Chongryun from the other examples of Korean ethnic schools and because this is how Japanese people and Chongryun itself call them. Mindan-affiliated schools are called "South Korean schools" because many of them are actually fully recognized as South Korean schools by the government of Seoul.

Currently, North Korea and South Korea employ two different standards for romanizing the Korean language. An example is the aforementioned word "*Joseon*" – in this case romanized according to the Revised Romanization of Korean, officially used in South Korea – which would be otherwise romanized "*Chosŏn*" in North Korea, which follows a modified version of the McCune-Reischauer system of romanization. Exceptions be made for "*Joseon*", which, through the Revised Romanization, has become a common word in English to refer to Korea before the Japanese colonization, all names are reported in the McCune-Reischauer system. For names of institutions (such as Chongryun) and schools, I use the system of romanization that they chose for themselves and that they report in their website. Additionally, *Zainichi* Koreans attending *Chōsen* schools often employ in their Japanese speech specific Korean words (such as "school", "Korean language", school club names, etc.) which even in Japanese writings are often transcribed through the *katakana* alphabet instead of being translated. As for the romanization of these names, I treated them as Japanese words and followed the Hepburn system for romanization of Japanese (I will signal through a note all these cases), which I also employed for all the other Japanese words, including "*Zainichi*" and "*Chōsen*". Any exceptions to the rules above will be signaled through notes.

Finally, as for the schools analyzed, I always report their original name unless the author I used as source preferred to employ a fictional name. In this case, I always adopt the fictional name devised by that specific author even when citing other sources which employ the original name. Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Japanese sources are mine and are indicated with a "J" in the corresponding footnote.

CHAPTER 1

IMMIGRATION IN JAPAN AND EDUCATION OF FOREIGN CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

Knowing about the existence of ethnic minorities in Japan might puzzle some people, quite accustomed to hear theories still upheld by a fair share of Japanese and several scholars, of an ethnically homogeneous Japan. However, data suggest that in December 2017, in the Asian country, foreign residents accounted for about the 2.02 percent of the total population, a seemingly low percentage which consists though of 2,561,848 people, being Japan's total population of 126,694,630 individuals⁵; definitely not a small amount of foreign individuals. Moreover, it can arguably be said that in Japan's modern history, its population has never been completely ethnically homogeneous if we consider 19th century's incorporation of the Ainu and the Okinawan people, whose separate language and culture have long lacked recognition. Japan ethnic homogeneity is itself a postwar rhetoric quite different from the narrative of the Japanese government during colonial rule when forced assimilation of the colonized populations was backed up by an ideology proposing a multi-ethnic Japan sharing common origins with other Asian people, and culminating in the slogan of a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere⁶. In this chapter I will firstly retrace briefly the history of ethnic minorities in the archipelago which will help us to better frame issues relating to the Korean community and its schools. Secondly, I will provide an analysis of current data and trends on Japan's foreign population followed by a general outline of the situation of ethnic schools in Japan. Finally, basing on the works of sociolinguists Bonny Norton and Yasuko Kanno, I will introduce the concept of 'imagined communities' which will be helpful in investigating the possible future trajectories to which *Chōsen* schools are heading.

HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION TO JAPAN

Historically, the Yamato people, ancestors of the Japanese, have not been the only native inhabitants of the lands that constitute Japan's sovereign territory today. For example, the prefecture of

5 “Hōmushō” (Ministry of Justice), 2018, *Zairyū gaikokujin tōkei* (Foreign residents statistics), http://www.moj.go.jp/housei/toukei/toukei_ichiran_touroku.html, retrieved on 06/28/2018.

6 Chikako KASHIWAZAKI, “The Politics of Legal Status: The Equation of Nationality with Ethnonational Identity”, in Sonia Ryang (ed.), *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*, London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 13-31, cit., p. 17.

Okinawa has been traditionally inhabited by the Ryukyuan while Hokkaido is home for the Ainu. However, even without thinking of these far territories which are located at the extreme tips of today's Japanese territory and were annexed in relatively recent times, Japanese people had to constantly confront throughout history with non-Yamato people in territories much closer to the imperial court. Ainu themselves, once called Emishi, used to live also in the northern half of Honshu and had recurring conflicts dating back millennia with the Japanese. Therefore, much before 19th century's incorporation of Okinawa and Hokkaido, Yamato people had to face other populations in order to expand in the Japanese archipelago.

By the second millennium, Japanese people had pushed their frontiers all the way up north and, by the 17th century, Tokugawa claimed sovereignty over the island of Ezo, as Hokkaido was known back then, though it was not effectively under Japan's control⁷. Later on, at the onset of the Meiji period, Japan established a more concrete control, colonizing the island in 1869 and incorporating the local Ainu who were nationalized as Japanese. Unlike most indigenous peoples in North America, Ainu were nationalized without recourse to treaties that recognized them as a semi sovereign nation within the larger nation. In fact, whereas Ainu have only one nationality and are Japanese only, Sioux, for example have two nationalities, simultaneously being members of a tribe within a semi-sovereign Sioux nation, and US or Canadian nationals⁸. The same fate happened to the Ryukyuan, who were nationalized as Japanese when their independent Ryukyu Kingdom, previously loosely under suzerainty of a Tokugawa-tethered domain⁹, was forcibly annexed to Japan in 1872, eventually becoming Okinawa prefecture in 1879.

It is evident then that well before venturing into colonial enterprises Japan had already started to expand its territory nationalizing as Japanese the local populations. Since the annexations of Okinawa and Hokkaido, Japanese settled in large numbers in these prefectures imposing their own customs and language almost obliterating the local culture and language. For a long time local languages were looked down upon until recent attempts to revive them.

When we say that Ainu and Ryukyuan were nationalized as Japanese, what kind of process did they go through? How were they nationalized as Japanese? Upon Japan's appropriation of Okinawa and Hokkaido, local people were recorded in family registers (*koseki*) which constituted the main tool with which the Meiji government could identify and monitor the people under its rule. This method of registration was first enacted in 1871 through the Family Registration Law which

7 William WETHERALL, "Nationality in Japan", in Soo im Lee, Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, Harumi Befu (eds.), *Japan's Diversity Dilemmas: Ethnicity, Citizenship, and Education*, Lincoln, iUniverse, 2006, pp. 11-46, cit., p. 20.

8 WETHERALL, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 20.

9 WETHERALL, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 20.

also brought to an end the previous parish registration system where Buddhist temples were in charge from the Tokugawa government for people registration. This system of registration was not based on individuals but on households, and reported, within other data, the ancestral home of every household which entails that every family register was affiliated to a local municipality. For example after Hokkaido's colonization, Ainu were recorded in family registers associated with local municipalities in the island. Members of one household were free to move in any other municipality of Japan but regardless of their residence, their register would have remained associated with the original municipality. Movement from one register to another was possible only through adoption or marriage. In the case of the latter, for example, one spouse had to move into the family register of the other and assume its family name and territorial affiliation¹⁰.

Family registers' legislation underwent many changes since 1871, but in fact these registers are still present in Japan nowadays, though they mostly function as a tool for identification of Japanese citizens or in the case of marriage, where even today a Japanese couple is considered married only when recorded as husband and wife in the same family register¹¹. On the other hand, the use of family registers for determining military conscription or legal responsibilities of the head of one household has ceased. Laws regarding family registers notably underwent many changes as Japan proceeded in colonial expansion due to the need of finding a proper way to accommodate colonized people in Japan's legal framework. In this regard, Japan's colonization of Korea and Taiwan demonstrates how family registers proved instrumental in determining the status of colonized subjects.

In order to contrast aggressive Western powers which were expanding their colonial empires too close to its borders, Japan decided to embark on colonial conquests from the onset of the Meiji period, as already witnessed for Hokkaido and Okinawa. Through different stages, Taiwan and Korea were formally annexed to Japan in 1895 and 1910 respectively. Japan then tried to pursue a legal and a cultural assimilation of the colonized territories, making Koreans and Taiwanese Japanese nationals and imposing Japanese language and customs. Assimilation policies were marked by slogans such as *ichioku isshin* (one hundred million, one heart) or by the idea of the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere stressing a romanticized racial brotherhood and union of all Asians, as well as a multiethnic composition of the subjects of the Japanese emperor¹².

Colonization of Korea and Taiwan prompted many people of these lands, especially Koreans, to migrate to Japan¹³. Their decision was partly due to difficult economic conditions

10 WETHERALL, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 28.

11 WETHERALL, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 28.

12 KASHIWAZAKI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans in...*, cit., p. 17.

13 As a matter of fact, sizable communities of Taiwanese, or more correctly, of Chinese at large, had already been

caused by expropriation by the Japanese of their agricultural plots. Many left on their own free will with the conviction that they would have found a better situation in terms of job opportunities and education possibilities for their children while others were forcibly brought to Japan to work as forced laborers in an attempt to make up for the labor shortage caused by the military conscription of many Japanese men during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Pacific War (1941-1945).

Immediately before the end of the World War II, Koreans in Japan amounted to about 2.4 millions, but following Japan's defeat and liberation of Korea in 1945, many of them chose to repatriate to the Korean peninsula. Former colonized subjects were now considered liberated citizens and through controversial stages and without any consultation with the parties involved they were deprived of their Japanese nationality following the treaty of San Francisco in 1952. The principle used to determine who was a former colonial subject was based on family registers. After the annexation of Korea and Taiwan, in order to consolidate its colonial rule and legally assimilate the new subjects, the Japanese government proceeded with a standardization of registries, re-organizing the Korean and Taiwanese registration adapting them to the Japanese model. Thus, registries were working in the same way under the same legal system but since, as we mentioned above, they were affiliated with a local municipality, they were essentially divided into *naichi* (“inner”) registers, affiliated with a municipality found in Japan prefectures (including Hokkaido and Okinawa), and *gaichi* (“outer”) registers, affiliated with a municipality found in the colonies. Since, as we said, regardless of one's residence, his or her family register would still continue to be associated with one's ancestral home or original domicile, it follows that migrants who came to Japan as well as their offspring would still have their family register in colonies, even in the case of birth in Japan. As Kashiwazaki says, “household registries served as a legal underpinning for the distinction between “Japanese proper” and colonial subjects^{14 15}”. After the treaty of San Francisco, Japanese authorities adhered to this distinction in determining who would have lost his Japanese

present in Japan since the end of the Bakufu period in port cities such as Nagasaki, Yokohama, Hakodate, Kobe, and Osaka, back then recently opened to foreign trade, employed in commerce or in a series jobs summed up with the expression “three swords”, which indicates three jobs usually very common among Chinese immigrants at that time, namely: cooks, dressmakers and barbers (CHEN Yuhua, “Chūgoku kei komyuniti” (The Chinese community), in Tagengoka Genshō Kenkyūkai (Society for the study of the phenomenon of multilingualization)(ed.), *Tagengo shakai nihon*, Sangensha, 2013, pp. 202-206, cit., p. 202.)

14 It can be noted that determination of one's ethnicity was solely based on family registration and not on race. In fact, individuals of Japanese origin who upon marriage with Koreans had entered the registry of their spouses were equally removed their Japanese nationality and treated as Koreans.

15 KASHIWAZAKI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans in...*, cit., p. 18.

nationality.

The years after Japan's defeat were turbulent, also because, the cold war was indeed “hot” in Far East Asia, with many conflicts ravaging and dividing countries like China and Korea (as we will see more in details in chapter 2). The political entities coming out of these conflicts had in many case an uncertain political status which reflected on Japan's Chinese and Korean communities. Following the Treaty of San Francisco, since only ROC (Republic of China, hence Taiwan) was recognized and not the PRC (Popular Republic of China), Chinese, including Taiwanese, who had lost their Japanese nationality became ROC nationals. As for Korea, Japan initially did not have established diplomatic relations neither with DPRK neither with ROK, so the Korean community had to wait until 1965's Japan and Republic of Korea's Treaty on Basic Relations to have its status more neatly clarified. Between other things, the agreement accorded the permission to the about 680,000 Koreans living in Japan at that time to apply and obtain South Korea nationality. But even then, while a little less than 400,000 of them applied for South Korean nationality, the remaining 280,000 chose not to apply, continuing to be de facto stateless. Japan's Immigration Bureau defines the former as South Korean nationals (“*Kankoku*” in Japanese), while the latter as *Chōsen* nationals¹⁶. Citizenship regulations based on jus sanguinis (initially just patrilineal but since 1985 ambilineal) rather than jus solis, imply that after the San Francisco Treaty, despite being born in Japan, children of foreign origin can acquire Japanese citizenship only if one of their parent is Japanese or through naturalization. All the Koreans and Chinese having lost their Japanese nationality in light of the treaties above were given permanent residence status (due to their peculiar situation they are defined as holders of an 'Special Permanent Residence Status' (*Tokubetsu Eijūsha*) but had to endure harsh living conditions due to lack of access to welfare policies and other services restricted solely to Japanese citizens. The situation was strenuous especially for stateless *Chōsen* nationals and even if there have been tremendous improvements since the 1980s, still nowadays members of this category need a travel permit when traveling outside of Japan and like the other exceptional permanent residents cannot vote in elections. This group of immigrants holding exceptional permanent residence status and having settled in Japan before the aforementioned treaties which finalized their situation, as well as their descendants, constitute the bulk of the so-called 'oldcomers'.

'Oldcomer' is a term devised to distinguish immigrants arrived to Japan from the Meiji period until the stipulation of international treaties in the 1950s-1960s, and their descendants, from those who arrived after the treaties and keep migrating to Japan today, called 'newcomers'. These

16 SATAKE Masaaki (ed.), *Zainichi gaikokujin to tabunka kyōsei: chiiki komyuniti no shiten kara* (Multicultural symbiosis with foreigners in Japan: from the point of regional communities), Tokyo, Akashi Shoten, 2011, cit., p. 41).

terms are mainly used in reference to the Korean community but some scholars use them also when talking about the Chinese community or the immigrant community at large. As regards the Korean community, Song describes 'newcomers' as the people who came to Japan as South Korea nationals after the treaty of 1965. During the 1980s they were mostly constituted by people entering Japan for work or as spouses of 'oldcomers', whereas since the 1990s there has been an increase in international students¹⁷. Chen, in his analysis of the Chinese community, employs the terms *Rōkakyō* (“Old Chinese Overseas”), instead of oldcomers, and *Shinkakyō* (“New Overseas Chinese”), instead of newcomers, and sets the mid-1970s as a demarcation period, namely when the PRC initiated a series of reforms that made its economy more open and international travel for its nationals easier¹⁸. These political changes as well as Japanese government's implementation of policies aimed at boosting the number of foreign students in Japan contributed to an increase of Chinese immigrants from the 1980s¹⁹.

Japan's bubble economy of the 1980s began to attract immigrants from countries other than the “traditional” China and Korea. For instance, many Filipino women migrated to Japan in the 1980s to work in entertainment businesses. Furthermore, in addition to Japan's labor demand, reforms in immigration regulations in 1989 and 1990, prompted a notable increase in the inflow of foreigners. These newly-enacted laws granted, among others, a renewable long temporary residence permit and the possibility of being employed in any type of job²⁰ to spouses of Japanese nationals and foreigners of Japanese origin (the so-called *nikkeijin*)²¹. Following these reforms, from the 1990s, Japan saw the arrival in large numbers of immigrants from countries hosting many people of Japanese origins such as Peru and Brazil, who were eventually employed as indentured workers in manufacturing industries. However, in the wake of a Japan affected by the Lehman shock and of a fast-growing Brazil, their number has dwindled since 2008. Nevertheless, statistics suggest that from 1975 to 2009 the number of registered foreign residents has increased threefold. In 2012,

17 SONG Saneshige, “Korian komyuniti” (The Korean community), in Tagengoka Genshō Kenkyūkai (Society for the study of the phenomenom of multilingualization)(ed.), *Tagengo shakai nihon*, Sangensha, 2013, pp. 207-214, cit., p. 208.

18 Chen does not mention though migration from Taiwan (ROC) in the period between 1952 and mid-1970s as his analysis seems to be confined to PRC only.

19 CHEN, in Tagengoka Genshō Kenkyūkai, *Tagengo...*, cit., p. 203.

20 This is a notable exception if considered that immigrants outside of this category cannot hold a low-skill job in Japan since the government grants working visa only for high-skill positions.

21 FURUYA Satoru, “Nihon no imin seisaku” (Japan's Immigrants policies), in Tagengoka Genshō Kenkyūkai (Society for the study of the phenomenom of multilingualization)(ed.), *Tagengo shakai nihon*, Sangensha, 2013, pp. 248-252, cit., p. 249.

arrivals set again a new record after the previously highest peak of 2008, continuing to grow ever since. The inflow of immigrants, today largely regulated by economic trade agreements which include also stipulations for work migration, continues to grow suggesting that Japan's future will be even more multicultural, as statistics can prove. In fact, just a decade ago, the largest minorities in terms of population were Chinese, Koreans, Brazilians, Filipinos, Peruvians and Americans, with demographics of many Japanese municipalities typically following this descending order. This situation, that even back then represented quite a change from just 10 years before, has further evolved and nowadays some of these minorities have been outnumbered by newly arrived immigrant communities.

CURRENT DATA AND TRENDS

Japan's foreign community has greatly diversified over the past decades and, if in the past the overall majority of foreign community was constituted by Koreans with special permanent residence status (so basically just the oldcomers), now other immigrant groups top rankings as the most numerous foreign community. Table 1 at the next page shows the change in the number of foreigners in Japan, divided per nationality, over the last decade, with data retrieved from Japan Ministry of Justice's Immigration Bureau and Satake (2011). In addition to recent data encompassing years from 2008 until December 2017, I also included statistics from 1999 in order to better show how the composition of Japan's foreign population has been radically shifting in just twenty years. Incorporating older and recent surveys meant also incorporating two different statistical methods due to Japan's Immigration Bureau reforming its aliens classification system in 2011. In fact, until this date, the government agency included in the calculation of the total number of aliens within Japanese borders, all foreign individuals present in Japan at the time of a given survey, thus counting also tourists, diplomats and foreign public officials. Although classification by type of visa or stay/residence status was included in the results, the total number broadly encompassed short term stayers (people staying up to 3 months with or without a tourist visa) and diplomat personnel, medium-long term stayers (people not belonging to the previous category), and permanent residents (including special permanent residents)²². From 2012 onwards, the Immigration Bureau began to create two separate statistics, one equally including the absolute total of foreigners at the time of data collection, and another including solely individuals effectively residing in Japan thus excluding short term stayers, diplomats, and public official.

²² “Hōmushō”, *Zairyū...*, 2018.

Nationality	1999	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total number	1,556,113	2,217,426	2,186,121	2,134,151	2,078,508	2,249,720(2,033,656)	2,325,608 (2,066,445)
China	294,201	655,377	680,518	687,156	674,879	683,452 (652,595)	699,154 (649,078)
Percentage of the total	18.09	29.6	31.1	32.2	32.5	30.3 (32.1)	30.0 (31.4)
Korea	636,548	589,239	578,495	565,989	545,401	567,049 (530,048)	549,798 (519,740)
Percentage of the total	40.9	26.6	26.5	26.5	26.2	25.2 (26.0)	23.6 (25.1)
Brazil	224,299	312,582	267,456	230,552	210,032	192,201 (190,609)	183,066 (181,317)
Percentage of the total	14.4	14.1	12.2	10.8	10.1	8.5 (9.37)	7.9 (8.8)
Philippines	115,685	210,617	211,716	210,181	209,376	211,269 (202,985)	220,217 (209,183)
Percentage of the total	7.4	9.5	9.7	9.8	10.1	9.3 (9.9)	9.4 (10.1)
Vietnam	-	41,136	41,000	41,781	44,690	53,542 (52,367)	73,877 (72,256)
Percentage of the total	-	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.4 (2.5)	3.2 (3.5)
USA	42,802	52,683	52,149	50,667	49,815	70,891 (48,361)	76,869 (49,981)
Percentage of the total	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.4	3.1 (2.3)	3.3 (2.4)
Others	-	355,792	354,787	347,825	344,315	471,316 (356,691)	522,627 (384,890)
Percentage of the total	-	16.0	16.2	16.2	16.5	21.0 (17.5)	22.5 (18.7)

Nationality	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total number	2,476,103 (2,121,831)	2,688,288 (2,232,189)	2,913,314 (2,382,822)	3,179,313 (2,561,848)
China*	734,506 (654,777)	785,982 (665,847)	843,740 (695,522)	901,200 (730,890)
Percentage of the total	29.7 (30.9)	29.3 (29.9)	29.0 (29.1)	28.3 (28.5)
Korea**	542,635 (501,230)	553,073 (491,711)	559,538 (485,557)	579,758 (481,522)
Percentage of the total	22.0 (23.7)	20.6 (22.0)	19.2 (20.3)	18.2 (18.8)
Brazil	177,704 (175,410)	175,351 (173,437)	183,583 (180,923)	193,798 (191,362)
Percentage of the total	7.2 (8.2)	6.5 (7.7)	6.3 (7.6)	6.1 (7.4)
Philippines	235,695 (217,585)	252,581 (229,595)	271,969 (243,662)	292,150 (260,553)
Percentage of the total	9.5 (10.2)	9.4 (10.3)	9.3 (10.2)	9.2 (10.2)
Vietnam	102,210 (99,865)	149,778 (146,956)	203,653 (199,990)	267,984 (262,405)
Percentage of the total	4.1 (4.7)	5.6 (6.6)	7.0 (8.4)	8.4 (10.2)
USA	76,726 (51,256)	86,307 (52,271)	94,447 (53,705)	101,873 (55,713)
Percentage of the total	3.1 (2.4)	3.2 (2.3)	3.2 (2.2)	3.2 (2.2)
Others	603,627 (421,708)	685,216 (472,372)	756,384 (523,463)	842,550 (579,403)
Percentage of the total	24.4 (19.9)	25.5 (21.1)	26.0 (22.0)	26.5 (22.6)

Table 1: Foreign Population in Japan (Selected nationalities)²³

Notes:

*: Chinese from the PRC and Taiwanese were merged in the same category as 'China' until 2011 but have been treated thereafter as separate. Figures in this table for China from 2012 include only PRC data (in 2017 Taiwanese in Japan were 56,724).

²³ “Hōmushō”, *Zairyū...*, 2018. and SATAKE, *Zainichi...*, cit., p. 16.

** : The category 'Korea' combines figures for both South Korea (*Kankoku*) nationals (oldcomers and newcomers) and Chōsen nationals. From 2015 these two figures started to be treated as separate but I nevertheless continued to combine them in this table.

In order to carry out a consistent analysis, I reported in the table the absolute total number of foreigners since statistics prior to 2011 only showed that value. However, if the total number of short-term stayers did not even reach 50,000 until 2011, surging popularity of tourism to Japan has made that value skyrocket lately, prompting statistical cases where foreign populations, like Americans, would result doubled in size should short term stayers be included. As a consequence, in order to avoid a skewed perception of the the real number of foreign residents, in post-2011 data I also reported in brackets the number of foreign residents only.

As it can be seen from table 1, a clearly visible trend is the constant decrease in the number of *Zainichi* Koreans who, up until 2006, used to be the largest immigrant population but have been outnumbered since 2007 by Chinese, who today constitute by far the biggest group. This situation was almost the opposite in 1999, where not only was the Korean community more than double the size of the Chinese community, but also comprised a little less than half of the total foreign population (40.9%). In 2017 their percentage over the total foreign population has dropped to around 18%. Major contributing factors are of course the increasingly higher number of Koreans who naturalize as Japanese every year, and the fact that, since mixed marriages between a Japanese and a Korean are today the bulk of marriages involving members of the *Zainichi* Korean community, many children of new generations are being born as Japanese, inheriting the citizenship from one of the parents. However, this percentage decline has also to be reconducted to the mass arrival of new immigrant groups, not to mention the continual rise of Chinese immigrants. For instance, interestingly enough, data I retrieved from Satake covered until 2009 and documented also the trend in the number of Peruvians (57,464), at the time the fifth most numerous minority. Lately, Peruvians have been greatly outstripped in number first by Vietnamese in 2012, by Americans in 2013, by Nepalese in 2015 and by Indonesians and Thais over the last year (2017).

Brazilians, once stable at the third position population-wise, have been steadily decreasing since the Lehman crisis in 2008 (though a slight resumption is being witnessed in the last two years) and are now surpassed by Filipinos and Vietnamese. South American immigrants, who symbolized a new phase in the history of migration to Japan, with the government reforming its immigration policies in 1990, are still comparatively visible, since they founded ethnic schools and have acquired in many cases a permanent visa status, but have steadily given way to other immigrants from Asia. Definitely outstanding is the recent hike in Nepalese, who doubled their Japan

population in just three years (42,346 in 2014 and 80,038 in 2017), and especially in Vietnamese who, stable at around 40,000 individuals until 2010, have accrued their number more than six times, to the point that they are now in third position as the most numerous²⁴. Most of the Vietnamese are in Japan as trainees, researchers or foreign students²⁵, and though it is outside the topic of my research, it would be interesting to study what type of impact will Vietnamese immigrants have in Japanese society and Japan's foreign community.

Because my research focuses on foreign schools, in the table I also included figures for Americans, who, despite being lower in number compared to other nationalities, have often been the driving force behind the founding of many international schools and represent in many cases the biggest chunk of the student population at these institutions, not to mention the fact that they have been a stable presence in Japan since the postwar period. Their figures, although possibly altered slightly by 2008's recession and maybe Fukushima nuclear disaster, have mainly remained constant throughout the years.²⁶

This progressively diversified foreign population has probably altered the overall perception toward Koreans, once embodying in the eye of the Japanese the status of foreigners. It is also very possible that the arrival of many immigrants, often not able, unlike the Koreans, to speak Japanese or to fit into Japanese customs, might have changed Koreans' perception of themselves and their role in Japanese society. Moreover, though table 1 clearly shows the decline in Koreans, since the results conflate data for oldcomers and newcomers, what is less evident looking at the table is the drop of special permanent residents shown instead in table 2. As it can be observed, special permanent residents used to represent the 56.9 percent of Japan's foreign population in 1991. That percentage experienced an abrupt decline in the following year, probably due to the arrival of many immigrants from South America, and steadily kept becoming lower finally reaching 14.5 in 2014. If we look at the latest available data, in 2017 special permanent residents were 329,822, occupying now a percentage of just 10.3. They were composed as follow: 1,027 listed as Chinese nationals, 1,083 as Taiwanese nationals, 295,826 as South Korean nationals, and 30,243 as *Chōsen* nationals. Theories on how Korean oldcomers are positioned within Japan's foreign population vary from

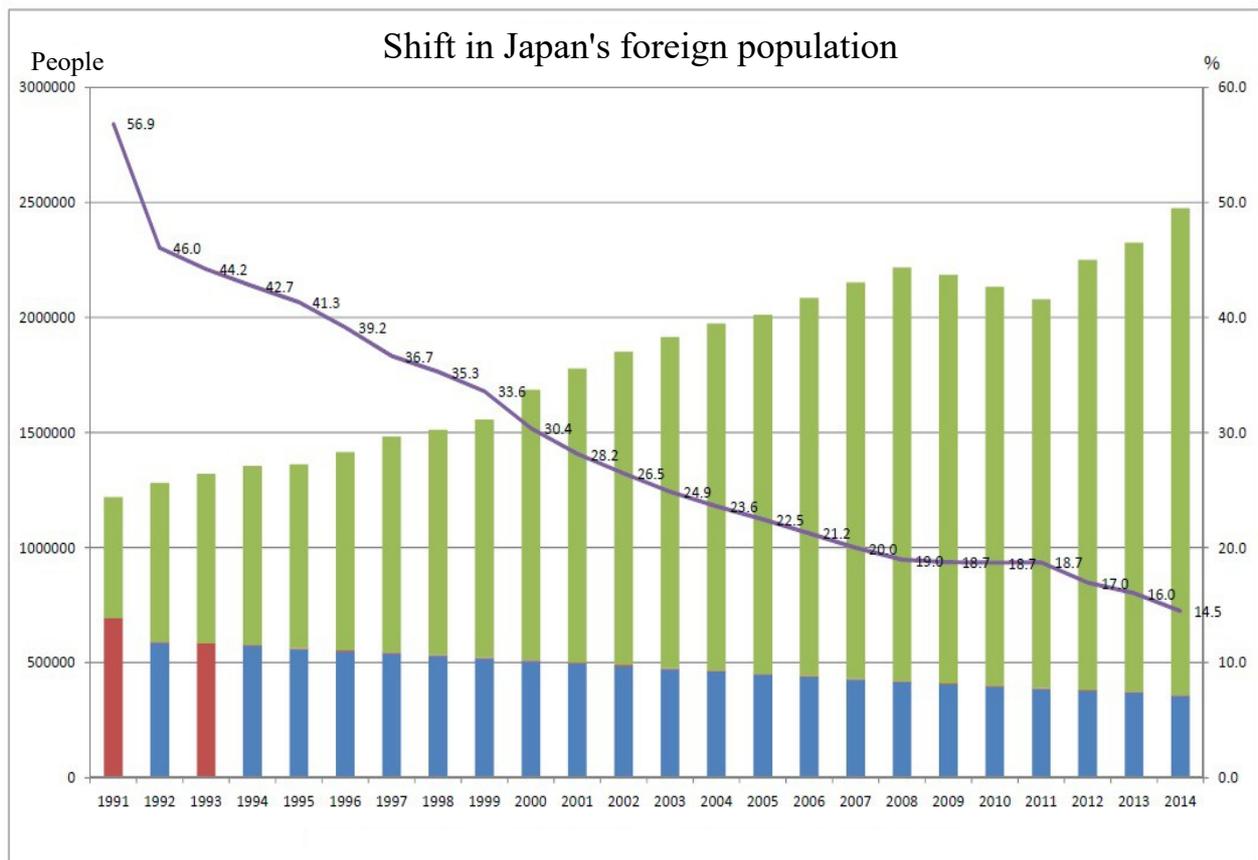
24 The figures I reported in this paragraph for Nepalese and Vietnamese do not include short term stayers but just people effectively residing in Japan. In both populations however, short-term stayers represent an insignificant fraction of the total.

25 KAWAKAMI Ikuo, "Betonamujin komyuniti" (The Vietnamese Community), in Tagengoka Genshō Kenkyūkai (Society for the study of the phenomenon of multilingualization)(ed.), *Tagengo shakai nihon*, Sangensha, 2013, pp. 229-232, cit., p. 229.

26 Figures do not include US military personnel stationed in Japan that, due to specific agreements between Japan and the USA, do not require residence qualifications and do not enter statistics.

those asserting that Koreans are still the most discriminated minority, to those convinced that Koreans should help other foreigners to integrate, in light of their experience as 'foreigners' who speak and understand the local language and culture (since it is arguably their native language and culture). Anyway, no matter how one may look at it, the narrative of minoritarian Koreans being the black dot in a (not so) racially homogeneous country does not hold anymore as Japan's foreign population has progressively expanded and diversified itself.

Table 2²⁷



Color chart:

- Blue: Korean special permanent residents
- Red: Special Permanent residents
- Green: Total number of foreign residents
- Violet line: Proportion of special permanent residents

Notes:

No data on Korean special permanent residents were available for 1991 and 1993, therefore in those years figures for

²⁷ SATO Keiji, *Zairyū gaikokujinsū no suii* (Change in the number of foreign residents), 2018, <http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/~satokei/sociallaw/foreignresident.html>, retrieved on July 6th 2018.

special permanent residents are shown instead.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

With respect to the distribution of registered foreigners, Satake proposes to divide Japan into three types of region²⁸:

- 1) Mixture of newcomers and oldcomers type.
- 2) Newcomer type.
- 3) Oldcomer type.

Regions belonging to the first category have historically had high numbers of Korean and Chinese oldcomers but since the 1980s have also witnessed a big surge in newcomers of both Chinese and Korean origin as well as of immigrants from other countries. Prefectures located in the Kanto region – such as Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama can best exemplify this category. Vietnamese too, not included in Satake's analysis, though having a large presence in all big urban areas, are heavily concentrated in these regions.

Regions belonging to the second category are areas that became immigrants destination only recently and not in colonial times. Unlike the very common pattern found nation-wise of Koreans and Chinese usually topping the position with the highest number of foreigners, in these regions foreigners will be mostly constituted by Brazilians with especially Koreans being lower in ranking. Prefectures of the Tokai region like Aichi, Gifu, Shizuoka, Mie as well as Gunma and Ibaraki more up north fit into this category. In fact, the Tokai region, characterized by a thriving manufacturing sector, and largely untouched by industry sector's hollowing out which affected other Japanese prefectures, became an attractive destination for Brazilian immigrants during the 1990s. Brazilians in these regions are still heavily present despite their drop from 2008.

Finally, regions of the third type used to receive many immigrants during the colonial period but have not been the main destinations since the 1980s. This is why oldcomers and especially Koreans still account for the largest percentage of foreigners in this area whereas the number of Brazilians and South Americans is basically very low. For example, the percentage of Koreans over the total number of foreigners is 63% in Osaka, 53% in Hyogo, and 62% in Kyoto, which are all prefectures that exemplify this third category. During the 1920s Osaka was experiencing an economic boom, particularly in the manufacturing and textile sector, to the point that it was called “the Manchester of the Orient”. This thriving economy paired to fears that massacres and violent

²⁸ SATAKE, *Zainichi...*, cit., p. 17.

actions perpetrated by locals in the Kanto region towards Koreans, where they were made scapegoats for the terrible earthquake that hit the area in 1923, might repeat, convinced many Koreans migrants to settle in Osaka during the colonial period.

This geographical distribution proposed by Satake is particularly useful for us in that it mirrors the distribution of ethnic schools in Japan.

FOREIGN SCHOOLS IN JAPAN

Before starting, one remark should be made about the definition of foreign schools and on why I decided to use this naming. In general, Japanese scholarly literature refer to foreign schools as *gaikokujin gakkō* which, if translated directly into English, becomes “Foreigners' schools”. As noted by Shimizu though, the term does not have any legal standing nor it is used to officially indicate these schools²⁹. Moreover, he also observes that the term is uniquely used in the Japanese language, however, as odd as “foreign schools” might sound in the English language I decided to use this naming since it helps to distinguish further categories (see below). Shimizu defines foreign schools as: “Schools which target mainly children of foreign nationalities and have a peculiar curriculum”³⁰.

Following this definition, Shimizu divides foreign schools in Japan into two types:

- 1) Ethnic schools (*Minzoku gakkō*)
- 2) International schools (*Kokusai gakkō*)

Schools of the first type are established by a government of a given country, or by a private organization, in order to provide an education to the population of that country living abroad or to an ethnic group³¹. Korean and Chinese schools in Japan fall under this category. Schools of the second type do not receive aid from or refer to any specific country, and welcome any student regardless of nationality or ethnicity³². Institutions following curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) fall within this category. Commonly, they are also known to Japanese speakers as *Intānashonaru sukūru*, directly transliterating “international schools” from the English language, in order to avoid confusion with Japanese high schools offering an “international curriculum”

29 SHIMIZU Kokichi, “Shakai no naka no gaikokujingakkō, gaikokujingakkō no naka no shakai” (Foreign schools within the society, the society within foreign schools), in Shimizu Kokichi, Nakajima Tomoko, Kaji Itaru (eds.), *Nihon no gaikokijngakkō toransunashōnariti o meguru kyōiku seisaku no kadai* (Japan's Foreign schools: the subject of educational policies exploring transnationality), Tokyo, Akashi Shoten, 2014, pp. 7-23, cit., p. 9.

30 KOBAYASHI 1995, as cited in SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 10. J

31 KOBAYASHI 1995, as cited in SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 10.

32 KOBAYASHI 1995, as cited in SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 10.

which, along with standard subjects, focuses on English language learning, and which are also called *Kokusai gakkō* in the Japanese language.

The exact number of foreign schools in Japan varies depending on the parameter used since some institutions are no more than after-school programs while other institutions are big high school or even university as in the case of Korea University³³ (*Chōsen daigakkō*). Pak's estimates suggest a number of 221 schools as of December 2007 whereas according to Tanaka their number was 214 as of March 2010. Apart from different calculation methods used, foreign schools experienced a drop in 2008 due to many Brazilian immigrants choosing to repatriate in the wake of the Lehman shock affecting Japan. Moreover, especially *Chōsen* schools, have continuously closed or merged throughout their history due to lack of students or difficult economic conditions, and continue to do so. Statistics for each types of foreign school are as follow:

- *Chōsen* schools: 79
- Chinese schools: 5
- South Korea schools: 4
- Brazilian schools: 97
- International schools: 24
- Others (Peru, France, German, Amerasian): 11

The high number of Brazilian schools is due to a large majority of these institutions being mere after-school programs or kindergartens. Data for *Chōsen* schools reflect the populous Korean community and the numerous efforts undertaken by their running organization, Chongryun, to set up schools serving the community. International schools have historically catered to the European and most notably to the American immigrant community, and were also the firsts to emerge in Japan with Saint Maur International School being founded in Yokohama in 1872 and still running today.

Schools' regional distribution throughout Japan reflects regional distribution of immigrants. For instance, with an exceptional high number of Brazilians, it is not surprising to observe that Chubu and Tokai regions boast up to 77 foreign schools. Looking at data of other areas, the Kanto region comes second with 74 schools, with Tokyo prefecture alone having 26, followed by the Kansai region with 42 schools. Outside of these highly urbanized regions, foreign schools are more scant also due to a lower concentration of foreign residents: Chugoku and Shikoku have 9; Kyushu

³³ Korea University is the university run by Chongryun and can be equally called a *Chōsen* school since its original name is *Chōsen daigakkō*. However, since Chongryun employs the name “Korea University” when referring to the institution in the English language I use this name as well.

and Okinawa have 7; and Hokkaido and Tohoku have 5 schools³⁴.

However, it is important to note that not necessarily all foreign children attend a foreign school. In fact, Pak's research suggest that, as of the end of 2005, the population of school-age (6 to 17 years old) foreign children amounted to about 167,000 individuals, of which about 76,000 (45.5%) were enrolled in Japanese public schools³⁵. The remainder was split between students attending foreign schools (34,000 people constituting the 20.4 percent of the total) and students not attending any institutions or in an unknown situation (34.1%)³⁶. In this regard, Kanno, through data taken from Ōta and Tsuboya (2005), reports that an estimate 11.4 percent of foreign-national students in compulsory education age (grades 1-9, ages 6-15) are not receiving any type of full-time schooling³⁷. The latter category is definitely surprising but, since in Japan the right of receiving compulsory education is not extended to foreigners, Kanno argues there has been a consistent attitude of *laissez-faire*, both at the Ministry of Education level and at local school district boards level, towards foreign students who stop going to school or do not enroll at all, leading to these abnormally high figures of non-schooled foreign children³⁸. However, it can be assumed that, lately, many efforts have been taken by the Ministry of Education to limit the number of foreign children with no schooling, for example through distribution to foreign families of introduction guides to the Japanese education system (*shūgaku gaido*) available in seven languages, including Portuguese and Chinese³⁹.

The number of students requiring Japanese language instruction (*'nihongo ga hitsuyō na gaikokujin jidō/seito'*) was of 34,335 in 2016, a figure having increased enormously since the government started its tally in 1991 (5,463)⁴⁰. Despite the great increase in Nepalese and Vietnamese immigrants, the majority of foreign pupils requiring language instruction are still children having Portuguese, Chinese, Filipino, or Spanish as their native language. If foreign

34 TANAKA 2011, as cited in SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 12.

35 Recent figures from the Ministry of Instruction bring the number of foreign children enrolled in public schools to 80,119 in 2016 (see References: “Monbukagakushō”, *Nihongo shidō...*, 2016). Not being able to find more recent statistics on the total number of foreign children comprising those attending foreign schools, I will stick to Pak's data.

36 PAK 2008, as cited in SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 12.

37 Yasuko KANNO, *Language and Education in Japan: Unequal Access to Bilingualism*, Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, cit., p. 16.

38 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 16.

39 “Monbukagakushō” (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology), 2016, *Nihongo shidō ga hitsuyō na jidō/seito no ukeire jōkyō tō ni kansuru chōsa (Heisei 28 nendo) no kekka ni tsuite* (Results of the research regarding the reception of students needing Japanese language guidance (2016 fiscal year), http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/29/06/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2017/06/21/1386753.pdf, retrieved on 07/06/2018.

40 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 13. And “Monbukagakushō”, *Nihongo shidō...*, 2016.

children do not attend only foreign schools the opposite is also true, in fact, a portion of the students attending foreign schools is composed by students holding Japanese citizenship, who might be, for example, students having ethnic roots in the community their foreign school represents, or students enrolled by parents wishing for their children an international education or an educational path different from that proposed by the Japanese government.

Most of the foreign schools are certified as miscellaneous schools with three of them being fully accredited as “regular” private schools by the Japanese government. Some foreign schools instead, especially many Brazilian institutions, do not have any type of accreditation as schools. Let us analyze more in depth at type of accreditation for each category⁴¹:

- *Chōsen* schools: miscellaneous (all schools)
- Chinese schools: miscellaneous (all schools)
- South Korea schools: miscellaneous (1), “regular” private school (3)
- Brazilian schools: miscellaneous (12), non-certified (85)
- International schools: miscellaneous (21), non-certified (3)
- Other schools: miscellaneous (5), non-certified (11)

What does the status 'miscellaneous schools' mean for foreign schools and how does it fit into the wider Japanese education system?

According to the Japanese law, foreign schools do not hold a legal status on their own, but are instead merged into a wider category called “miscellaneous schools” (*Kakushu gakkō*). Miscellaneous schools group together institutions as varied as dressmaking schools, driving schools, cooking academies, cram schools, let alone foreign schools⁴². Therefore, when compared to “standard” Japanese elementary schools, high schools, etc., foreign schools have the same status of any driving school, where people learn how to drive a car, or any cram school, that students attend after classes to better prepare for university examinations. This condition, in which schools that provide compulsory education to Japanese students and/or that strictly follow the Japanese government's education system are neatly separated by all the other types of school, suggests a clear, almost binary division between what is “standard” and what is “not-standard”. Again, Shimizu, echoing Amano, argues in fact that since the Meiji period, Japan's education system has always been marked by a stark separation between “regular” schools, providing standard education

41 TANAKA 2011, as cited in SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 12.

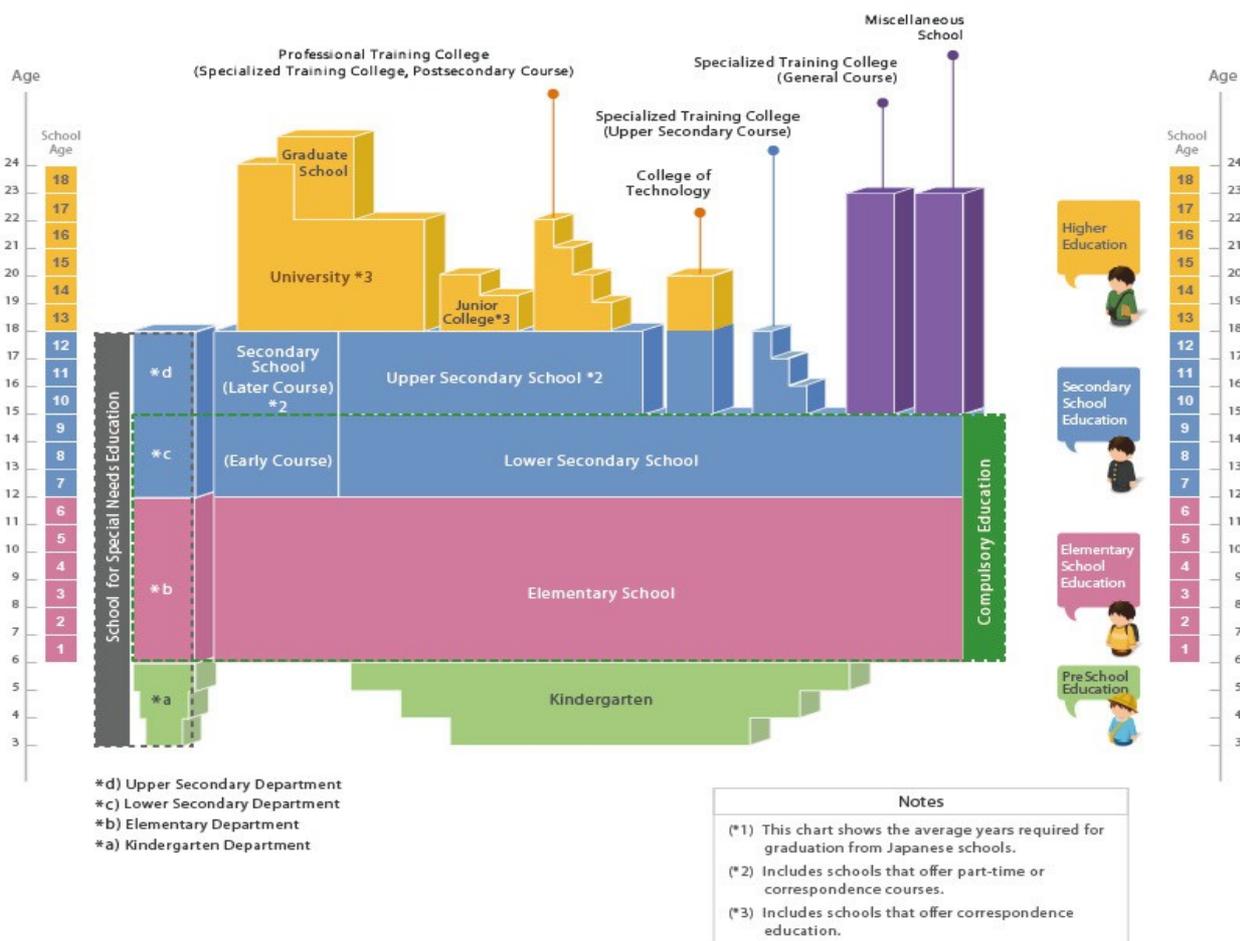
42 “Monbukagakushō”, 2009, http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shougai/senshuu/1280734.htm, retrieved on 06/07/2018.

and possibility to sit for university entrance examinations (so a full-fledged education path), and “non-regular” schools, offering a parallel education focusing on specific subjects and granting possibility of taking university entrance exams only on special occasions⁴³. Today, to put it in more practical terms, “normal” schools are the so-called “Article 1 schools” (*Ichijōkō*) since they fall within the type of schools stipulated in Art. 1 of the School Education Law (1947). The schools classified as “article 1 schools” are: Elementary schools (*Shōgakkō*); Lower Secondary School (*Chūgakkō*); Upper Secondary School (*Kōtōgakkō*); University (*Daigaku*), which includes Junior college (*Tanki daigaku*) and College of technology (*Kōtōsenmongakkō*); School for Special Needs (*Tokubetsu shien gakkō*); and Kindergarten (*Yōchien*).

Table 3 below schematizes the Japanese School systems.

Table 3⁴⁴

Japanese School systems



43 SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 11.

44 “Monbukagakushō”, 2018, *Principles Guide Japan’s Educational System*,

<http://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/overview/index.htm>, retrieved on 07/06/2018.

Education is subdivided into four levels, namely, pre-school education, elementary school education, secondary school education and higher education, with compulsory education extending until grade 9 (about 15 years old). As it can be noted, miscellaneous schools and specialized training colleges with general course (*Senshūgakkō ippankatei*)⁴⁵, which are not “article 1 schools”, do not fall within any of the four levels and are outside the education system. Unless each school of this category sets its own entry conditions, no regulation imposes particular requirements such as a school diploma, and virtually anybody can enroll in the school at any time. Indeed, this would normally be assumed in the case, for example, of a driving school (which is a miscellaneous school) and it would be considered almost obvious that a driving school is outside a school system. However, as for a foreign school, the fact of falling within this category might be questionable. Actually, only three South Korean high schools are “article 1 schools” (but are private and not public schools) since they pair classes about Korean language and culture to Japanese standard curriculum.

Undoubtedly, Japan is not peculiar in its legislation regarding foreign schools. Countries like China, Taiwan and South Korea, similarly to Japan, exclude foreign schools from their education systems, but indeed, every country has its own level of integration and incorporation of foreign schools and it is hard to make generalizations. Shimizu cites as what he thinks are good examples of incorporation the UK's system and Australia's system. The former is praised for allowing international and/or ethnic schools (such as France or Greece accredited schools) to have GCSE and A levels preparatory courses (both are exams granting qualifications. A levels are university entrance qualifications). In addition, the UK allows the establishment of 'faith schools', which, as long as they conform to the national curriculum, are recognized as full fledged public schools – unlike in the aforementioned case of the three South Korean schools recognized as “article 1 schools” which, nonetheless, remain private institutions where students are required to pay a tuition – where students receive a standard UK government's education but with a particular religious character depending on the religion of the school⁴⁶. Australia instead is exalted since it has established public schools for Australian Aborigines, who constitute a population minority, where they study the national curriculum from their cultural point of view and with subjects aimed at preserving their heritage⁴⁷.

45 Similarly to miscellaneous schools, they comprise several type of institutions including exams preparatory schools.

46 SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 16.

47 SHIMIZU, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 8.

PAST AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

By virtue of their status, foreign schools have always had a different treatment from the government compared to “art. 1 schools”. If, on one hand, being outside of the education system implies greater independence in shaping school programs and regulations, on the other, it also means that foreign schools are excluded from several benefits. Treatment towards foreign schools, not to mention foreign residents' living conditions, have improved since the 1980s and the 1990s when Japan ratified international treaties aimed at implementing respect for human rights. Some of these treaties are (brackets indicate the year in which Japan ratified the contract) the International Bill of Human Rights (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1994), and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1995)⁴⁸. However, still today, foreign schools need to confront many issues due to their status as “miscellaneous schools” which in some cases even threaten their survival.

First of all, financing their own activities is a primary issue, since Japan's Ministry of Education does not provide any type of funding to miscellaneous schools. The Ministry of Education only funds “Art. 1” public schools and provides a relevant amount of budget to “Art. 1” private schools since they are too Japanese full-fledged schools. Having no type of governmental money aid little affects international schools which usually target affluent Japan's “expat” community. Moreover, since international schools are in most cases English-medium, a language with a high economic capital, they are particularly attractive to many Japanese parents and, as a consequence, can afford to charge a high tuition which fully supports their needs.

On the other hand, Korean and Chinese schools are much more likely to suffer from lack of public funding, since students attending these schools often come from working class families who cannot afford to pay high sums for their children education. The situation for them was even more vexing decades ago, when, due to lack of access to welfare services, families of these communities were further impoverished and had to struggle even more to put their children in schools with tuition. Korean and Chinese schools have constantly tried to keep tuition costs down in order to make schools more affordable but this in turn has always led to tremendous budget cuts. *Chōsen* schools for example are often located in poorly managed and sometimes decaying infrastructures since funds for maintenance are not available; moreover they usually keep school staff as limited as possible. Some prefectures and local municipalities have started since the 1980s, on their own initiative, to funnel funds to foreign schools located in their territory, yet, these funds are often very limited and schools cannot rely on this aid alone. Moreover, due to the recent emergence of hot

48 IJIMA Shigeaki, “Nihon ni iru gaikokujin no kodomo to kyōiku” (Foreign children in Japan and education), in Satake (ed.), *Zainichi...*, 2011, pp. 214-227, cit., p. 223.

issues with North Korea, such as the Japanese abductees problem, some prefectures have discontinued funding to *Chōsen* schools due to their ties with the country run by Kim Jong-Un.

Secondly, transfer from a foreign school to a Japanese school has always been a tricky question, partially solved only in recent years. In fact, exclusion from the pattern of Japanese education means that students graduated from foreign schools were deemed not eligible for taking Japanese schools entrance examinations. In the Japanese education system, entrance exams are required to enter any institution after middle school level (and occasionally even from elementary schools). Students usually become eligible exam-takers if they have completed education in the previous cycle (for example students can take a university entrance examination if they have completed high school education). Because of their school not being recognized by the Japanese Minister of Education as a “standard” school, foreign schools' graduates did not officially qualify as exam-takers. Whereas access and possibility to take exams were sometimes less strict at high school level or for private and public universities, where access by recommendation is also easier, state universities imperatively did not allow entrance to foreign schools' graduates. This stood in stark contrast with the treatment of foreign students from abroad who, quite ironically, were admitted upon fulfillment of certain requirements.

This situation had produced many cases in which students of ethnic schools attended at the same time Japanese high schools' night classes to be able to sit for university examinations. In this regard, Kanno also reports the decision of a Chinese ethnic school (=Zhonghua ethnic school, see below) to terminate its high school division in 1982 so to ensure that its students attend Japanese high schools which will grant them a smoother access to university⁴⁹. In July 2002, the Ministry of Education decided on a policy granting eligibility to graduates of foreign schools for Japanese university entrance examinations. All foreign schools were initially included but following that year's Japan and North Korea summit and amidst a wave of bashing the North Korean government, eligibility was limited to Western International schools⁵⁰. Subsequently, after a series of protests and accusations of discrimination, the Japanese government revised its decision, including thereafter also ethnic schools. However, the situation resolved with an exception for *Chōsen* schools only, to which, university access has to be granted on a student-to-student basis with the university having the final say. This ad hoc unfair policies towards *Chōsen* schools, motivated again on the grounds of these schools' relation to North Korean, are still in place today.

Thirdly, another issue originated in the last decade is the series of problems regarding rules

49 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 79.

50 TANAKA Hiroshi, “Emerging Political and Legal Challenges of Ethnic Schools in Japan”, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (eds.), *Japan's...*, 2006, pp. 150-167, cit., p. 160.

provisioning for public high schools becoming tuition-free (*Kōkō mushōka*) and their application to foreign schools. On April 1st 2010 the government implemented the 'Law regarding the non-levy of tuition fees related to public upper secondary schools and the provision of upper secondary school attendance support funds' (my translation), according to which, public high schools should become tuition-free institutions⁵¹. As for private and miscellaneous schools, the law establishes the provision of funds covering a part of the tuition fees to be decided on a student individual basis⁵². Foreign schools, due to their status as miscellaneous schools, are included in this decree but again, an exception was made for *Chōsen* schools in the wake of turbulent Japan-North Korea relations. Despite accusations of racism and claims by human rights organizations that children education should not intertwine with politics, exclusion of *Chōsen* schools from *mushōka* has not yet been revoked. Several *Chōsen* high schools throughout the country have filed still ongoing lawsuits to contest this decision.

Additional matters include the non-applicability of tax deduction on donations to foreign schools. In practice, in case of a money donation to a school, that money is deducted from the income of the donor and calculated as a deductible expense for tax purposes⁵³. However, this system is only applicable only in case of donations to “art. 1” schools and specialized training college, which consequently makes foreign schools little attractive for donors. Besides, some past issues, perhaps of minor relevance but still important in terms of fostering equality, are participation to high school sport tournaments and ability to purchase discounted train passes. Participation in inter-school tournaments was granted initially for baseball competitions in 1991 and later extended to all disciplines in 1994. Thanks to this possibility, many *Chōsen* high schools were able to win nationwide championships or represent their prefectures. The problem of discounted train passes is not actually a minor one since many students – I would say the majority of them in highly urbanized areas – ride the train every day to get to school and some pupils even travel long distances. Possibility of buying discounted train passes (as it is the norm for “art.1” school students) which otherwise would be quite expensive, definitely can make very positive contributions to a family budget. Fortunately, Japan Rail (JR) extended this possibility to foreign schools students in 1994.

A part of the problems analyzed so far still continue to pose challenges to foreign schools,

51 In Japan, high school education is not included in compulsory education. Public high schools charged tuition fees before the implementation of *mushōka* because they technically fall out of the duty of the government to provide a free compulsory education for its citizens.

52 HIGA Yasunori and TATE Nahoko, “Gaikokujingakkō shisaku no rekishi teki tenkai: haijo to hōsetsu o meguru kō no bunretsu to kyōshin” (Historical development of policies for foreign schools: public resonance and division regarding exclusions and inclusions.), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji (eds.), *Nihon no...*, 2014, pp. 24-35, cit., p. 26.

53 IJIMA, in Satake(ed.), *Zainichi...*, cit., p. 217.

especially to *Chōsen* schools, excluded with ad hoc directives from several benefits, yet, it is also true that many issues have turned up for the better. Not limited to this, beyond a general betterment of living conditions, recent times have also witnessed a shifting perception of foreign schools and, in particular, of ethnic schools. In fact, in an increasingly globalized Japan, more and more people have turned their eyes to the multilingual education offered in ethnic schools, and this attention might become a unique opportunity for the latter to develop and acquire a more active role within Japanese society.

Nowadays, Japan's economy is becoming more globalized, and its society and institutions are diversifying as well. Even not so recently have people become more aware that a good command of one or more foreign languages is a key to many jobs and career advancement opportunities, even without necessarily leaving Japan. Similarly to many other countries in the world, Japanese families, in particular those belonging to the middle class, are increasingly eager to enroll their children in institutions which can provide an international education. The Japanese government too is attempting to pursue the so-called *gurobaruka* (“globalization”), by promoting study abroad and exchange programs with schools overseas, by establishing high school curricula focusing on English language learning such as the 'Super English Language High School' (SELHi) program and the 'Super Global High School' (SGH) program, and by pushing for the adoption of the International Baccalaureat (IB) ('IB 200 schools plan'). Some parents though, due to a general diminished trust in public education, turn directly their attention to international and ethnic schools. Schools that particularly benefited from this 'surging interest towards international education'⁵⁴ are institutions whose medium languages of instruction are languages enjoying a high status in the world economy, and a big cultural capital, notably English and Chinese-medium foreign schools. In fact, along with long-time attractive international schools, over the last twenty years, some people are increasingly looking at ethnic Chinese schools as an interesting educational possibility for their children. With Brazil now included among the so-called BRICS economic powers, Brazilian ethnic schools too might arise as a valuable choice for Japanese families.

Yet, enrolling Japanese citizens in foreign schools also presents some drawbacks. Beyond the aforementioned issues affecting foreign schools in general, children in this school with Japanese nationality find themselves in an uncertain legal status. In fact, attendance to a “non-art. 1” school is not considered to fulfill a child's duty to receive compulsory education therefore Japanese who

54 YABUTA Naoko, SHIBANO Jun'ichi, YAMAMOTO Kosuke, SHIKITA Keiko, “Gaikokujingakkō kenkyū no dōkō: hen'yō to keizoku ga egakidasu gaikokujingakkō no 'ima'” (Trends in foreign schools' research: the 'present time' of foreign schools depicting change and continuation), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji (eds.), *Nihon no...*, 2014, pp. 24-35, cit., p. 47.

enroll their children at a foreign school technically do not perform their citizens obligations⁵⁵. According to the law, it is uncertain whether this constitutes an illegal action, however it is a reality that some parents were frowned upon as “bad Japanese” for this decision, while others eventually decide not to enroll their children to a foreign school fearing a warning of the local school district⁵⁶. Finally, even as Japanese, parents with children in foreign schools are not entitled to costs coverage for textbooks and children vaccination and have to pay everything themselves.

On the side of ethnic schools, transition from an “ethnic educational concept” to an “international educational concept” might be a difficult process, as the school has to keep in mind the needs of the community it is serving. Parents of foreign communities often choose to put their children in a ethnic school so that they can grow and learn in a protected environment without fearing discrimination from Japanese peers for their ethnic roots. Moreover, ethnic schools often set as primary goal that of teaching to ethnic students their heritage language and culture, ultimately wishing that they will appreciate their ethnic background and proudly acknowledge it in their future lives. Accommodating the demands of parents both inside and outside the ethnic community can be challenging. In addition, ethnic schools may also be confronted with the task of coordinating the needs of oldcomers and newcomers within the same ethnic community. Taking into account these several factors and shifting economic and social realities, how are educational goals being crafted in ethnic schools? In the next chapter, I will attempt to frame this question within Kanno and Norton's concept of 'imagined communities'.

IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Kanno and Norton have conducted numerous separate research on minority language instruction and immigrants education, using and re-adapting Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities'. Norton asserts that imagined communities “refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of imagination”⁵⁷. In fact, “we do not only affiliate with tangible and concrete communities such as our neighbors, religious groups, etc. [...] imagination [too] is another source of community”⁵⁸. In more concrete terms, our idea of nation is actually an imagined community “because the member of even the smallest nation, will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them,

55 YABUTA et al, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji (eds.), *Nihon no...*, 2014, pp. 24-35, cit., p. 48.

56 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 78.

57 Bonny NORTON, *Identity and Language Learning: Extending the Conversation*, Bristol, Multilingual Matters, 2013, cit., p. 8.

58 NORTON, *Identity...*, cit., p. 8.

yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”⁵⁹. It follows that national identities are not innate to people but carefully constructed by nation-states through census, maps, museums and, of course, schools, the film industry and the media⁶⁰. This operation of crafting a national identity carried out by nation-states is representative of the influence they have on their citizens and of the strong control they hold on people's imagination.

Drawing from this theory, Kanno posits the idea of “institutionally imagined communities” which have a long impact on schools' policies and practices. Institutionally imagined communities are “visions of the kinds of people students will grow up to socialize with, where they will live in the world, and the places they will occupy in society”⁶¹. These “visions”, implicitly or explicitly guide the pedagogical practices of schools which can expand or narrow the range of identities that students can adopt, and once a school delimits possible possible identities for a certain group of students, it is tremendously difficult for individual students to resist these imposed identities⁶². In her study of bilingualism in five schools in Japan, Kanno analyzes the difference between each school's imagined communities. She noticed for example that, in a renown expensive international school attended by children of wealthy families, school policies stress the importance of bilingualism and even more, that of a good command of English. In fact, in spite of the school's location in Japan, where Japanese is the main language, this school envisions for their pupils a future as powerful actors, for example as diplomats or companies executives, in an international scenario extending way beyond Japan's borders, where bilingualism is extremely valuable and command of English essential. In a Japanese private school with an English immersion curriculum attended again by generally wealthy families, the school is required to pass on to students a solid proficiency of the English language but must not neglect instruction in the Japanese language and Japanese subjects. This school envisions and wishes for their students high job positions within Japan, where English is instrumental for a successful career advancement and Japanese fundamental.

Concerning two public Japanese schools attended by many foreign children, instructional methods propose a binary choice: either acquisition of the Japanese language or maintenance of one's L1. In a school attended by many children of immigrant working-class families thought to be in Japan on a temporary basis, educational staff is sensitive towards maintenance of the children's L1, since it is assumed that these children will eventually leave for the their home country where

59 NORTON, *Identity...*, cit., p. 8.

60 NORTON, *Identity...*, cit., p. 193.

61 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 3.

62 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 5.

they need to speak their own language. Therefore in this school, Kanno documented bilingual aides in Japanese classes along with some classes taught in the immigrants' L1⁶³. In the other public school analyzed, attended like the one above by many children of working-class backgrounds but that have this time the expectation to live in Japan for good, visions for the children's future change. This school prioritizes acquisition of the Japanese language and puts a great amount of effort on integrating students in Japanese society. On the other hand, it neglects maintenance of minority language students' L1 almost to the point of discouraging its use. For these children, the school envisions a future within Japan, therefore stresses the importance of assimilation into Japanese society. In both cases, schools project onto their pupils a future not dissimilar from their working-class background. The overall future expectation towards these immigrant students is that they will be employed in blue-collar jobs, as a consequence schools, prioritize the acquisition solely of language of the country where the students are thought to spend the rest of their lives: their home country in the first case, and Japan in the second. Bilingualism is not given as an option as it is considered a luxury students and their families cannot afford⁶⁴.

This analysis could confirm Bourdieu's theory which asserts that schools perpetuate social inequalities⁶⁵. Bourdieu, who influenced both Norton and Kanno's research, fights, like Anderson, against the concept of individuals as masters of their own destiny, stating that individuals are complicit in playing a game whose rules have been set by powerful institutions⁶⁶. Bourdieu considered an individual's habitus (to be understood as the deeply engrained habits, skills, and dispositions that we possess due to our life experience) "as unconsciously influenced by the fields in which he [the individual] finds himself (e.g. Family, school, workplace). It is through this interaction of habitus and field that people gain a practical sense of who they are and who they can become"⁶⁷. As seen above, schools are important tools for instilling national identity in people and become instrumental in ensuring the continuation of existing power and class relations, channeling and integrating youth into the economic system. As we said above, teachers might unconsciously abide to existing power and class relations thinking to act for the well being of children.

However, Kanno also bestows a lot of importance to individual imagined communities where human agency becomes more important. In fact, she believes that educators too, are able to challenge the unequal power structures in society and that they can resist unequal future

63 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 154.

64 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 3.

65 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 2.

66 NORTON, *Identity...*, cit., p. 198.

67 NORTON, *Identity...*, cit., p. 196.

trajectories⁶⁸. One example is the Chinese ethnic school analyzed in her fieldwork (to which she gives the fictional name of Zhonghua), where teachers have great aspirations for their children and hope they will become cultural and social bridges between Japan and China⁶⁹. Thanks to the emergence of China as an economic powerhouse, the school believes that, in light of its students' proficiency in Japanese and Chinese (and possibly also English) and knowledge of both Chinese and Japanese culture, pupils will be able to turn into successful global players. Although most its students come from a working class background, the school envisions a future with many job possibilities opened to them and shape its policies in that direction, trying to carry out the aforementioned process of giving an international connotation to a previously solely ethnic education. Zhonghua's attempt is essentially a form of social experiment in which ethnic/linguistic minority children are given a bilingual education that is usually reserved for children of more affluent backgrounds⁷⁰. Kanno then concludes that “when a school decides to churn its energy into presenting a more positive and powerful image of an ethnic community, as Zhonghua does, it can take minority children to a place where their parents individually cannot hope to take them”⁷¹.

Thus, educators can question the very imagined communities that society at large predicts for some students⁷². Not limited to this, even parents have specific imagined communities, which might clash with those envisioned by schools, and so do students as they become more adult. To sum up, there are many elements which contribute to educational goals and forge future trajectories of (ethnic) schools.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have tried to give an outline of the formation of Japanese foreign communities and their composition. Subsequently I have attempted to frame the current situation on foreign schools and what type of difficulties did they have to endure. In light of their future challenges but also future development possibilities, I concluded focusing on the concept of imagined communities. Now, comes the question “What are the imagined communities of *Chōsen* schools?”. Imagined communities of *Chōsen* schools have varied enormously since they were set up by Chongryun after the war, reflecting in this the inner changes of Japan's Korean community. Founded amidst a delicate political and social climate, *Chōsen* schools underwent until today numerous curriculum

68 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 4.

69 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 164.

70 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 165.

71 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 166.

72 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 179.

reforms that radically altered the direction towards which schools wanted to steer their students. Some of these reforms were advocated by younger teachers and backed up or opposed by parents and senior educational staff in an inter-generational confrontation which mirrored a community in transition. In the next chapter, I will look more closely at the changes Japan's Korean community has experienced throughout its history and analyze the hopes and wishes that led to the establishment of *Chōsen* schools throughout the archipelago.

CHAPTER 2

THE *ZAINICHI* KOREAN COMMUNITY AND ITS EDUCATION UNTIL THE TREATY OF SAN FRANCISCO

INTRODUCTION

The Koreans have been for a long time the most numerous foreign community in Japan, until being surpassed by Chinese in 2007. The Korean minority in Japan has been present in large numbers in Japan since 1910 when the first big waves of immigrants from the Korean peninsula started to arrive. A presence of more 100 years implies that current *Zainichi* Koreans are welcoming their 6th and 7th generations. Sonia Ryang, a sociologist and herself a second generation *Zainichi* Korean, reveals how even among people of her own generation, the most widely spoken language at home was Japanese, even for those like her who received schooling in *Chōsen* schools from the elementary level⁷³. Nowadays, it can be assumed that virtually all children of oldcomer Koreans speak Japanese as their L1 and hence they do not constitute a language minority if they enroll in Japanese schools. For those who enroll in *Chōsen* schools, the Korean language they learn in classes is a foreign language, as it is to their teachers. The progressive loss of one's heritage language is a very common process in any immigrant group as its members proceed through generations, in fact it is often observed, for example, that second generation children, while fully understanding what their parents say to them in their heritage language, tend to respond in the language of the country where they are born. The origins of Korean ethnic schools in Japan have to be re-conducted to a large extent precisely to the need of teaching to Korean children their heritage language, in light of a possible return to their Korean homeland, liberated from Japan's colonial rule in 1945. At that time in fact, a large part of Koreans in Japan were already second generation or the so-called 1.5 generation, born in Korea but arrived to Japan during early teen years, therefore heavily influenced in their culture and language use by the host country.

Repatriation of the over two million of Koreans living in Japan at the time of liberation – of which not everybody wanted to go back - could not be done in a day, nevertheless many believe it would have been actuated eventually. Moreover, division of Korea in two areas of influence following the war, did not excessively anguish Koreans in its early stages, as it was thought to be just a temporary measure. What was important in the meanwhile was to educate Koreans grown up in Japan on homeland's customs and language, so that they could more easily fit into their new life

73 Sonia RYANG, *North Koreans in Japan: Language, Ideology, and Identity*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1997, cit., p. 16.

awaiting them in the peninsula. However, several factors occurring afterward, such as the uncertain status of Koreans in Japan, inner conflicts and unrest within Korea, and the escalation of the Cold War, delayed repatriations and further strengthened the division of the peninsula in two parts. From that time, Koreans stranded in Japan, deprived of their Japanese citizenship after the San Francisco Treaty in 1952, started to critically review their concept of “homeland”. Nevertheless, *Chōsen* schools continued for many decades to base their curriculum on the assumption that the all Korean community would eventually return to the homeland, setting up educational programs focusing mainly on Korea's matters rather than Japan's. The crafting of these programs was heavily influenced by the political ideology of the Chongryun, the organization that revived Korean ethnic education after a small period of crisis in between 1949 and 1955 and inherited schools previously founded by the League of Koreans, its parent organization, founded in 1945 and suppressed by the American occupation forces in 1949. Chongryun in fact had and has strong ties to North Korea due to the ample support of communism among *Zainichi* Koreans. Beyond political affiliation, educational programs in schools were also shaped by the sincere hopes of first generation members to return to a united homeland which they had had to leave due to economical and historical forces triggered by the Japanese penetration of Korea.

I will begin this chapter by recounting Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula and the immigration of Koreans to Japan. Next, I will analyze the series of events that led to the emergence of Korean ethnic schools, attempting to retrace the issues and the struggles the Korean community experienced in the post-war. As we will see, the majority of Korean schools founded in the after-war by the League of Koreans would have to close in 1949, after which, new schools would not be founded until 1955 when Chongryun will emerge. Few schools founded by the league, survived the closure and were subsequently run by Chongryun, continually existing in spite of great historical changes. However, in order to distinguish between the league's period and Chongryun's period, I will refer to the earlier schools as Korean ethnic schools or league's schools while to the latter as *Chōsen* schools or Chongryun's schools.

JAPANESE PENETRATION OF KOREA

Iijima summarizes the main reasons that caused immigration from Korea to Japan during the colonial era through the following stages: “Give me the land” (*tochi yokose*) phase, triggered by the 'land survey project' in the 1910s; “Give me the rice” (*kome yokose*) phase, prompted by the 'Plan for the increase of rice production' in the 1920s; “Give me people” (*hito yokose*) phase in the 1930s; and the “Give me your life” (*inochi yokose*) phase in the 1940s⁷⁴. The first two idiomatic phrases

74 IIJIMA, in Satake(ed.), *Zainichi...*, cit., p. 215.

refer to the fact that Japanese colonization was characterized at the beginning by several expropriations of agricultural terrains by the colonizers and changes in the economy that left many Koreans in despair, obliging them to migrate to Japan to look for better opportunities. The third phase refers to the labor demand of Japanese industries, due to many Japanese men enlisted as soldiers fighting wars in Asia and elsewhere, which spurred in 1930s a massive hiring of Koreans, still exempted by military duties. Finally, with the Pacific War becoming tougher in the 1940s, Japan decided to send Korean men too to the front, hence the phrase “give me your life”. In light of this ensemble of causes, Koreans left for Japan on their own will, or were forcibly brought by order of the Japanese, ever since the latter started to penetrate Korea from the Meiji period.

At the onset of the Meiji period (1868-1912) Japan was striving to modernize after centuries of isolation ended in 1854, when the country had been forced into opening to world trade through the United States' gunboat diplomacy. Modernization did not only mean adoption of new technologies or reshaping its internal political structures, but also putting in place a solid foreign policy, able to deal successfully with both western states and Asian neighbors. At that time, though coerced to sign unfavorable unequal treaties with western powers, Japan was in fact one of the few independent countries in a subdued Asia, where imperialist expansion of European countries did not seem to stop. Of course, the perspective of ending up door to door with foreign powers was cause of great concern for Meiji politicians. As said by Duus, “throughout the 1870s and 1880s a series of events – Russian encroachments on the Chinese border, French seizure of Indo-China, British expansion into Burma and Malaya – reminded them [the Japanese] that an aggressive Western imperialism was on the march in Asia. The war between France and China in 1883-84 was particularly worrisome, for it prefigured the imminent breakup of China, a possibility unimaginable a decade before.”⁷⁵. Furthermore, back then, Japanese statesmen were realizing that the economic strategy of paying for foreign imports by exporting agricultural products such as tea and silk, could not ensure in the long run Japan's survival in a Western-dominated global market. They held the conviction that Japan needed to become an exporter of manufactured goods and higher-valued-added products⁷⁶. Meiji leaders soon recognized that “neighboring countries like China and Korea were not only essential to the security of Japan but were also promising markets for Japanese goods; if these territories were to come under the exclusive control of the Western powers, then Japan would suffer economically as well as strategically”, in fact, “neighboring markets in East Asia, [were] the only regions in the world where they [the Japanese] might compete with the more

75 Peter DUUS, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea 1895-1910*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995, cit., p. 16.

76 DUUS, *The Abacus...*, cit., p. 19.

advanced Western economies”⁷⁷. This overall situation subsequently steered Japan towards seeking control over the Korean peninsula, back then an isolated and yet unmodernized country, known as *Chōsen*, an independent state with its emperor but under the Chinese political sphere. Japanese subtly started to penetrate Korea, first by obliging *Chōsen* politicians to ratify in 1876 unequal treaties much like Western powers with Japan just two decades earlier⁷⁸. Subsequently, they continued the incorporation of Korea into their political sphere with progressively more assertive methods finally acquiring full control over the country in 1910.

As mentioned in chapter 1, when Korea was incorporated into the Japanese Empire, Koreans were immediately absorbed in Japan's legal framework through the creation of specific family registers which made Koreans Japanese citizens. The separation between Japan proper's registers (*Naichi koseki*) and colonies' registers (*Gaichi koseki*) was drawn since the beginning and was used even back then to determine certain citizens' duties, like military conscription which was extended, until 1940s, only to men in Japan proper's registers. In any case though, Koreans could be effectively considered Japanese citizens and were also entitled to citizenship rights like voting rights, when universal suffrage was achieved in 1925⁷⁹. Voting rights could not be performed in colonies as there were no elections but Koreans residing in Japan could participate in local and national elections and even ran for candidates as demonstrated by several cases of Korean politicians or candidates especially in local municipalities.

The fact that Korea and Japan, though separated by a relatively narrow sea, are geographically next to each others, differentiated Japan colonialism from many cases of European colonialism where colonies were located very far from the European continent. Territorial proximity entailed that Korea could be more easily incorporated into Japan and in fact the country actually became an extension of Japan, to the point that to many is even hard to refer to Korea as a colony. Wetherall talks in fact of subnations within the wider Japanese state rather than colonies, and argues that the Japanese empire was divided in these subnations with “Proper Japan” just being one of them. He also asserts that every Japanese citizen at that time, including Koreans and Taiwanese, was characterized by different layers of territorial affiliation. On the outer level was nationality (*kokuseki*) which included everybody, then subnationality (*minseki*) and finally the layer of local affiliation. Everyone was first of all affiliated to local municipalities, as demonstrated by the family register, then to a subnation, and finally was he considered a Japanese subject. Most importantly, “subnationality, like nationality, was always a matter of register affiliation, not race”⁸⁰.

77 DUUS, *The Abacus...*, cit., p. 19.

78 DUUS, *The Abacus...*, cit., p. 48.

79 KASHIWAZAKI, in Sonia Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 18.

80 WETHERALL, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 28.

A solid integration into the Japanese state though, came with brutalities such as the forced cultural assimilation of Koreans and punishments for speaking the Korean language in schools, in Japan as well as in the peninsula. Moreover, it can be argued that, stating that Korea was not a colony, is actually in line with the narrative of the colonial Japanese government which under the slogan *naisen ittai* (“Korea and Japan forming one body”), and through high-sounding and seemingly noble wishes for Japanese and Koreans to be a united population, motivated the enlistment of thousands of Korean men to be sent to war. Finally, race-blind policies and regulations did not necessarily mean that Koreans in Japan did not face any type of racism; in fact it happened quite the opposite. This being said, it is also true that Japan, in its penetration and incorporation of Korea, attempted to pursue in many cases policies that could be inclusive of Koreans and could effectively make them Japanese subjects with related citizenship rights. Furthermore, although Japanese settlers sought to establish a privileged position in the colonies, they tried to administer Korea and other colonies as if they were Japanese territories, seeking a full territorial integration.

THE BEGINNING OF THE KOREAN DIASPORA

The high level of territorial integration was also witnessed by the movement of people between Korea and Japan in both directions, in fact, during colonization, not only did many Koreans move to Japan but also a sizable number of Japanese went to the Korean peninsula. In order to foster an economic growth, Japan had proceeded with a land reform of Korea, acquiring many agricultural plots in the peninsula and encouraging many Japanese farmers to settle there. This pushed the migration to Korea of many Japanese to the extent that by 1940, over 700,000 of them were residing in the peninsula⁸¹. These changes in land ownership proved difficult for Korean farmers who constituted at that time the 85 percent of the total population, leaving many with no other choices but to seek better opportunities elsewhere, and not only to Japan, since many also migrated to China, Hawaii and America. The major “pull” for those who chose to go to Japan was the industrialization experienced in the archipelago during the Taishō-era (1912-1926) which created many job opportunities. In many instances, Japanese labor recruiters, facing severe labor shortages, even began soliciting cheap Korean laborers to work in developing industries with companies sending executives to Korea's most depressed area to carry out the recruitment⁸². The majority of Korean immigrants, the vast majority of which was initially constituted by men, were employed in coal mining, steel and metal industries. Women who later migrated due to family reunions were

81 Sarah Sakhaee KASHANI, “Colonial Migration to the “Manchester of the Orient”: The Origins of the Korean Community in Osaka, Japan, 1920-1945”, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (eds.), *Japan's...*, 2006, cit., p. 170.

82 KASHANI, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 171.

employed in large numbers in the textile sector.

Osaka, the largest and most productive city in Japan during the 1920s, also called back then the “Manchester of the Orient”, became one of the main destinations for Koreans, which explains today's still high concentration of Koreans, especially old-comers, in the area. Other reasons for preferring Osaka over Tokyo urban area, have to be reconducted to the type of industries common in the Japanese capital, typically factories of medium to large scale requiring mostly skilled labor and having lower turn-over rates compared to the textile and mining industries in Osaka⁸³. Koreans arriving to Japan could not speak Japanese and were often illiterate even in their own language, therefore had much more chances to find employment in unskilled positions like the ones Osaka's industry could offer. In addition, as mentioned in chapter 1, in the wake of Kanto's earthquake of 1923, severely hitting Tokyo, Koreans had often been made scapegoats for the disaster and had been accused of looting shops, accusations which had led the angered local population to perpetrate indiscriminate killings of Koreans, whose death toll exceeded 6,000 people after these events. Fears that these brutalities might repeat, were strong enough to convince Korean immigrants that Osaka was a better destination.

Apart from these extreme examples of discrimination, racism towards Koreans was also present in more subtle forms. Many Koreans in fact had difficulties in finding a landlord who would lease to them and cases of Koreans living crammed in small apartments were not uncommon. Poverty was widespread and living as well as working conditions, were often harsh. In fact, coming from a situation of despair back in the homeland, Koreans were often more willing than the Japanese to accept low wages and rigid working environments⁸⁴. Some Koreans though, were able to set up business projects on their own, such as yakiniku (Korean Barbecue) restaurants, steel factories, or loan companies, which allowed them to lead a modest or even wealthy living. Other Koreans ran successfully for elections, in fact in the period from 1929 to 1943, among a total of 383 Korean candidates, 96 were elected for various charges in different institutions, such as city councils, prefectural councils, school districts, with even one being elected at the Lower House at the Diet⁸⁵. Additionally, there were documented cases in which campaign posters written in hangul were used in order to attract Korean voters, as in Yajirō Masuzoe's political campaign for Wakamatsu municipal assembly. Suffrage rights for Koreans would have been suspended only in December 1945, in a revision historically famous also for granting voting rights to women⁸⁶.

By 1931, more than 300,000 Koreans resided in Japan, and many second generations

83 KASHANI, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 175.

84 KASHANI, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 177.

85 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 165.

86 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 153.

individuals, already numerous after about twenty years of continuous migration, were regarding Japan as their home. Echoing Boudieu's theory about the importance schools have in forming national identities (see chapter 1), many members of the second generation living in colonial Japan actually revealed that education was a significant factor that influenced their identity⁸⁷. Education in the colonial era has often been depicted as an imposed brutal process of assimilation where Koreans were physically punished for speaking their language, but indeed many Korean parents had a strong desire that their children went to school. Education was emphasized as an empowering tool for social mobility and several Koreans had actually migrated to Japan precisely for seeking better education possibilities for their children. In addition, education was probably valued because many Korean families in Japan could not afford to send their children to school. In fact, the Ministry of Education, though admitting that school-age Korean children, in light of their status as Japanese citizens, were subject to the compulsory education law, suggested to avoid a strict enforcement of the law in their regard⁸⁸. As a consequence, schooling of Korean children largely depended on parents' will and possibilities, and since many children had to help their families in working tasks, school was precluded to them. In 1931, it is estimated that only 18.5 percent of Korean children were attending the elementary school. This percentage, however, will jump to 64.7 in 1942, possibly reflecting improved economic conditions of Korean families in Japan.

In conclusion, how brutal as it might have been, through the instruction that some of them could receive in schools, many second generation and 1.5 generation Koreans, probably started feeling more Japanese than Koreans, looking at Japanese at their first language in which they could read and write, rather than a Korean they could not speak well or were illiterate in. Those of them who repatriated to the peninsula after the liberation often found problems reintegrating in the homeland's society, which probably was not so "homeland" to them.

TOWARDS THE WAR

At the onset of the 1930s, Japan was about to engage in a further colonial expansion into China, and by the end of the decade it would have been embroiled in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) with the Pacific War being on the horizon. This series of events, implying a great military mobilization, renewed efforts to turn Koreans into imperial subjects⁸⁹. Forced assimilation became stricter, as exemplified by the aforementioned *naisen ittai* propaganda and the *sōshikai*

87 KASHANI, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 180.

88 Hiromatsu INOKUCHI, "Korean ethnic schools in occupied Japan, 1945-52", in Sonia Ryang (ed.), *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*, London, Routledge, 2000, pp.140-56, cit., p. 143.

89 Sonia RYANG (ed.), *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*, London, Routledge, 2000, cit., p. 2.

(“Creating Japanese-Style Names and Reforming Korean Names”) policy which obliged Koreans to adopt Japanese-style name and abandon their Korean names. This, however, did not impact the division between Japanese proper's and colonial family registers which remains unaltered.

This ensemble of policies, at the core of the so-called *kōminka undō* (“Movement for transformation into imperial subjects”) also, and I would say especially, targeted schools. We have seen in the previous chapter how “education is a key site for the construction of national identities, for inculcating the categories and sentiments that bind people in an “imagined community” of the nation”⁹⁰. Subsequently we have witnessed this national-subject making process unfolding in the previous chapter with forced assimilation in schools, and Koreans acquiring new identities through education. From the 1930s, this national-subject making process increasingly assumed the goal of turning colonial subjects into loyal emperor subjects⁹¹. Kashiwazaki contends that “assimilation in Western colonialism was represented by the dissemination of Western culture with its “civilizing” mission. In the case of Japan, assimilation policies demanded “spiritual assimilation”, centered on loyalty and allegiance to the Japanese emperor”⁹². This process of fostering loyalty to the emperor was equally present in schools in Korea and in Japan, with both Japanese and Korean students, also because all students were under the same education system; it was the direction towards which all schools in Japan were heading as a whole.

The ultimate goal of the *naisen ittai* campaign, and possibly also of the *sōshikaimei*, was the full conscription of Korean males as the emperor's soldiers⁹³. Men belonging to a Korea-affiliated family register, previously exempted from military duties, became subjects to compulsory conscription from 1943. A total of 257,404 Korean men were drafted in the Japanese army and 106,782 into the navy, with many people from both divisions dying during the war as Japanese soldiers⁹⁴. Furthermore, a little bit earlier than the enlistment of Korean soldiers, the Japanese had already begun to forcibly recruit and bring to Japan Korean workers, in order to supply several industries and mines suffering from labor shortages. From 1939 to December 1944, a total of

90 ANDERSON, 1991, as cited in Jeffrey T. HESTER, “Kids between nations: ethnic classes in the construction of Korean identities in Japanese public schools”, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans in...*, 2000, pp. 175-196, cit., p. 176.

91 Koreans were explicitly barred from speaking their language at school. However, it is worth reminding that this “national-subject making process” (which is virtually present in all schools and not only in the case of Koreans in colonial Japan) does not materialize in the form of an overt propaganda but it is accomplished rather implicitly through “the symbolic mediation of a national imaginary comprising language, history, and geography” (Hester, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans in...*, cit., p. 176).

92 KASHIWAZAKI, in Sonia Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 17.

93 RYANG (ed.), *Koreans...*, p.3.

94 TSUBOE, 1949, as cited in RYANG (ed.), *Koreans...*, p.3.

634,093 male Koreans were brought to Japan as forced laborers: 320,148 worked in coal mining, 61,409 in metal mining, 129,664 in construction and civil engineering, and 122,872 in manufacturing and machine industries⁹⁵. It almost goes without saying that these slave laborers were living and working under the hardest conditions. Finally, World War II was characterized by the delicate issue of comfort women. These were women forced into prostitution for the Japanese army, sometimes forcibly separated from their families and sent as far away as Southeast Asia and the Pacific fronts⁹⁶. These women inducted into prostitution had to endure rapes, maltreatment, and many of them died or were killed in the final months of the war. They were recruited from all colonies of Japan and many of them were Korean women.

The atrocities of the war left a strong impact on Koreans as well as on Japanese. Feelings among members of the Korean community were as varied as the community itself. Most of the Koreans were angered towards Japan for the cruel aspects of the colonial experience and welcomed Japan's defeat as their liberation and as chance to go back to an independent Korea. Others, while maybe sharing to some extent these feelings, admittedly cried when the Japanese emperor declared the country's surrender and the end of his divine status; like for many Japanese, the reason they had been fighting for had vanished. Some Koreans did not know about their being Koreans until 1952 when all of a sudden they were deprived of their Japanese nationality. There were cases, in fact, where Korean families managed to successfully hide their Korean identity to their children and descendants who eventually grew up believing to be Japanese with no Korean ancestry. Losing all at once their Japanese nationality was indeed shocking for most of them. These diverse feelings exemplified what often happens in immigrants' experiences, where people change their identities and often become ambivalent between longing for the homeland and desire to stay in the host country. Surely many people, especially those forcibly deported to Japan, had no desires but return to Korea, but instead of drawing a strict dividing line (like it was drawn instead to divide Korea geographically as we will see below) between people believing this or that, it can be argued that these feelings coexisted at the same time in many Koreans or became more apparent to them upon return to the peninsula where several found difficulties in adapting to the local culture and experienced discrimination for being "Japanese". They had become foreigners in both countries.

THE IMMEDIATE POSTWAR

From July 17th until August 2nd 1945 in the city of Potsdam, in a recently defeated and occupied Germany, the governments of the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom

95 KIM Yöng-dal 1991, as cited in RYANG (ed.), *Koreans...*, p.3.

96 RYANG (ed.), *Koreans...*, p.3.

participated at the Potsdam Conference with the purpose of discussing and finding viable solutions regarding the post-war order and the issuance of peace treaties. The conference, on July 26th 1945, saw the emanation of the Potsdam Declaration for the Unconditional Surrender of Japan which contained the following statement from the Cairo Conference of 1943:

Japan will be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed. The aforesaid three great powers (U.S., U.K. and China), mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.⁹⁷

Although the details concerning the process of Korean independence were still somewhat vague, these were the intentions of the three war winning states towards Korea, that at the time of the Potsdam conference still constituted an integral part of the Japanese Empire. However, events happening shortly after changed the premise from which Korean independence was supposed to be achieved. As recounted by Morris-Suzuki, “throughout the Pacific War, the Soviet Union, engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Nazi Germany, had maintained a neutrality pact with Japan. But with Hitler defeated, three days after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima [happened on August 6th 1945], the USSR revoked the pact, and its troops began to sweep into the northern reaches of Japan's continental empire. Before the U.S. forces could reach the south of the Korean peninsula, Soviet forces had already begun to enter the north.”⁹⁸.

The U.S. started to become alarmed with the possibility that the Soviet Union might take over all Korea under its influence, breaking previous agreements between Truman and Stalin of a joint occupation of Korea in preparation for independence. On August 10th 1945, a committee of U.S. military and civilian officials urgently began to look for quick solutions to limit the advance of the Soviet Union and neatly divide the two countries' respective areas of influence. U.S. officers Dean Rusk and Charles H. Bonesteel noticed that the 38th parallel divided Korea in half, leaving with a short margin the capital Seoul in the southern (U.S.) part. Consequently, they suggested the proposal to the Soviet Union to establish a common trusteeship of Korea adopting the 38th parallel as a dividing line, which was accepted⁹⁹. This is how the division in two Koreas at around the 38th parallel began. However, in 1945, the partition into two separate governments had not yet emerged, not to mention that this separation was considered to be temporary by all parties, including the Koreans in Japan.

97 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 152.

98 Tessa MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus to North Korea: Shadows from Japan's Cold War*, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007, cit., p. 46.

99 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 46.

Shortly after, on August 15th Japan announced its surrender, through the radio address of Emperor Hirohito. Though official signing of the unconditional surrender would have been done on September 2nd, the Japanese Empire had ended. Koreans celebrated the date and still remember it now as the day of the Liberation (*Kaihō no hi*). The month of 1945 concluded with the landing, on the 30th, of General Douglas MacArthur at Atsugi military airfield on the outskirts of Tokyo: the occupation of Japan by the allied forces had begun¹⁰⁰.

THE REPATRIATION RUSH

American occupation of Japan would have lasted until the Treaty of San Francisco, already mentioned for its definite revocation of former colonized subjects' Japanese nationality, signed on September 8 1951 and effective from April 28 1952. Americans enacted various legal and political reforms, perhaps most notably, the creation of a new Japanese constitution which among other things, defined the roles of the Japanese emperor, officially deprived of its divine status, and finalized the impossibility for Japan to have an army.

In August 1945, when the occupation began, the population of Koreans in Japan amounted to about 2.4 million people¹⁰¹. In November 1945 the GHQ (General Headquarters of the occupation forces¹⁰²) issued a directive stating that Koreans should be treated as liberated people¹⁰³. Nevertheless, this statement was not followed by specific indications on how to treat them. Moreover, in an East Asia increasingly ravaged by the Cold War, the US government occasionally feared that former colonized subjects might clash with the goal of turning Japan into a bulwark against the spread of communism in Asia. As a consequence, General MacArthur was instructed by Washington, that if necessary, former colonized subjects should be treated as enemy nationals. This indicates that during the occupation years, Taiwanese and Koreans' in Japan were ambiguously defined as “Japanese nationals”, “liberated nationals”, and “enemy nationals”.

Repatriation was a prime concern both for the occupation forces and for the Japanese authorities, worried that former colonized subjects could cause public unrest, due to their alleged anti-Japanese stance. For all parties involved it seemed the common solution to the problem of Koreans in Japan¹⁰⁴. “To facilitate a smooth and swift repatriation of Koreans” was also one of the

100RYANG, *North Koreans...*, cit., p. 78.

101RYANG, *North Koreans...*, cit., p. 78.

102 The General Headquarters (GHQ) was often used to refer to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), title held by General Douglas MacArthur, the person at the top of the occupation forces. GHQ and SCAP could be used almost interchangeably.

103 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 152.

104 RYANG, *North Koreans...*, cit., p. 78.

main aims of the League of Koreans (in Korean *Chaeil chosŏnin yŏnmaeng*), an association of *Zainichi* Koreans, forerunner of the Chongryun, founded on October 15 1945. The league had been formed by many Korean communists, released from prison with the liberation, together with other nationalistic Korean members, and despite having a leftist orientation it accepted non-communist members as well. An accentuated communist orientation will be acquired from March 1947 when the league will expel its non-communist members, and ally with the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), which had been recently reorganized after having been outlawed in the 1930s (it had originally been founded in 1920s). The league's rise coincided with the emergence of another *Zainichi* Korean organization, the Mindan, characterized by a nationalistic but distinctly anti-leftist stance¹⁰⁵.

Despite being a favorably shared decision by all parties involved, there was a great deal of confusion on how repatriation should be carried out. Right after the liberation, crowds of Koreans rushed to the major ports of Japan with the hope of riding a boat to Korea. Back then, the traffic of ships back and forth from the peninsula was of great dimensions since many Japanese were also repatriating from Korea to Japan, which implied that initially, repatriation operations were carried out amidst chaotic circumstances. The SCAP ordered the repatriation first of Korean laborers brought forcibly to Japan, who constituted the biggest chunk of this initial repatriation rush. The Korean population in Japan was greatly reduced in little time in fact it is estimated that by March 1946, of the 2.4 millions of Koreans present in Japan in August 1945, only 650,000 were remaining. An official program for repatriation was launched around that time by SCAP with deadline for application for repatriation set at March 18 1946. Before this expiration, about 79 percent of those 650,000 Koreans in Japan expressed their wish to return to turn to Korea, of which 514,000 applied to return to southern Korea, while just under 10,000 people applied to return northern Korea¹⁰⁶. The use of “southern” and “northern”, instead of South and North Korea is not casual, in fact, right after the war the two states had not yet formed; Korea was simply divided in two occupied areas.

Repatriation procedures were dictated by strict requirements. In fact, Japan at that time was shattered by war damages and needed to recover economically; SCAP, in order to avoid a further outflow of financial resources from the country, mandated that Koreans repatriating could bring with them no more than 1,000 yen in cash and nothing of value, in other words, no gold, silver, bonds, or jewelry¹⁰⁷. That sum though was barely enough to survive and many Koreans subsequently experienced economic hardships once back to the homeland. These strict conditions

105 RYANG, *North Koreans...*, cit., p. 79.

106 RYANG, *North Koreans...*, cit., p. 80.

107 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 145.

triggered a rise in unchecked repatriation, constituted by Koreans returning on their own by chartering small boats. It is estimated that between 1945 and 1949, there were about 818,292 controlled repatriates while approximately one million went unchecked¹⁰⁸. What contributed to this high number of unchecked returns was also the aforementioned climate of general confusion and the little control of the authorities who showed almost no efforts to crack down this unbridled movement of people. In fact, what mattered the most to Japanese authorities and SCAP was making Koreans leaving Japan, regardless of the method.

We have noticed above that, after the introduction of the application for repatriation in 1946, the majority of people applied to return to the southern part of the peninsula, at that time controlled by the allied forces. This choice on their part did not entail any political preference or despise of communism, which actually enjoyed a great popularity among Koreans who were mostly coming from the working-class. Although the U.S. and the Soviet Union had decided in August 1945 to divide Korea into two areas of influence, polarization of Korea had not yet materialized, not to mention that any division was considered to be temporary. Quite simply, Koreans were applying to return to their native village, or places where they could count on friends and family connections. In fact, the nearly totality of Koreans having migrated to Japan during the colonial era were originally from the South Cholla province, South and North Kyongsang provinces, and Cheju island, all situated in the southern part of the peninsula.

Beyond the severe poverty affecting regions like Cheju island, heavy migration from these areas was also motivated on the grounds of geographical proximity and better connections to Japan. For example, at the beginning of the 1920s many direct ship routes had been established between the port of Osaka and Cheju island which of course facilitated arrivals to Japan¹⁰⁹. For most of the immigrants, coming from a rural background and grown up in small villages, social networks acquired through family and friend connections were pivotal in the immigration process, which is why Korean communities in Japan tended to cluster based on their kin and village of origin¹¹⁰. In cities with a large population of Koreans, like Osaka, there was a neighborhood hosting predominantly Koreans from one specific region while the neighborhood next to it might have hosted Koreans from another region. Many first generation Koreans recall how interactions and intermingling between these Korean communities were not that frequent also because customs and eating habits were different, not to mention dialects, which often made people of different territories unable to understand each others. It is true that these differences probably mattered less to most

108 RYANG, *North Koreans...*, cit., p. 80.

109 KASHANI, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 176.

110 KASHANI, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 177.

second generation members who were also likely to share Japanese as a common language with their peers with roots in another region of Korea. However, for first generation Korean immigrants, local identity was much more important than national identity¹¹¹. This local identity was the driving principle for Koreans when choosing where to repatriate right after the war.

Eventually, of the total 524,000 of Koreans who applied for repatriation in March 1946, only 83,000 actually returned by the end of year (which resulted in SCAP abandoning the program)¹¹². Rumors of civil unrest, severe food shortages, and difficult living conditions in the peninsula had started to circulate among Koreans in Japan. The sea separating Korea and Japan had already begun to witness Koreans returning once again to Japan escaping a troubled political situation and economic hardships, partly caused by the little amount of savings they could have brought from Japan at the time of the repatriation. Korea was experiencing both an inflow and an outflow of immigrants, with many people running away from persecutions and riots dotting an unstable and increasingly divided Korea. From 1946 all the way through the Korean War that will happen shortly after, many Koreans would have migrated again to Japan, with some managing to re-enter the country illegally and others being stopped and sent back by SCAP and Japanese authorities or held in refugee camps. With Americans not forcing repatriation of those who had applied, many Koreans in Japan decided on remaining for a while in the country and postponing repatriation.

THE ORIGINS OF KOREAN ETHNIC EDUCATION

With the repatriation fever having diminished, and in the wake of this decision of many *Zainichi* Koreans of temporarily putting off repatriation plans, the League of Koreans' primary mission became the improvement of the livelihoods of community members remaining in Japan, particularly in the area of education¹¹³. The league aimed at establishing an education striving to achieve chiefly two important goals: restore the Korean language and history, and develop Korean language proficiency¹¹⁴. The term “restore” has to be understood on the grounds of the suppression of Korean language and culture operated in schools during colonial times. In imperial Japan, some Korean children had had limited possibility to study their language thanks to private Korean instructors, but through Japanese public schooling, many Korean kids had been distanced from their heritage, hence the purpose of the league's education to restore Korean culture and language. As in the words of a first generation Korea woman who experienced the liberation herself:

111 KASHANI, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 177.

112 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 146.

113 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 147.

114 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 147.

Until we learned our language, we were not liberated. The Japanese defeat on 15 August 1945 did not automatically mean liberation to us; liberation must be learned by hard work, and learning our own language was the first thing to do. ¹¹⁵

In addition, perhaps even more importantly, these two goals could not be separated from the prospective of repatriation, which had just been postponed and not abandoned. In fact, the majority of Koreans in Japan still intended to return to the peninsula sooner or later, and the imagined community envisioned by league's educators was that of Koreans living in an independent homeland. Learning Korean language and Korean customs was therefore crucial also in practical terms.

The first schools to be established were predominantly Korean language schools called “*Kokugo kōshūsho*” (“National language training school”) such as the Totsuka National language training school, founded in Tokyo shortly after the liberation in September of 1945¹¹⁶. Other schools followed suit and the Korean community showed an enthusiastic effort to build schools throughout the country, with some institutions being no more than a hut. Additionally, offices of the league, people's houses, remains of factories' buildings, and depots in many regions of Japan were used and readapted to become schools¹¹⁷. A great part of Japan's Korean population quickly activated to provide what was necessary for classrooms, such as desks and chairs often made out of timber coming from the debris of the war, and the league conducted many activities of funding. For Koreans, this was the beginning of their 'ethnic education'. The official Japanese website of the Chongryun describes the beginning of ethnic education in these terms:

Compatriots in Japan welcomed the liberation of August 15 with unlimited emotion and joy, and firmly decided that the miserable life as colonial slaves should never repeat again. All as one body they rose up to make children study the language and alphabet of Korea. ¹¹⁸

It can be clearly seen how the founding of schools is excessively exalted as an almost mythological deed in Chongryun's narrative. Nevertheless, reading Chongryun's account of the origin of Korean ethnic schools can introduce us to the Japanese language used by Chongryun in its official discourse. Thanks to it we can grasp terms such as “compatriots in Japan” (*Zainichi dōhō*) or

¹¹⁵ As cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 85.

¹¹⁶ “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index6.html>, retrieved on 07/10/2018.

¹¹⁷ “Chōsen gakkō no aru fūkei” (The landscape of Chōsen schools), *4.24 kyōiku tōsō kara 69 nen: sōsōki no minzokukyōiku no ayumi*, 03/25/2017 (69 years from the Education Fight of April 24: the progress of ethnic education at its early stage), http://www.urihakkyo.com/2017/03/25/hakkutsu_424-69/, retrieved on 07/10/2018.

¹¹⁸ “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index6.html>, retrieved on 07/11/2018. J.

“liberation of August 15” (*8.15 kaihō*) that Chongryun Koreans might use to describe their identity as *Zainichi* Koreans, at least in public discourse. This account also makes us notice the importance bestowed on learning the “alphabet of Korea” (*Chōsen no moji*). In fact, Hangul, the alphabet invented in Korea in the 15th century and used exclusively for the Korean language, is an important sign of national identification by Chongryun (and by all Koreans at large), which calls it in Japanese “*urikuru*”, using a borrowed term from Korean. This version of the story is also reported in textbooks of *Chōsen* schools, which are equally published by Chongryun, hence the importance for our study.

The website 'Chōsen gakkō no aru fūkei' (“The landscape of *Chōsen* schools”), web-blog version of the magazine of the same name, published by the 'Chōsen gakkō o kiroku suru kai' (“Association for documenting *Chōsen* schools”) collects past and current resources regarding *Chōsen* schools and life experiences of their students. The language used in the historical narrative found in the website is similar to the one used by Chongryun, but again it can be useful in capturing the feeling behind the founding of ethnic education. A paragraph in an article about the history of schools is titled “*wagako ni bokokugo wo*” (“ [giving, teaching] the native language to my child”). The same article recounts the school founding as animated by the motto “*ubawareta chōsen go o kodomotachi ni*” (“[giving back] the stolen Korean language to the children”) and is full of reference to “*dōhō shitei*” (“fellow compatriot children”). In the same website, in her interview, a 1941 Osaka born *Zainichi* Korean woman, recalls how, when she was an infant, her parents would come home from work and immediately leave again every evening. At her question “where are you going?”, her parents would answer: “*Hakkyo o tate ni iku*” (I am going to be build the *hakkyo* [=school])¹¹⁹. This single episode can tell the individual efforts undertaken by many Koreans to build ethnic schools, whose importance is also witnessed by the use of a Korean loanword to indicate it, “*hakkyo*”¹²⁰, instead of the specific Japanese word for school which is “*gakkō*”. Indeed, even when speaking Japanese among them, *Zainichi* Koreans might use the term *hakkyo* or *uri hakkyo* (“our school”) when referring to *Chōsen* schools.

In building schools there were also many cases of cooperation with local Japanese municipalities; some prefectural and city governments rented part of school buildings or procured construction materials¹²¹. The mayor of Kobe, for example, decided to allow the league to use parts of two school buildings and when given the contract to sign in order to finalize the agreement, he

119 “Chōsen gakkō no aru fūkei” (The landscape of Chōsen schools), *4.24 kyōiku tōsō kara 70 nen ubawareta manabi no kikai* (Seventy years from the Education Fight of April 24, a lost chance to learn), 03/25/2018, http://www.urihakkyo.com/2018/03/25/0424-70th_interview/, retrieved on 07/10/2018.

120 Transliteration from Japanese.

121 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 147.

responded: “We don't need one. You can use the building as long as you want, until you decide to return to your country.”¹²². This demonstrates once again how single Japanese municipalities often cooperated with the local Korean community, and chose not to conform with the overall policies of the central Japanese government.

In February 1946, at its second national conference, the league decided to introduce a plan to formally structure and institutionalize the elementary school system as well as establish two schools for adult political leaders in Tokyo and Osaka¹²³. From April of the same year, the newly established education was divided in three levels, namely: primary level, middle level, and upper level (*Sho, Chū, Jō*). In September of the same year the primary level came to be composed of six years of education, and in the following month, with the founding of Tokyo Chōsen middle school, the middle school level was systematized and regulated. Teachers associations were soon formed and the content of textbooks too was standardized¹²⁴. Korean language course textbooks published in 1946 contained texts dealing with Korea's liberation from Japanese rule, basic knowledge of Korean history, a description of the geography of Korea, and sociopolitical issues regarding Korea.

In January 1947, the league clarified its general principles and fundamental goals of education which included phrases such as, “to set a long-term policy of education”, “to achieve the improvement of the educational institutions and democratization of pedagogical contents”, and “to help democratize Japanese education”¹²⁵. The fundamental goals were as follow:

- 1) To teach true democracy under which all people can live a better life.
- 2) To foster love of our own country [Korea] with a consideration of world history.
- 3) To develop a unique sense of admiration for the fine arts and creative activities based on everyday life experience.
- 4) To develop a respect for work through everyday experience and learning.
- 5) To stimulate active minds for research in technology and science.
- 6) To facilitate the investigation of social relations between science, labor, and economic activities.¹²⁶
- 7) To foster thoroughly an education for both men and women.¹²⁷

122 KIM Kyōng-hwan 1988, as cited in INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 148.

123 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 147.

124 “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index6.html>, retrieved on 07/10/2018.

125 OZAWA 1973, as cited in INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 148.

126 OZAWA 1973, as cited in INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 148.

127 “Chōsen gakkō no aru fūkei”, *4.24 kyōiku tōsō kara 69 nen...*, cit. J.

A spirit of love for their own country (*aikokushin*) was central in the ethnic education and it aimed at raising a Korean national consciousness:

Ethnic education is education that actualizes the happiness of Koreans as a people. The central duty of ethnic education is to raise children who love the people, culture, and language of the homeland [Korea]. Thus, children receiving this education would risk their lives to fight against those who trample underfoot the people, culture, and language of the homeland.¹²⁸

Japanese colonial experience was criticized, yet, love for their own country was not promoted in aggressive nationalistic terms but under the principle of democracy (*minshushugi*); democratization of the whole society was one the main goal. During several conferences held in 1947, a further standardization of league's schools spread all over Japan was implemented. A unified official designation of primary schools was institutionalized (they were officially called *shotōgakuin*, “primary institutes”) and dates of matriculation and graduation, school terms, holiday periods, and school subjects were collectively defined. It was also determined that schools would not have charged tuition but would have instead been financed by the league and by each Korean community as a whole (and not solely by the parents sending children to school). In October 1946 there were already about 1,100 teachers educating about 41,000 students¹²⁹, and by October 1947, the league had built 541 elementary schools, seven junior high schools, twenty-two adolescent schools (*seinen gakkō*), and eight high schools¹³⁰.

The league was in the front line to erect ethnic schools throughout Japan, but also enjoyed a vigorous help from the country's Korean population, whose large majority was supporting the league and its ideals. During colonial times, having endured harsh labor conditions in mines and factories, and belonging for the most to the working-class, many *Zainichi* Koreans had been attracted to communist ideas and not few were believing that liberation of Koreans would have occurred only through communism. During imperial Japan, both in the colonies and in Japan proper, many Koreans had been active in the communist movement and even had founded in the 1920s the Japan Bureau of the Korean Communist party. Due to the Comintern's principle of “one country, one [communist] party” the party had had to merge in 1928 with the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), of which Koreans would have formed an integrative part, despite frequent claims that the party did not fully represent Koreans' nationalistic cause or episodes of racial discrimination from the Japanese members. In the early 1930s, at the peak of the interwar communist movement,

128 LI Dong-sun 1956, as cited in INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 148.

129 “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index6.html>, retrieved on 07/10/2018.

130 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 149.

more than 10 percent of the JCP members had been Koreans, most of them rank-and-file activists¹³¹. Subsequently, the party had been outlawed and many of its members had been arrested. They would have been liberated, as we have seen, only after the liberation, with some of former members founding the league which will, shortly after, resume collaboration with the JCP.

However, no matter how much the league or Japan's Korean population might have been embracing a communist ideology, the education of early Korean ethnic schools did not have any communist features as the SCAP or Japanese authorities will later attempt to prove. The League's schools predominantly stressed democratic ideals as also witnessed by the principles of the 'Alliance of Korean Teachers in Japan' stipulated on August 28 1947:

- 1) We shall wipe out the residual elements of feudalism and Japanese imperialism and hope in the democratization of education.
- 2) We, as democratic educators, shall hope for an improvement of our skills and stability in life.
- 3) We shall collaborate with the democratic organizations of Japan and the homeland, strive to construct a democratic ethnic culture, join forces with progressive foreign countries, and contribute to the world democratization.¹³²

As it can be noticed from the frequency of words such as “democratization”, “*minshuka*”, or “democratic”, “*minshushugi*”, at least in its mission statement, the league stressed the importance of democracy as the main underlying principle of its ethnic education centered on learning Korean language and culture.

EVOLVING SITUATION OF KOREA

In previous paragraphs we have seen that the initial repatriation fever greatly slowed down in 1946 because of rumors of a progressively unstable situation in the peninsula. Why was Korea increasingly dotted with civil unrest? In 1946, North Korea and South Korea had not yet surfaced in the political scenario but the division of Korea into two different areas of influence was already signaling many flaws. In August 1945, while penetrating northern Korea, after revoking its neutrality pact with Japan the Soviet troops encouraged the formation of Soviet-style people's committees and invited Korean communists abroad to return to Korea. In Japan-colonized Korea and Manchuria, Korean guerrilla fighters had been combating in opposition to the colonizers. Kim Il

131 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 142.

132 “Chōsen gakkō no aru fūkei”, *4.24 kyōiku tōsō kara 69 nen...*, cit. J.

Sung was one of these former guerrilla fighters, who after having left Manchuria for escaping the suppression of communism, had become from 1942 to 1945, a captain in the Soviet Army. He came back to Korea in this period in 1945. Although communism enjoyed relative popularity, at the arrival of the Soviet troops, other positions such as that of Cho Mansik, leader of the Nationalist Right were also popular among people in northern Korea.

The Soviet troops initially collaborated with Cho in forming the emergent northern government, but after the refusal of the former to adhere to the common trusteeship of U.S. and the Soviet Union over Korea, finalized in December 1945, which he labeled as threatening to the independence of Korea, the Soviet Union arrested him. With the Cold War intensifying, the Soviet Union progressively became less tolerant of non-communist governments and, subsequently, promoted Kim Il Sung who became a powerful figure within the North Korea Communist Party (later renamed the Workers' Party of North Korea). Despite these frictions, the North Korea Communist Party was successful in carrying out over little time reforms which benefited the local population. By the end of 1946, land had been distributed to farmers free of charge, equal rights for men and women had been guaranteed by law, key industries and corporations had been nationalized, and social security and labor protection laws had been established¹³³.

The situation in the South was far less stable, and became the origin of the persecutions that drove many Koreans back to Japan. Once entering the liberated Southern part of the peninsula in 1945, Americans had no choice but to rely to existing governing structures that the Japanese had left behind¹³⁴. Key-roles in the government were given to Koreans regarded as pro-Japanese during colonial times, a decision that greatly angered the overall Korean population who started to watch Americans with suspicion. Moreover, the political and social scenes in post-war southern Korea were chaotic since, unlike the northern part, where the governing body consisted of well-known patriots, a multitude of individuals of all sorts of backgrounds claimed authority and authenticity¹³⁵. Communists belonging to the South Korean Workers' Party and other leftist forces were also very active in the southern part. The American occupation of Korea had less developed intelligence apparatuses compared to that of Japan and was confronted with a confusing situation. Probably because of this lack of an efficient intelligence backup, the U.S. were unable to fully comprehend Korea's conditions and consequently adopted a more coercive grip which resulted in excessive persecutions and suppression of many groups feared to be communist terrorists. People's committees in the provinces were violently repressed, leading to casualties and arrests¹³⁶. This unstable

133 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p.79.

134 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p.79.

135 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p.79.

136 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p.79.

situation, characterized by deadly persecutions, protracted for many years and caused the migration of many Koreans from the southern part of the peninsula to Japan.

In the 1947-48 the relations between the two parts of Korea became more worrisome. The U.S.-Soviet conflict over the divided occupation intensified, and the two halves, the north and the south, became more and more polarized¹³⁷. By 1947, the military commanders of the northern part had begun to draft a plan to attack the South, and similar developments were occurring below the 38th parallel. Polarization was finalized with the founding of R.O.K. (Republic of Korea, corresponding to the South) in August 1948 with Syngman Rhee as president, followed shortly after by the founding of D.P.R.K. (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, corresponding to the North), under the leadership of Kim Il Sung. The official establishment of the two states, both claiming legitimacy over the all Korean peninsula, was the major factor that changed the self-identification of the two main Japan's Korean organizations: the Mindan became a pro-South Korea organization, while the League of Koreans became closely linked to North Korea to the point of calling its members "overseas nationals of North Korea".

The League of Koreans, founded as we have seen above, in 1945 by Korean communists, although initially not strictly being a communist organization, had progressively expelled its non-communist members and in 1948 it became a pro-North Korea organization. Engaged, as we have seen, in helping the repatriation of Koreans, the League had been promoting, until 1948, return to one's native place, which for most Koreans in Japan meant the southern part of the peninsula. In fact, the South Korean Workers' Party was also active in the southern part and the League had had an office in Seoul since its foundation (which became defunct in June 1949). After the establishment of the D.P.R.K. the League of Koreans opted for political conviction at the expense of regional attachment which also meant abandonment of the repatriation to the South¹³⁸. This radical change is well reflected in the language use of the *Haebang Shinmun*, the League's Korean language organ, for indicating the two halves of Korea: before the establishment of D.P.R.K., *ponguk*, "country of origin" was used for southern Korea, and *puk chōson*, "northern Korea" for northern Korea. With the creation of D.P.R.K., the league switched to *choguk*, "the fatherland", for North Korea, and *nambanbu*, "the southern half of the fatherland"¹³⁹. Moreover, by mid-1949 *Haebang Shinmun* editorials were hailing Kim Il Sung as "*the greatest patriot and national hero*".

The political affiliation of the league did not clash with the fact of having previously helped the return of many *Zainichi* Koreans to the southern part as the league was opposed to the South

137 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p.81.

138 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p.81.

139 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p.81.

Korean government, described as a puppet state controlled by America's imperialism, but never to its people. South Koreans were described as violently oppressed people who were fighting for liberation from the South Korean regime. Although these definitions were fueled by propaganda, they were not too distant from the truth since South Korea actually was an undemocratic regime back then (and until the 1980s) which violently repressed the opposition and killed thousands of people. North Korea certainly did not behave otherwise in many instances, but it is also important to note that South Korea too used to be equally repressive if not worse.

Oppositions of communists and rightists were not confined to Korea but were present in other parts of Asia, most notably Korea's neighbor, China. Among American forces in Japan there was a growing concern with respect to the spread of communism across Asia and SCAP was becoming increasingly less tolerant of communist activities within Japan. The league's association with the newly-born D.P.R.K. paired with the uncertain status of *Zainichi* Koreans at that time would have had important consequences on the recently emerged Korean education system.

THE END OF THE LEAGUE'S ETHNIC EDUCATION

In the post-war period, the status of Koreans in Japan was far from being defined and often oscillated quite arbitrarily from that of “liberated nationals” to that of “enemy nationals”, or that of “Japanese” to that of “foreigners”. Definition of their status of course influenced the status of ethnic schools since, similar to what is happening today, citizens had to fulfill their compulsory education years in accredited institutions. If Koreans were to be considered Japanese, then the government should have ensured and overseen accreditation of Korean schools or outlawing them, while if Koreans were to be considered foreigners, then Korean schools could have remained autonomous. At the beginning, Japan's Ministry of Education was not concerned with the formation of Korean ethnic schools since it was busy with the issue of reforming its own education system, pressured by Americans. Similarly, SCAP, being convinced of the imminent return of all Koreans to the peninsula, possibly estimated that clarification of Koreans' status was not necessary. However, with returns markedly declining from 1946, in December of that year, SCAP stated that Koreans having remained in Japan should be treated as Japanese nationals. This decision not only angered the Korean community but also triggered a change in the Ministry of Education's policies. In April 1947, the ministry stated that Koreans residing in Japan were subject to Japanese law, and that they were obliged to have their children receive Japanese compulsory education¹⁴⁰.

Following this decision, it was necessary to find a way on how to deal with Korean schools. The Ministry opted for a soft line, advising each prefectural government, responsible for

140 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 149.

accreditation of schools within its territory, to flexibly consider the local context and evaluate whether Korean schools of the area should be accredited as elementary schools, miscellaneous schools, or be dealt with in another way. However, US Army's military government teams (MGT) in some prefectures insisted that Korean schools should be obliged to register and be subject to verifications by the government, probably because they considered having schools out of government control as a possible threat to the national security of an already fragile Japan which had just existed a lost war. Moreover, the fact that the League of Koreans had got involved in March 1947's JCP electoral campaign and had expelled its non-communist members might have accrued a mounting communist fear in MGTs. With the government soft line though, many prefectural government did not take decisive actions and many Korean schools eventually did not register. Several MGTs subsequently started to exert pressure on SCAP which later instructed the Ministry of Education to issue an official order to prefectural governments declaring that Korean schools should comply with all pertinent Japanese education laws. The order was approved by the Ministry and finally issued on 24 January 1948¹⁴¹.

The order essentially meant that all Korean children in Japan had to attend government-accredited institutions, which implied that all Korean schools needed to be accredited by their prefectural government if they wanted to survive. In order to receive accreditation, schools had to adopt Japanese standard curriculum with the Korean language becoming an extracurricular program. The order also made clear that recognition as miscellaneous schools, which would have granted higher independence, was not possible since this status could not apply to schools offering compulsory education. Koreans of the league, still holding the conviction that repatriation would have taken place, contended that these regulations would have undermined the very principles on which their ethnic education had been founded. Therefore the league offered to collaborate by setting four conditions; if the government had respected them the league would have registered its schools as private schools. These conditions were¹⁴²:

- 1) The use of Korean as language of instruction.
- 2) The use of textbooks published by Korean Compilation committee.
- 3) School management carried out by units of school management associations.
- 4) The inclusion of Japanese language as a standard subject in the curriculum.

SCAP and the Japanese government, however, ignored proposals of collaboration which

141 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 150.

142 "Chongryun", 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index6.html>, retrieved on 07/12/2018. J.

caused feelings of disappointments among Koreans who soon began to stage demonstrations all over the country to avoid evictions from the school buildings. Tensions peaked in April 1948, in an episode that Chongryun remembers as “4.24 *kyōiku tōsō*” (The education fight of April 24) happened in Kobe and Osaka.

On April 23, police and city workers attempted to evict Koreans from three public schools (part of which Korean schools were using)¹⁴³. The mayor of that time, Koderu Kenkichi, in fact had much more conservative ideas towards the Korean situation, unlike his predecessor, that we have seen granting unconditionally the use of school buildings to the Korean community. In response to the eviction, on the following day, Koreans, together with some Japanese supporters, staged a demonstration around Hyōgo Prefectural capital (located in Kobe since the city is part of Hyōgo prefecture) demanding to meet the prefectural governor and the mayor¹⁴⁴. Some protestors managed to enter the capitol and occupied the governor's office, forcing the governor, the mayor, and the police chief to collaborate. Right when the episode seemed to be ending in a successful victory for Koreans, on the evening of the same day, Kobe US military commanders proclaimed a state of emergency, which resulted in thousands of arrests. The police and US military forces arbitrarily arrested even Koreans who had not participated in the protest and almost randomly investigated anybody behaving suspiciously, targeting also other foreigners such as Taiwanese people.

This draconian reaction of the US military was also fueled and motivated on the grounds of considering Koreans as rebellious communists who did not abide to the Japanese law. Similar episodes happened on the same days in neighboring Osaka, where a meeting between the governor of Osaka prefecture and representatives of the league, following a mass demonstration in front of the Osaka capitol, was abruptly interrupted by US forces who resorted to arrests and attempts to disperse the crowd. Two Korean teenagers were even shot dead and several people were brutally beaten and tortured by the police.

The sad episodes of April 24 probably accrued in Koreans the feeling of being mistreated and suppressed by a powerful and imperialistic United States maneuvering Japan's politics, and augmented distrust towards the police. In Chongryun's recounting of the incidents, American military “similarly to beasts, engaged in acts of brutality” (“*yajū no yōna bankō o kankō shita...*”) and the Japanese police forces “oppressed with its military power compatriots in Japan” (“*zainichi dōhō o buryoku de dan'atsu shita*”)¹⁴⁵. It can be clearly seen how Chongryun almost adopts a war narrative style in telling the 4.24 events, to further symbolize the fight of *Zainichi* Koreans.

143 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 151.

144 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 151.

145 “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index6.html>, retrieved on 07/13/2018. J.

After the Kobe and Osaka incidents, schools had to abide to the Japanese law, but since they were registered as private schools, they were granted some liberties within the range of freedom allowed by the private school status which meant that a certain amount of Korean language education could be offered within Japanese standard curriculum. Although the league's demands had not been fully met, there had been a degree of collaboration between Japanese education minister Morito and league officials. However, this new state of things would have been short-lived, in fact, just four months after the riot, August and September 1948 saw the creation of R.O.K. and D.P.R.K. which unequivocally polarized the situation in Korea. The members of the league gave up their territorial affiliation to the southern part of the peninsula, embracing the political creed of North Korea. Such political affiliation in a cold war scenario, and among members of an ethnic minority often accused of undermining national security, could not go unnoticed by SCAP, increasingly sensitive to communist activities. Moreover, after the success of JCP in the election of January 1949, where the party gained its historical of thirty-five seats¹⁴⁶, prime minister Yoshida Shigeru's administration had become increasingly concerned that the communist party might threaten the execution of the US economic recovery plan. Therefore, on April 4 1949, the Yoshida administration and SCAP issued an order to regulate the activities of “anti-democratic” and “terrorist” organizations. Their intention was to outlaw the communists, and one of the first targets was the league¹⁴⁷.

The attack on the league happened on 9 September 1949 when the organization was forcibly closed on the grounds of being an anti-democratic, terrorist organization. Closure of the majority of the league's schools followed suit. Chongryun's Japanese website, in correlation to the event, describes the U.S. (*Amerika*) and the Japanese authorities (*Nihon tōkyoku*) as those who “plot to obliterate the ethnic education of *Zainichi* Koreans” (*zainichi chōsenjin no minzoku kyōiku o massatsu shiyō to takuramu amerika to nihon tōkyoku*). This description somewhat echoes Imperial Japan's attempt to annihilate Korean culture and language through impeding Korean instruction during imperial times. This language use might also reflect again a war narrative in Chongryun's historical rhetoric, where ethnic education is considered a precious achievement to be defended by an aggressive America and Japanese authorities. This overall necessity of defending themselves from exterior enemies, which characterized Chongryun thereafter, might seem too exaggerated in today's vision and also unfair to its members, but certainly was not unmotivated back then. As the 4.24 incident demonstrates, Korean were discriminated in the post-war period and for many years following 1952, when they definitely lost Japanese citizenship, they would have

146 Koreans could not vote but many supported JCP's political campaign.

147 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 153.

lived in a society predominantly hostile to them with very few rights.

After the end of the league, while the majority of Korean schools had been forcibly closed, others were allowed to reapply for the status of private schools. The final outcome though, did not change much since of the schools that applied within the deadline of 4 November 1949, only three were accredited out of the 128 schools which had applied. Nevertheless, even after it, there was not a total cessation of Korean ethnic education because some schools became simple language schools outside of the education system. Areas with numerous Korean communities witnessed the creation of extracurricular ethnic schools attached to Japanese public schools, called “*minzoku gakkyū*”, for example the city of Osaka where, after the events of 4.24, a memorandum between the governor and Korean representatives was signed on 4 June 1948 creating the basis for the establishment of extracurricular ethnic classes within Osaka's public school system¹⁴⁸. Some of these classes still exist today, and the schools they are attached to represent one of the alternatives for Korean parents when choosing the educational path for their children.

Despite these achievements, it is certainly true that after the closure of the league there was a hiatus from the “great scale” ethnic education of preceding years, since most of the Korean schools had closed or turned into normal Japanese schools. Ethnic education will take a new start only from 1955, when, in a changed political scenario, Chongryun will emerge from the ashes of the League of Koreans.

A TUMULTUOUS ASIA

The year 1949 was characterized by turmoil not only within Japan but also throughout Asia. Ever since the establishment of the common US-Soviet Union trusteeship over Korea, there had been riots and arrests in the southern part of the peninsula which continued for a long time, even after the proclamation of the R.O.K. With mounting fears of communist activities, arrests and indiscriminate killings towards guerrilla fighters but also civil population perpetrated by American and South Korean authorities quickly escalated in the South, such as in the infamous case of Cheju island. This territory, one of the poorest in South Korea, and traditionally a point of departure for many immigrants to Japan, was characterized by a vigorous rebel activity, to the extent that it is estimated that rebel sympathizers numbered about 15,000 and controlled most of the island . The US

¹⁴⁸ An exchange of a memorandum providing for the possibility of Korean extracurricular classes had already happened on 5 May 1948 between the Ministry of Education and Korean representatives (HESTER, in Ryang, *Koreans...*, cit., p. 177). This though was just a possibility, and the several changes in the ministry's policies, including the league's banning, interposed with its realization. The memorandum signed in Osaka instead, was a more concrete agreement taken with Osaka prefecture, the entity directly responsible for accrediting schools within its territory, and brought more tangible results. See chapter 3 and Hester, 2000 for details.

authorities engaged in a cruel and blind suppression of the rebels which resulted in the killing of more than 60,000 islanders, who constituted about 24 percent of Cheju total population¹⁴⁹.

This unstable situation led to a new spike of immigrant arrivals to Japan to the point that in 1949, reports suggested of 8,302 illegal immigrants arrests. The American authorities had already started to close Japanese borders and prohibit disembarkation since they were unable to distinguish between refugees, people visiting families, and people engaged in smuggling among this huge traffic of immigrants. Ships were sent back to sea and the people arrested were shipped to detention camps, like the Ōmura Detention Camp near Nagasaki, where they would be held until they could be deported to South Korea¹⁵⁰. Many people though managed to make it to Japan. However, the country they had arrived (or returned) to was not exempted by the so-called red purges as demonstrated by the termination of the League of Koreans, the suppression of several labor unions' strikes, and the dismissing of about 1,700 “red” teachers and university lecturers. Still in 1949, the establishment of the Popular Republic of China (1 October), a big blow to the USA's East Asia foreign policy, further cemented in the Americans the conviction of fighting communism on all fronts and transforming Japan in a bulwark for combating the communist wave in Asia.

Meanwhile, North Koreans' hopes for unification of the peninsula had not been abandoned and, given the seemingly fixed division of the whole Korean land, the D.P.R.K. had been drafting since June 1949 a reunification plan to be achieved by virtue of military power. On June 25 1950 the North Korean People's Army crossed the 38th parallel and started a fast advance southward, rapid to the point that by September, all the peninsula had been unified except for its southeastern tip¹⁵¹. At that point, the US military intervened in the war, successfully pushed back the advance of the People Army, and started proceeding northward. Since the trigger of the war was regarded to be North Korea's “invasion” of South Korea, the U.N. fully supported US military intervention. Afterward, U.N. bombings arriving very close to the Chinese border provoked China's intervention in the war which helped North Korean People's Army and made U.N. forces retreat at about the 38th parallel, the pre-war border, by the end of February 1951. In June, the Soviet ambassador to the U.N. called for “a cease-fire and an armistice providing for the mutual withdrawal of forces from the 38th parallel”¹⁵². Talks between the two parties followed suit and concluded two years later with the signing of the armistice on 27 July 1953. Number of dead civilians and missing people amounted to 760,000 in South Korea while the number of casualties and refugees for North Korea

149 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 87.

150 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 24.

151 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 87.

152 HALLIDAY and CUMMINGS 1988, as cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 87.

was of about 2.7 million¹⁵³.

The war further accentuated in the majority of Japan's Korea communities, hate towards Americans and the South Korean authorities. Being *Zainichi* Koreans preponderantly in favor of the defunct League of Koreans, they chose to support the North Korean state (precisely about 90 percent of them according to a Japanese authorities' survey in 1955¹⁵⁴). Moreover, the fact that Mindan had sent volunteers to fight for U.N. troops also accrued disappointment towards *Zainichi* Korean organizations affiliated with South Korea. "In its official discourse, North Korea still calls the Korean War "the Fatherland Liberation War", a defensive war to protect Korea from the U.S. invasion and to achieve national integrity. In contrast, South Korea often refers to it as "civil war", insisting that Kim Il Sung started the war and is responsible for genocide"¹⁵⁵.

Quite ironically, the war helped Japan in its economic recovery thanks to its industries supplying U.S.'s military engagement. Furthermore, at the same time of the war, the country, now set on a path of great economic growth, was waving goodbye to the 7-year Allied occupation period of its territory. The end of SCAP control of Japan was finalized in 1952, with the Treaty of San Francisco, which also determined for good the status of Koreans, ending years of uncertain and oscillating treatments.

THE END OF AN ERA

For *Zainichi* Koreans, the Treaty of San Francisco, ratified in September 1951 and becoming effective from April 28, 1952, essentially meant being stripped of their Japanese nationality. As said above, the government used the principle of family registers to determine who was a Japanese national: people belonging to a Japan proper-based (*naichi*) register were considered Japanese nationals, while people belonging to a former colony-based (*gaichi*) register were considered foreigners. On the day the treaty went into effect, the Japanese government declared that the former colonized subjects would be treated as foreigners holding the status of foreign residents¹⁵⁶. The treaty did not refer to the change of the nationality of the former colonized subjects and the decision by the Japanese government was taken without no direct consultation with the party involved. This is markedly different from other processes of decolonization (like the ones for former French and British colonies), where states involved carefully made sure that no former citizen remained without nationality, and often allowed individuals to choose which nationality they wanted to relinquish or acquire. In addition, risky categories likely to be excluded were given protection and were granted

153 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 88.

154 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 88.

155 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 88.

156 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 154.

the nationality of the former colonizer so that they would not become stateless. On the contrary, after an unclear treatment during SCAP occupation, *Zainichi* Koreans found themselves devoid of their Japanese nationality and with no nationality in substitution.

The delicate political situation of a divided Korea certainly contributed to the emergence of this unusual, almost stateless condition. The two newly emerged Korean states were not in fact recognized by the Japanese government which will normalize its relations with South Korea only in 1965. South Korea had started to carry out a registration of its population in 1949 and in June of that year had offered to overseas Koreans the possibility to register: in 1952 about 110,000 Koreans in Japan were registered¹⁵⁷. However, South Korea, in light maybe of the topical case of *Zainichi* Koreans who had lived for a long time in Japan or were even born there, had decided to exempt them from military conscription and voting rights. This was probably done also because the Syngman Rhee regime in South Korea, which was burdened with its own problems of poverty and unemployment, was showing no serious interest in supporting any large-scale return of *Zainichi* Koreans to its territory¹⁵⁸. Creating conditions in which *Zainichi* Koreans would have entertained the idea of repatriate, or would have been obliged to repatriate was not the goal of the newly-born South Korean government; a position which also might explain the lack of commitment to create South Korea-affiliated ethnic schools in Japan. On the other hand, North Korea had defined as its citizens all ethnic Koreans born before 1946 in addition to those living within its borders. However, a more detailed regulation regarding nationality and citizenship rights has always lacked, leaving the matter of North Korea nationality somewhat obscure.

In any case, to which states *Zainichi* Koreans would feel affiliated mattered little in 1952 as there were no normalized diplomatic relations between Japan and the two Koreas; all Koreans in Japan at that time thus were registered by the Immigration Bureau as foreign residents of *Chōsen* nationality. Many Koreans in Japan actually were not unhappy with this designation: for many of them, still with fresh wounds of the humiliating discrimination of colonization, acquiring Japanese nationality even after the liberation would have meant becoming Japanese and obliterating their Korean identities, a process reminiscent of the attempts of the colonial government to annihilate Korean culture. Therefore Japanese nationality was definitely not something they would have chosen or wished for themselves.

In practical terms, status as foreigners in post-war Japan granted very few rights. Former colonial subjects were granted permanent residency (officially only from 1965 and with exceptions; see Chapter 3) but did not have access to welfare services (from 1958), could not work as public

157 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 123.

158 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 66.

officials (back then even a job as a train driver for the national railways fell into this category), and could not travel abroad with the assurance of being readmitted to Japan on the way back. Korean soldiers who had committed war crimes, like their Japanese counterparts, had been executed or had served postwar sentences, but Korean soldiers entitled to war compensations, unlike their Japanese peers who equally fought with them with the same status and in the same conditions, were denied any indemnity following their deprivation of Japanese nationality. In a Korean community, predominantly composed by low-income working class households, these consequences were costly ones.

In the field of education, official loss of Japanese nationality implied that Korean kids were not subject anymore to the duty of receiving compulsory schooling. Korean children were still allowed to go to Japanese schools, but their parents were often required to sign a written consent not to complain about the education their children received in the schools¹⁵⁹. In the view of many Japanese officials and many Japanese people of the time, Japanese education (as well as possibility to stay in Japan) was considered a privilege kindly granted by the Japanese government; foreign residents had to accept it by not creating any disturbance in return. Following the ratification of the Treaty of San Francisco, public support for the few ethnic schools that had been accredited after the troubled events of 1948 and 1949 was discontinued. In fact, “although Koreans were designated as foreigners, their education as foreigners was not recognized”¹⁶⁰. However, this lack of rights to public schooling, subsequently paved the way for the re-establishment of ethnic education since Koreans kids were not obliged anymore to go to Japanese public schools. The “no responsibility, no support” position of the Japanese government meant that Korean ethnic education would have not received any type of aid, but also that it could have existed as long as it remained confined to a community the government was not responsible for anymore.

CONCLUSION

Until the Treaty of San Francisco in 1952, which for many scholars represent a watershed in the history of immigration to Japan, *Zainichi* Koreans experienced the most diverse treatments. Ever since the first waves of immigration set out from the peninsula, Koreans went through a period of about forty years, in which they were considered colonial subjects to be assimilated, citizens of a self-styled glorious and multiethnic empire enjoying voting rights, liberated nationals, enemy nationals and so forth. The possibility of setting up their own ethnic education heavily depended on their status and on the duty of receiving compulsory schooling. The latter, in particular, which remains to some extent an issue even today, was often used as a powerful weapon to exclude or

159 INOKUCHI, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 154.

160 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 156

forcibly include Korean kids in the public education system.

The post-war period was characterized by a continually shifting international scenario, notably marked by a tumultuous situation in Asia and by the increased division and polarization of Korea in the context of the cold war. The emergence of two republics of Korea led many *Zainichi* Koreans to embrace North Korea's political identity at the expense of territorial affiliation to the southern part of the peninsula, from which most of them had originally come from. With the emergence of Chongryun in 1955, many will identify themselves as overseas nationals of North Korea. Along with the international scenario Japan too experienced many internal changes in the post-war period especially due to the need of reconstructing itself and recovering from the terrible losses of World War II. *Zainichi* Koreans' life as well was influenced by Japan's changing economical and political landscape.

From 1952, with the loss of many rights and the categorization as resident aliens, Koreans became a minority excluded from welfare services and public education rights. However, they had become an excluded society that could now live with its own rules as long as these did not clash with the interests of the majority. This new situation paradoxically will lead to the possibility of re-erecting an ethnic education system with the Chongryun in the first line, like the league in the post-war, in building schools. Despite a sensibly changed political scenario and the formation of the two Korean republics, the mission and goals of this ethnic education were not radically different: reunification and repatriation. Reunification was still considered a tangible possibility, which was about to be realized with the Korean War had not been for the intervention, in North Korea's rhetoric, of the imperialistic U.S. and the South Korean illegitimate government. Repatriation was now focused on “returning” (or perhaps should I say “going”) to the “fatherland”, North Korea. As we will see in the next chapter, these two principles will still be the pillars underlying the foundation of *Chōsen* schools throughout Japan and the society envisioned by *Chōsen* educators for their students.

CHAPTER 3

CHŌSEN SCHOOLS IN THE PAST

INTRODUCTION

The defeat in World War II had been particularly arduous for Japan. The Asian country, with many of its cities and industries razed by bombings, had had to start a complete reconstruction of its economical apparatus and to operate radical changes in its political and cultural institutions. In that fragile economic situation, where many families were burdened by poverty, one might understand, though not justify, the increased suspicion of many Japanese people towards the Koreans. Especially after Japan began its recovery, several Japanese feared that the Korean minority - widely believed to be anti-Japanese in light of the discrimination endured in colonial times - could attempt to jeopardize the great efforts put into the country reconstruction. Some Japanese people were convinced that it was important to integrate Koreans into Japanese society, but others were anxious about a Korean community unjustly alleged to cause unnecessary unrest and riots in this very delicate situation.

The defeat in the war had also meant the end of Japan's colonial enterprises. The complete loss of its military conquests and the seven years-occupation by the Allied forces triggered a sudden turn in Japan's foreign policy. Forbidden from its new constitution to hold an army, the country subsequently turned inwards, refraining from taking assertive positions in the international scene. The new constitution had delineated a pacifist political profile, strongly advocated by the U.S. occupation, which led Japanese politicians to pursue, as little as possible intervention in foreign matters, and to limit interactions with foreign partners to the minimum dictated by an export-oriented economy. The idea of a multicultural Japanese empire was superseded by that of an homogeneous Japan where foreigners' presence came to be seen as inconvenient.

As for Korea, the former colony had become divided after the liberation, and now was split in two halves, one being South Korea, a poor country plagued by political repression, and the other being North Korea, a communist regime which was more stable and wealthy than the southern half, but still a great reason of concern for the U.S.'s East Asia foreign policy, from which Japan was heavily influenced. In light of this low status of Korea in the international scene, Koreans in Japan could not enjoy a high status neither, nor could they rely on a powerful foreign state to defend their rights. The support of *Zainichi* Koreans to North Korea, an enemy state, and the fact that none of the two Koreas was initially recognized by the Japanese government, further aggravated their condition.

After 1952, *Zainichi* Koreans essentially found themselves in an increasingly politically isolated country, with the above factors further worsening their status as foreigners. A change in Japan's foreign policy will be witnessed from the end of the 1970s when the country was externally pressured to revise its immigration policies in the wake of the arrival of refugees fleeing the Vietnam War. From that period onwards, rights for immigrant groups in Japan increased and so did, as a consequence, integration of Koreans into Japanese society and interactions between the Japanese majority and ethnic minorities. However, until that time, Koreans were denied basic access to welfare services and were often intimidated by Japanese public officials when dealing with procedures such as renewal of permission of residence. Due to this treatment, Koreans had little reason to identify with the Japanese majority which is why becoming Japanese citizens through naturalization was frowned upon. On the other hand, affiliating to a *Zainichi* Korean society could provide unity against a harassing majority, and attendance to *Chōsen* schools, a safe environment where Korean students did not have to experience discrimination from their schoolmates.

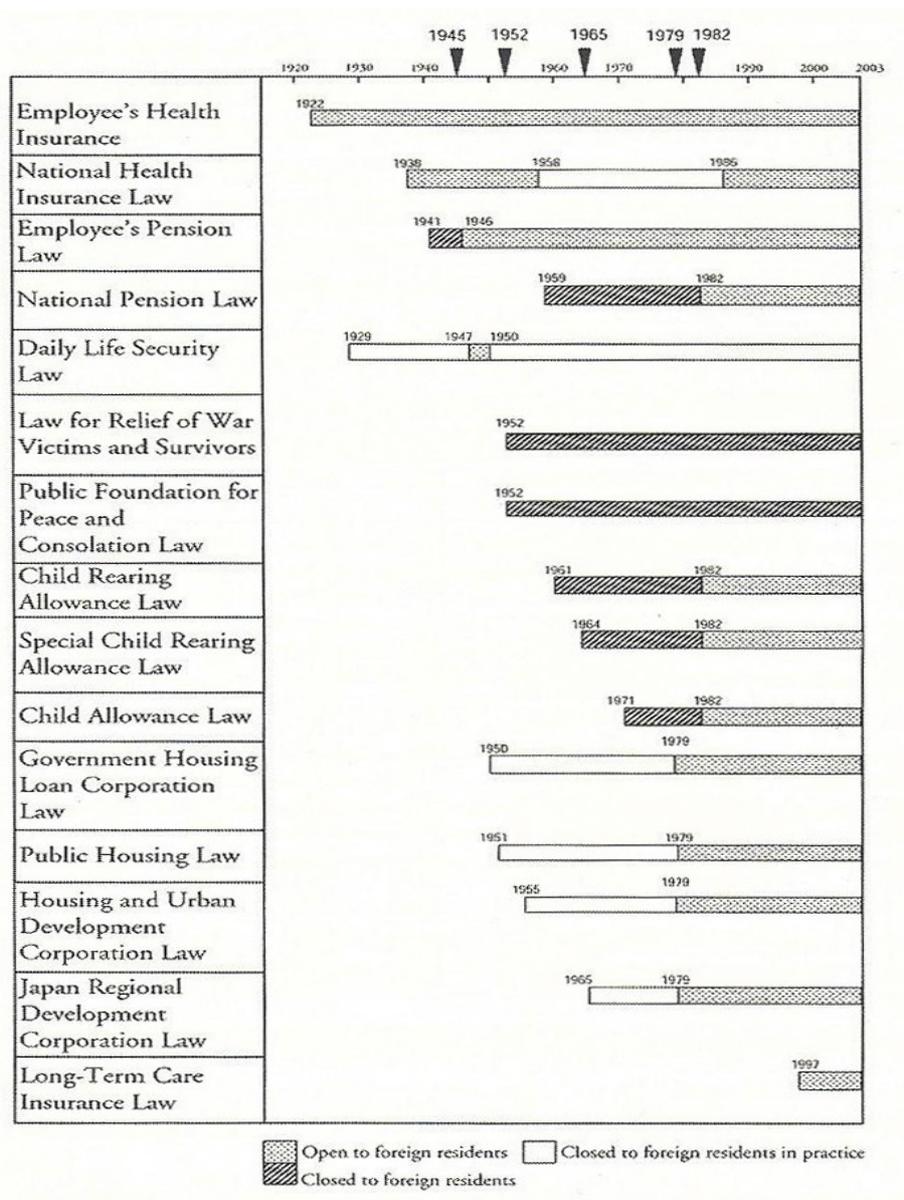
Of course, there was a variation in the way of thinking among Japanese people, in fact many governors or associations were often calling for more rights for *Zainichi* Koreans and also enacted policies in favor of the immigrant community and its education. Opinions differed also among the Korean community, where some people were feeling ambivalent about their identity, and where others chose to campaign for more integration into Japanese society. On the other hand, Chongryun members chose not to interfere in any way with the Japanese political scene by wholeheartedly severing ties with Japan, at least ideologically. In Chongryun's creed, there was no need to deal with Japanese affairs or know anything about Japan, because *Zainichi* Koreans were “overseas nationals of North Korea” and were meant to eventually repatriate to the socialist country. This assumption was pivotal in structuring the education with subjects focusing on North Korea and nearly not mentioning Japan unless in correlation with the Kim Il Sung regime.

In this chapter, I will analyze what education in *Chōsen* schools was like in the period from the Treaty of San Francisco in 1952, until 1993 when Chongryun implemented educational reforms that dramatically changed the school curriculum. In addition, I will investigate the reasons that allowed the survival in a country like Japan of an education pledging allegiance to a socialist country.

LIVING CONDITIONS OF KOREANS

What were exactly the laws and policies which greatly curtailed foreign residents' access to the services Japanese nationals could enjoy as a whole? Table 4 shows foreign residents' eligibility for social welfare from 1920 to 2003.

Table 4: Foreign Residents' Eligibility for Social Welfare¹⁶¹



It can be seen how foreign residents, hence Koreans as well, were substantially excluded from most welfare services until 1979 and 1982, major turning points in Japan's laws dealing with the foreign resident population. In fact, with the arrival of refugees from Indochina in the 1970s, Japan was pressured by the international community to initiate reforms¹⁶². In particular, Japan's ratification of the International Covenant on Human Rights in 1979, required the Japanese government to improve its treatment of women, *Burakumin* (Japan's untouchables), Ainu people, disabled people, and foreign residents. However, living conditions were starkly different before

161 LEE, MURPHY-SHIGEMATSU, BEFU (eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 237.

162 LEE, MURPHY-SHIGEMATSU, BEFU (eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 236.

these achievements. The impossibility to subscribe to the national healthcare became real in 1958, which resulted in a more consolidated determination among many *Zainichi* Koreans to apply for repatriation to North Korea, which was actively being promoted by Chongryun in that period. It would have been open again to foreign residents in 1982. Today, Koreans are still barred from benefits coming from the Law for Relief of War Victims and Survivors, and the Public Foundation for Peace and Consolation Law, the latter essentially consisting of money aid given to people having experienced imprisonments during the war or veterans not qualifying for the former. Several lawsuits refuting inapplicability to these policies have been initiated by Korean veterans who fought during World War II as emperor's soldiers but have all been rejected so far. Exclusion from the social welfare was indeed very challenging for Koreans who mostly belonged to the working-class and had limited economic means.

Koreans' initial status immediately after 1952 was that of foreigners without any clear specifications regarding their residence permit. This would have been achieved only in 1965 with the 'Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea' through which Japan recognized the South Korean government, and specified the legal status of Koreans in Japan. "According to the agreement, permanent residence [*kyōtei eijū*] would be granted to Koreans who had been resident continuously in Japan since 15 August 1945 and those who were born in Japan after 16 August 1945. Application for this status would then be closed on 15 January 1971, but children born after 16 January 1971 to parents who had received permanent residence would automatically be granted such status as well"¹⁶³. However, according to this agreement, South Korea was "the only lawful government in Korea as specified in Resolution 195 of the United Nations General Assembly"¹⁶⁴. It follows that the only way to get the permanent residence status was demonstration of being a South Korean national which was objected by many *Zainichi* Koreans, in light of their affiliation to North Korea. As a consequence, despite more benefits could be obtained through qualifying as permanent residents, many *Zainichi* Koreans did not apply. Their status would have been clarified only in 1982 with the creation of the ad hoc category of "exceptional permanent residence" applied to Koreans not eligible for permanent residence under the 1965 treaty. The two categories of "permanent residence" (*kyōtei eijū*) and "exceptional permanent residence" (*tokurei eijū*) will eventually be merged in the 1992 with the creation of the category "special permanent residence" (*tokubetsu eijū*) which encompasses all former colonial subjects and their descendants – hence all the oldcomers – and is still used today (see Table 1 and Table 2).

An uncertain status as foreigner implied the possibility of deportation in case of criminal

163 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 124.

164 KAMIYA 1980, as cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 124.

offenses. Actually, despite the deportation fear of many *Zainichi* Koreans, this prospect was improbable for petty crimes or small matters since Japan would not have forcibly deported Koreans to North Korea, first of all, because the state was not recognized and was labeled as a socialist regime, and secondly, because deportation to the North would have angered the South Korean government, which is why repatriations occurring between 1958 and 1984 were officially handled by the Red Cross, an international organization. Similarly, deportation to the South would not have been a feasible option neither as the South regime, troubled by poverty, did not eagerly welcome the settlement of other people within its borders, not to mention that many *Zainichi* Koreans would have strongly rejected repatriation or deportation to South Korea which was an illegitimate regime in their opinion. However, for bigger crimes, deportation was provisioned for by the law regarding regular foreign residents, which mandated deportation in case of commission of crimes entailing a prison sentence of more than one year¹⁶⁵. In this case, deportation would have been actuated to South Korea, the country with which Japan had or wanted to build official diplomatic relations.

Furthermore, until 1965 for South Korean nationals and 1982 for non-South Korean nationals, travel outside Japan would have been a one-way journey as their nonresident status would have prevented them from reentering the country. Their non-defined situation made it impossible to issue travel permits granting a reentry, therefore individuals were basically barred from traveling abroad as this could have meant indefinite separation from one's family and friends. This is another factor which probably led many Koreans to unite around Chongryun; if leaving the country with an assurance of returning was not possible it follows that escaping from the oppressive Japanese society too was not possible, unless Korean people formed a close-knit community among themselves. Repatriation to North Korea must have been exceptionally hard decisions for individuals precisely because it presupposed the impossibility of going back to Japan. Travel permits have been issued since 1982, making traveling abroad possible for the first time since 1952, and have increasingly become longer in validity¹⁶⁶.

Taking into account these reasons, it becomes clear that the impossibility of voting and participate in society as an active part of the citizenry was indeed only one of the many drawbacks following the deprivation of Japanese nationality. As a matter of fact, *Zainichi* Koreans were experiencing an official racism, through the strict laws of the country, and an unofficial racism

165 This law has now been changed and from 1992, deportation is implemented for crimes leading to prison sentences of more than seven years.

166 Travel permits have expiration dates, within which, the permanent resident has to come back to Japan if he or she wants to avoid complications when reentering the country. While initially very short in length, now, once issued, travel permits are valid for several years.

through discrimination by the local population. Chongryun emerged precisely in this difficult situation.

THE BIRTH OF CHONGRYUN

Following the dissolution of the League of Koreans, many ex-members joined the Japanese Communist Party which had openly declared, since 1947, its engagement in “properly defending the interests of Koreans in Japan”¹⁶⁷. In 1951, during the Korean War, Korean communists and leftist-nationalists in Japan organized the Democratic Front of Koreans – Minjŏn, in its Korean abbreviation¹⁶⁸. However, within the Minjŏn, there were often clashes on what should be the goals of the movement. A part of Minjŏn members sympathized with the mission of the JCP of initiating a communist revolution in Japan and East Asia whereas other members were advocating for a more patriotic cause, focused on collaboration with North Korea, now defined as the “fatherland”. Han Dŏk-su, a first generation *Zainichi* Korean and an ex-member of the league, belonged to the latter.

In 1955, North Korea's intention to normalize diplomatic relations with Japan caused divisions between the two factions to escalate. In fact, while the JCP was opposed to the current Japanese government, considered an obstacle to the communist revolution, North Korea intended to acknowledge it and collaborate with it. Soon intense debates over these disagreements erupted and concluded with the dissolution of the Minjŏn and the foundation, on May 25 1955, of the Chongryun, with Han Dŏk-su as chairman. In Chongryun's narrative, Kim Il Sung is reputed to have had a fundamental role in its foundation, by instructing the patriotic activists in Japan (*aikokuteki na katsudōka*) on the right patriotic path to follow. He is credited to have revealed how to conduct the policy reversal (*rosen tenkan*) which consisted in these points¹⁶⁹:

1. *Zainichi* Compatriots (*Zainichi dōhō*) live in Japan, yet they should not fight for the revolution in that country but contribute to the cause of the fatherland (*sokoku*).
2. The movement of *Zainichi* Koreans should gather compatriots around the fatherland and foster a close cooperation with it.
3. *Zainichi* Koreans should become masters of themselves (*mizukara ga shutai ni natte*) and expand the movement (*undō o tenkai*).

167 INOKUCHI, in Sonia Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 147.

168 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 89.

169 “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index6.html>, retrieved on 07/19/2018. J.

Although it is uncertain to what extent Kim Il Sung might have orchestrated Chongryun's foundation, his role is emphasized as part of the “devotion to the Great Leader (=Kim Il Sung)”, which would have later become central in the official political ideology of the D.P.R.K., and in the ideology of Chongryun itself. Nevertheless, these points well illustrate the intention of Chongryun to completely distance itself from Japan's affairs. In fact, from this moment onwards, Koreans will be considered “overseas nationals of North Korea”, in Japan only on a temporary basis, which is why Chongryun will also stigmatize the term “ethnic minority” to refer to *Zainichi* Koreans. In Chongryun's discourse, all the links with Japan had to be severed while relations with the fatherland had to be fostered.

The ideology on which Chongryun was established clearly emerges from the organization's agenda at the time of its foundation¹⁷⁰:

1. We shall organize all the Korean compatriots in Japan around the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
2. We shall fight to achieve the peaceful reunification of the fatherland.
3. We shall institutionalize our own education among the Korean children in Japan.
4. We shall safeguard firmly our honor as overseas nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It can be noticed that one of the main purposes of the newly erected organization was that of institutionalizing an education for Korean children in Japan; an education which would have raised its students as overseas nationals of North Korea, instilling in them patriotism and love for the cause of reunification of the two Koreas; they would have been the new generation of North Korea. The ultimate imagined community was that of all Koreans living in a united fatherland possibly under the leadership of Kim Il Sung.

The decision of abstaining from interfering in Japanese domestic affairs, and identifying *Zainichi* Koreans as North Korean overseas nationals, was not only meant to provide an identity around which the Korean community could become more united against a hostile Japanese society. In fact, it was also a wise strategy for ensuring the organization's survival within Japan. Chongryun condemned campaigning for more rights because this could have led to transgressions of the Japanese law. Respect of the law was important in the mind of the organization because in case of criminal offenses, Koreans could possibly face deportation to South Korea, not to mention that the

170 HAN Dök-su 1986, as cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 90.

State Preservation Law and the Anticommunism Law could put subversive people sympathetic to North Korea in jail¹⁷¹. If a person was perplexed on how an education crafted on North Korea's political ideology could survive in a country such as Japan, the answer is to be found on Chongryun's consistent efforts to avoid any troubles with the law as well as any intervention in the political or social sphere. "By declaring it would abide to Japanese law and refrain from Japan's domestic affairs, Chongryun secured its legitimacy as a non-subversive organization"¹⁷².

Thanks to this relatively great freedom from government control, the organization soon started to erect *Chōsen* schools throughout the country, taking control of the schools previously founded by the league which had survived the forced closures of 1949.

THE FORMATION OF *CHŌSEN* SCHOOLS

At the time of its foundation, Chongryun was popular among Koreans in Japan as the overwhelming majority of these supported North Korea; therefore, the organization could benefit from a collaboration with the local community in establishing *Chōsen* schools. From 1957, funds to the school were also sent by North Korea, further cementing relationships between Chongryun and the Kim Il Sung regime. Establishment of *Chōsen* schools involved all levels of schooling, extending as far as tertiary education level with the foundation in Tokyo on 10 April 1956 of the Korea University (*Chōsen daigakkō*), to these days the unique example of university within ethnic education in Japan. A great impulse to the construction of schools was given by the start of repatriation programs to North Korea from December 1959, in fact as many as 76 institutions were founded between 1959 and 1962¹⁷³. In the 1959-1960 academic year, a total of 30,484 students were enrolled in all Chongryun schools and by April 1961 their number had increased to 40,542, excluding about 10,000 students who had been repatriated to North Korea¹⁷⁴.

At the beginning, schools stood on a totally separate track from the Japanese education system since they did not have any type of recognition from the Japanese government. This implied that points of contact between *Chōsen* schools and "art. 1 schools" were virtually non-existent and that pursuing education from the former to the latter was substantially impossible. Certification as miscellaneous schools (*kakushu gakkō*), which depended on prefectural governments, was gradual and was achieved nationwide in 1975, with the recognition of San'in *Chōsen* Primary and Middle School located in Shimane prefecture. The first prefecture to do so had been Kyoto prefecture on 18 May 1953, even before Chongryun was founded. Tokyo prefecture had followed shortly after in

171 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 115.

172 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 113.

173 "Chongryun", 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index6.html>, retrieved on 07/20/2018.

174 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 24.

April 1955, while Korea University was recognized in 1968. Allocation of funds to *Chōsen* schools was (and still is) a matter depending on each prefecture, and the first one to channel financial resources was Tokyo prefecture, at the time of the recognition as miscellaneous schools. These funds though were not sufficient to cover schools' expenses and neither were funds from North Korea (according to a 1989 estimate, the latter covered about 10 percent of the all budget¹⁷⁵). Therefore, the necessity of paying tuition, and poorly run buildings because of low budget expenditures, were a reality of *Chōsen* schools even at the time of their foundation.

Since the time Chongryun took over the mission of providing Korean ethnic education, initiated by the League of Koreans, *Chōsen* schools have never been full-fledged education facilities of North Korea and have never followed the education system of that country. In fact, the way in which education levels are structured resembles that of Japan's "art. 1 schools" and did not change much from the system conceived by the league; similarly to Japanese schools, *Chōsen* education is composed of six years of primary schools (*shokyū gakkō*), three years of middle school (*chūkyū gakkō*), three years of high school (*kōkyū gakkō*), and four years of university (*daigakkō*) (the so-called 6-3-3-4 format). However, the influence of North Korea has always been big, and prior to 1983, textbooks were modeled on North Korean schools textbooks. Even after 1983, a Chongryun committee regularly visited North Korea over summer vacation for consultation. The influence of North Korea in school programs has greatly been reduced over time, notably with the 1993's Chongryun educational reforms, but was enormous at the onset of schools' foundation. With the assumption that children would repatriate to North Korea, the school curriculum was centered on North Korea, teaching the history, the geography, the economy of that country, as if it was the place where students were living. Little to no references to Japan appeared in textbooks unless in derogatory terms for the colonial experience.

School curriculum and Chongryun ideology went along that of North Korea and reflected political changes in the communist country. One could say that imagined communities of North Korean educators and Chongryun educators were almost merged, but for two major exceptions. One was the repatriation to the fatherland which was being promoted by Chongryun, and the other was the prospect of employment within Chongryun or its related institutions throughout Japan. In fact, the *Zainichi* Korean organization has still today a capillary distribution in all regions of Japan where a Korean population is present. Together with the Tokyo headquarters it has several local chapters, in addition to: labor unions (Women's union, *Chōsen* Teachers' union, etc.); twenty-two associated independent commercial companies which include banks and insurance companies; a publishing company – the Hagu Sōbang publishing company – responsible for printing *Chōsen* schools'

175 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 24.

textbooks and two newspapers, i.e. the Chōson Shinbo (in Korean) and the Chōsen jihō (in Japanese)¹⁷⁶. Many *Chōsen* schools graduates were, and are, therefore placed in the organization's various organs, which, together with the central headquarters, also have the important role of acting as a window to contact North Korea, due to the lack of diplomatic ties between the country and Japan, not to mention the tasks of cooperate economically and promote tourism in the socialist country.

To sum up, *Chōsen* schools are also fundamental to form the workforce and personnel of Chongryun and its associated *Zainichi* Korean economic enterprises. This was especially true in the years between its foundation and the 1980s when the top layers of the organization were composed by first-generation members whose merits in protecting the Korean community and in building schools during the difficult colonial and post-war periods were often undisputed; Chongryun was almost acting as a paternal figure for the *Zainichi* Korean community, defending it from the antagonist Japanese society, and the most talented among Korea University's graduates were simply not supposed to turn down a job offer from the organization.

Fostering loyalty to North Korea and Chongryun was achieved mainly through the teaching of the Korean language. When Chongryun started founding schools, the majority of *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan spoke Japanese as their mother-tongue; Korean, the official language used in Chongryun activities, and the only language employed to teach subjects at *Chōsen* schools (except for the class of Japanese language), was already a foreign language to most of the students who enrolled. This lack of background command of the language allowed Chongryun to teach only the Korean suitable to conduct the organization's activities in a proper way. To put it in more simple terms, *Zainichi* Korean children were learning a language in which they had a wide range of vocabulary to express their love for the fatherland or construct an argumentation in favor of reunification of the Korean peninsula. However, they were taught no vocabulary that would enable them to criticize Chongryun or the causes for whom the organization was fighting. The Chongryun ideology was being formed through the Korean language, in fact as affirmed by Rossi-Landi, “without the development of language there could be no ideology. [...] The mechanism of language is thus an integral part of ideology”¹⁷⁷.

THE IDEOLOGY

According to Voloshinov, “the word functions as an essential ingredient accompanying all

176 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 3.

177 ROSSI-LANDI 1990, as cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 2.

ideological creativity whatsoever”¹⁷⁸. In this regard, it can be said that Chongryun, through the education provided in *Chōsen* schools, was giving students only the words that would arise in them the ideology (in Korean “*sasang*”) and the worldview approved by the organization. This ideology and set of values underlying *Chōsen* education were of course centered on the concept that Koreans in Japan were overseas nationals of North Korea, and therefore were adapted to the political changes in the country. A major turn in the political orientation of the country of Kim Il Sung occurred in the mid-1950s in the wake of the so-called Sino-Soviet split which consisted in a fracture – attributed to several economical, political, and ideological factors – between the two main communist countries in the world, namely Maoist China and the Soviet Union. This fracture extended to all the communist bloc and pushed North Korea to develop its own interpretation of the Marxist ideology. This is the background in which the *Juche* ideology emerged.

According to Kim Il Sung: “Establishing *Juche* means that the people approach the revolution and construction in their own country as masters”¹⁷⁹. Literally meaning “subject” and often translated as “self-reliance”, *Juche* postulates that the human being is the creator of nature, and gives primacy to human mental faculties. However, it is the revolutionary leader who awakes human consciousness and functions as a catalyst for it. Because of this important role bestowed on the revolutionary leader, his authority is made absolute in the process called in Korean '*shinkyōk-hwa*', meaning “putting the leader into the godly position”, which becomes one of the most important and visible aspects of the *Juche* ideology¹⁸⁰. “*Juche* may be understood as an attempt at consolidating the epistemological basis and logical necessity for Kim Il Sung's leadership”¹⁸¹. From the late 1960s onwards, the North Korea party and government began unifying the society along the *Juche* line, with stress on Kim Il Sung worship. Chongryun followed suit and during the 1970s, *Juche* came to be valorized as a powerful reference point in Chongryun's social discourse¹⁸².

Chongryun authorities established linguistic control with regard to references to Kim Il Sung and *Juche* in the beginning of the 1970s. This was achieved through mechanic drills in which students learnt to refer to Kim Il Sung by using only specific pairs of adjectives¹⁸³. For example, pupils were taught to mention Kim Il Sung by employing the title '*wōnsunim*', which means

178 VOLOSHINOV 1973, as cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 2.

179 KIM Il Sung 1986, as cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 97.

180 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 98.

181 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 99.

182 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 100.

183 I believe that these drills should not be seen solely as a brainwashing operation. Their content was indeed propagandistic but it is also true that students at primary school are in general not able to elaborate much independent thought and that, back then, mechanical drills were not uncommon methods to teach foreign languages.

“marshal”, together with the honorific suffix '*nim*', only used to address to people of exceptionally high rank. The same rules applied to Chongryun's official discourse and publications. This practice was markedly different from the period preceding the implementation of *Juche* ideology, when Kim Il Sung was also referred to as 'comrade Kim' or simply '*wǒnsu*' without the honorific title '*nim*'. Now, writing or talking about Kim Il Sung without using the proper titles and adjectives would have resulted in a bad mark for students of *Chōsen* schools.

This attentive focus on *Juche* ideology permeated all the subjects of the curriculum across the all levels of instruction, from elementary school to university. Of course, special attention was devoted to the elementary school level, where students were not able to speak Korean and therefore needed to master Korean language skills and the whole set of fixed adjectives and expressions used in Chongryun's official narrative. At primary level, 10 out of the 24 hours of the weekly course load were spent on learning the Korean language which would have been the sole language of instruction for all subjects in all levels of instruction except for foreign languages (Japanese and English)¹⁸⁴.

Many curriculum subjects overlapped with those of Japanese schools and included: Japanese, math, English, natural science, history, geography, PE, music and art; however, the country of reference was North Korea, therefore North Korea's history and geography were taught instead of Japanese history and geography. In addition, at primary school, students had a class called 'childhood of Father Marshal Kim Il Sung', while middle school's curriculum comprised 'revolutionary activities of Father Marshal Kim Il Sung' as a subject¹⁸⁵. In classrooms it was not uncommon to find panels reading: “We are the Happiest Children in the World, Thanks to Our Father Marshal Kim Il Sung”. Clearly, important goals of the schools were to instill patriotism and reverence of Kim Il Sung, regarded as a paternal figure protecting overseas Koreans in Japan, as well as to conform children to Chongryun's rhetoric. According to one teacher:

The lesson of the childhood gives basic skills for the future life in Chongryun's organizational units. Without knowing how to call the members of the revolutionary family, the cradle in which our great leader was born and brought up, no one can sufficiently and successfully participate in Chongryun's patriotic activities and our cause of the reunification of the fatherland.¹⁸⁶

In the first year of primary school lessons were taught in a mixture of Korean and Japanese but from the second year, speaking Japanese at school would have become strictly forbidden and

184 In the school curriculum the Korean language is indicated as the “national language” and any other language, including Japanese, is considered a foreign language.

185 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 25.

186 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 28.

students breaking this rule were severely scolded by their teachers. Essentially, schools were based on a system of reward / punishment, where students were highly praised and rewarded with sweets and stationery for showing a solid command of the Korean language and of Chongryun's set of expressions, and were instead subject to criticism for using Japanese at school or not properly adopting Chongryun's narrative¹⁸⁷. It could be argued that teaching fixed ideological expressions or specific honorific references might sound unnatural to children, but indeed most of them were probably seeing these exercises as mere drills and were not concerned with their ideological content; they were instead motivated to perform well and to master Chongryun Korean language upon the promise of a good reward and good grades.

The Korean language learned at school allowed students to properly express *Juche* ideology concepts and Chongryun's narrative; this Korean language essentially was the organizational language of the *Zainichi* Korean association. Nevertheless, it was a Korean language with strong limitations since, even back then, both teachers and students did not speak Korean at home, which implies there were no chances to complement the academic Korean used at school with a more colloquial version of it. In fact, first generation members were already diminishing in the 1960s-1970s and many of them actually belonged to the 1.5 generation thus were more accustomed to speak Japanese rather than Korean. Furthermore, as we have seen in chapter 2, first generation Koreans were more likely to speak their own native dialect instead of a more standard version of Korean. In this regard, Chongryun, through the implementation of adult language education – like the League of Koreans had done previously, had already proceeded to unify and standardize the Korean language(s) used by the first generation, making it similar to its organizational Korean language.

Students were learning a Korean based on the written form which, even more than Japanese, starkly differs from the spoken version of the language, most notably in verb endings. Many former *Chōsen* schools graduates who were not employed for Chongryun or its related companies, admittedly reported difficulties when speaking Korean to native speakers or blamed the Korean language taught in *Chōsen* schools. However, Ryang maintains that through individual exercise and

187 There was a systematic way to track down violations of this “No Japanese language policy” through the use of penalty cards, whose excessive accumulation would have resulted in close monitoring by the teachers. This method was perhaps unreasonably strict but I believe it makes more sense if one considers that, in the school's view, the children should have become the next generation of North Korea; this practice was probably a rigid language immersion system attempting to simulate life in North Korea where Japanese was not spoken and therefore could not be used for communicating. Furthermore, this method could be a sort of retaliation towards language policies in schools in colonial Japan, where penalties for speaking Korean were way harsher and included corporal punishments.

efforts, the Korean language taught in *Chōsen* schools could be brought almost to a native level, in fact many *Zainichi* Koreans are actually bilingual¹⁸⁸. Indeed, this is arguably true for any foreign language solely learned at school, therefore lack of communicative skills might probably be attributed to little efforts or chances to pick up the language after having entered adult life. Nevertheless, it is accurate to say that even by attending *Chōsen* schools, *Zainichi* Koreans could not get in contact with spoken versions of Korean used by native Korean speakers in the North as well as in the South. Furthermore, censorship, through the system of reward / punishment, had the effect of freeze, if not reduce, the number of usable Korean words; a speaker tended to stick to the Korean words she felt confident of¹⁸⁹. Reforms aimed at teaching a more “natural” and colloquial form of Korean would have been enacted with the curriculum revision of 1993.

A patriotic education was also highly emphasized at Korea University where students were required to take courses on *Juche* philosophy or Korean language and literature regardless of their major. Similar to today, the university back then was composed by the following faculties: Economical and Political Sciences, (Korean) Literature and History, Management, Foreign Languages, Engineering, Education, and Physical Education. Still today, most of its students eventually fill the ranks of Chongryun's employees upon graduation and, presently as well as in the past, Korea University has the peculiar characteristic of requiring all students, even those who could easily commute to its facilities, to live in the small campus' dorms. Access to the campus is strictly monitored also because students themselves are not allowed to stay outside the campus except during the free access hours which are limited to four afternoons a week and all day Sunday. These very rules used to be much stricter up until the 1990s, when spending time outside campus was permitted on one afternoon per week, which greatly curtailed students' possibilities to find means of financial support like part-time jobs, common among Japanese university students. Discipline was extremely rigid and students were routinely required to participate in self-criticism and self-review sessions in which they had to ask themselves:

1. Have you fulfilled the assignments given by the organization?
2. Have you completed the study assignments required by the course?
3. Have you been honest to your comrades?
4. Can you say that your conduct has been in accordance with the patriotic ideal of the organization?

188 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 152.

189 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 35.

5. Can you say that you have displayed enough loyalty to the Great Leader and the Dear Leader [Kim Jong Il]?¹⁹⁰

Over the last twenty years, rules have considerably become more relaxed, and college life in today's Korea University might resemble more that of other Japanese universities. However, up until the 1990s the university was actually secluded from the rest of the world and Japanese society, and many students had difficulty dealing with the pressure coming from the rigid regulations and self-criticism sessions. Students attending Korea University have been continually increasing, despite the overall diminishing trend of students in *Chōsen* schools. This demonstrates a general propensity towards pursuing tertiary education of *Chōsen* students, among which the percentage of people enrolling in any type of university has risen considerably, sometimes surpassing that of normal Japanese schools in some prefectures (see chapter 4). This trend might be due to greater integration within Japanese society and easier access to Japanese universities, which have led *Chōsen* high schools graduates to increasingly consider university education – both Korea University and other Japanese universities – as a viable option for their future careers. Moreover, more recent access to welfare benefits for the Korean community, and more possibilities to do part-time jobs or conduct life outside the campus might have made Korea University more affordable¹⁹¹.

GOING TO NORTH KOREA

From 1959 until 1984, 93,340 *Zainichi* Koreans were repatriated to North Korea. How was the country Chongryun Koreans wanted so ardently to go to? As we have seen above, the socialist country had been spared by the wave of social unrest and violence that had invaded its southern counterpart. Repression against dissenters was equally present in the North, and certainly the country could not be defined a democracy, nevertheless, the government was more largely supported by the local population because it was guided by a well-known patriot and former captain of the anti-Japanese guerrilla: Kim Il Sung. Contrarily to the South, D.P.R.K. citizens had seen, since as early as 1946, land reforms as well as laws promoting equality among citizens, and had experienced a better economic performance. In fact, until 1974, North Korea's per capita GDP was higher than that of South Korea and until 1976 North Korean economy was outproducing that of the its southern counterpart¹⁹². When Chongryun was founded, South Korea was still far from the

190 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 39.

191 Chongryun attempts to keep school fees low, nevertheless all *Chōsen* schools are obliged to rely on tuition because of poor financing from the outside. Since Korea University needs also to charge room and board, in 1995 students spent on average around 120,000 yen per month, taking into account personal expenses.

192 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 126.

annual growth rate of 7.6 percent that it would have experienced between 1982 and 1986, and its per capita GNP in 1960 was of 80 dollars. In other words, it is safe to say that until the 1970s living conditions were better in North Korea rather than South Korea.

From 1946 until the end of the Korean War, movements of people between Japan and the Korean peninsula had been mainly composed by refugees fleeing the harsh living conditions of the southern part. After 1953, the flow of people had notably decreased and the new circumstances were not favorable to repatriations from Japan. First of all, South Korea, already in a difficult economic situation, was not eager to welcome migrants from Japan, and many *Zainichi* Koreans actually did not want to go there neither, because of ideological convictions and negative rumors about life in the southern part. Secondly, North Korea was a socialist state with whom the majority of capitalist countries, including Japan, did not want to entertain any diplomatic relation, not to mention that repatriating people to the North could have jeopardized Japanese and South Korean relations in a period when the two countries had not yet recognized each others officially (this will happen in 1965).

The idea of repatriation was envisioned by Japanese politicians and executives of the Japanese Red Cross from the 1950s. At the onset, it had started as a plan consisting of “people exchange”, in order to ensure the return to Japan of several Japanese citizens who had remained stuck in North Korea since the liberation. Japanese politicians were convinced that, if a renowned international organization like the Red Cross had been put in charge of the repatriation, the operation would have been free from diplomatic incidents. After several years of consultation, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) accepted to carry out repatriations to North Korea on humanitarian grounds, considering the difficult situation in which Koreans were living in Japan. It is not inaccurate to say, though, that behind humanitarian reasons there was also a desire of the Japanese government to get rid of a sizable foreign community it did not know how to handle and was feeling uncomfortable cohabiting with. Chongryun was very successful in promoting and encouraging the repatriation, supporting its logic grounded on obvious ideological reasons with statistical facts which showed a higher GDP and growth rate compared to South Korea.

In 1956 the ICRC began a population survey in order to plan the return operations and consulted with the Japanese government and the newly-born Chongryun to obtain demographical data. In 1955, there were about 575,000 Koreans in Japan registered as foreign residents and of these, according to the Japanese government, twenty-one percent belonged to the “South Korean” side, fifty percent to the “North Korean” side, six percent were “neutral”, and twenty-three percent were “diverse”¹⁹³. This categorization itself is already unclear and clashes with previous statistics

193 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 92.

that indicated that 90 percent of *Zainichi* Koreans supported the northern regime. It is not known to me how this survey was conducted by the government; it is possible that many people within the “diverse” category might have been counted on the North Korean side in the other survey, or that many of these people were actually torn between the geographical belonging to the southern part of the peninsula and the political preference for the North. Furthermore, considering the nationality alone might be misleading: in 1955, twenty-five percent of Koreans in Japan were R.O.K nationals but not necessarily all people in this category were on the “South Korean” side, in fact, some had taken up the nationality because they believed in possible benefits deriving from it.

If we keep analyzing the statistics of the government, data become even more intriguing. The Japanese government had informed the ICRC that, according to Chongryun, at least 60,000 *Zainichi* Koreans wished to be repatriated, which roughly corresponded to about nine percent of total Koreans and about eighteen percent of North Koreans¹⁹⁴. However, when ICRC officials consulted directly with Chongryun, in light of its connection to the Korean community, they were informed that about 30,000 *Zainichi* Koreans wanted to return to the peninsula. The Chongryun asserted to have calculated this figure through a method of registration among Japan's Korean population, although the way registration had been carried out was rather obscure. Figures reported by Chongryun to the Japanese government and to ICRC differed by half the number. It would have turned out later that these statistics had actually been provided by North Korea and not by Chongryun. In later meetings, when asked to provide more exact figures in order to carefully plan the repatriation process, Chongryun reported the number of Koreans in Japan seeking repatriation as of December 1955 at 1,424, much far from the initial estimate of 60,000 people.

According to the Chongryun, this figure of 1,424 was composed by members in general of the Korean community, Ōmura Immigration Detention Center prisoners, people with family in the North, and students wishing to pursue their university education in the socialist country. The Ōmura Immigration Detention Center, today still in operation, is located in the prefecture of Nagasaki, in the eastern part of the island of Kyushu which directly faces the Korean peninsula. Japanese and SCAP authorities had tried from the late 1940s to stop the flow of immigrants from the Korean peninsula, imperatively refusing disembarkation of immigrants ships. Attempts to crack down on illegal immigration had resulted in several arrests of people who were incarcerated at the Ōmura Detention Center while waiting for deportation from Japan. The initial intention of the Japanese government was to repatriate these people to South Korea, but the detainees had no intention of returning to a country they had just fled. Many of them had escaped from South Korea for their socialist political convictions for which they could have been persecuted, therefore many wished to

194 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 93.

be repatriated to North Korea instead. Their estimated number was seventy-one.

Students wishing to enter a university in North Korea were about 133. In 1955, *Chōsen* schools graduates were almost completely barred from pursuing education in Japanese higher education institutions since very few prefectures had recognized *Chōsen* schools as miscellaneous schools. Furthermore, Chongryun's Korea University would have been founded in April of the next year, therefore students wishing to pursue an ethnic education in their native / heritage language had little choice but to repatriate to the peninsula. This seemingly low figure among the total number of students of Korean ethnic schools is actually quite credible as in the 1950s, proceeding to university education was not common neither among the Japanese, neither among the Koreans. Finally, people wishing to return for family reunion were about 120, and people in general from the Korean community were 1,100, mostly residing in Tokyo¹⁹⁵.

The actual figure of 1,424 people had been multiplied twenty-five- to fifty-fold by North Korean statistics. The figure of 60,000 provided by North Korea to the Japanese government had been exaggeratedly increased upward because of North Korea's labor demands necessary for after-war reconstruction (the Korean War had ended just two years prior, in 1953) and perhaps for reasons of ideological propaganda. The figure had subsequently been readjusted, but still augmented upward, when given to the ICRC, more directly responsible for carrying out repatriations. In fact, despite its intention to welcome *Zainichi* Koreans, North Korea too probably feared that an excessive inflow of people could likely upset its internal economy; 30,000 was a more cautious number to start with. Japan, unable to find suitable ways to deal with the Korean minority, had not really questioned the data provided nor maybe had intention to do so. In fact, we have seen that the Japanese government of that time was quite uneasy with the presence of a large foreign community, and wished that Koreans were repatriated.

The political scene of Japan in the mid-1950s was dominated by the Liberal Democrats, emerged in 1955, with the Socialist Party as the main opposition force. Beyond ethnic prejudices, from which no party was immune, many Socialists supported repatriation because they really believed Kim Il Sung's promises of a new and better world¹⁹⁶. In fact, we have seen how economic indicators were favoring the North over the South, and even though many knew that D.P.R.K. was no utopia, there were still hopes that its revolutionary socialism might have carved a path to a bright future. On the other hand, "Liberal Democrats harbored no such illusions, but many of them were only too happy to lend their political muscle to any feasible proposal for a mass exodus of Koreans

195 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 96.

196 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 95.

from Japan”¹⁹⁷. In short, all parties in the government desired the repatriation of ethnic Koreans to North Korea.

Thus, repatriation procedures were being influenced by Cold War dynamics and lack of efforts from the Japanese government to efficiently address the issue of foreign residents within Japan. Similarly to 1952, when Koreans had been scrapped of their Japanese nationality without consultation, even this time there was little dialogue with *Zainichi* Koreans, the people most directly concerned by the repatriation project. Surely, the majority of Koreans in Japan supported Chongryun over Mindan and had expressed sympathy towards North Korea, nevertheless, it was being assumed that all Koreans in Japan on the ambiguous “North Korea” side had wholeheartedly embraced Chongryun's positions. In a world polarized between communist and capitalist countries, Koreans in Japan had been thought to follow this pattern with a neat division between “southerners” and “northerners”, whereas the actual situation was more mixed.

First of all, despite the difficult living conditions, in 1955 national health insurance was still available to foreign residents and many Koreans intended to live in Japan because they simply felt Japan was their home country. Others, despite politically closer to North Korea, were probably not yet ready to give up their territorial affiliation to the southern part of the peninsula and go to a part of their native country with very distant dialects and customs, and with no family or friends' connections. It is still worth remembering that local affiliation to one's native village was extremely important for the first generation, and, for what regards the second generation, Japan was the strongest territorial affiliation: going to North Korea would have equaled migrating to a foreign country. In any case, this would have been a one-way journey as Koreans did not possess a resident status in the 1950s and therefore could not have reentered Japan. To sum up, in 1950s' Japan, the majority of Koreans was supporting North Korea politically, nevertheless, few of them actually wanted to migrate to the socialist country as of 1955.

In the period immediately following 1955 various factors radically altered the initial figure of 1,424 would-be returnees. First of all, new healthcare reforms enacted in 1958 totally impeded foreign residents' access to national health insurance, which had been open to them since 1938 (see table 4). This of course represented a big blow on the Korean community who now had to pay expensive sums of money to access an essential service such as healthcare. Undoubtedly, this is the chief reason that triggered many Koreans to apply for repatriation to North Korea, with the hope of enjoying a better access to welfare services and medical care that were being promised to all the Koreans who would have migrated to the country of Kim Il Sung. Secondly, in 1955 Chongryun had just emerged and it may be reasonably assumed that its influence over the Korean population

197 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 95.

was still smaller. Most importantly, it had not yet started its successful campaign for repatriation which, as we have seen, constituted a basis of its ideological discourse. In fact, Chongryun later carried out an organization-wide movement to encourage the repatriation of scientists and engineers in order to assist North Korea's effort to reconstruct its war-torn economy¹⁹⁸. North Korea was labeled as a “paradise on earth” and was described as the “true and only fatherland for all Koreans in Japan”. As Chongryun expanded its influence over the Korean community more and more people were drawn to the idea of repatriation.

With increasingly more people wishing to repatriate, the ICRC finally decided to begin repatriation procedures which took off from December 1959. Future returnees would have boarded a train in Tokyo bound for the Japanese port of Niigata, from which they would have left on a ship for the North Korean port of Cheongjin. The all route was supervised by the ICRC with the collaboration of the Red Cross Societies of Japan and North Korea. The biggest chunk of would-be returnees migrated in the first year of the repatriation program, in fact between December 1959 and the end of 1960, 51,978 left Japan for North Korea through the above route¹⁹⁹. This great “repatriation rush” can justify the similar rush with which Chongryun built numerous *Chōsen* schools between 1959 and 1962. Following 1960, repatriations considerably slowed down and before a temporary interruption in 1967, about 82,000 Koreans had repatriated since the start of the program. After the interruption, repatriations resumed on 1971, but only a small fraction of people migrated from that year until the definite end of the program in 1984. In total, from 1959 until 1984, 93,340 people had repatriated, of which 86,603 were ethnic Koreans, 6,731 were Japanese, and six were Chinese (the last two categories being spouses or dependents)²⁰⁰.

Although the repatriation program was officially closed in 1984, its popularity had sensitively started to decline much earlier. Increasingly difficult economic conditions in North Korea on one hand, and a booming economy in an affluent Japan on the other, discouraged more and more Koreans from taking the route to the peninsula. Furthermore, controversies concerning the treatment of returnees in North Korea soon began to surface and caused minor fractures within the Chongryun. Members of the organization resigned and started campaigning against the repatriation program upon hearing news that many returnees wishing to go back to Japan had been prevented to do so and had been sent to forced labor camps. These claims certainly caused numerous Koreans to further distance themselves from the idea of repatriating.

Chongryun maintained for long time its rhetoric of embellishing North Korea and promoting

198 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 113.

199 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 11.

200 MORRIS-SUZUKI, *Exodus...*, cit., p. 12.

repatriation especially in *Chōsen* schools, although not many Korean families were actually envisioning a migration to the peninsula. Starting from the 1980s, Chongryun too began to reconsider its stances towards repatriation, and the description of North Korea as a “paradise on earth” was abandoned.

NUMEROUS KOREAN NATIONALITIES

The previous paragraph has shed light on an actually diverse Korean community, not so polarized around the pro-North Korea Chongryun, or the pro-South Korea Mindan. Japan's Korean community was not immune from Cold War's ideologies, and confronted as it was with restrictive policies for foreign residents, it certainly could find in Chongryun and Mindan safe havens in which community members could support each others. Notwithstanding that, a number of Koreans were leading their lives not necessarily associated to any of these associations, or maybe even associated with both because of family and friends' connections.

Koreans deprived of their Japanese nationality after 1952 could apply for Japanese nationality through naturalization (*kika*), but this method was frowned upon by both Chongryun and Mindan. The two *Zainichi* Korean organizations equated “acquiring Japanese nationality” to “becoming Japanese”, which was considered an insult towards their Korean ethnicity after the Korean peninsula had been liberated from Japanese colonizers. For some extremists, naturalization was a subtle second attempt by the Japanese government to annihilate Korean culture and identity after the colonization. Furthermore, acquiring Japanese nationality heavily clashed with Chongryun's ideology of considering *Zainichi* Koreans as “overseas nationals of North Korea”. In the eye of the Japanese government too, nationality and ethnicity were somewhat conflated; for example, although there was never a rule obliging people naturalizing as Japanese to adopt a Japanese or a Japanese-sounding name upon acquisition of nationality, this requirement existed in practice. Civil servants in charge of naturalization procedures could arbitrarily reject naturalization requests if they deemed the applicant not suitable. Among these officials in charge, as well as among Japanese people, it was common sense that a person wanting to become Japanese should become Japanese in all senses, adopting a name that would not suggest a foreign origin. As a consequence it was not rare that applicants insisting on using their ethnic name would be rejected.

Zainichi Koreans, with respect to naturalization, shared the view of Chongryun and Mindan and were overall against it as demonstrated by the extremely low number of naturalization until the 1990s. Since this decade, the unilateral association of citizenship and ethnicity has become weaker and increasingly more *Zainichi* Koreans have become aware that acquire Japanese nationality does not equal losing their own Korean roots. A surge in naturalization procedures has to be reconducted

also to a simplified bureaucratic process from which intimidation and arbitrary decisions from civil servants have been substantially stamped out. Until the 1980s, not only did applicants have to go through a long bureaucratic process but often needed to endure bullying and non-official arbitrary rules – such as the impossibility of keeping one's own ethnic name – from civil servants. These practices, which reflected the lesser integration of Koreans into the Japanese society at the time, have drastically changed and, since 1995, approximately 10,000 Koreans have naturalized every year, contributing to a continually declining number of special permanent residents (see table 1 and table 2). However, at least for the first three decades following the Treaty of San Francisco in 1952, acquiring Japanese nationality was frowned upon by the majority of the community and those who did naturalize could likely pass as traitors.

What was instead less homogeneous within the community and did not exactly overlap with affiliation with North Korea or South Korea was the type of “Korean nationality” possessed by *Zainichi* Koreans. We have seen that after 1949, South Korea offered the possibility to *Zainichi* Koreans to become South Korean nationals, which was subsequently recognized by Japan following the Normalization Treaty between Japan and South Korea of 1965. Many people in both occasions, in light of their self-styled status as overseas nationals of North Korea, had refused to apply, but others were less concerned by this aspect and, despite their support for North Korea, had decided to become South Korean nationals because it could grant them benefits and also the possibility to travel abroad. Chongryun initially was strongly against the acquisition of South Korean nationality but soon started to tolerate it as many of its members were South Korean nationals because they had received the nationality from their parents. As long as it was not Japanese nationality, many people considered South Korean nationality as a mere piece of paper granting them more benefits, and asserted that their ideological convictions did not need to be certified by documents.

By 1970 South Korean nationals outnumbered *Chōsen* nationals (special foreign residents with no South Korean nationality) by almost 50,000 people²⁰¹ and whereas in 1955 R.O.K. nationals were only 25 percent of all *Zainichi* Koreans, they constituted the 78 percent in 1992²⁰². A general thaw between South and North Korea that occurred from the 1980s, also pushed many people into adopting South Korean passports. Today, the majority of students attending *Chōsen* schools are of South Korean nationality and the latest trends reveal that, as of December 2017, special foreign residents holding South Korean nationality are 295,826, while those classified as *Chōsen* nationals are only 30,243²⁰³. Equally inhomogeneous was membership in either the Chongryun or the

201 Erin Aeran CHUNG, “The Korean Citizen in Japanese Civil Society”, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 126.

202 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 127.

203 Hōmushō”, 2018, *Zairyū...*, http://www.moj.go.jp/housei/toukei/toukei_ichiran_touroku.html, retrieved on

Mindanao, in fact some people, for motivations due to family connections or work relations were registered members of both. Indeed, for most people, immediate human connections, rather than political ideals, mattered most in day-to-day life²⁰⁴.

In conclusion, although during the period of repatriations from the 1950s until early 1980s most of the Koreans were staunchly opposing naturalization as Japanese, more variety was founded in the type of nationality they possessed which frequently did not overlap with their political positions, if they had any. Afterward, with the progressive thaw of Cold War and a better integration into Japan's society and welfare state from the 1980s, ideological oppositions would have been further considered separate from pieces of paper certifying either South Korean or Japanese nationality.

ALTERNATIVES TO *CHŌSEN* SCHOOLS

Diversity within the Korean community was found also in the field of education, in fact, even in Cold War years, *Chōsen* schools were not the sole possibility for Korean families who, like today were often sending their children to Japanese public schools. Reasons for doing that were multiple, for example ensuring a university education, from which *Chōsen* schools graduates were mostly barred from, or for having less financial burdens since Japanese public schools do not charge tuition. On the other hand, over the total number of Korean students, the percentage going to *Chōsen* schools was higher in the past than it is today, because many Koreans were regarding *Chōsen* schools a more protected environment free from discrimination. In the 1950s and 1960s, it is safe to say that most Japanese schools would have not valued a student's Korean identity nor would they have taken any effort to promote learning of her heritage language. As we have seen in chapter 1, according to Kanno²⁰⁵, even today Japanese public schools tend to have an approach where integration into Japanese society goes at detriment of a child's ethnic identity or native foreign language²⁰⁶.

Nevertheless, despite Chongryun and Japan's government attempt to draw a thick line of separation between Japanese and Koreans, other organizations were having different stances and, in the period of repatriations, not all Japanese were in block against the integration of Koreans. In fact, even during the league years some prefectural governors had leased buildings to be used as Korean

07/23/2018.

204 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 150.

205 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 154.

206 This approach, however, is not typical of Japan only since, Kanno argues, in countries such the U.S., non-native English speakers are seen as a deficit rather than as potential bilinguals. (see KANNO, "High-performing...", in references)

ethnic schools, and after the emergence Chongryun, some prefectures recognized *Chōsen* schools as miscellaneous schools and started to provide some financial help. Positive examples of people and institutions that defied the hard line of the Japanese government towards foreign resident were also found in Osaka, a typically “oldcomer-type” of region as we have seen in chapter 1, which still today boasts the biggest community of oldcomer *Zainichi* Koreans.

In chapter 2, I have described how the riots of 4.24 led to an exchange of memorandum on 4 June 1948 between Osaka governor and Korean representatives, through which, both parties committed to establish extracurricular ethnic classes within Osaka's public school system. “Memorandum-based ethnic classes” (*oboegaki minzoku gakkyū*) were launched in some thirty-three schools under prefectural jurisdiction where authorized Korean educators could teach Korean history, language and culture on an extracurricular basis²⁰⁷. Nevertheless, the project soon deteriorated for numerous difficulties, most notably episodes of inhospitality and discrimination from the Japanese faculty which resulted in the resignation of many Korean teachers. Posts becoming vacant were not filled, consequently leading to the closure of the ethnic class. Continuous lack of Korean instructors resulted in a gradual decline of these “memorandum-based ethnic classes” to the point of near extinction until 1986 when Osaka prefecture's education board, upon pressure from Korean parents and supporters of the cause, decided to ensure the hiring of new teachers in order to guarantee the continuation of ethnic classes whose number has since been frozen at eleven (seven in Osaka city and four in Osaka prefecture).

A more successful project was initiated instead in 1972, still in Osaka, through which ethnic classes with a more solid organization were institutionalized. What triggered its creation was a pamphlet, published in April 1971 by the Osaka middle school principals' conference, which contained in the section “the situation of foreign students”, several derogatory terms toward Korean pupils, categorizing them as “selfish”, “impulsive”, or “lacking sense of guilt”²⁰⁸. Its publication infuriated Japan Teachers' Union, a progressive organization in the front line in advocating Korean children's right to autonomous education, and always supportive to the establishment of ethnic education since the post-war period. The unfortunate episode of racism convinced the Teachers' Union of the necessity to take measures aimed at protecting Korean children's access to education, and through a collaboration with Korean students, parents, and young activists, ethnic classes within Osaka Prefecture's public schools emerged shortly after.

These initiatives were contemporary to an overall movement from the end of the 1960s aimed at improving sensitivity towards Japanese minorities including the *Burakumin* (Japanese

207 HESTER, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 178.

208 HESTER, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 179.

untouchables) who often lived and live in areas where the Korean population is numerous. Nagahashi primary school (a Japanese public school), located in Osaka's Nishinari Ward, in the middle of one of Japan's largest *Burakumin* community, had been among the first schools to hold special supplementary classes for *Burakumin* children²⁰⁹. Shortly after, teachers had begun talking in class about human rights, Korean-Japanese relations, the meaning of using an ethnic name versus using a Japanese “passing name”, and the historical background to the presence of Koreans in Japan²¹⁰. The establishment of extracurricular ethnic classes aimed to Korean children, who constituted the twenty percent of the school's student population, followed suit. Teachers of these classes were working on a volunteering basis because the Osaka government did not finance the activity, nevertheless, the high demand of these ethnic classes from students and parents plus the enthusiasm with which this initiative was welcomed, spurred teachers to persevere in their task. This positive example which had succeeded despite lack of help from the government, motivated Japan Teachers' Union and its supporters to pursue in the establishment of ethnic classes in Osaka prefecture's schools.

Teachers of ethnic classes worked on a volunteering until 1992, after which they started receiving some founding from the prefecture. In fact, in 1991, a bilateral agreement was signed between R.O.K. and Japan that included an undertaking regarding ethnic extracurricular activities. Following this, Japan's Ministry of Education instructed all prefectural boards of education that they do “not restrict opportunities for Korean children to study Korean language, Korean culture, etc., on an extracurricular basis”²¹¹. Today, Korean ethnic classes or clubs operate in over 100 public primary and middle schools in Osaka prefecture. The way they operate varies depending on the school, but in many cases they are held once a week on a free attendance basis. Given the little time, especially at primary school level, teachers try to present Korean culture in a enjoyable way to the children, attempting to avoid too much study material. Nevertheless, achievements are not scarce, given that some schools yearly hold Korean culture festivals where members of the ethnic class perform in front of the whole students population; certainly a positive example that demonstrates recognition of one's ethnic identity through full participation in school life.

Since the early 1970s, ethnic education in public schools has sought to achieve integration of Korean children into Japanese society as Koreans. This approach has been founded on the following three elements²¹²:

209 HESTER, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 180.

210 HESTER, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 180.

211 HESTER, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 180.

212 HESTER, in Ryang (ed.), *Koreans...*, cit., p. 182.

1. Raising the ethnic self-awareness of foreign students and instilling in them a pride in their ethnic heritage.
2. Cultivation of a respect for human rights and “international understanding”.
3. Fostering solidarity between Japanese and foreign children, based on mutual respect.

Thus, ethnic classes within Japanese public schools have existed, in spite of difficulties, since the 1970s – and even before if we look at “memorandum-based ethnic classes” – and still stand today as an alternative option to *Chōsen* schools and Mindan-operated schools. They demonstrate that, despite deep-seated prejudice against Koreans in society and at government level, some Japanese and Koreans managed to collaborate in order to give birth to positive examples of ethnic education. They also show the early presence of movements advocating *kyōsei* (coexistence), in contrast with colonial *kyōwa* (harmony), which might have created a fertile terrain in Japan for accepting the adoption of international treaties protecting human rights at the end of the 1970s. The same treaties that will allow a betterment of living conditions and education possibilities for *Zainichi* Koreans.

THE ROLE OF CHONGRYUN

Throughout this chapter we have investigated how education in *Chōsen* schools was rigidly based on the assumption that *Zainichi* Koreans were “overseas nationals of North Korea” and how educational programs were heavily ideological. I am sure that many would not hesitate to call this education a brainwashing process. What were *Zainichi* Koreans thinking in this regard? Denied access to national medical insurance was one of the main reasons that spurred repatriation to North Korea and before the implementation of this law, as of 1955, only 1,424 had expressed their wish to go back to the socialist country. How many *Zainichi* Koreans were believing in Chongryun's imagined community?

Certainly, the majority of *Zainichi* Koreans preferred the North Korean state over the South Korean one but not everybody wanted to actually migrate to the socialist country. Some Koreans wished to repatriate but wanted to wait for the reunification of the peninsula, which until the 1980s was considered a feasible possibility. On the contrary, other Koreans were convinced they would have just kept living in Japan even after an eventual reunification, with some though continuing to attend *Chōsen* schools because they believed that living in Japan for good did not have to mean a loss of their Korean identity. Indeed it can be said that instead of a genuine belief in Chongryun's ideology, many members of the community wanted to attend *Chōsen* schools to maintain their Korean roots. Chongryun schools were widely present throughout the country and therefore

constituted an option at reach for many, whereas Mindan operated only four schools throughout the country. Examples of integration in the Japanese public school system like Osaka's were not available everywhere, not to mention that each Korean family had their own way to negotiate their Korean identity; some parents might have preferred to entirely avoid the public education system or send their children to institutions where Korea-related subjects could be a core part of the curriculum and not just an extracurricular activity.

The scholar Sonia Ryang, who grew up as a *Zainichi* Korean in the 1960s and 1970s, revealed that Japanese children she was meeting at private music lessons were often asking her irritating questions such as why were there Koreans in Japan or why did she have a different name despite looking and sounding Japanese. Schools in Japan at that time did not really teach much about Japan's colonial past, and *Zainichi* Koreans like Ryang were often confronted with questions such as why people like them were living in Japan. On the contrary, says Ryang, *Chōsen* schools were teaching why children like her were born in Japan to Korean parents, and reassured her there was nothing embarrassing about being Koreans in Japan²¹³. *Chōsen* schools were (and are) a place where the Korean identity of one's child was not only accepted but also explained and motivated with historical reasons. Undoubtedly, many other Korean children were feeling similar to Ryang, and it cannot be said that those children's questioning, stemming from ignorance regarding the history of Koreans in Japan, does not happen today.

In 1955, several Koreans immediately sided with Chongryun and welcomed its creed. In other cases however, it can be asserted that popularity of Chongryun's ideology grew bigger throughout different stages and did not merely depend on political affiliation to North Korea per se. As we have seen above, Japan had not devised ways to deal effectively with the foreign resident issue, nor did South Korea initially show support to Korean communities in Japan, welcoming them to repatriate if they wanted to. On the other hand, North Korea had given a more concrete help, financing *Chōsen* schools and offering, through repatriation, an alternative to many Koreans who could not afford medical care anymore. Undeniably, beyond humanitarian reasons, there were also propagandistic and possibly economical motivations, but it is true that Kim Il Sung's regime provided a more tangible support than what Japan and South Korea did. In light of this situation, many Koreans, seeing that North Korea was giving them an alternative and feeling abandoned from Japan, adopted Chongryun's ideology and started to consider themselves as “overseas nationals of North Korea”.

Furthermore, Chongryun itself had a pivotal role in creating the identity of “overseas nationals” with the curriculum and the Korean language used in *Chōsen* schools. Through

213 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 17.

introducing a language full of specific epithets for Kim Il Sung and not teaching words that would allow a negative connotation of Chongryun and North Korea, a particular identity was shaped. “The best censorship is not so much to suppress speakable or usable words but not to give the words at all, which automatically circumscribes the potential circuit of linguistic expression”²¹⁴. The Japanese language used at home mostly pertained to the domestic sphere and *Zainichi* Koreans did not have a Japanese vocabulary rich of political expressions allowing to set up a discussion critical of Chongryun; Korean language and Japanese language corresponded to two different domains²¹⁵.

Through the creation of a new identity, Chongryun was able to transform people's own perceptions of their past as colonial subjects, retelling it with its own rhetoric. We have seen that some Koreans were well integrated into Japanese society during colonial times; many Koreans had volunteered to fight for the Emperor and some families had even become very wealthy, enjoying living standards much higher than the average Japanese. Their new identity as former exploited colonial subjects was developed only after the emergence of Chongryun, and some people even admittedly recognized this process by saying that it was thanks to the organization that they were able to “recover” their Korean identity. Of course many *Zainichi* Koreans had consciously understood themselves as colonial subjects before the liberation but it was a politically sensitive postcolonial experience that shaped them into “overseas nationals” of North Korea²¹⁶. “By internalizing Chongryun's discourse, the majority of first-generation Chongryun Koreans lost alternative language to represent themselves. In this process they have become “overseas nationals”²¹⁷.

CONCLUSION

Past education in *Chōsen* schools emphasized *Zainichi* Koreans' connection to North Korea and ultimately imagined students as the next generation of the socialist country. The very identity of “overseas nationals” was forged in *Zainichi* Koreans through schooling in these institutions where instructors taught using a specific Korean language – that was Chongryun's organizational language – full of political expressions aimed at fostering loyalty to Chongryun and Kim Il Sung in

214 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 106.

215 Ryang extensively investigates the Japanese and the Korean spoken by Chongryun Koreans and claims that linguistic shift between the two languages according to the surrounding environment, habits, or social situation, constitutes a typical trait of the identity of those who received schooling in *Chōsen* institutions (see RYANG, *North...*, 1997, in References). The topic, although of great importance, is not the main focus of my thesis therefore I limited myself to briefly mention it without going into further details.

216 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 106.

217 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 107.

accordance with the *Juche* ideology. Alternative words to describe one's own Korean identity or relationship with the fatherland were simply not given and, as a consequence, an individual would have possessed only the set of words approved by Chongryun's rhetoric.

Some may judge the past curriculum of *Chōsen* schools as excessively nationalistic and may as well point out that the extreme focus on North Korea, with almost a total neglect of Japan, was not appropriate for individuals living in Japan. A former student motivated this approach with the following words:

I know you want to point out that I am blinded by nationalism. Let me put it this way. Koreans are entitled to be more nationalistic than others, at least for the time being. Our nation has been treated very badly by both Japan and Western powers, notably the U.S. The reason the peninsula was divided into two zones was because of the selfishness of the superpowers; Korea was made a scapegoat. We had been occupied by Japan; we did nothing wrong. And yet we were, and still are, divided into two. We Koreans have been discriminated against and oppressed. The Japanese media is busy bashing our fatherland. Under these historical and social conditions, we cannot help but become nationalists.²¹⁸

Of course, Chongryun had a clear interest in enacting this nationalistic approach and using its organizational language in *Chōsen* schooling for they ensured its survival. However, it cannot be denied that Koreans were victims of the division of their country which occurred because of external agents, and that they had to endure discrimination and oppression in Japan. However, the vision embodied by the former student, though possibly very widespread, was not by all means the only one among *Zainichi* Koreans, in fact we have seen a varied community with diverging positions, even during the more polarized period of the Cold War. Not only were *Zainichi* Koreans under the umbrella of Chongryun's education diverse, but also Japan's entire Korean populace.

To sum up, North Korean identity built up in *Chōsen* schools has not been stable and fixed since North Korea or Chongryun were formed, but instead emerged through different political and historical stages. Chongryun schooling enormously contributed in producing this identity, in fact, if it is true that schools foster a national identity, then *Chōsen* schools forged a “North Korean overseas identity”. However, this identity, and the ensuing imagined community, are always subject to human agency and negotiation, in fact, a part of the students attending *Chōsen* schools only partially agreed to the ideology underlining their education. Some educators as well had diverging views concerning the education offered in *Chōsen* schools and, in a period with a different political and cultural climate, they campaigned for changes in the curriculum which will eventually occur with the reform of *Chōsen* schools in 1993.

218 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 168.

CHAPTER 4

CHŌSEN SCHOOLS TODAY

INTRODUCTION

In 1993 Chongryun implemented educational reforms which radically changed the curriculum of *Chōsen* schools. These revisions constituted the regular update of educational programs which the *Zainichi* Korean Association had been carrying out every ten years since 1963, when the curriculum of all *Chōsen* schools nationwide had been unified. One notable reform had been that of 1973 which had resulted in the incorporation of the *Juche* philosophy in school subjects and consequent focus on the figure of Kim Il Sung. However, compared to past amendments, 1993's transformations represented a complete turn from the ideals underlining previous *Chōsen* schools' education and critically altered what students were learning at school. With this new reform, educational programs were shifting from a pervasive focus on Kim Il Sung's cult of personality to a curriculum more similar to that of Japanese schools, inclusive of Japan-related subjects, like Japanese history, which would have enhanced students' chances to pass entrance exams to Japanese institutions.

Needless to say, these revisions reflected changes which had been occurring for many decades within Japan: the Korean community was now more integrated, both legally and socially, and its children, now at the third and fourth generation, were hardly wishing to go to North Korea, a place very distant from their thoughts and immediate life concerns. Contrarily to their older family members, these children had got the chance to socialize with their Japanese peers in cram schools or sport activities even though they were attending *Chōsen* schools. Compared to the already unstable second generation, these children felt very weak ties to the “fatherland”, which news now reported to be afflicted by poverty and famine, and were imagining their future in Japan. Many *Zainichi* Koreans warmly welcomed the educational reforms and even asserted that they had arrived much later than expected, while others labeled them a threat to the principles on which *Chōsen* schools had been founded.

No matter the point of view, it can be asserted that 1993's transformations became the point of departure for modern education of Japan's *Chōsen* schools, where nationalism and connection to North Korea are still highlighted but are far from the previous war-like propaganda tones. Today, *Chōsen* schools, though still maintaining Korean as the medium language for all subjects, are in many aspects more similar to Japanese schools and seek integration with the Japan's education system in order to allow its students to pursue tertiary education in Japanese institutions. If in the past, the idea of returning to the “fatherland” was ingrained to the point of severing all ties with

Japan, today *Chōsen* schools strive to foster a Korean identity within Japan; the category *Zainichi* Koreans feel to belong to is not “overseas nationals of North Korea” anymore but “Koreans in Japan”.

In this chapter, beginning from an analysis of the content of 1993's reforms, I will investigate the present situation of *Chōsen* education in Japan. Drawing from studies conducted in 2014 by several Japanese scholars on Korean ethnic institutions in the oldcomers heavily populated Japanese region of Kansai, I will attempt to make a presentation of the curricular programs and student life of three *Chōsen* schools: one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school.

THE FACTORS OF THE CHANGE

In Ryang, it is alleged that 1993's reforms had been strongly advocated for by second generation teachers in *Chōsen* schools²¹⁹. The second generation of *Chōsen* students had always been torn between devotion to the Korean peninsula, the land of origin of their parents, and Japan, the country where they had been born and raised. The first generation, to which Chongryun's founder and head until 2001, Han Dōk-Su, belonged to, was still attached to the motherland – which in the case of Chongryun coincided with North Korea – and had erected a school system in line with this idea. However, with changing times and an increasingly small first generation, many second generation teachers probably felt the need to depart from the precepts of the respected older members of the community and reshape education in *Chōsen* schools to make it more suitable and in line with the educational possibilities of the third generation who would have lived the rest of their life in Japan. Therefore, they campaigned for reforms that they considered more fitted for the new society.

Favorable circumstances for the reforms had substantially emerged well before 1993. First of all, *Zainichi* Koreans in the 1990s were enjoying much better living conditions compared to the peak period of repatriations to North Korea in 1959-1960. With the exception of World War II relief related money aid, by 1982 for most of services, and by 1986 for national healthcare, *Zainichi* Koreans had been successfully integrated in Japan's welfare system. Not limited to that, they had been enriched by the burgeoning Japanese economy which had led the country to become the second economy worldwide. Living conditions in North Korea, now in a deep economic crisis and plagued by poverty and famines, paled in comparison to the wealthy living standards people enjoyed in Japan even after the recession caused by the bubble burst. In fact, North Korea was now lagging behind South Korea in terms of economic development, and in part due to the fall of communism in many countries and ineffective agricultural policies, the country of Kim Il Sung had

219 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 58.

precipitated in a severe economic situation afflicted by food shortages; certainly the country could not by all means be defined attractive.

Moreover, with the possibility of international travel from the 1980s, North Korea could now be visited like a normal tourist destination, eventually returning to one's home in Japan after the trip was over. Nowadays Chongryun has a travel agency, Chūgai Travel Co., which organizes tours of North Korea for people residing in Japan and has an abundant offer of travel packages, ranging from stays in North Korea's beach resorts to trips to Mount Paektu, an important mountain in Korean history which also symbolizes Korean fight for independence from Japan. Chongryun now provides information regarding travel documents required for journeys and family trips to North Korea, available in the section 'Visits to the fatherland – International travel' (*Sokoku hōmon – kaigai tokō*) of its Japanese website. In addition, school trips to North Korea now constitute an important moment of the academic year in *Chōsen* high schools, not to mention Korea University which now requires its students to spend a period of study abroad in the universities of the fatherland. Unlike the 1960s when going to North Korea would have been a radical one-way journey, from the 1980s *Zainichi* Koreans feeling somewhat affiliated to North Korea have been able to easily connect to their heritage through normal leisure trips or limited stays in the socialist country without the need to sever ties with their native place in Japan.

A further reason included the high level of social interaction that the new generation of *Chōsen* schools' pupils had been entertaining with their Japanese peers from the 1980s and 1990s. Starting with baseball tournaments in 1991, *Chōsen* schools could now participate in inter-high sport competitions with other Japanese schools, and Korean students now had many Japanese friends met in activities outside school such as attendance to cram schools. The very reason Korean parents were sending their children to cram schools consisted in the hope that they would pass admission tests and enter a Japanese university. In fact, although *Chōsen* schools' graduates were still completely barred from the possibility of applying to national universities, progressively more and more public and private universities were accepting applications from students of *Chōsen* schools.

Changes in Japan's demographics had also transformed *Zainichi* Koreans' view regarding their position in Japanese society. Reforms in immigration policies in 1990 had brought in the country many immigrants from South America who, compared to Koreans, were foreign residents with little to no Japanese language proficiency and knowledge of Japanese manners, despite their Japanese roots. This fact had probably changed the concept of “foreigner” among *Zainichi* Koreans and Japanese. These waves of immigration had also made clear that Japan could not seal itself off from the rest of the world but instead needed foreigners to supply its labor force. In the 1990s,

Japan was certainly far from being a multicultural reality but voices supportive of internationalization and integration of foreigners were slowly becoming louder. Emerging views advocating for multiculturalism were further convincing *Zainichi* Koreans that becoming Japanese citizens did not imply loss of their heritage, hence the high number of naturalizations from that decade.

Concomitant with higher propensity to welcome multiculturalism and a better integration in society, many *Zainichi* Koreans had abandoned a belligerent position of self-defense and suspicion with respect to the Japanese people. Previously, bureaucratic procedures involved a great deal of intimidation by Japanese public servants and some *Zainichi* Koreans lamented that, upon renewal of residence permit in the 1980s, impolite behavior and derogatory remarks such as admonishments that Japan was granting a favor to foreign residents and that Koreans had to be thankful and behave well, were not rare. From the 1990s, many *Zainichi* Koreans had witnessed so sudden changes in the behavior of public servants, now for the most smiling and kind, to the point of doubting whether the immigration office had actually been pushing its employees to adopt a hostile behavior towards foreign immigrants. This demonstrates that the overall attitude towards foreigners had substantially begun to change. Similarly, if until the 1990s, Japanese media were mostly silent with regard to aggressions to the Korean community, or rapes of female students of *Chōsen* schools – who could be easily targeted because of their wearing the *chima jeogori*, a Korean traditional dress, as school uniform – from that decade they had started to openly condemn these acts.

The various cultural, political and economical changes that had occurred in Japan and North Korea, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, paired with the emergence of new generations increasingly more connected to Japan and with weaker ties to the peninsula, had created a favorable environment for reforms in the curriculum. Moreover, with the fall of the socialist bloc the all whole world had become less polarized and Japan was in the way to become an increasingly multicultural reality. In light of these factors, many teachers reputed it was time for *Chōsen* school to change too.

NEW SUBJECTS

A major characteristic of the new curriculum was the elimination of Kim Il Sung-related subjects and a considerable shrink in references to him and the *Juche* philosophy. “Childhood of Kim Il Sung” and “Revolutionary History of the Great Leader Kim Il Sung” were abolished and more hours came to be devoted to Japanese history, Japanese language, and social studies²²⁰. The great decrease in references to the leader of North Korea and the reduction of ideological content were

220 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 51.

evident in Korean language textbooks, previously heavily politicized. The lesson called “Our country” of the Korean language textbook for the first year of primary school previously read:

Our country is called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
Our Father Marshal built it and leads it.
Our country is the most beautiful in the world.
Our country is the most advanced in the world.
People live there very happily.²²¹

Instead, in the new textbook the same lesson recited:

Our country is called Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
Our country is the most beautiful in the world.
People live there very happily.²²²

As it can be seen, the focus on North Korea is still maintained, in fact the new curriculum did not imply a complete upset of the relationship between North Korea and Chongryun. The socialist country was (and is) still regarded as the fatherland for Koreans in *Chōsen* schools, however, the reference to Kim Il Sung (“Our Father Marshal”) had been completely eliminated. Another significant change is the elimination of the phrase regarding the advancement of North Korea. In 1993 it was an established fact that North Korea was terribly lagging behind economically, since the Korean communities in Japan and the Japanese government too had been asked to send money or rice as a help for the famine. Taking into account that repatriations were not popular anymore and had long been abandoned, labeling North Korea as the most advanced country in the world would have certainly sounded deceptive to anybody, including Chongryun Koreans themselves.

Affiliation to North Korea was separated from the cult of Kim Il Sung whose presence in the new curriculum had been greatly reduced. Previously, many lessons were stressing the importance of becoming “true sons of the Great Leader”, but with the new curriculum they were instead focusing on the importance of “being useful to the fatherland”. This big scaling down of references to the great leader influenced the Korean language taught in *Chōsen* schools as well. The previous formal and plain Korean language drenched in expressions of political propaganda, of which Kim Il Sung's personality cult constituted the backbone, was superseded by a more colloquial version of the language. Apart from the important intent to make *Chōsen* schools' Korean closer to the

221 “Chongryun” 1993, as cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 51.

222 “Chongryun” 1993, as cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 51.

language used everyday by native speakers, this was arguably an important change since the former Korean language full of performative utterances consisting of political cliches constituted Chongryun's organizational language. This means that school reforms resulted in (or were preceded by) a shift in Chongryun's political ideology as well.

The new curriculum saw the introduction of readings commonly found in Japanese primary schools such as Aesop's fables, and music textbooks, previously containing for the most part songs about Kim Il Sung, came to include classical music and folk songs²²³. Social studies, which had replaced Kim Il Sung related subjects, were now instructing students on how Japan and local municipalities were governed, and on how to recognize government agencies, post offices or other entities strictly related to life necessities in Japan. The pretension that the students lived in, or would have moved to, North Korea had been abandoned; the textbooks clearly assumed that the students were in Japan²²⁴. Parallel to this assumption, new textbooks were also teaching more about world geography trying to expand knowledge about many foreign countries which before were totally absent or presented in connection with the revolutionary history of North Korea. For instance, in the past curriculum, the U.S. were referred to solely in derogatory terms and blamed for being an oppressive imperialistic power. Instead, the new curriculum taught students also other aspects of the U.S. such as the presence in that country of a sizable overseas Korean community and mentioned its recent historical developments as well. With respect to South Korea however, there were very few references in the new curriculum, which probably means that, despite the big changes, an alternative way to look at the issue of reunification had not yet been developed.

In the past, textbooks did not essentially deal with the topic of Koreans in Japan, because Chongryun presented itself as an organization exclusively devoted to the fatherland. In earlier Chongryun's rhetoric, *Zainichi* Koreans did not even exist as an entity since they were considered North Korean overseas nationals, and with the assumption that repatriations would have been imminent, Korean communities in Japan would have soon disappeared therefore they were not worth of pedagogical concern. New textbooks instead included several chapters on Japan's Korean communities and, concomitant to the introduction of Japanese geography, they were also providing information on their location and position. Moreover, in new academic materials, Chongryun stated as its mission that of keeping in touch with "Korean compatriots" throughout Japan, and that of fostering solidarity between Koreans and Japanese citizens.

To sum up, the patriotic element and affiliation to North Korea had not been erased, yet the new curriculum clearly aimed at raising pupils proud of their heritage who could be successful

223 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 53.

224 RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 53.

within Japanese society. It follows that, after the reforms, *Chōsen* schools started devoting much attention to provide an adequate preparation for entrance tests in Japanese universities, and the quite straightforward anti-Japanese tones of previous textbooks' editions were neutralized and substituted with teachings stressing the importance of cooperation with the Japanese population. The future of these children was reputed to be in Japan: children would have lived in the archipelago while still maintaining the link to their heritage culture, in other words, they were ideally imagined to live as proud Koreans in Japan.

THE VISION OF PARENTS

How did the community welcome the reforms enacted in 1993? In light of more flexible policies allowing *Chōsen* schools' graduates to enter some Japanese universities, many parents had begun nurturing hopes that their children would proceed to tertiary education, and consequently cheered the new changes. A mother commented on the reforms as follows:

It will help my son's preparation for the entrance examination for a Japanese university. No matter how great our leaders [Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il] may be, it is time-consuming to learn about them. Now my son will have a fair chance to survive the entrance examinations to the competitive Japanese universities. ²²⁵

Several parents highlighted the fact that the revision was just common sense since *Zainichi* Koreans had been living in Japan for generations and would have continued to do so even in the case of Korea's reunification. A mother said the following words:

This is only natural. We are living in a world without Cold War. And we Koreans in Japan are going to go on living in Japan, not in North Korea. Why learn only about Kim Il Sung and North Korea and not about Japan? The time when our parents [the first generation] had to fight against the international reactionary forces had long gone. I would even say the reform came much later than it should have done. ²²⁶

Other parents instead were not happy with the new textbooks which were deemed mediocre and non-political, and warned that they their identity as overseas nationals of North Korea would have got lost. Some interestingly pointed out that discrimination against Koreans in Japan was not over yet: *Zainichi* Koreans were not integrated in Japanese society and it was necessary for them to remain a close-knit community reunited around the idea of the fatherland. As in the words of this mother:

225 As cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 58.

226 As cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 58.

Yes, we live in a society where Koreans are still discriminated against. Unless we keep our Korean identity around our fatherland, we will not be able to resist social pressure to be assimilated into the Japanese. [...] ²²⁷

In certain cases, parents were concerned that suddenly abolishing subjects related to the Great Leader without a valid substitution would not have helped a transformation towards a more progressive and open Korean community. Teachers were equally divided with some of them lamenting that the elimination of the peculiarities of the previous system would have made *Chōsen* schools non-competitive with Japanese schools. In this regard, one of them asserted:

I don't understand what on earth the “superior persons” in the armchairs at the Education Department are thinking of. What are we going to teach if we are not teaching about our Father Marshal? What is left for Korean schools? I think this new “strategical revision” is most unstrategical. We cannot compete with the Japanese education system under the same conditions, as we don't have enough resources. In order to survive, we have to offer our own, different curriculum. ²²⁸

It might be assumed that parents eager to send their children to a Japanese university gladly welcomed the reform while parents feeling less integrated in Japanese society or less wealthy rejected the changes. However, although it is true that many opposed parents added to their comments that in any case they would have not been able to pay for private cram schools – which Japanese students often attend to polish their preparation for passing university entrance exams –, other parents against the reforms actually wished that their children went to Japanese universities. In fact, many people might have been concerned with the loss of the overseas North Korean identity which had been their self-identification throughout their life. Therefore it is hard to make generalizations.

It is certain though, that the urge for a change had long been felt by many parents who even before the reforms had begun raising doubts about the type of education offered in *Chōsen* schools. At around the time of the reform, a high number of parents were pulling their children out of *Chōsen* schools because they believed their children had to survive in Japan and had to be “men of the 21st century”. I think that this latter expression in particular, which was often being used by parents to describe the type of future they envisioned for their children, can be partially reconducted to two specific historical events that accompanied the changes in *Chōsen* education, namely, the end of the Cold War, and the death of Kim Il Sung, which occurred on 8 July 1994, shortly after the

²²⁷ As cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 59.

²²⁸ As cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 60.

reforms had started. The personality cult surrounding the figure of Kim Il Sung had not been adequately adapted to his son and successor Kim Jong Il, for whom no specific titles other than “dear leader” had been devised. The death of Kim Il Sung, that left in tears many *Zainichi* Koreans who had been studying since a young age his life and his teachings, together with the conclusion of the Cold War equilibrium, further symbolized the end of an era: it was now the 21st century and Korean children needed another type of education.

By changing their curriculum, *Chōsen* schools embraced many stances of *Zainichi* Korean parents who wanted their children to have a less politicized education which would have given pupils the necessary tools to live in Japan. The following comment from a *Chōsen* middle school teacher provide an insightful perspective on the new role of Chongryun education:

[...] Why do we have to insist on glorifying the fatherland when none of us wishes to return there? But at the same time why can we not also retain our national identity while living in Japan? Is it that bad to be Korean? Even if it is true that we would not go and live in Korea after the reunification, can we still not have our own fatherland? ²²⁹

As in the teachers' words, with the reform, *Chōsen* schools became institutions allowing *Zainichi* Koreans to maintain their roots while stably living in Japan. It can be said that the revision officially ratified a shift from being “North Korean” towards being “Korean in Japan” that had already been shaping long before in the minds of many *Zainichi* Koreans.

IN THE 21st CENTURY

The reform of 1993 set foot for a new type of *Chōsen* schooling whose essential features are still present nowadays. What distinguishes *Chōsen* education in the 21st century? In the Japanese language website of Chongryun, the introduction to the page “ethnic education and its content” (*minzoku kyōiku no naiyō*) reads:

In *Chōsen* schools we put efforts into an ethnic education first of all taught in the Korean language (*Chōsen-go*), which focuses on Korean history, Korean geography, ethnic culture, and ethnic tradition.

Moreover, through the teaching of the Japanese and English languages, advanced sciences, the society and nature of Japan and world countries, we strive to provide all sorts of necessary skills to our children compatriots on the assumption that they will live and have a future occupation in Japan. ²³⁰

This excerpt can confirm that education in *Chōsen* schools solidly remains focused on North

229 As cited in RYANG, *North...*, cit., p. 138.

230 “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index2.html>, retrieved on 08/03/2018. J.

Korea and most importantly, on the Korean language, which is the medium for all classes. However, if the basis of this education lays in Korean culture, the curriculum looks at Japan as the country where pupils will live and work in the future and it is shaped accordingly. A similar orientation can be witnessed in the consecutive paragraph titled “the purpose of ethnic education” (*minzoku kyōiku no mokuteki*) which states as follows:

The purpose of *Chōsen* schools in the 21st century is to make fellow children compatriots born and raised in Japan acquire an ethnic self-consciousness, a well-grounded ethnic knowledge as *Chōsen* people, a right understanding of history, and a contemporary scientific knowledge. Schools aim to foster in fellow children compatriots a true and genuine humanity, and to nurture in them a healthy body.

In other words, the goal of *Chōsen* education is to raise bright talents and true *Chōsen* people who are capable to actively participate in both Japanese and international society, and contribute to the establishment of our compatriot community, and to the reunification and the development of the country. All this in line with a wish for a new century where a rich, harmonious, active compatriots community, founded on its ethnic identity (*minzokusei*) and sodality among its members, will take form.²³¹

Interestingly enough, in both the latter and the former excerpt, fatherland (*sokoku*), and *Juche* are not present. In the web article as a whole from which they were retrieved, called “ethnic education and its content”, fatherland (*sokoku*) is mentioned twice, *Juche* is mentioned once, and Kim Il Sung is never mentioned. On the other hand, “Japan” is mentioned up to seven times, and the text of the article itself clarifies that the education in *Chōsen* schools consider Japan as the country where pupils live and are going to live. It is stated in fact that Chongryun education aspires to provide its students with the necessary knowledge to lead an admirable life in Japan (*nihon de rippa ni ikiteyuku ue de*). Moreover, if we look at the excerpt above in particular, students ideally will live as *Chōsen* people but also as active members of Japanese society as well as of the international society. This attitude reconnects to the recently emerged concept of “local citizenship”, where Japanese and foreign communities equally contribute and actively participate to the life of the area or municipality where they live. At least in Chongryun's narrative, *Chōsen* schools pupils will have two degrees of affiliation: the first one to the compatriots community (*dōhō shakai*)²³², and the second one to the Japanese society.

In fact, rather than North Korea, the compatriot community is repeatedly emphasized in the text as the most important entity of affiliation. The socialist country is still regarded as the

231 “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index2.html>, retrieved on 08/03/2018. J.

232 The Japanese word “*shakai*” is normally translated as “society”, in fact the original version of “Japanese society”, reported in the text, reads “*nihon shakai*”. When associated to the word “*dōhō*” (compatriot), I decided to translate it as “community” since I thought it was more appropriate for the context. Nevertheless, in the original Japanese text “*shakai*” is used in both cases.

fatherland, and the trip to North Korea is deemed an important step in forming an ethnic heart (*minzoku no kokoro*). Moreover, Chongryun sets as goal that of fostering a correct recognition of history, extensively teaching the topic of Japanese colonization, which is often not sufficiently dealt with in Japanese public instruction, and providing a positive image of North Korea which is often bashed in Japanese and world media. Nevertheless, together with the historical ambitions of reuniting the Korean peninsula and contributing to the development of North Korea which are still maintained, establishing a united compatriot community too has become equally important today.

A greater attention towards Japan's Korean community has implied the introduction of subjects treating the history and current situation of *Zainichi* Koreans. Core topics of the society class at primary level – which has substituted Kim Il Sung related subjects since the 1993's reforms – include history and culture of Korean compatriots in Japan, reflections on the experiences of the first generation, and life and rights of Koreans in Japan²³³. If one considers Chongryun's discouragement on his members during Cold War years to get involved in any way with the Japanese political scene, the introduction of teachings related to rights of *Zainichi* Koreans is certainly remarkable and witnesses a desire for a more direct participation in Japan's affairs. In the society class, much time is also devoted to Japan's history and geography, not to mention the topic of reunification and the society of South Korea.

South Korea, at the beginning described as an authoritarian enemy state abusing of the Korean compatriots living in its territory, had largely disappeared from textbooks following the reform of 1993. With the successive reforms of 2003 the topic of Korean reunification and South Korean society was deepened and more teaching hours were dedicated to it. Since Chongryun does not report information on the most recent reforms of this decade, the latest data available from its Japanese website regarding the specific content of textbooks refer to the reforms of 2003. As regards the topic of South Korea, although it is not possible for me to verify, it is not unreasonable to assume that there might have been some distinctive changes in the last decade. The reforms of 2003 happened in a period when political and economical cooperation between the two Koreas was at its historical height since the division of the peninsula. However, episodes such as the Yeongpyeong bombardment in 2010 – which also caused episodes of retaliation against *Chōsen* schools from the Japanese government –, North Korea's missile tests, and other incidents have reheated tensions between the two countries in the last decade.

On the other hand, greater independence from North Korea's political influence might also lead us to presume that recent diplomatic incidents between the two Koreas may not have undermined the peaceful international stances stressed in *Chōsen* education from the reforms of

233 “Chongryun”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index2.html>, retrieved on 08/03/2018. J.

1993 and 2003. Sure thing is that today *Chōsen* schools seek cooperation with Japanese society and aim at fostering international amity (*kokusai shinzen*) with world nations. Concomitant to a greater participation in Japanese society, Chongryun has come to stress in its narrative the importance for *Chōsen* schools' students of becoming “ambassadors” of a successful example of ethnic education. In the *Zainichi* association's rhetoric, students need to be proud of their education which, by protecting an ethnic heritage and cooperating with the host country at the same time, can set a good example of multicultural mutual understanding²³⁴. These stances are quite representative of the shift that has happened in Chongryun's rhetoric since 1993; before this year the *Zainichi* Korean organization would have taught students to be thankful and proud of *Chōsen* education because it was considered a gift from the great leader and because it had been established with the support of the fatherland. Instead, from 1993 onwards, Chongryun has wished for its students to be proud of *Chōsen* school ethnic education for the positive role these schools can have in fostering friendly relationships with Japanese and other foreigners.

Interestingly enough, higher chances of interaction with Japanese people have resulted in the rise of an amicable spirit of competition, especially in sports. Participation in high school national sport tournaments, to which *Chōsen* schools have been allowed since the early 1990s, have yielded in many cases outstanding results as witnessed by some *Chōsen* schools achieving the first place in prefectural competitions or even winning the national championship. For schools boasting a good reputation for sports such as Osaka *Chōsen* High School, famous for its men boxing and rugby teams, competing in inter-high sport tournaments is almost perceived as a friendly fight for the sake of ethnic education: in students' mind, scoring good results in championships allow their schools to be validated in the eye of their Japanese peers. Chongryun itself is eager to point out in its website, how the skills of *Chōsen* schools students, not limited to sports, have constantly impressed Japanese. These episodes might also be remnants of old feelings of hostility and antagonism

234 These high-sounding terms that Chongryun frequently employs may certainly be puzzling for some people. For instance, many Japanese people have criticized *Chōsen* schools' affiliation to a country that is constantly accused of violating human rights and has carried out the infamous abductions of a still undefined number of Japanese citizens. With respect to how Chongryun's stated positions relate to its connection to North Korea I think, first of all, that what we read in the chapter so far constitute education principles that may differ with the position Chongryun takes on specific political issues. Moreover, though affiliation to North Korea stems from purely political reasons, the connection of many *Chōsen* schools' students to the socialist country can also be motivated on cultural grounds and many other motives. Taking into account the increasingly greater distance of *Chōsen* schools from North Korea's political shadow, the principles underlying their education might not necessarily overlap with every political position of the country led today by Kim Jong Un, grand-son of Kim Il Sung. It is indubitable that *Chōsen* schools have sought in the last decades a positive and cooperative relationship with Japan and world countries, quite different from the defensive position held until 1993.

towards the Japanese, but I think they also reflect the willingness of becoming active members of society which is accompanied by a wish for greater recognition.

How are the ideals underlying Chongryun's education in the 21st century specifically applied to the curriculum and how is daily life in *Chōsen* schools more in practice? In the following paragraphs, I will investigate these aspects by looking more in details at each level of schooling, with the exception of the university, and by analyzing data coming from Japanese researchers' fieldwork at specific *Chōsen* institutions in the Kansai region of Japan.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Whether it is the old or new curriculum, primary school level (*shokyūbu*) has always represented one of the most important steps in *Chōsen* education as children, until then accustomed to a Japanese language-only speaking environment, enter for the first time the domain of the compatriots community. Many children actually might experience community life for the first time in *Chōsen* kindergartens, however it is in primary school that they start learning more systematically about their heritage culture and where they are requested to master quickly the “national language”, hence the Korean language. The curriculum of *Chōsen* primary schools throughout Japan has been unified since Chongryun's reforms of 1963 and even today it is the same in every school. Table 5 displays the weekly number of class hours for each subject in every year of *Chōsen* primary school as of 2012.

Table 5: *Chōsen* Primary School's Curriculum²³⁵

	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year	6 th year	Total
Society			1	2	2	2	7
National language (Korean)	9	8	7	7	6	6	43
Korean history						2	2
Korean Geography					2		2
Mathematics	4	5	5	5	5	5	29
Science			3	3	3	3	12

235 “Chongryon”, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index7.html>, retrieved on 08/05/2018. J.; and YABUTA Naoko, “Gakkō wa jisedai no tonmu no tame ni: Seiban Chōsen shochūkyū gakkō” (The school is for the next generation of compatriots: Seibang *Chōsen* primary and middle school), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, 2014, pp. 58-72, cit., p. 61.

Japanese	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
P.E.	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Music	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Art	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Total hours per week	23	23	26	27	28	28	155
Weeks of classes in a year	34	35	35	35	35	35	
Total number of subjects	6	6	8	8	9	9	

As it can be noted, out of the twenty-three hours of classes per week in the first and second years, more than one third is dedicated to the teaching of the Korean language. Outside of this subject, mathematics and Japanese are the second most important classes with around four to five hours of lesson per week. With the notable exception of the presence of both the Korean and Japanese languages, Japanese primary schools do not starkly differ from *Chōsen* schools and the hours dedicated to the teaching of the “national language”, *kokugo*, (Korean in *Chōsen* schools, and Japanese in Japanese schools) are almost exactly the same throughout the six years. Beyond the teaching of a second language (i.e. Japanese) totally absent in Japanese primary schools, *Chōsen* schools invest slightly more time in music and art – from the third to the final year, weekly hours dedicated to these subjects in Japanese primary schools range between 1.7 to 1.4 – not to mention the teaching of Korean geography and history which have no equivalent in the Japanese system as these two subjects are not taught at primary level. On the other hand, Japanese primary school's curriculum has slightly more lessons of P.E. and includes subjects which are totally absent from *Chōsen* schools' curriculum, namely: life environment studies, home economics and moral education. Overall, Japanese public primary schools, with a total of 5,645 classes during the six years, tops *Chōsen* primary schools which have a total of 5,402²³⁶.

Seibang *Chōsen* Primary and Middle School, located in the city of Himeji in Hyogo Prefecture, is one of the several *Chōsen* primary schools scattered throughout Japan and of course has adopted the above curriculum. The school is one of the oldest continually existing *Chōsen* schools in the country as it was founded in 1946. As the name itself suggests, the school includes a primary section, a middle section, plus a kindergarten session, and throughout its roughly seventy years of existence it has incorporated five nearby *Chōsen* schools which had to be merged for different reasons; the earliest in 1967, and the latest in 2001. The school had originally been

236 “Monbukagakushō”, http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/syo/index.htm, and, “Chongryun”, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index7.html>, retrieved on 08/05/2018. J.

founded as the League of Koreans' Shikama Middle School on 26 June 1946 but was renamed Seibang *Chōsen* middle school in 1948, moved to its current location in September 1954 and acquired a primary school section through the incorporations mentioned above²³⁷.

Seibang's mission is to “nurture competent ethnic individuals who will be wise and virtuous with a healthy body” basing on the principles of a “rich ethnic identity” (*yutaka na minzokusei*), “high and extensive skills” (*haba hiroku takai shishitsu · nōryoku*), in a “healthy and sound place” (*kenzen na tokoro*)²³⁸.

According to the school's principal:

The vision of the school is to firmly grow individuals who can contribute of course to the ethnic community, to the international society, and to Japanese society. Students improve their knowledge, firmly acquire the Korean language, and can use it the way they think. This 'ability' and the 'sentiment' of cherishing our own ethnicity are what this school was founded on. While focusing now on academic ability, we aim to improve the quality of instruction, but at the same time, due to the high number of alumni living in the region, we value not only education within school but also becoming a base for the regional community. Bearing this in mind, we carry out our education. ²³⁹

This is in fact not to dissimilar from Chongryun's ideals regarding education. Since the principal highlights the importance of mastering the Korean language and this language itself is the medium language for all subjects except for Japanese language: how is teaching of Korean being implemented at primary school level nowadays?

Teaching of Korean has evolved throughout decades and the reform of 1993 operated in this domain as well, with the introduction of a Korean based on the spoken form of the language which replaced the previous more unnatural version based on the written form. What instead did not change much, is the rigor with which the Korean language is taught and its pervasive presence within school. Through nine Korean language classes per week in grade one, the objective is to make children acquire all the vocabulary necessary for school life. In earlier grades, Korean is sometimes paired to Japanese for words of difficult comprehension, but as students proceed through grades, Japanese is increasingly not used. The systematic way of rewarding good Korean skills or punishing any utterance in Japanese has not been reported, but the school still encourages its students not to speak Japanese and just focus on Korean. Inside the school, everything, from the noticeboard to announcements, is written or carried out in Korean. Therefore, a greater presence in the curriculum of Japan-related subjects has not distanced the school from its language immersion

237 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 59.

238 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 60.

239 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 60. J.

policy which is probably helpful, especially at primary level, to get children accustomed to speaking a non-native language.

As we said above, acquisition of the Korean language for *Zainichi* Korean children substantially begins only upon entering primary school, in fact, systematic teaching of the language, including its writing form, starts from this point. Nevertheless, children who go to *Chōsen* kindergartens are already capable to understand many words or expressions related to daily life before beginning compulsory education. This is indeed the case for most of Seibang students who before enrolling to the primary section of the school attend the kindergarten section. For instance, in one primary section class composed of twelve boys and eleven girls, for a total of twenty-three pupils, only three of them went to a Japanese kindergarten²⁴⁰. Teachers do their best to quickly bring students who went to Japanese kindergartens to the same level of the other students and, particularly in the first years, they use various playing tools or games such as riddles in Korean to teach as many words as possible.

As regards the Japanese language, it used to be considered a foreign language in the curriculum but today Chongryun lists it as “Japanese language”. No matter how it is regarded, Japanese has always been taught in *Chōsen* schools not as a foreign language but with the assumption that it is the mother tongue of all the students. One only needs to think that before the reform of 1973, through which the cult of Kim Il Sung and the *Juche* ideology were introduced, *Chōsen* schools were employing Japan's Ministry of Education approved textbooks printed by Japanese publishers for teaching the Japanese language. Since 1973, Chongryun has been publishing its own Japanese textbooks, yet, back then as well as today, Japanese is presumed to be the mother language of the students, and the teacher of Japanese at the middle section of Seibang asserts that the school wishes for its students to be equally proficient in both Korean and Japanese²⁴¹.

Interestingly though, when asked if *Chōsen* schools carry out a bilingual education, the teacher provides a somewhat unclear answer:

It is a bit different [from being bilingual], after all, the base is the Korean language. But because life before [coming to school] is in Japanese, it is complicated and difficult to explain. [...] What is most important is the Korean language. But we use Japanese as much as the Korean language. It is very complicated though, [...] ²⁴²

Japanese is equally used in everyday life and is probably the only language used outside of

240 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 62.

241 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 64.

242 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 64.

school for both teachers and students, furthermore, it is recognized as the mother tongue of the all school population. Notwithstanding that, Korean is not classified as a heritage language nor as foreign language, hence its real status for students, but is defined by the teacher as the “national mother tongue” vis-a-vis Japanese, defined as the “mother tongue”. In addition, the Korean language, is often called “*urimaru*”²⁴³ which translates as “our language”. From this fact, I think that the greater importance bestowed on the Korean language needs to be understood in spiritual terms rather than in proficiency or usefulness. *Urimaru* is regarded as the perfect expression of a *Zainichi* Korean's ethnic identity; it is not considered a skill valued for its practical use since virtually everybody in the community will never settle in North Korea, but instead becomes something to be cultivated and treasured. No matter the actual proficiency, which many teachers of Seibang admittedly declared not to be up to their native Japanese, *urimaru* needs to be protected because, by protecting it, one can protect his own ethnic identity. As in the words of another teacher at Seibang, *urimaru* is the “heart”, the “heart of the people, of the ethnic community” (*minzoku no kokoro*)²⁴⁴. The teacher in question subsequently rectifies by saying that from this reasoning it does not follow that “compatriots” who do not speak Korean do not have a heart, nevertheless she does not back on the importance for *Zainichi* Koreans to speak *urimaru* to maintain their identity.

Eventually, rather than a bilingual education, *Chōsen* schools offer an education that has as a final result that of being bilingual²⁴⁵. However, the great limit of *Zainichi* Koreans is that they will be rarely required to confront with native speakers of Korean and instead will live in an environment where, outside of school, only Japanese is used. As we have seen in chapter 3, this implies that in case of lack of one's individual efforts after graduating, Korean language skills will become weaker.

Similarly to Japanese primary schools, there are no subjects such as foreign languages but English is taught on an extracurricular basis for a defined number of classes each year. At Seibang, foreign teachers come and hold English language lessons for twenty times in a year. Other activities outside the main lesson time encompass cleaning of the school facilities (including cleaning the school bus which kindergarten pupils take care of once a month, obviously under adults supervision), sports and cultural club activities, and special classes involving the local territory such as work experiences in agricultural fields. Interestingly enough, unlike Seibang's website which is quite scarce in information and it is not updated, Seibang's Facebook page contains abundant recent information regarding students' activities and it is instead regularly updated. Equally curious is the

243 Transliteration from the Japanese *katakana* writing approximation of the Korean term.

244 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 65.

245 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 64.

fact that all posts are written in Japanese with only occasional short phrases written in Korean and some opening Korean greetings written though in the Japanese *katakana* alphabet. This is probably done with the intention of reaching the Japanese audience as well.

With respect to dimensions, Seibang is representative of many characteristics frequently found in *Chōsen* schools which usually are not big institutions at any level of schooling. Within *Chōsen* education it is very common to find institutions which aggregate in their facilities different levels of schooling, for example, institutions which have, like in the case of Seibang, both a primary and a middle school section, or a middle and a high school section, or all sections and so on. Indeed, this is not an unusual pattern in foreign schools which often attempt to offer all levels of schooling to a small student population. Equally quite common within *Chōsen* education, especially at primary level, is the merger of smaller schools with too few students into bigger schools, as Seibang can again demonstrate. In fact, compared to middle schools or high schools, primary schools had been founded in great numbers both by the league and by the Chongryun, however, with the steady decline of students and sometimes lack of financial resources, many of them have been constantly forced to close or merge into bigger schools.

As of 2012, the student population of Seibang is relatively small and totals 287 pupils divided as follows: 56 children in the kindergarten section, 140 children in the primary section, and 91 children in the middle section. Each grade has only one class whose composition ranges between twenty and thirty children. Of the total student population, a 35 percent holds *Chōsen* nationality, a 61 percent holds South Korean nationality, and a 4 percent holds Japanese nationality²⁴⁶. This composition confirms the trend according to which the majority of the oldcomer *Zainichi* Korean population now possesses South Korean nationality regardless of political convictions or education choices. Students constituting the tiny portion of Japanese nationality holders either have Korean ethnic heritage through one or both parents, since all the pupils can trace their ethnic roots to the Korean peninsula.

The school staff is composed by thirty-two individuals, among which, twenty-two are teachers distributed as follows: five in the kindergarten section, eight in the primary section, and nine in the middle section. All of these teachers are Korea University graduates²⁴⁷. The remaining staff is composed by three people employed in the school administration, and seven people working as school bus drivers. The city of Himeji, though not located in a rural area, is about an hour distant from the closest big urban area of *Hanshin*, composed by Osaka and Kobe, where there are many other *Chōsen* schools, and it is equally far by the relatively big urban area of Okayama. As a

246 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 59.

247 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 60.

consequence, the school has a big catchment area that extends for kilometers, hence the need of employing up to seven bus drivers. The furthest student lives at the astonishing distance of thirty-five kilometers from the school. Buses themselves though are more similar to big vans, in fact they are meant to serve a student population who is sparsely distributed in the surrounding territory but that is small in numbers. In all *Chōsen* schools, a chronic lack of abundant financial resources dictates a need to operate on a low budget and make savings whenever it is necessary. Seibang, like other *Chōsen* schools, has the staff limited to the essential and hugely rely on outside help from parents.

Parents participation or interest in school matters is usually a common trait in ethnic schools, not only in *Chōsen* institutions but also in Chinese or Brazilian ones. The ethnic school has a central role in the community as it is a place where links to the ethnic heritage are maintained and cultivated. For many parents, involvement in school matters represents the only chance to stay in contact with the community as a whole, which is why the ethnic school is generally held dear by every community member and it is often called *uri hakkyo*, “our school”. Of course, participation in school activities varies depending on the household and area of residence; in big urban areas where foreigners are more numerous, ethnic communities might be less close-knit, moreover, given the schools' usually large catchment areas, long physical distances from the school might represent a hurdle for parents' active engagement. It is also necessary to mention that due to the low income of many families who send their children to ethnic schools, in many cases both parents are working full-time and are therefore hampered from participating to the school's activities.

As regards Seibang, the school is characterized by a solid interaction between the institution and students' parents, and the whole *Zainichi* community of the area is very close-knit and attached to the school. Nearly the totality of parents (98.8 percent) received *Chōsen* schooling or attended a *Chōsen* school for some time during life, and a 91.3 percent of those falling into this category is constituted by Seibang graduates²⁴⁸. Seibang, like every other *Chōsen* school, has its own mothers' association, and its own fathers' association, called respectively *omoni kai* and *aboji kai*, from the Korean words for “mum” and “dad” plus the Japanese character *kai* which means “association, organization”. Seibang's *omoni kai* is engaged in a wide range of activities from preparing meals and traditional Korean food at many school events, and helping in the organization of school festivals. Once a month they sell home-made kimchi in food stalls or hold Korean food demonstrations in Japanese schools and other external institutions as a fund-raising activity whose earnings are used to buy Seibang's school tools and equipment. The *aboji kai*, besides assistance in school events' organization and arrangement of picnics, campings and other activities for fostering

248 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 58.

socialization between students, mainly takes care of the school facilities with maintenance work when needed.

At Seibang, there is a single *omoni kai* and a single *aboji kai* reuniting parents from all the three sections of the school. At an *omoni kai* meeting dedicated to the organization of November's events, Yabuta documented the presence of more than thirty mothers; they call each other *onni* (the term used in Korean by younger sisters to call their older sisters) and are in many cases former schoolmates²⁴⁹. These two parents groups are a feature of every *Chōsen* school and not only do they represent the high level of synergy between the institution and students' families but also provide the school with vital help, occasionally making up for the lack of personnel. They form a nationwide network which constitutes an important part of the *Zainichi* Korean community and often participate or even stage peaceful demonstrations for the rights of the Korean minority. Curiously, both groups are very prolific social media users and many *Chōsen* schools' *omoni kai* regularly post on their Facebook pages reporting their latest activities. Similarly to the Facebook page of Seibang itself, the content of the Facebook pages I found was exclusively in Japanese with only occasional phrases in Korean and sometimes with opening Korean greetings written with the Japanese *katakana* alphabet.

It may be argued that an incentive to take part in school activities comes from the fact of paying a tuition, which despite attempts to keep it low, is needed by all *Chōsen* schools, and in general by all ethnic schools, for survival; Seibang charges 8,000 yen per month for the kindergarten and the primary sections, and 12,500 yen per month for the middle section. Although this notion may partly be true, it is also necessary to make clarifications. Kanno noted that Japanese renown private schools and especially English-medium international schools – which charge a tuition way higher than that of *Chōsen* schools – are characterized by a service provider-client relationship between parents and the school staff²⁵⁰. In other words, parents become customers of the school, they want educational policies that live up to their expectations and the price they paid. The school is an important investment for them and they actively participate in school life but also do not refrain from voicing their concerns and objecting measures they do not agree with. However, this provider-client relationship is rarely founded in ethnic schools where, because of the perceived important role these institutions have in their communities, teachers are likely to be regarded as community guides whose opinions are seldom questioned. This does not necessarily mean that parents are totally muted with respect to express their points of view regarding school policies, in fact, in previous paragraphs, we have seen parents voicing their disagreements over the reform of

249 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 67.

250 KANNO, *Language...*, cit., p. 152.

1993. However, despite the presence of a tuition, it is safe to say that in ethnic schools, parents' faith in teachers' work is more unconditional, and that participation in school life is more widely intended as participation in communal life.

Given the important role that Seibang has in Himeji's *Zainichi* Korean community, the school is held dear by many former graduates who constitute about 90 percent of the students' parents. Therefore, at Seibang there is also a high synergy between generations with former graduates often visiting the school and organizing classmates reunions. Visits and assistance from alumni are especially visible in club activities where *senpai* often meet with their *kōhai*²⁵¹ for advice and talks. As regards sport competitions, Seibang is famous for its basketball and soccer teams which boast former members who have proceeded to professional level entering Japanese teams, with one even becoming a player in the North Korean national soccer team. The close-knit and intimate environment where students spend twelve years of their childhood and teenage-hood with the same classmates and teachers, allow for the formation of long-lasting relationships that drive many *senpai* and former graduates back to their school to pay a visit. While it can be objected that such environment may end up being oppressive and devoid of new stimuli – and certainly it must have been so for some students – it surely favors the development of strong bonds between students and keeps the local community united.

Instructors declare to be happy to see former students who, despite having entered Japanese society, are still able to speak the Korean language and go back to the school to meet their teachers. While being a place where students receive a preparation on how to live as *Chōsen* people within Japanese society, Seibang is also a place where students go back as parents or affectionate alumni²⁵². Such strong inter-generational bonds are not rare in *Chōsen* or other ethnic schools, but are especially present at Seibang which is located far off from bustling urban realities where *Zainichi* Koreans and *Chōsen* schools are more numerous. When asked about what kind of management strategy the school has in mind for the future, the principal of Seibang points out the intention of continuing to raise students who will be fond of their school and will keep cultivating a long-lasting

251 *Senpai* and *kōhai* are two Japanese terms which can be translated respectively as “senior” and “junior”, and denote a type of relationship found in almost every domain of Japanese life. *Senpai* might be students sharing the same educational path of their *kōhai* but being in higher grades, or senior employees within one company. In Japanese culture, *kōhai* are supposed to learn from their *senpai* and be respectful to them. Conversely, *senpai* should be good mentors to their *kōhai*, and sometimes take the responsibility for the latter's actions within the organization they both belong too. The *senpai-kōhai* relationship is found also in sports club, and is equally present in Japanese schools as in *Chōsen* schools.

252 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 70.

relationship with it²⁵³.

Seibang provides education until grade nine, after which students need to enroll in another school for pursuing high school education. Since there are no *Chōsen* high schools in Himeji, the nearly totality of Seibang graduates go to Kobe *Chōsen* High school which is the only *Chōsen* school at a relatively reachable distance, located in the same prefecture about forty-five kilometers away. Very few students enroll in Japanese high schools; On the school website no information is available on which high schools Seibang's graduates have attended but according to data of Yabuta, between 2007 and 2012, of each year's graduation class only one or two students either moved out to a totally different city or proceeded to a Japanese high school²⁵⁴. Taking into account that a graduation class is constituted by roughly twenty to thirty students (there is only one class per grade), the figures of one to two people become adjusted to a small scale, but still remain exceptionally low.

Yet, before moving to the high school level though, we still need to investigate *Chōsen* middle schools which will be done in the next chapter.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

After the primary level of schooling, *Chōsen* education continues through the middle level (*chūkyūbu*), hence in *Chōsen* middle schools which, like their Japanese counterparts, cover grades seven to nine, corresponding to children from twelve to fifteen years old. Table 6 at the next page shows the curriculum of *Chōsen* middle schools with the indication of weekly hours of class for each subjects which is compared to the equivalent in Japanese public middle schools.

Contrarily to primary level, where Japanese public schools had more lessons (5,645 against 5,402), at middle level *Chōsen* schools present a heavier course load. Compared to primary schools, the number of lessons for Korean is reduced but is higher than the number of lessons Japanese public middle schools dedicate to Japanese; after all, despite the many hours devoted to Korean in primary school, the language still has little chances to develop outside school premises, hence the need to still invest a considerable amount of time in it. Interestingly, *Chōsen* schools devote more hours to the Japanese language than what Japanese public schools do, however, this can be explained with the necessity of making up for the relatively little time reserved for Japanese classes at primary level. Society class has a lighter hour load but, contrarily to Japanese public schools, it is a curriculum subject which continues from primary school; themes of this class in middle school are somewhat akin to those of the primary level but are treated more in depth, for example they might

253 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 71.

254 YABUTA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 71.

include study and reflections of human rights and legal conditions of foreigners in Japan.

Table 6: *Chōsen* Middle School's Curriculum²⁵⁵

	Chōsen middle schools				Japanese public middle schools
	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	Total	Total
Society	2	2	2	6	10.0
National Language (Korean)	5	5	5	15	
Korean Grammar			1	1	
Korean History		2	2	4	
Korean Geography	2			2	
Mathematics	4	4	4	12	11.0
Science	4	4	3	11	11.0
Japanese	4	4	4	12	11.0
English	4	4	4	12	12.0
P.E.	2	2	2	6	9.0
Music	1	1	1	3	3.3
Art	1	1	1	3	3.3
Home Economics	1			1	5.0
Information		1	1	2	
Moral Education					3.0
Special Activities (LHR)					3.0
Integrated Studies					5.4
Week Total	30	30	30	90	87.0
Total number of classes for all three grades	3,150				3,045

Similarly to the primary level, moral education, home economics, and P.E. are not present or are dedicated less time to in *Chōsen* schools. Special Activities or LHR, where the latter stands for “long home room”, indicate a series of activities usually occupying some minutes before and after the school day where students might discuss with their home room teacher topics related to recent news, solve issues that have emerged within classmates or do self-study. On the other hand,

²⁵⁵ “Chongryun”, 2018; “Monbukagakushō”; and NAKAJIMA Tomoko, “Makeru wake ni wa ikanai!: Higashi Ōsaka Chōsen chūkyū gakkō” (We don't have to loose! East Osaka Chōsen Middle School), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji (eds.), *Nihon...*, 2014, pp. 73-87, cit., p. 76.

Integrated Studies deals with diverse topics, including international understanding, problem solving, reflections on ethical issues, etc. These two subjects, present in the Japanese curriculum since middle school, are notably absent in *Chōsen* middle schools or are reduced in time to the point of not being counted as curricular.

The school we will use as representative of a *Chōsen* institution for the middle level is East Osaka *Chōsen* Middle School (*Higashi Ōsaka Chōsen chūkyū gakkō*), located in the Ikuno Ward of Osaka City. We are now in a totally different scenario from that of Seibang, a small comprehensive *Chōsen* institution serving a tiny *Zainichi* Korean community spread over a mid-size urban area and its surrounding rural territory. In fact, *Tongjung*²⁵⁶, as East Osaka *Chōsen* Middle School is nicknamed, is situated, as the name suggests, in Kansai's largest metropolis, which has been home to the largest community of *Zainichi* Koreans since the first migration flows from the peninsula during Japanese colonial period (see chapter 2). Ikuno, the ward where *Tongjung* sits, has long been Osaka's neighborhood with the highest concentration of *Zainichi* Koreans and it has recently become famous among tourists for its “Korean town”, a street lined with Korean food grocery shops which the local population still affectionately call *Chōsen ichiba*, “Korean market”. Ikuno Ward population is constituted for one fifth by *Zainichi* Koreans²⁵⁷, which implies the presence of many *Chōsen* educational institutions in the area due to the potential high number of students. In fact, within the few square kilometers that compose Ikuno ward (8.37 km²) there are up to the three *Chōsen* schools, including *Tongjung* and two primary schools. Additionally, if one considers Osaka prefecture at large the total number of *Chōsen* schools rise to ten institutions which are located in the most densely populated catchment area for Chongryun education, which probably can be compared only to Tokyo's.

Because of these reasons, *Tongjung* has a student population of 350 people and is the unique example nationwide of a *Chōsen* middle school which only has a middle section without any primary or high school sections attached. These characteristics make *Tongjung* look similar, in terms of size and school life, to any other Japanese middle school, and some parents specifically choose to send their children here because it can provide a big and more stimulating environment with more chances to make new acquaintances outside the usual circle of friends but still within the realm of *Chōsen* education. Instead, what is completely similar to Seibang's middle school section is the curriculum which is identical nationwide and it is the one reported above at table 6.

256 The name is the Korean pronunciation for the characters of “east” and “middle”, which serve as an abbreviation for the school's full name.

257 The calculation is done by considering ward residents with *Chōsen* or South Korean nationality; if we were to include ward residents with Japanese nationality who have Korean ethnic roots then the proportion would be even higher.

Tongjung students have to be at school by 8:45 for the morning meeting, after which, lessons start at 9:05 and continue through the afternoon for a total of six classes per day of forty-five minutes each. Once classes are over, students proceed with the cleaning tasks and do a short home room (shorter in time compared to LHR which in Japanese schools is counted as a subject) which concludes at 15:45. Afterwards, up until 17:30, it is time for club activities to which all students participate everyday with the exception of Mondays when pupils instead take part to student councils²⁵⁸. These activities, called *shōnendan* (translatable as young boys groups or boy scouts), beginning at the fourth year of primary school and covering all the three years of middle school, have been a feature of *Chōsen* education well before the reform of 1993. Up until that year, these groups were called “Young Pioneers” and formed an integral part of the cult of Kim Il Sung which permeated the old curriculum. Their task was to further deepen knowledge of the life of the great leader by studying his moral maxims, and students' entrance into these councils was purportedly happening one after the introduction among school subjects of “childhood of Father Marshal Kim Il Sung” so that students could further review the content of the class. *Shōnendan* also engaged in activities similar to those of boy scout groups such as campings, creating a chance of socialization among students. Shaped on the North Korean Young Pioneers groups, which still exist to date with the same features, these student councils were found in many socialist countries including the Soviet Union and East Germany. Nowadays these groups in *Chōsen* schools mainly serve the purpose of creating chances for students' socialization.

The school year in all *Chōsen* schools begins in April, much like Japanese schools, and is subdivided in three terms, each having a mid-term and a final term examination, with the exception of the third term where in place of the latter examination, a final year examination is held. Additionally, at the end of the second term, students are required to take the unified exam of all *Chōsen* schools nationwide²⁵⁹. According to the school's principal, *Tongjung*'s mission is to become “a model school where students can study well” and – in line with Chongryun's rhetoric – to develop an education able “to foster an ethnic awareness and academic ability in children, and to grow individuals who can live and flourish both within compatriots' and international societies”²⁶⁰. Being able to succeed in an international environment implies the need to develop good English skills which is why *Tongjung* requires its students to sit for the *Eiken*, an English language certification widely used in Japan. Additionally, with the assumption that students will live in Japan, *Chōsen* schools strive to provide an academic knowledge comparable to that of Japanese students

258 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 75.

259 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 76.

260 As cited in NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 77.

and, in this regard, Chongryun mandates to middle school students to take the *Kanji kentei*, a Japanese characters (*kanji*) certification exam.

In order to maintain pedagogical methods up to date and to favor an exchange of ideas between educators, *Tongjung* teachers hold meetings on a weekly basis and additionally sit at a table with their counterparts from Osaka's and Wakayama's *Chōsen* middle schools once every two weeks to discuss how to make improvements in the school environment. Furthermore, they also exchange opinions with Japanese teachers and participate to seminars organized in Japanese universities.

A major difference between Japanese schools and *Chōsen* schools, which may affect academic performance, is the absence in the latter of school entrance examinations. In fact, we have seen that *Chōsen* schools strive to provide students with a suitable academic preparation which can enable them to pass entrance examinations at Japanese universities, yet they do not implement an examination system for continuation of studies within Chongryun (some schools do require an entrance exam but these are close to checks of the overall student level since everybody pass with few exceptions). This can simply be explained on the grounds of the meager number of *Chōsen* schools throughout the country – normally one high school per big city and just one university nationwide – which implies that preventing a student failing an entrance examination from enrolling into a *Chōsen* high school or Korea University would equal barring her from ethnic education. Moreover, limiting the number of incoming freshmen would enormously be unstrategical for *Chōsen* schools which are continuously confronted with a declining number of students.

Entrance examinations are a well-known characteristic of the Japanese education system and, although they are required in some private primary and middle schools, they become a stable part of students' life from the middle level when pupils need to prepare for entering high schools, which do not constitute compulsory education anymore and are therefore free to set quotas for new enrollments. The Japanese entrance examination system, though far from the rigid competition levels of the 1980s, is often criticized for the pressure it exerts on students and many question its validity as a way for testing real academic ability. Nevertheless, it still may act as a tool to push students to achieve a better performance and not to take entrance in a given university for granted. How can *Chōsen* schools make up for the lack of entrance examinations?

First of all, we have seen that Chongryun can monitor the overall academic performance of all its institutions through the *Chōsen* schools national examination which students at the second year of middle school are required to take. Secondly, *Chōsen* schools attempt to stimulate a student's brilliant academic performance through a system of reward for good grades which are publicly announced to all the school population. At *Tongjung*, posters reporting students' grades are hung not only within the classroom but also throughout the schools' corridors; after mid-term and

final examinations, the average score for each class plus the grades of the top thirty students with their names clearly visible, are displayed throughout the school²⁶¹. Furthermore, the names of each student having scored among the top thirty are regularly read aloud and praised in the morning meetings before classes, not to mention school festivals and events which always include a moment of acclamation of the best students and a public announcement of their grades in front of their classmates and parents. Children's families receive a grade transcript reporting the number of absences, overall performance in the assignments, number of times the student forgot to bring something at school, and an evaluation of the student's endurance and motivation, in addition to grades themselves²⁶². Finally, at the time of the graduation ceremony, the name of each student is announced and praised together with his grades, the qualifications he obtained or his performance in sports.

This system of both reward and competition among students is institutionalized with the purpose of boosting students' study motivation and pushing for better performances. Attempts to keep a high level of academic ability also materialize in the help given to students with low grades, in fact, many *Chōsen* middle schools, including *Tongjung*, implement a study method according to which top students help students at the bottom. This is indeed a peculiarity of all Japanese schools in general, however, it takes place way more systematically in *Chōsen* schools, where students are organized in study pairs, both during class and during after-school, for giving each others reciprocal help regarding homework and exams. Nakajima argues that *Tongjung* teachers are usually very committed to their tasks and take direct responsibility for their students' future as they feel that, through contribution to the school community, they are also contributing to the well-being of the whole *Zainichi* Korean community²⁶³. This perception of their own role recalls the importance that *Chōsen* schools have for the compatriots community; a pivotal function whether in a bustling city as in this case of *Tongjung*, or in a provincial town as in the case of Seibang.

This series of tools are needful for *Tongjung* and other *Chōsen* schools to attain an overall good academic performance in lieu of a selection through examinations. For *Chōsen* schools, the need of keeping standards comparable to or even better than Japanese schools' is dictated, beyond a school's own pride, by the fact that many graduates will take entrance examinations for Japanese universities or will have to confront with their Japanese peers in areas such as the workplace, therefore we can assert that attention to instruction levels is a major element that comes into play with the assumption that *Zainichi* Koreans will be part of the Japanese society. However, push for a

261 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 78.

262 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 79.

263 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 79.

good academic performance, is motivated also on the grounds of competition with the Japanese school environment, which materializes not only in school grades but also, as earlier mentioned, in sports' tournaments. As in the words of a *Tongjung* parent: “Even in fights, even in sports, and even in study, it is forbidden to loose”²⁶⁴.

Tongjung is famous for its soccer club, its rugby club, and its women volleyball club, which all have participated or even won championships in the Kansai area and nationwide. Since *Chōsen* schools were granted access to inter-school tournaments in the early 1990s, sport competitions have become an important part of the school spirit. By achieving distinguished results in games, school can, first of all, repay the compatriots community for its efforts in protecting the school. Secondly, sport wins or championship qualifications are a perfect occasion to appeal to the Japanese society; moreover, they metaphorically become a fight for recognition of *Zainichi* Koreans' rights²⁶⁵.

This ardor for sport competitions can assume several meanings. It might be a remnant of the past deep-rooted antagonism of *Chōsen* schools towards the Japanese, but it can also exemplify Chongryun Koreans' more direct participation in Japan's society which is concomitant to a greater call for respect of the rights of *Zainichi* Koreans as a minority within the country. Finally, it witnesses the solid relationship uniting *Chōsen* schools and the compatriots community. In fact, *Tongjung* soccer club's coach affirms to strive for the sake of the compatriots community and asserts that what allows his team to win is “the pride of their origins, and a feeling of gratitude”²⁶⁶.

Gratitude towards parents or the compatriots community is often recurring in the words of *Tongjung* students, who at the time of graduation are invited by the school to write thanks letter for their family²⁶⁷. In fact, *Tongjung* is no exception in the *Chōsen* schools panorama, characterized by a lively interaction between families and school staff, and even in this Osaka's middle school, *omoni* and *aboji* acquire a significant role in school's life. Although different from Seibang, where, because of the small size of the community in the area, parents and the school almost constituted a single entity, even in *Tongjung* parents are recognized as vital to the institution's survival. At the Osaka's school, *Abojikai* is thanked because of the charity events it organizes for the school, while *omoni* are praised for preparing *bentō* lunch boxes for their children so that they can have a meal to bring for the midday break. Moreover, *Tongjung* urges its students to thank their parents, even before their teachers, so that they will not take for granted the fact of going to school; families are required to pay relevant sums of money, sometimes at the limit of their financial capability, in order to send

264 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 75. J.

265 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 80.

266 As cited in NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 81. J.

267 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 81.

their children to *Tongjung* which has a tuition of 12,500 yen per month. Thus, the school wants to acknowledge the efforts that families make so that future generations will receive an ethnic education.

Strong relationships with parents and the compatriots indeed are the most important, yet *Tongjung* also cares to entertain exchanges with Japanese institutions. In fact, contact with Japanese schools is not limited to sport competitions but is present also in academic partnerships *Tongjung* has with a Japanese middle school located in the prefecture of Kōchi²⁶⁸. Following this agreement, students of both schools carry out cultural exchange projects and include a visit to each others' institutions as part of their school trips. This type of partnerships are not uncommon in other *Chōsen* schools and show again that local municipalities or single institutions themselves have often more cooperative positions compared to the Ministry of Education.

As regards the pupils population, the relatively big size of the school mentioned above has already given us an insight on the composition of *Tongjung's* student body. As of 2012, students enrolled in the school numbered 340²⁶⁹, although the calculation was done right in the period when Osaka City government decided to discontinue its financial support to the school (see chapter 5). Therefore, it is possible that enrollments might have slightly dropped since then. Teachers instead were twenty-six. The school has a more recent history compared to Seibang, since it was founded in September 1961, amidst the rush of repatriations to North Korea²⁷⁰. At the time of its foundation the school had the impressive enrollment of 1117 pupils and thirty-seven teachers. Confirming a trend already seen at Seibang, as of 2012 the majority of students (fifty-eight percent) have South Korean nationality, whereas holders of *Chōsen* nationality and Japanese nationality are respectively forty percent and two percent. The totality of students have at least one parent of oldcomer Korean ancestry and about eighty percent of the parents attended a *Chōsen* school. Nearly the entire student body (ninety-eight percent) attended a *Chōsen* primary school before enrolling at *Tongjung*.

As said above, Osaka has the most densely populated *Chōsen* school district in Japan and although the number of *Chōsen* institutions is officially ten – since one school, similarly to Seibang, has two sections – the final count eventually reaches eleven (eight primary schools, two middle schools, one high school). Under *Tongjung's* catchment area there are six primary schools, two of which are located in Ikuno Ward itself, while the other two are under the way smaller North Osaka *Chōsen* Middle School which actually incorporates one of the primary schools as a section.

268 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 82.

269 For a comparison, the nine Japanese public middle schools located in Ikuno Ward, as of 2012, range between 133 and 385 students (NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu et al, *Nihon...*, cit., p.74).

270 NAKAJIMA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 73.

Much alike Seibang's middle section, *Tongjung's* graduates overall proceed their studies into a *Chōsen* high school while the percentage going to Japanese high schools is extremely low. Thus, the majority of students leaving *Tongjung* enroll at the only *Chōsen* high school situated in Osaka prefecture: Osaka *Chōsen* High School founded in 1952, which I will talk about in the next paragraph.

THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

According to Chongryun, at high school (*kōkyūbu*), the right world view is formed, and the general knowledge instruction characterizing secondary education is completed before students venture in more specific academic fields at university²⁷¹. Despite the comprehensive nature of education at this level, *Chōsen* high schools require students from the 2nd year onwards to choose between different curricula which allow a small degree of specialization. A liberal arts curriculum (*bunkei*) and a scientific curriculum (*rieki*) are typically found everywhere, while availability of other curricula depend on the high school considered; Tokyo *Chōsen* High School, in addition with the possibility of studying Chinese as a second foreign language in the liberal arts curriculum, offers also a business and information curriculum while Kanagawa *Chōsen* High School's students can further select between an Intensive English, Intensive Korean, or Intensive Japanese courses.

Osaka *Chōsen* High School (*Ōsaka chōsen kōkyū gakkō*), which we will investigate in this chapter, only makes available the classical choice between a liberal arts curriculum and the scientific curriculum, as illustrated in table 7.

According to the school's website, the liberal arts curriculum is the best choice for students seeking an extensive knowledge enabling them to pursue different paths after graduation ranging from universities (liberal arts faculties), junior colleges (*tanki daigaku*), professional training colleges (*senmon gakkō*), and various types of employment²⁷². The scientific curriculum, instead, offers a more specialized preparation intended mainly for students wishing to pursue their academic path in scientific faculties at universities.

Curricula can mostly be distinguished for their elective subjects and the weekly number of classes in certain core subjects. However, on the overall, both curricula are similar in many aspects, in fact *Chōsen's* high school education is distant from highly diversified high school systems where students choose between professional schools, technical schools, or university preparatory schools as in Italy or Germany, nor does it have a great availability of electives.

271 "Chongryun", 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/index.html>, retrieved on 08/12/2018.

272 "Osaka *Chōsen* High School", 2018, retrieved on 08/13/2018.

Table 7: Curriculum of Osaka *Chōsen* High School²⁷³

	1 st year		2 nd year		3 rd year	
	Liberal Arts	Scientific	Liberal Arts	Scientific	Liberal Arts	Scientific
Society	2	2	2		2	2
Contemporary Korean History	2	2	2	2	2	
Korean History					3	2
World History			3	2		
Geography	2					
Korean language	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	5	3	6	3	6
Science	3	3	2		2	
Japanese language	4	4	4	3	4	3
English	4	5	5	5	5	5
P.E.	2	2	2	2	2	2
Music	1	1	1		1	
Information A	2	2				
Electives*			2	6	2	6
Total classes per week	30	30	30	30	30	30
N° of core courses	11	11	10	7	10	7
N° of elective courses			1	2	1	2
List of electives*	-Liberal Arts Curriculum: Japanese Language Seminar; English Language Seminar; Korean Language Seminar; Information Processing; Theory of Physical Education; -Scientific Curriculum: Physics; Biology; Chemistry.					

While offering the possibility of selecting between different curricula depending on one's own interests, *Chōsen* high schools' different educational paths do not present stark dissimilarities among each others. In the Japanese system, variation within courses is slightly higher and with

273 KAJI Itaru, "Tsunageyou minzoku no kokoro: Ōsaka Chōsen kōkyū gakkō" (Let's connect, ethnic heart: Osaka Chōsen High School), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji (eds.), *Nihon...*, 2014, pp. 88-102, cit., p. 92.

more exceptions as there are intensive English curricula (SEHS), intensive science curricula (SSH), international courses curricula (see chapter 1), not to mention professional high schools providing training in specific disciplines such as fisheries, agrarian sciences, nursing, and so on. Nevertheless, as of 2015, an overwhelming 72.8 percent of the total student population in Japanese high schools is following the General Curriculum (*futsūka*)²⁷⁴.

The General Curriculum presents some similarities with *Chōsen* high school education and is likewise characterized by a division from the second year in a liberal arts path, and a scientific path. Subjects in the General Curriculum are organized in the following blocks:

- Japanese language: Integrated Japanese*, Contemporary Writings, Classics, etc.;
- Geography and History: World History, Japanese History, World Geography, etc.;
- Civics: Contemporary Society, Economics, Political Science, etc.;
- Mathematics: Mathematics I*, Mathematics II, etc.;
- Science: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, etc.;
- P.E.;
- Arts: Music, Art; *Shodō* calligraphy, etc.;
- Foreign Language: English for Communication I*, English Conversation, etc.;
- Home Economics;
- Information;
- Special Activities (LHR)

The subjects bearing an asterisk (*) are defined as mandatory by the Ministry of Education and are therefore required in every institution certified as “art. 1” high school²⁷⁵. The General Curriculum typically includes many of the subjects listed above with differentiations being made depending on the single school and on whether the curriculum is liberal arts or scientific. The total amount of classes largely depends on the institution but it is usually around thirty classes per week.

The division in two main curricula underlying the General Curriculum has been devised not only to allow pupils to follow their own study interests but also to provide a more specific

274 “Monbukagakushō”, 2016, *Kōtōgakkō no kyōiku katei ni kan suru kiso shiryō*, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/075/siryo/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2016/05/16/1370461_4.pdf, retrieved on 08/13/2018, cit., p. 9.

275 “Monbukagakushō”, 2016, *Kōtōgakkō no kyōiku katei ni kan suru kiso shiryō*, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/075/siryo/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2016/05/16/1370461_4.pdf, retrieved on 08/13/2018, cit., p. 40.

preparation for the desired future academic field at university. Since in Japanese universities entrance exams are different depending on each faculty, which are roughly divided in humanities focused and science focused, these academic paths are meant to equip students with the necessary knowledge to successfully enter the type of faculty they wish. Osaka *Chōsen* High School's website itself indicates what type of institutions each curriculum prepares for, thus, Chongryun's decision to institutionalize this curriculum choice may be explained with the desire to better prepare students for entrance exams in Japanese universities.

At Osaka *Chōsen* High School – which I will refer to as Osaka *Chōkō* using the two initial characters of the words “*Chōsen*” and “high school” in Japanese (*kōkō*) – students are required to sit for an entrance examination depending on the curriculum they choose, yet, pass rate is nearly a hundred percent. As of 2011, the number of students to be admitted in liberal arts curriculum classes is limited to 230 while the ceiling for admissions in the scientific curriculum class is of thirty people. An additional class with the limit fixed at twenty people should be composed of transfer students from Japanese middle schools, nevertheless, due to their low number this class is not formed in the 2011 school year (April 2011 – March 2012)²⁷⁶. In the same school year Osaka *Chōkō*'s student population reaches a total of 349 people, who commute to its premises situated in the city of East Osaka (*Higashi Ōsaka shi*) from all the Osaka, Nara and Wakayama prefectures. About eighty-five percent of pupils come from *Tongjung*, roughly ten percent from North Osaka *Chōsen* Middle School, and the remaining mostly come from Wakayama *Chōsen* Middle *Chōsen* Middle School²⁷⁷; the middle school section in Nara prefecture has been incorporated in *Tongjung* since many years ago.

At Osaka *Chōkō*, each class in the liberal arts curriculum is formed by roughly thirty people and class members are changed and mixed with other classes every year, similarly to Japanese high schools where this custom constitutes a norm. Again, this is possible for the numerous *Zainichi* Korean children who populate Osaka prefecture which results in Osaka *Chōkō* being the second biggest *Chōsen* high school in Japan, in terms of enrollment, after Tokyo *Chōsen* High School. Instead, classes in the scientific curriculum are usually constituted by a little more than twenty people. In the 2011 academic year, the school staff is of forty-five people²⁷⁸. Lessons are articulated, similarly to *Tongjung*, in blocks of forty-five minutes each, beginning at 9:00 after the morning

276 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 89.

277 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 89.

278 NAKAJIMA Tomoko, “Koria kei gaikokujingakkō no hō katsuteki na rikai o mezashite” (Aiming at a comprehensive understanding of Korean schools”, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji (eds.), *Nihon...*, cit., 2014, pp. 52-57, cit., p. 56.

meeting (08:45 – 09:00) and concluding at 14:50, with a lunch break of forty minutes in between, for a total of six classes per day. After the end of classes, students engage in cleaning tasks until 15:10, followed by the home room time which terminates at 15:30.

During one day of fieldwork in May 2012, Kaji reported the following themes being dealt with in lessons. During the society class, with phrases such as “the protagonist of the future” or “the compatriots community and us” written on the blackboard, students were investigating to what extent Korean laborers employed in construction sites in Japan during World War II received inhuman treatment in and out the workplace²⁷⁹. In the contemporary Korean history class, the professor was explaining about the maintenance works on the Potonggang river built in order to protect Pyongyang from floods, while in the Japanese class students used the same textbooks employed in Japanese high schools and were studying excerpts from the literary work “The Tale of Heike”²⁸⁰. In the home room class, which only on Wednesdays is extended to forty minutes instead of the usual twenty minutes, first year students were polishing their mid-term exams preparation through group study, while second year students were devoting this time to reflecting on what to do after graduation or in the future at large.

The young teacher in charge of guiding the reflection was touching several topics, including university, employment and marriage. Above all, students were instructed to consider these elements as simple means instead of objectives per se. For example, students were encouraged to think that becoming a doctor per se is not a life purpose; instead, one should think: “I want to do this in life. This is why I want to enter university and become a doctor.”²⁸¹. To put it simply, the teacher wanted to push pupils to positively question and consider why would they want, for instance, to enroll in university, enter a big company or prefer to marry a *Zainichi* Korean over a Japanese or vice versa. In the teacher's words:

Pursuing education in university, employment, marriage... these are mere methods. Defining your purpose for life is what is important. Also do not forget that we are Koreans (*Chōsenjin*) who live in Japan.²⁸²

Besides the normal school routine which goes from Monday to Friday, students engage in a series of activities ranging from history workshops, volunteering in day-care facilities, meetings with first generation *Zainichi* Koreans, not to mention club activities. These occupations cover all Saturdays with only two exceptions per month, in which students have classes or the school is

279 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 92.

280 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 92.

281 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 93. J.

282 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 93. J.

closed (usually the fourth Saturday every month). The school presents some differences with the Japanese school calendar and combines some Japanese national holidays with some North Korean national holidays. On the other hand, long study breaks between semesters are similar in length with Japanese institutions with the possible exception of summer holidays, which at Osaka *Chōkō*, finish one week prior. However, classes are subsequently not held for a week in September when all *Chōsen* high schools gather in the Kantō area for the Central Sport Championship (*Chūō taiiku taikai*), which consists in competitions for each sport club²⁸³.

At Osaka *Chōkō*, education is carried out in accordance with the four following principles:

- Foster a rich, ethnic, instructive, well-grounded knowledge.
- Cultivate an outstanding linguistic ability and a refined international way of thinking.
- Grow a wide knowledge.
- Carry out enthusiastically extracurricular activities.

The school's educational mission is stated as follows:

We, young *Zainichi* compatriots born and raised in Japan, uphold as our educational purpose: the acquisition of a sound ethnic knowledge, an outstanding language ability, and extensive knowledge and skills, as well as the attainment of a big role in the friendship between Korea (*Chōsen*) and Japan, and as pioneers in the era of internationalization.

The vision of a new generation of “*Zainichi*”, proud of their ethnic culture and tradition, endowed with an extensive knowledge and high moral values, building a rich, convivial and inclusive society within Japanese local communities, represents the educational idea of our school.

Needless to say, the through knowledge of ethnic culture having as pillars an ethnic awareness and the national mother tongue, is an essential condition for becoming true cosmopolitan individuals, and an outstanding language ability plus a capability to adapt to an information-oriented society are important qualities required in future times.²⁸⁴

The content is substantially analogous to the educational idea proposed by Chongryun and by previously analyzed *Chōsen* schools. Expressions stressing an ethnic awareness (*minzoku teki jikaku*), an extensive knowledge (*haba hiroi chishiki*), and an international way of thinking (*kokusai kankaku*) are equally found while scrolling down the websites of other *Chōsen* high schools, such as Kanagawa *Chōsen* High School or Tokyo *Chōsen* High School. However, so far only Osaka *Chōkō* has highlighted the importance of an “outstanding linguistic ability”, and has openly stated in its

283 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 90.

284 “Osaka Chōsen High School”, <http://www.osakakhs.com/okhs/>, retrieved 14 August 2018. J.

website the aim of achieving a trilingualism in Korean, Japanese, and English. These stances apparently clash with the words of one of Seibang's teachers who had refuted the notion that *Chōsen* schools provide a bilingual education. Actually, it is my conviction that the two cases little differ as both Seibang's teacher and Osaka *Chōkō* emphasize the need of pacific co-living with the Japanese and international society. The only exception is that for the teacher, because of the strong cultural and spiritual attachment to the Korean language, it is difficult to define *Chōsen* education as bilingual, while Osaka *Chōkō*, maybe more interested in the practical or promotional aspects, does not refrain from calling it trilingual. Anyway, in both cases, primacy of the ethnic culture and language is clearly emphasized as the last paragraph of the above quotation itself points out. This being said, what is starkly different from the past is that today the importance of ethnic culture might not necessarily be intended as a nationalistic superiority over other cultures from which an aggressive protection is needed as it was the case in pre-1993 Chongryun's education.

Similarly to many other *Chōsen* schools, even Osaka *Chōkō* excels in several sport disciplines and prouds itself on having sent athletes to many national high school competitions. Osaka *Chōkō* is arguably the most successful *Chōsen* school with regard to sport achievements, and is renown for its men boxing team, that has constantly won the national inter-high championship, and for its men soccer and rugby teams, which have often become the representative team for Osaka Prefecture. It is interesting to note that the last two clubs in particular have a membership of sixty students each, meaning that two thirds of the school's male population is either part of the soccer or rugby teams²⁸⁵. Overall, it is estimated that between 80 – 85 percent of the students belong to a club and in 2012 only ten people out the 113 freshmen did not take part in club activities. Moreover, compared to Japanese high schools, the amount of students skipping trainings or club sessions in order to attend cram schools is extremely low²⁸⁶.

Taking into account that eighty-five percent of the students come from *Tongjung*, which likewise highly values involvement in sports, we can say that Osaka *Chōkō* continues the legacy of *Tongjung* and brings up even more the level that athletes have achieved in middle school. The investment of the school in sports is also visible from its educational creed which specifically enshrines participation in club activities as a core principle. Finally, considering that, unlike Japanese schools, Osaka *Chōkō* does not hire special training coaches outside of the teachers body nor does it carry out scouting of athletes, its accomplishments are definitely outstanding.

Cultural clubs are equally lively, in particular, the traditional Korean dance club for which Osaka *Chōkō* is also famous. Since there is no equivalent club in Japanese schools, members cannot

285 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 94.

286 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 93.

measure their ability in competitions with their Japanese peers, yet they often perform in festivals and cultural events, in Japanese institutions as well, so they become a school's trademark. The most talented members who wish to pursue a career in this dance business might have a chance to be hired by Kungang Opera Troupe, an artistic *Zainichi* Korean organization. The troupe tours all Japan, especially city areas heavily populated by *Zainichi* Koreans, nevertheless, its shows are far from being simple exhibitions by high school students, and are hosted in large dance halls or cultural centers with tickets usually ranging around 3000 yen, but even reaching 5000 or 6000 yen for big concerts in Tokyo or Osaka. Looking at the troupe's website, their schedule for fall 2018 seems quite busy and their professional crew of about seventy members is recruited from dance clubs of *Chōsen* schools throughout the country or Korea University who join the club after graduation.

Another notable extracurricular activity, is the school trip to North Korea, which takes place in the third and final year of high school, considered an essential step in the formation of ethnic self-awareness. In order for the trip to take place, semester final exams for third year students, which are scheduled for the same period, are moved forward. These trips have been possible for all students since the stabilization in 1980s of the status of *Chōsen* nationality holders who became entitled to re-entry permit to Japan after a stay abroad.

Attendance to Osaka *Chōkō* costs a tuition of 37,000 yen per month plus an enrollment fee of 317,000 yen if the student is a boy, or 268,000 if the student is a female, both inclusive of the first month tuition. As for girls though, the fee does not into account the price for the school uniform which is charged separately depending on whether the student chooses the traditional *chima jeogori* or a more common design adopted in many Japanese high schools²⁸⁷. In comparison with middle school, the monthly tuition has almost tripled, further burdening families with little financial means. Moreover, figures above do not include other minor expenses, such as the aforementioned school trip to North Korea. Considering that since 2010 Japanese public high schools have become tuition-free (*kōkō mushōka*), it becomes apparent how many sacrifices some *Zainichi* Korean families are willing to do so that their children receive an ethnic high school education. Consequently, it also becomes clear that applying the *kōkō mushōka* to *Chōsen* schools, so far excluded from the provision, through financial aid to needy students would immensely help

²⁸⁷ The once mandatory *chima jeogori*, a traditional Korean dress, that unequivocally identifies female students of *Chōsen* schools, has now become optional due to some students having repeatedly been the target of rapes or racist remarks. Each student can now feel free to choose the type of uniform in which she feels more comfortable and safe. In the case of Osaka *Chōkō* about ninety percent of girls opt out for the Japanese-style uniform. The problem has never existed for boys who have always worn uniforms, very similar to those used in Japanese schools, which did not make them immediately recognizable as *Chōsen* schools' students.

numerous *Zainichi* Korean families.

Of course, students attending Osaka *Chōkō* are not all necessarily impoverished but actually come from the most diverse backgrounds, and while in the past most of the children parents were owners of small businesses, nowadays the majority is constituted by white-collar employees. Back in the days, there apparently used to be a custom among wealthy Korean families possessing their own company, to send the eldest son – i.e. the son who would have inherited the family business – to a Japanese school, whereas the youngest sons would have been sent to *Chōsen* schools; however, this habit seems to have eclipsed²⁸⁸. Similarly to other schools, over eighty percent of the parents have attended a *Chōsen* school, and all families are constituted by *Zainichi* Korean oldcomers, at least on one side. Enrollment is not precluded to newcomers, but it is for children with no roots in the Korean peninsula, who are not allowed to attend the school; in any case, students with a Japanese parent do not even reach the five percent of the total. As regards the nationality of pupils, data do not substantially change from the trend observed in the other schools: the majority have South Korean nationality (63.4 percent), followed by *Chōsen* nationality holders (35.8 percent), and finally by Japanese nationals (0.8 percent), this time slightly less numerous²⁸⁹.

Up until now we have seen that students in *Chōsen* schools typically stick to this educational path from primary school all the way to high school, with percentages of graduates proceeding to *Chōsen* schools for their next level of education normally averaging more than ninety percent. However, things change once students leave high school, as many of them subsequently enroll in Japanese universities instead of continuing within the realm of Chongryun's education by enrolling in Korea University. Table 8 and table 9, illustrating the paths pursued by Osaka *Chōkō*'s graduating class of 2011 and 2002 respectively, give us an insight on current trends regarding future destinations of *Chōsen* schools students.

As regards the terms in the tables, Junior colleges (*tanki daigaku*) are institutions offering short university degrees of the duration of two years while professional training colleges (*senmon gakkō*) provide specialized formation of specific job skills (see table 3 in chapter one). *Zainichi* Korean companies or organizations refer first of all, to Chongryun itself, the aforementioned Kumgang Opera Troupe, the Chūgai Travel Co., or *Zainichi* Korean banks and businesses. Unfortunately, many *Chōsen* high schools, including Osaka *Chōkō*, do not provide in their websites any information on the future courses of their graduates therefore they do not mention the specific names of the prospective universities or other destinations of each year's graduate class, which is instead normally done in Japanese high schools that take care of correctly displaying the page

288 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 89.

289 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 89.

sotsugyō no shinro (future paths after graduation) in their websites. As a consequence, it is impossible to distinguish the percentage of state, public, or private universities among those chosen by graduates, although Kaji reports that among 2011 graduation class, one student entered Tokyo University, while two enrolled at Osaka University (both prestigious state universities)²⁹⁰.

Discovering the exact figure would have been of great interest given that, after 2003, it has been possible for *Chōsen* schools graduates – although prior a discretionary approval which is uniquely applied to Chongryun schools (see chapter 1 and 5) – to sit for the national exam granting access to state universities, usually the most prestigious higher educational institutions in each prefecture, from which *Chōsen* schools graduates were previously precluded with no exceptions. Nevertheless the tables still provide interesting data.

Table 8: Choices after graduation of Osaka Chōsen High School's graduates expressed in percentage (2011)²⁹¹

	Osaka <i>Chōkō</i>	Japanese high schools in Osaka Prefecture
Korea University	19.9	
Japanese Universities	37.6	52.6
Junior College	1.4	7.3
Professional Training college	20.6	14.2
Employment (<i>Zainichi</i> Korean company or organization)	4.3	
Employment (other)	7.1	10.1
Other (Study abroad, <i>rōnin</i> ²⁹² , etc.)	9.2	15.7
Total	100.0 (141 people)	100.0 (67,718 people)

It can be noticed that, by summing the figures for both Korea University and Japanese universities, the percentage of Osaka *Chōkō* graduates choosing to pursue their studies in a

290 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 97.

291 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 97. J.

292 The term *rōnin* originally indicated a masterless samurai in Japan's Edo period but has come to designate students (especially high school graduates) who have failed an entrance exam to a university and are waiting to re-take the same exam the following year.

university in general (57.5 percent), is higher than that for Osaka prefecture. Furthermore, people choosing to work after graduation (both within the umbrella of *Zainichi* Korean organizations or outside of it), are marginally more numerous in the case of Osaka *Chōkō*, 11.4 against 10.1. Students graduating from Japanese schools in Osaka Prefecture on the other hand outnumber Osaka *Chōkō*'s in the figures for junior college and “other”.

How has the situation evolved from the previous decade? Table 9 shows the same data referring to the graduate class of 2002.

Table 9: Choices after graduation of Osaka Chōsen High School's graduates expressed in percentage (2002)²⁹³

	Osaka <i>Chōkō</i>	Japanese high schools in Osaka Prefecture
Korea University	12.7	
University	18.8	37.7
Junior College	10.7	10.9
Professional Training college	18.3	14.1
Employment (<i>Zainichi</i> Korean company or organization)	9.1	
Employment (other)	15.7	11.8
Other (Study abroad, <i>rōnin</i>)	14.7	25.6
Total	100.0 (197 people)	100.0 (87,701 people)

Confronting the two tables, what immediately catches the eye is the upward trend in students pursuing education in university. Besides the figure for Japanese high schools, which has experienced a 39.5 percent increase, data for Osaka *Chōkō* are even more striking since people proceeding to Japanese universities have augmented two-fold. Despite the drop in enrollments in Osaka *Chōkō*, which is a general phenomenon of all *Chōsen* schools below university level, students heading to Korea University too have increased, for a total aggregate surge, inclusive of *Chōsen* schools graduates choosing Japanese universities, of 82.5 percent. To sum up, the amount of *Chōsen* schools' students going to any university, which in 2002, with a percentage of 31.5 was

293 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 98. J.

lower than Osaka prefecture's average of 37.7, has immensely grown to the point of outstripping Osaka's Japanese high schools. Notwithstanding the fact that higher percentages of people going to university constitute a national trend in Japan, this sharp increase demonstrates a greater availability of opportunities for *Chōsen* students who might have partially benefited from the little concessions, although discriminatory towards Chongryun schools, made by the government in 2003.

Another visible trend is the fall in Osaka *Chōkō*'s students opting for employment which in 2002 was more than double (24.8 percent) of the equivalent Japanese figure (11.8); in this regard, the Japanese figure has mostly remained constant. Enrollment in professional training colleges has mostly been stable in both cases, with a little increase for Osaka *Chōkō*, while junior colleges have plummeted as a choice after graduation from the *Chōsen* high school. As for “other”, in the case of Osaka *Chōkō*, the nearly totality is constituted by *rōnin*, especially students applying for state universities²⁹⁴. The “study abroad” percentage is practically non-existent as *Chōsen* high schools have an unusual characteristic for being ethnic schools. In fact, a sizable chunk of graduates of other ethnic schools, such as Mindan-administered Korean schools or Chinese schools, eventually receive their tertiary education in South Korean or Chinese universities. This however does not happen with *Chōsen* schools' graduates, among which the percentage of people studying abroad in North Korea is extremely low if not equal to zero. As a matter of fact, nowadays living in North Korea is not considered a viable option by *Zainichi* Koreans; moreover Osaka *Chōkō*'s students choosing to study abroad in a country other than Japan and North Korea are very few.

Overall, data show that, in the case of Osaka Prefecture's high schools, pursuing to a four year university has increasingly become a more popular choice, yet other options have not sharply decreased but have instead remained stable, with the possible exception of junior colleges which declined in popularity. The great decrease in the category “other” can be explained on the grounds of less competition to enter Japanese universities which used to be substantially harsher in the past, consequently resulting in more people being *rōnin*. In fact, the decades-long Japan's declining birthrate has resulted in a drastic drop of the young – also witnessed by the shrink in Osaka prefecture's population of students graduating from high school – bringing about a situation where access to university has become easier.

Speaking of the population drop, *Chōsen* high schools too have experienced this phenomenon, in fact Osaka *Chōkō*'s graduating students have diminished since 2002. This decrease in *Chōsen* schools' enrollment is due not only to less popularity of these institutions or lack of financial aid, but also because the *Zainichi* Korean population as well has been affected by Japan's demographic trends. Coming back instead to the analysis of future courses, Osaka *Chōkō*'s students

294 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 96.

deciding to receive their tertiary education in any university have remarkably risen, with other options becoming less popular. Academic counseling at Osaka *Chōkō* does not seem to steer students in a particular direction or to push them to choose Korea University over Japanese universities. Instead, it seems that teachers encourage future graduates to better define their life goal and then choose their occupation or university accordingly.

The data in tables 8 and 9 only report tendencies for Osaka *Chōkō* and Osaka Prefecture which might differ from what is observed in Japanese and *Chōsen* high schools nation-wide. Increase in the percentage of university enrollments is a national trend and steadily keeps going up in almost all Japanese high schools, no matter the prefecture. There are though relevant regional differences: in 2016, whereas the national average for graduates of Japanese high schools entering university is of 49.5 percent, Tokyo Metropolis, the prefecture with the highest percentage, stands at 72.7 percent²⁹⁵. The second and third place go respectively to Kyoto Prefecture (65.2 percent) and to Yamanashi Prefecture (56.4 percent) (note the difference already separating the first two positions from the third onwards), which is followed shortly after by Osaka Prefecture which stands at 56.2 percent, a slight increase from 2011.

It would be interesting to verify whether trends regarding future paths of high school graduates, observed in Japanese prefectures influence *Chōsen* schools located in the same territory. Nevertheless, I was not able to find specific data in this regard as, to my knowledge, *Chōsen* high schools do not publicly report on their websites future courses of their graduates. With respect to Korea university, since all students are required to live on campus regardless of their family residence and are therefore charged the same board fees, it can be reasonably assumed that distance from campus relatively does not matter as no student can save money by living with family members and commuting to classes; however, these are just suppositions. Sure thing is though, that the number of freshmen at Korea University is continually increasing and a smoother access to Japanese universities has caused the overall number of *Chōsen* high schools' graduates pursuing a university education to soar.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have analyzed the great changes brought about by 1993's reforms and have explored more in details the curriculum of three *Chōsen* institutions and how their students spend

295 “Monbukagakushō”, 2016, *Kōtō kyōiku ni kan suru kiso dēta (Todōfukuken betsu)* (Fundamental data on high school education (Divided per prefecture)), http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo4/042/siryō/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2017/08/01/1388715_05.pdf, retrieved on 08/13/2018.

their school life. In the wake of the reform, educational programs parted ways with the previously strong assumption that *Zainichi* Koreans were overseas nationals of North Korea, and brought to an end the pervasive cult of the figure of Kim Il Sung. Nowadays, schools still teach the *Juche* philosophy and still regard North Korea as the fatherland, yet they assume that children will live in Japan for the rest of their life and are willing to foster cooperation with Japanese society. This view is reflected in the new curriculum which, together with the fundamental ethnic awareness, aims at providing pupils with the necessary skills to thrive in Japanese and international society.

Rather than North Korea, the imagined community of *Chōsen* schools has come to be embodied by the *Zainichi* Korean society. A moment when *Zainichi* Koreans in *Chōsen* schools can more tangibly experience their communion is the Central Sport Championship (*Chūō taiiku taikai*) in September, and the Central Art Contest (*Chūō geijutsu kyōen taikai*), in November. On these two occasions, the former dedicated to sport clubs competitions, and the latter to cultural clubs competitions, students from *Chōsen* schools scattered throughout Japan reunite in the same place and participate in the numerous contests. Through this event, the *Chōsen* young around Japan can connect with their peers, and be in an environment where the Korean language learnt at school is the common language. As in the words of a novel “*Chōkō irebun – Ōsaka chōsen kōkō sakka bu no kiseki*” (The *Chōkō* Eleven – The Miracle of Osaka *Chōsen* High School's Soccer Club) having as subjects Osaka *Chōkō*'s students:

Everybody speaks the Korean language, and everything gets lively and exciting. Those were days that, whether willing or not, we were made conscious about our existence as *Zainichi* Koreans. [...] ²⁹⁶

Outside of these big national competitions, *Zainichi* Korean communities revolving around a city's local *Chōsen* school, are very united and close-knit. We have seen in fact, that *Chōsen* schools play a pivotal role, acting as a place where the ethnic culture is protected and maintained, and where community members can meet and form bonds. Consequently, there is generally a high degree of interaction between schools and parents as well as former graduates; families sending their children to these institutions often give their best to help the school and positively contribute to its running. Overall, the imperative motto of all *Chōsen* schools seems to be: “one for all, and all for one”.

Speaking once again of club activities, we have found out that sport has played a fundamental role in students' life since *Chōsen* schools were allowed to compete with Japanese schools in national tournaments. *Chōsen* schools, despite the lack of resources, have for long time produced top athletes in many disciplines, especially in soccer, where many alumni became players

²⁹⁶ HONDA 2012, as cited in KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon...*, cit., p. 100. J.

of the North Korean national soccer team. Moreover, some *Chōsen* former graduates have even founded the team of 'United Koreans in Japan' which play games internationally in the CONIFA World Football Cup, a tournament reuniting non-FIFA affiliated teams, mostly constituted by small states (e.x. Monaco team) or minorities (e.x. Romani minority team, Kurdistan team)²⁹⁷. Indeed, for *Chōsen* schools, the purpose of 'fostering brilliant individuals who will live as proud Koreans in Japan' can be also be achieved through sports. In addition, excellent sport performance has granted access to university to some *Chōsen* high schools' graduates who were scouted by teams of prestigious Japanese institutions such as Dōshisha, Meiji, Hōsei, or Waseda.

As regards future paths after high school, our investigation did not proceed to Korea University, the only example in Japan of an ethnic tertiary education. The educational track devised by Chongryun, ideally gets accomplished at Korea University, where, according to the *Zainichi* organization, by living for four years only within the campus premises, surrounded exclusively by compatriots, a *Zainichi* Korean can fully develop an "ethnic heart" and become an educator for future generations. Nevertheless, I decided not to focus on Chongryun's tertiary education institution since not every *Chōsen* student actually proceeds to Korea University. Although, the latter has a huge role in *Chōsen* education as it is the place where teachers are formed, the future of *Chōsen* schools is mostly played from primary school to high school. In fact, the discriminatory policies targeting *Chōsen* schools mainly affect children within the compulsory education realm and at high school level. In particular, we have seen in the last paragraph how possibility to take the entrance exam to Japanese state universities is not yet unconditionally granted to *Chōsen* students who, in addition to this, still face numerous other challenges. Over the next and final chapter, I will investigate current threats and possibilities for the *Chōsen* education system, comparing it to other examples of ethnic education within Japan, with the final aim of finding clearer answers regarding its future.

297 Interestingly, 'United Koreans in Japan' is not the only CONIFA team from Japan as there is a Ryukyu team too, grouping players from the Ryukyu minority (see chapter 1).

CHAPTER 5

FUTURE CHALLENGES

INTRODUCTION

As we have analyzed at the beginning of this thesis, status as 'miscellaneous schools' (*kakushū gakkō*), poses some obstacles to foreign schools in Japan and leaves them outside of the educational system of the Asian country. This little level of integration, where Japanese and foreign schools stand into two different separate tracks, is not unique to Japan as each country has its own way of including (or excluding) minorities and foreigners in the overall academic system; moreover as regards Japan, several progresses have been made in the last decades. Yet, the situation for *Chōsen* schools is different as they are denied many concessions that have been recently granted to foreign schools. Whereas the extent to which the Japanese government should aid foreign schools is a more complicated issue, it definitely can be argued that the Ministry of Education's directives have been discriminatory.

The current status of North Korea, a dictatorship with a long history of human rights abuse, which has continuously alarmed Japan at its missile tests and the abduction of Japanese citizens, certainly puts the Abe administration in a delicate position. Given the links between Chongryun and the regime run by Kim Jong Un, decisions involving *Chōsen* schools should not be overseen lightheartedly. Nevertheless, political affairs should not intertwine with the right to education of *Zainichi* Korean children, not to mention that *Chōsen* schools have evolved throughout the decades, abandoning their past propaganda tones. As we have seen, affiliation to North Korea constitutes just one aspect of the instruction in these institutions which have continuously sought cooperation with the Japanese society. Therefore, if Japan were to grant allowances to foreign schools, these concessions should be extended to *Chōsen* schools as well, regardless of the international political scenario.

A diplomatic position of a given country can influence foreign schools in Japan not only through the directives of the Japanese government but also in other domains. In fact, countries that have achieved a prosperous political and economical status become attractive to Japan or other countries and often acquire a privileged cultural position. The languages spoken in these countries come to be considered as an important asset; in other words, their cultural capital becomes bigger. The almost imperative need of learning English is the most visible example of how a language can be contemplated as a powerful resource. Similarly, the emergence of China as an economic superpower has led to a huge rise in learners of the Chinese language, to which universities and educational programs worldwide have come to devote a great amount of attention.

In this regard, foreign schools, in light of their bilingual education implemented since the primary level (or even preschool level), can turn into preferred locations where to develop strong language assets. English-medium international schools have long been alluring to Japanese parents²⁹⁸ and have priced their expensive education also accordingly to this high demand. Ethnic schools, although originally targeting a specific migrant community compared to international schools, can equally become attractive as in the case of Zhonghua Chinese School that has drawn Japanese students with no ethnic or cultural bonds to China.

The Korean language has a smaller cultural capital compared to Chinese or English, yet, South Korea nurtures several economic relationships with Japan. However, should a Japanese parent wish for her children the acquisition of the Korean language or a more international education, she would probably send her children to a Mindan-administered ethnic school. *Chōsen* schools' affiliation to North Korea make them very little attractive to Japanese, no matter how strong or weak their relationship with the regime might be. The Kim Jong Un's country, having no diplomatic relations with Japan, plagued by an impoverished economy, ostracized in world media, has a cultural capital almost equal to zero in the eye of most people. The fact itself that *Chōsen* schools do not allow enrollment to pupils with no Korean heritage, demonstrate that they do not envision a development in that sense nor they do retain it possible.

Zainichi Koreans' living conditions remain inexplicably linked to the political status of North Korea and to the division of the peninsula in two halves²⁹⁹. In this final chapter, through an analysis of the subjects above, we will come to the conclusion that *Chōsen* schools too cannot hope to a substantial betterment of their status as long as North Korea does not make internal and external changes. Moreover, despite the international stances and the abandonment of strong political tones, *Chōsen* schools have failed to attract South Korean citizens born in South Korea and temporarily or permanently residing in Japan, limiting their target solely to the *Zainichi* oldcomer Korean community, which steadily keeps shrinking.

ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY

To begin with, I will talk about one of the most positive change that has regarded *Chōsen* schools, i.e. access to Japanese universities. In chapter 1 we have seen that the exclusion of 'miscellaneous schools' from the Japanese education system has made transfers or enrollments from a foreign school to a Japanese school, including university, a difficult task. However, thanks to policies

298 Our focus is of course on Japan, but similar statements can be made for many countries worldwide where English is not the first language.

299 CHUNG, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu (Eds.), *Japan's...*, cit., p. 129.

implemented in the early 2000s, recent times have witnessed greater levels of harmonization as demonstrated by the surge of *Chōsen* schools' graduates proceeding to Japanese universities (table 8 and 9 in chapter 4). Yet, rules discriminating against *Chōsen* schools graduates are still in place.

So far, I have limited my discourse on access to Japanese universities to mentioning the existence of entrance examinations, and the possibility for private universities to carry out a more independent and discretionary selection of the applicants compared to public and especially state universities. As a matter of fact, the path towards Japanese universities is composed of multiple steps depending on the university a high-school graduate is applying to. Institutions categorized as 'art. 1' four-years universities (*daigaku*) are usually divided into state and public universities (*kokukōritsu daigaku*), and private universities (*shiritsu daigaku*), with entry requirements varying according to the type considered.

State universities – which include some of Japan's oldest and most prestigious academic institutions such as the University of Tokyo, University of Kyoto, University of Osaka, and so on – and public universities, which may be institutions funded by local municipalities such as Yokohama City University or Tokyo Metropolitan University, mandate students to take the National Center Test for University Entrance Examination (*daigaku nyūshi sentaa shiken*), hereafter called National Center Test, a big scale test of the duration of two days where exam-takers are tested on several subjects they studied throughout high school. The test is managed by the National Center which is an independent administrative agency, it is standardized for all students, and takes place in the same days nationwide, usually a weekend in January, in test centers throughout Japan. Test-takers have compulsory subjects such as Japanese, but can also get to choose some of the subjects they want to be graded in, depending on their university of choice. In fact, each university faculty requires applicants to pass specific subjects with a minimum score, therefore, it follows that a test-taker normally knows which university she wants to apply to and that she will choose the subjects accordingly.

Japanese take the National Center Test during the last year of high school although it is important to note that the exam is not a requirement for graduation from high school but it is solely needed for university, in fact, not every student takes it and students aiming at a higher score might retake it the following years too. Achieving the score required by the university of choice is not the end of the procedure as the applicant will subsequently need to take the entrance examination administered by the single university, which in case of a positive result will eventually grant her the possibility of enrollment. In short, students wishing to pursue to state and public universities need to go through two steps: the National Test Center plus the entrance examination of the single university.

Private universities, on the other hand, have greater independence and although they might use a National Center Test's score to evaluate one student's application, they do not require it and instead rely solely on the student's entrance examination. Thus, applicants to private universities can skip the National Center Test altogether and devote their energy exclusively to the single university's entrance examination. In lieu of the latter, universities might accept students basing on a recommendation letter or on an evaluation of the student's high school grades and career, with policies greatly varying in each institution. These entrance methods are occasionally adopted in state and public universities as well, provided that the applicant has previously obtained the necessary National Center Test score.

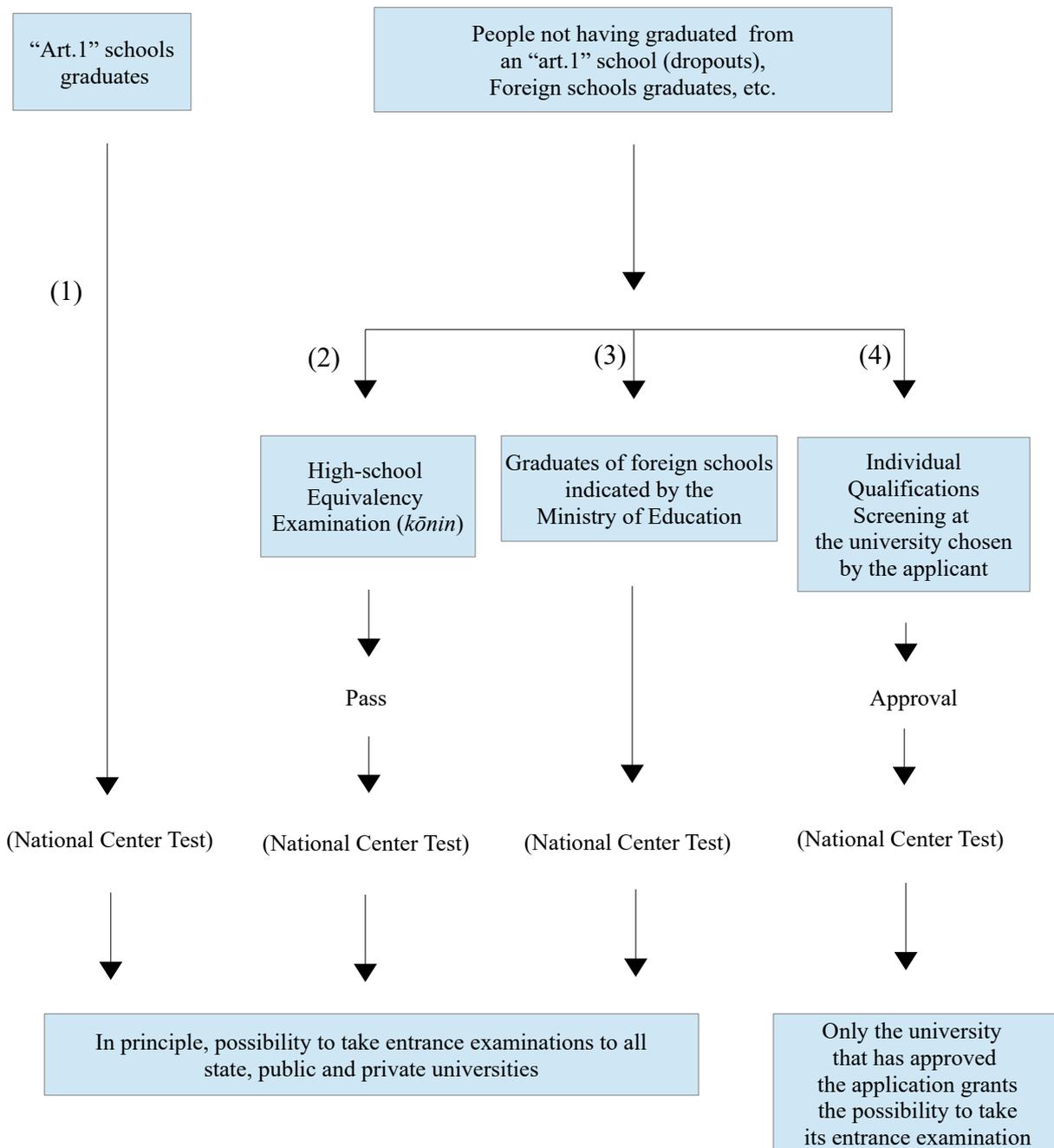
Japanese high-schoolers usually intend to apply for more than one university therefore they might choose to take the National Center Test to keep state and public universities a viable option. On the other hand, students who retain state and public universities not feasible, or simply do not intend to proceed to university, do not sit for it. As it can be inferred, entrance to private universities is generally easier, in fact many of these institutions have a lower academic ranking and cater to students who could not pass the National Center Test's benchmark. However, private universities are also extremely numerous and diverse, and some institutions such as Keio, Waseda, Ritsumeikan, Sophia and many others, have long been renown for their prestigious status, not far from that of top state universities, and employ difficult and selective entrance criteria.

As regards *Chōsen* schools, rather than passing the National Center Test or single schools' entrance examination, the main issue has always been the possibility itself of taking these tests. People can qualify as test-takers for the National Center Test upon completion of high school education (or upon expected completion of high school education as in the case of most National Center Test applicants who will graduate from high school about a month and half after taking the test), which is also a requirement for pursuing university education overall. Methods to certify completion of high school education for individuals not having graduated from 'art. 1' high schools, including *Chōsen* and other 'miscellaneous schools', has evolved through time, stabilizing in the current situation schematized in table 10 at the next page.

The table illustrates the procedure from high school graduation until university; the upper part of the scheme, where university applicants are visually located, is divided in two blocs: 'art. 1' schools graduates and "others". 'Art. 1' schools graduates, automatically qualify as test-takers and therefore follow the straightforward path (1). High-school dropouts or people whose high school education is not officially recognized have the option to take the *Kōnin* (called *daiken* until 2005), which in case of pass, certifies the equivalency to high school education and thus qualifies people as suitable university applicants (2). This choice though used to be equally precluded to 'miscellaneous

schools' graduates until September 1999, since *Kōnin* required applicants to possess a middle school diploma, hence to have fulfilled the duty of compulsory education in an 'art. 1' school.

Table 10 Procedures for High School Graduates to enter Japanese Universities³⁰⁰



Students having completed twelve years of instruction in schools under a national education system of a foreign country or in ethnic and international schools in Japan indicated by the Ministry

300 Ōbunsha Kyōiku Sentaa, 2007, <http://eic.obunsha.co.jp/resource/topics/0701/0105.pdf>, retrieved on 08/24/2018.

of Education are recognized as eligible university applicants (3). *Chōsen* schools do not fall in this category as they are not among the ethnic schools indicated by the government. Finally, an additional path has been introduced in September 2003 which gives graduates of schools not provisioned for by the Ministry of Education a limited chance to apply (4). For instance, let us suppose that a *Chōsen* high school graduate wishes to apply to a Japanese state university: first of all, he will have to submit his personal application to the university which will verify whether the student have the right qualifications to become eligible. In case of approval, the student will be allowed to sit for the National Center Test and, should he obtain the score requested, he will subsequently be permitted to take the entrance examination for the university, whose eventual positive result will grant him the possibility to enroll. Yet, his National Center Test's score will only be valid for the university that approved his qualification and will not allow him to apply to other state and public universities that demand an equal or lower score.

In short, nowadays graduates of *Chōsen* schools can rely on the (2) and (4) methods to apply to Japanese state and public universities, which nevertheless require additional steps or are subject to personal application screening that by all means does not guarantee a positive outcome. Prior to 1999, *Chōsen* students wishing to pursue to a Japanese university would have either attended Japanese high schools' night courses so that they could have earned a Japanese diploma, or would have attempted to enter a private university. The latter in fact have always been less bound to the system's regulations, and could motivate the decision to admit applications from *Chōsen* students basing on a provision contained in article sixty-nine of the 'Ordinance for Enforcement of the School Education Act' which considers eligible university applicants “people with an academic ability recognized to be equal or superior to graduates of upper secondary schools [high schools]”³⁰¹. Few public universities as well granted eligibility to *Chōsen* students employing this article, however, state universities' decision on this matter strictly depended on the Ministry of Education's regulations which did not make concessions. Many private universities have specifically addressed the issue of *Chōsen* graduates, mentioning in their websites the necessary paperwork and procedures requested to these applicants. Yet, if on one hand for some private universities it has become an established custom to accept applications from *Chōsen* high school graduates, decisions are still based on the discretionary power accorded to institutions not under the direct control of the Ministry of Education, and there have been cases of private universities, such as Tamagawa University in 2007, that refused *Chōsen* students' applications on the grounds that their diploma did not satisfy eligibility requirements for examination³⁰².

301 Ōbunsha Kyōiku Sentaa, 2007, <http://eic.obunsha.co.jp/resource/topics/0701/0105.pdf>, retrieved on 08/24/2018.

302 IJIMA, in Satake, *Zainichi gaikokujin...*, cit., p. 216.

In table 10, the National Center Test is indicated within brackets as it is not compulsory for private universities or in other situations. Since the National Center Test is tailored to students of Japanese high schools, international students to Japan (*ryūgakusei*) in state, public and private universities, who have completed their secondary education in a foreign country – who fall within the category (3) – might be asked to submit a cover letter, a short essay, a certificate of Japanese proficiency, or to take the 'Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students' (EJU) rather than the National Center Test, with requirements greatly changing depending on each institution and the language of the courses (many Japanese universities now offer majors totally taught in English or other foreign languages).

Interestingly enough, well before 1999, international students from abroad were deemed eligible to apply to Japanese universities provided that their diploma certified at least twelve years of education. Conversely, students in ethnic or international schools within Japan were not granted this benefit, possibly because, besides little interest to integrate these institutions into the Japanese system, there was the assumption that students of these schools would have enrolled in universities abroad. After the numerous initiatives of private universities to accept candidates from 'miscellaneous schools' mentioned earlier, and important breakthroughs, such as the decision of Kyoto University Graduate School – one of the most prestigious national university – to make graduates from Korea University eligible to apply in 1998, the Japanese government finally decided to address the issue from 1999³⁰³.

These initiatives coincided with a series of efforts from the Japanese government to internationalize its university education system and to attract more international students but soon intermingled with political events of that time. In fact, initial provisions, issued in July 2002, provided for the extension of eligibility for the National Center Test and university entrance examinations to graduates of all foreign schools, including *Chōsen* schools. However, Japanese politics were marked in 2002 by the Japan-North Korea Summit, held in September with the intention to resolve the uneasy diplomatic relationships between the two countries and establish economic cooperation. The summit was a diplomatic failure for North Korea which admitted to have abducted twelve Japanese citizens and apologized for the act. That was the beginning of the Abduction Issue (*rachi mondai*).

During the 1970s and 1980s, there had been several incidents in which Japanese citizens disappeared in unnatural circumstances³⁰⁴. Despite allegations that North Korea was involved, the

303 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 159.

304 “Abductions of Japanese Citizens by North Korea”, 2011, <https://www.rachi.go.jp/en/ratimondai/syousai.html>, retrieved on 08/26/2018.

regime was denying any participation and in Japan too these claims were often dismissed as a conspiracy theory or as an irrational cold war fantasy. The revelation of the abduction, possibly done by North Korea with the intention of showing honesty and goodwill but miscalculating Japan's reaction, sparked public outrage in the archipelago and resulted in a general bashing of North Korea by Japanese media. Although some abductees were able to return to Japan, the topic remains an open and contentious issue between the two countries as Japan claims that the number of Japanese citizens abducted is higher than that indicated by regime which also provided dubious proofs concerning the death of some of them. Investigations are still on-going and the subject is frequently covered in Japanese media.

The public resentment caused by the disclosure of such news triggered actions of retaliation against North Korea in Japan, including Ministry of Education's decision to revise its previous position regarding the extension of eligibility for university admission to *Chōsen* schools. The Ministry justified its actions declaring that “recognizing now eligibility to North Korean Chōsen schools might eventually benefit North Korea”³⁰⁵. The policy was drastically changed and it was subsequently announced that eligibility would be limited to only the sixteen Western international schools which were certified by international accreditation organizations (WASC, ECIS, and ACSI) often adopting internationally recognized curricula such as International Baccalaureate (IB), with instead *Chōsen*, South Korean, Chinese, Brazilian, French and German ethnic schools excluded³⁰⁶. This provision was met with widespread criticism since it favored English-medium international schools usually attended by children of wealthy foreign diplomats or businessmen who constitute just a tiny portion of the student population of foreign schools in Japan.

A volunteer lawyer committee pointed out to the Ministry of Education that the decision was discriminatory and even doubtfully legal, and observed, with respect to *Chōsen* schools, that political events should not affect children rights to education³⁰⁷. In response to this criticism, the government extended in September and October eligibility to South Korean, Chinese, French and German schools in addition to the previous international schools. Brazilian schools were added to the list with special conditions in January 2004, since the term of the elementary and junior high schools in Brazil was eleven years³⁰⁸. Instead, no eligibility was granted to *Chōsen* schools – where, like the Japanese system, primary and secondary education last for a total of twelve years – whose students are still subject today to the personal evaluation method by the single university introduced

305 IJIMA, in Satake, *Zainichi gaikokujin...*, cit., p. 216.

306 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 160.

307 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 161.

308 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 161

in September 2003 (path 4 in table 10).

Luckily, data from Osaka *Chōkō* analyzed in chapter 4 somehow comfort us on the rate of *Chōsen* students pursuing tertiary education in Korea University or Japanese institutions: it seems that going to university has become a popular choice, perhaps the most popular, and there have been cases of successful applicants to state universities coming from *Chōsen* high schools. The surge in university enrollments that has been happening over the last decade might partially be motivated on the little advancements made by the regulations implemented in 2003 which still provide *Chōsen* schools' graduates with a little chance to become eligible applicants to state universities. Yet, *Chōsen* schools are still negatively singled out among other foreign schools, and North Korea-Japanese politics still get in the way of students' ethnic education.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Status as 'miscellaneous schools' has granted Chongryun a great freedom in deciding its own educational programs without being subject to Japanese government's directives, thus ensuring the implementation of pre-1993 programs that could not have been approved had the schools been under the 'art.1' designation. In the present days, however, this very classification yields more harm than benefits since *Chōsen* schools, as 'miscellaneous schools' keep not receiving financial support, while previous small sources of income such as money aid from North Korea and some Japanese prefectures have recently been reduced or discontinued.

The issue of lack of financial resources has constantly emerged throughout our research as one of the biggest threats to the existence of *Chōsen* schools, and institutions routinely adopt the most diverse tools to avoid budgetary strains, such as reducing the personnel to the minimum required, and relying on help from parents. This is also done in order to limit the tuition fees that fall on students' families, which despite being consistently lower compared to expensive international schools, can still represent a burden. Moreover, donations made to 'miscellaneous' schools are not tax-deductibles which implies that *Chōsen* schools are little attractive to donors.

Chongryun was able to establish schools all over Japan, not only through the legacy of the League of Koreans and help from the *Zainichi* Korean community, but also thanks sizable funds sent from North Korea. In fact, for the first decades of their history, the regime funneled a great amount of money into Chongryun's education project; this aid could not exempt schools from charging tuition as it could cover only a part of the expenses, nevertheless it was certainly helpful. The amount of funds gradually shrank as North Korea began encountering more and more economic difficulties which were further exacerbated by the fall of the socialist bloc in the 1990s. The regime was even obliged to ask Japan for help to relieve its starving population with food aid,

and undoubtedly did not have much money to spare for *Chōsen* schools. Nowadays, funds from North Korea are consistently lower than in the past and are reduced to the minimum. Less financial dependence on North Korea may also partially account for the change in the educational content of Chongryun schools which since the reform of 1993 has become less 'North Korea-focused' than before.

Influence of politics on education did not remain at the level of the Ministry of Education with its policies concerning eligibility for university but extended in the domain of local prefectures, which since long time had channeled a limited amount of funds to *Chōsen* schools in their territory. In 2003, shortly after the aforementioned North Korea-Japan Summit, the metropolitan government of Tokyo filed a legal action against Tokyo Second Chōsen primary school (*Tokyo Daini Chōsen shōkyū*) demanding them to return the land on which the school building is located³⁰⁹. The issue stemmed from the need to reach a future agreement between the metropolitan government and the school authorities concerning the warranty deed of the territory of the school premises. Although the requests from the metropolitan government were lawful, many criticized the lawsuit for having been initiated without a previous attempt to reach an agreement, and reputed it to be a sign of bashing North Korea³¹⁰. Considering that the legal action from the metropolitan government happened during the tenure of Shintarō Ishihara, already known for his racist remarks and little sympathy for ethnic schools, the events become less surprising. However, the public outcry following the summit overlapped with the dispute and the very lawyers of Tokyo who participated in “the volunteer lawyer's committee on the entrance examination eligibility”, formed a defense council for this case³¹¹. The issue settled with the payment from the school authorities of the money needed for purchasing the land of the school premises.

Despite the wave of bashing against North Korea after the 2002 summit, at this point in time funds reserved to *Chōsen* schools from prefectures and local municipalities were still intact. However, political crisis involving the socialist country in 2010 resulted in more actions taken against *Chōsen* schools, including cuts to prefectural subsidies. Under Ishihara's second term as metropolitan governor, Tokyo Metropolis suspended, on 24 December 2010, funds to the ten *Chōsen* schools located within its territory. The incident sparking this reaction was Yeonpyeong island attack on 23 November 2013. On this day, a South Korean military drill near the maritime border between the two states in the peninsula, where Yeonpyeong island is situated, prompted an attack from North Korea, which shelled the island causing extensive damage and killing two civilians and two marines.

309 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 163.

310 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 163.

311 TANAKA, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 163

According to North Korea, the attack was in response to a live-fire exercise from South Korea that led to shells falling in its territorial waters³¹², although South Korean drills did not include live-fire exercises. The incident was arguably the worst incident since the end of the Korean War in 1953 and was feared by some to lead to a re-opening of the conflict. In fact, although gun shots and minor attacks had occasionally occurred around the 38th parallel, nothing was comparable in scale to the Yeonpyeong bombardment. The episode of course was a reason of concern for Japan as well, due to the country's geographical proximity to the peninsula, and came to have an impact on educational policies concerning *Chōsen* schools that were being drafted at that time, most notably the *kōkō mushōka*.

The *kōkō mushōka* is the 'law regarding the non-levy of tuition fees related to public upper secondary schools and the provision of upper secondary school attendance support funds', according to which Japanese public high schools should become tuition-free (*kōkō* means “high school” and *mushōka* “becoming tuition-free”). As mentioned earlier, high school does not constitute compulsory education in Japan and until the *kōkō mushōka*, public high schools were equally charging a tuition. The law was enacted on 1 April 2010 and, as for “art.1” private schools and 'miscellaneous schools', provisions for money funds aimed at covering part of the school fees to be given to students reputed in need of financial support. Foreign schools, as 'miscellaneous schools' are eligible for the *kōkō mushōka* if they fall into one of the following categories:

- a) Upper secondary institutions that follow the education system of a foreign country.
- b) Educational institutions which are certified by organizations approved by the Minister of Education.
- c) Upon the Minister of Education's approval, institutions that have courses deemed to be similar to a high school curriculum.³¹³

Chinese, South Korean and Brazilian schools, in light of their status recognized in their respective countries, fall into category (a). International schools accredited by educational bodies such WASC or ECIS fall into category (b). Finally, *Chōsen* schools can possibly fall into category (c).

The political climate between Japan and North Korea was already tensed before the Yeonpyeong incident due to the abduction issue as well as the nuclear and missile tests that the regime had been conducting intermittently since 2006. After several postponements, an examination

312 “BBC”, *South Korea marks Yeonpyeong island attack*, 23 November 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-20457512>.

313 HIGA, TATE, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 28

by the Ministry of Education to determine whether *kōkō mushōka* was applicable to *Chōsen* schools begun on 5 November 2010. The initiative though was short-lived since the Yeonpyeong attack of November 23rd brought the examination to a halt. Kan Prime Minister, during the last period of his administration, in August 2011, mildly suggested to re-open the examination but the victory of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party on December 2012 again blocked any action in that regard³¹⁴. On 28 December 2012, the Minister of Education motivated the exclusion of *Chōsen* high schools from the *kōkō mushōka* on the grounds that: “There is no progress on the abduction issue and [*Chōsen* schools] have a tight relationship with the Chongryun. Furthermore, these two elements influence the educational content, the people and the financial affair [of the school]”³¹⁵.

The move was heavily criticized by the United Nations and human rights associations which labeled it as discriminatory. The situation has not changed to these days and many *Chōsen* high schools have filed lawsuits to push the Ministry of Education to revise its decision. Osaka *Chōkō* as well took legal actions to protest the ruling, yet its requests were not successful in court. Taking into account the monthly tuition of 37,000 yen that Osaka *Chōkō* has to charge on its students, it becomes evident how eligibility for the *kōkō mushōka* would immensely help students' families. Moreover, the provision presents also the risk to further drive *Zainichi* Korean children away from *Chōsen* high schools since Japanese public high schools are now tuition-free.

In addition, Osaka *Chōkō* has also been challenged by the funds cut from Osaka Prefecture. In fact, Tokyo Metropolis was not the only regional municipality to discontinue subsidies in 2010 and subsequent years; other prefectures followed suit and Osaka Prefecture, as well as Osaka City, suspended their money aid from March 2012. Campaigning for inclusion in the *kōkō mushōka* amendment has become one of the main focuses for *Chōsen* schools' *omoni kai*, whose members frequently hold rallies to raise awareness about the issue and support many schools' legal battles. Nevertheless, relations within the Japan and North Korea have not thawed since the emergence of the abduction issue in 2002, which has resulted in increasingly hostile policies towards *Chōsen* schools. Moreover, North Korea's continuous missile tests, where some rockets have occasionally fallen in Japanese territorial waters as recently as 2017, keep angering and worrying Japanese public institutions which still harbor unfavorable views with respect to Chongryun. As of 2018, no progress has been made on the *kōkō mushōka* issue and, many prefectures have subsidies to *Chōsen* schools currently suspended.

314 HIGA, TATE, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, “*Nihon no...*”, cit., p. 29

315 As cited in HIGA, TATE, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 29

RIGHT TO RECEIVE EDUCATION

The right of foreign residents in Japan to receive education is clearly highlighted by Chongryun in the section of its website titled: “Advocacy for acquisition and protection of the right to receive ethnic education” (*minzoku kyōiku no kenri no kakutoku to yōgo kakudai*). In there it is explained that the right to education is directly connected to the dignity of human beings, and that it is one of most important fundamental human rights³¹⁶. In addition, it is protected by the 'International Bill of Human Rights' as well as by article 26 of Japan's Constitution.

Nevertheless, the right to education of foreign children in Japan have often found controversial applications during the country's contemporary history, and it has repeatedly been interpreted to fit the government's needs. Letting alone the prewar period – when Japan in fact did not have the current Constitution which was enacted on 3 May 1947 – few years after the liberation, the right and duty to receive compulsory education was exploited by the Japanese government and SCAP to crack down on Korean ethnic schools, with the excuse that *Zainichi* Koreans had to be temporarily considered Japanese citizens, hence subject to said right and duty. As soon as Koreans were stripped of their Japanese citizenship with the treaty of San Francisco in 1952, the Japanese government did not bother anymore with what kind of education Korean residents would have received nor did it extend the right of education to them; in short, “no responsibility, no support”. Since 1952, Japan has historically maintained this position of indifference towards foreign children which, if on one hand favored the establishment of completely independent institutions with a peculiar curriculum such as *Chōsen* schools, on the other hand resulted in a large amount of foreign children in compulsory school age not attending any school (about 11.4 percent in 2005 according to Kanno, see chapter 1).

Can such an important right stated in the constitution be purportedly neglected by Japanese authorities? Article 26 reads in its English translation:

All people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law.

All people shall be obligated to have all boys and girls under their protection receive ordinary education as provided for by law. Such compulsory education shall be free.³¹⁷

The term “people” is rendered into Japanese with the word *kokumin*, which uses the Chinese characters *ko*ku (country), and *min*, translatable as people, nation, or population at large. The term

316 Chongryun, 2018, <http://www.chongryon.com/j/edu/index5.html>, retrieved on 27/08/2018.

317 “Japanese Law Translation”, 2009, <http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=174>, retrieved on 28/08/2018.

kokumin, somewhat difficult to be correctly rendered into English, may occasionally be translated as “people” (as in the English version) or as “nation”. Japanese government probably interpreted *kokumin* as signifying the Japanese nation, in particularly those possessing Japanese citizenship although it is unclear whether this interpretation was purportedly adopted with the intention of excluding foreign nationals or if it should be attributed to a lack of a deepened analysis of the term *kokumin* and its possible applications. In any case, the right and duty to receive education was understood to be limited to holders of Japanese nationality.

According to Iijima, the constitution should not always be interpreted literally, but firmly considering the social reality³¹⁸. To support his thesis, he cites as example comma 2, article 22 of the Constitution which reads: “Freedom of all persons to move to a foreign country and to divest themselves of their nationality shall be inviolate”³¹⁹. Can a foreigner divest herself of her Japanese nationality? Of course she cannot since she does not have it from the start, therefore in this case, 'persons' – rendered in Japanese as *hito*, “person(s)” – refer to Japanese nationals. Additionally, article 30 reads: “The people [rendered as *kokumin* in Japanese] shall be liable to taxation as provided by law”³²⁰. Does it follow that foreign residents are not subject to taxation? Certainly not so. Thus in this case, *kokumin* has to be interpreted as people residing in Japan³²¹. In conclusion, Iijima asserts that the target of article 26, which refers to an important human right, should be extended to foreign residents as well³²².

The non-enactment of the duty of receiving compulsory education mostly affects children of newcomers who, contrarily to oldcomer Koreans, might face linguistic and cultural barriers. In this regard, the Ministry of Education has begun to take steps and, in its annual reports on the state of education, it details the number of foreign children attending Japanese public schools. Furthermore, it advertises its free distribution of guides to the Japanese education system (*shūgaku gaido*) available in seven languages, including Portuguese and Chinese (see chapter 1). Little knowledge of a school system – which may also lead people to wrongly assume that some basic and compulsory educational services are fee-charging and consequently to them being discouraged from sending their children to school – is in fact one of the main problems affecting foreign students in all levels of schooling, from compulsory school age to university, not only in Japan but also in many other

318 IJIMA, in Satake, *Zainichi gaikokujin...*, cit., p. 222.

319 IJIMA, in Satake, *Zainichi gaikokujin...*, cit., p. 222. (English translation from: Japanese Law Translation, 2009, <http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=174>, retrieved on 28/08/2018.)

320 IJIMA, in Satake, *Zainichi gaikokujin...*, cit., p. 222. (English translation from: Japanese Law Translation, 2009, <http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=174>, retrieved on 28/08/2018.)

321 IJIMA, in Satake, *Zainichi gaikokujin...*, cit., p. 222.

322 IJIMA, in Satake, *Zainichi gaikokujin...*, cit., p. 222.

countries including the U.S.³²³. In the latter case too, however, *Zainichi* Korean oldcomers are actually little affected.

Yet, the right of receiving education may also be threatened by the total lack of support to educational institutions. This is why the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Japan Federation of Bar Associations, let alone Chongryun, have pointed out how the neglect of the Japanese government towards *Chōsen* schools, and especially the recent targeted discriminatory policies, might violate the rights of *Zainichi* Koreans to receive an education in their heritage language, allowing them to learn about their culture. In addition, Iijma asserts that the exclusion from the *kōkō mushōka*, not only does it undermine *Zainichi* Koreans' right to education but also violates article 14 of the constitution which prohibits discrimination³²⁴. In conclusion, Japan's diplomatic battles for the return of the abductees and North Korean military threats should not undermine children's right to education in *Chōsen* schools, which have long abandoned tones of propaganda and never demonstrated to be institutions sponsoring terrorism.

AN AGING COMMUNITY

Due to their more than a hundred years' permanence within Japan, *Zainichi* Koreans have shown, since long time ago, the same demographic trends of Japanese, an aging population. Concomitant to one of the world's lowest fertility rate, the steep decline of the Japanese young has been inexorable and Korean residents' youngsters make no exception. In 2005, Japan reached its record lowest fertility rate of 1.26 children per woman, which since then has been slightly increasing until 2016's of 1.44 children per woman³²⁵. Nevertheless, it remains one of the world's lowest and, considering the necessary rate of 2.1 children per woman to sustain a demographic growth, Japan is still far from offsetting the problems of an aging population.

Even among *Zainichi* Korean, the number of deaths is not counterbalanced by an exact or higher number of births, which leads to a shrink in the population as witnessed in table 1 at chapter 1. Yet, there are also other factors which further contribute to a decrease of *Zainichi* Koreans, in particular Korean oldcomers, hence holders of a special permanent residence permit (*tokubetsu eijūsha*). As already emerged, naturalization into Japanese is now fairly common, not to mention mixed Korean-Japanese marriages which now constitute the majority of unions involving a resident Korean. It is estimated in fact that since the 1970s the number of intermarriages between Koreans

323 See Kanno 2018.

324 IIJIMA, in Satake, *Zainichi gaikokujin...*, cit., p. 226

325 “The World Bank”, 2016, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=JP>, retrieved on 09/11/2018.

and Japanese has surpassed the figure for marriages within South Korean/*Chōsen* nationals, and already in 1997, marriages with at least a spouse being a Korean resident were composed by 84.1 percent of mixed Japanese-Korean couples, and by only 14.9 percent of couples entirely Korean³²⁶. Taking into account that since 1985, both parents, and not just the father, have been able to pass on Japanese nationality to their children, it follows that all the offspring of mixed Japanese-Korean couples will obtain Japanese nationality, consequentially loosing their special permanent residence if the Korean parent is an oldcomer³²⁷.

Kaji, using the years between 1995 and 2005 as sample period and taking into account parents' nationality, analyzes the number of children living in families with the mother being aged fifty-five or younger, and the number of children living in one-parent families with that parent being aged fifty-five or younger³²⁸ in Japan. He concludes that in this ten years' period, children with at least one parent of South Korean/*Chōsen* nationality have diminished by 27 percent, while children with both parents of South Korean/*Chōsen* nationality have decreased by a stunning 47 percent, thus almost by half³²⁹. The institutions most likely affected by these data are of course *Chōsen* schools. In fact, as seen in the population breakdown of institutions analyzed in chapter 4, the nearly totality of students come from families with both parents of Korean nationality, while students holding Japanese nationality or with at least a Japanese national as parent constitute a tiny minority. This implies that the population usually targeted by *Chōsen* schools has been dwindling at a very fast rate. The consequences of this ongoing shrink are evident from the declining number of *Chōsen* institutions through the years 1989, 1996 and 2012 (1989 → 1996 → 2012):

- Korea University (*Chōsen daigakkō*): 1 → 1 → 1
- *Chōsen* high schools (*kōkyū gakkō*): 12 → 12 → 10
- *Chōsen* middle schools (*chūkyū gakkō*): 56 → 52 → 33

326 CHUNG, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 126.

327 Children born by a parent being a national of a country other than Japan and by a parent holding a special permanent residence permit can obtain both. Thus, there are cases, reported in statistics, of people being, for example, American, Italian, or French nationals and holding a special permanent residence permit for Japan. Nevertheless, their presence is irrelevant to our analysis of *Chōsen* schools as there are virtually no students enrolled in such schools of nationality other than Japan, South Korea or *Chōsen*.

328 Kaji's figures therefore include, for instance, even workers aged thirty who live with a parent aged fifty-five or younger, while it does not include, for example, university students aged who live by themselves.

329 KAJI Itaru, "Shōshika to gurōbaruika no naka de: koria kei gaikokujingakkō no 'keiei senryaku'" (Amidst birth rate decline and globalization: 'management strategies' of Korean schools), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, 2014, pp. 146-159, cit., p. 146.

- *Chōsen* primary schools (*shōkyū gakkō*): 83 → 76 → 54
- *Chōsen* kindergartens (*yōchien*): 68 → 61 → 38³³⁰

Although some of the schools may have closed for financial issues or other reasons, the incredible shrink in their number makes evident how enrollments in *Chōsen* schools have been decreasing.

EDUCATIONAL CHOICES OF *ZAINICHI* KOREANS

If just a part of Korean residents attend *Chōsen* schools, where do the rest of Korean parents send their children? The close-knit communities around *Chōsen* schools do not encompass by any means all Korean residents, but instead constitutes a tiny portion of them. In fact, Park estimates that in 2011, around 10 percent of all *Zainichi* Korean parents sent their children to ethnic schools, including both Chongryun-affiliated *Chōsen* schools and Mindan-affiliated South Korean schools³³¹. What other educational choices are offered to parents?

First of all, many Korean parents, no matter their will, are limited by the availability of *Chōsen* schools, which may not be present where they live. In fact, although *Zainichi* Koreans have historically concentrated in specific regions, most notably Osaka and the Kansai area, they were and are present in every Japanese prefecture. Moreover, it can be said that every region in Japan was involved to a certain extent in the Korean diaspora; given that Korean immigrant laborers were often recruited (or forcibly recruited) to work not only in city factories but also in mines, they were sometimes sent to far rural regions with mining activities. Even Tokushima and Kagoshima, the prefectures respectively with the least numerous Korean population (362 people) and the lowest density of *Zainichi* Koreans (0.03 Koreans every 100 people)³³² equally appear in records of the years between 1939 and 1942, which the number of Korean laborers requested in working sites throughout all Japan's forty-seven prefectures³³³.

This example of data can certify that Korean laborers, forcibly taken to Japan to supply the labor demand in time of war, were hired in every single Japanese prefecture. Today, Chongryun has

330 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 147.

331 PARK 2011, as cited in TANADA Yōhei, “'Zainichi gakkō' to shite rekishi to mirai: Hakutō Gakuin Kenkoku yō – sho – chū – kōtō gakkō” (History and future as a *Zainichi* school: Baekdu Hagwon Keonguk Comprehensive School) in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, 2014, pp. 103-117, cit., p. 158 (note number 8).

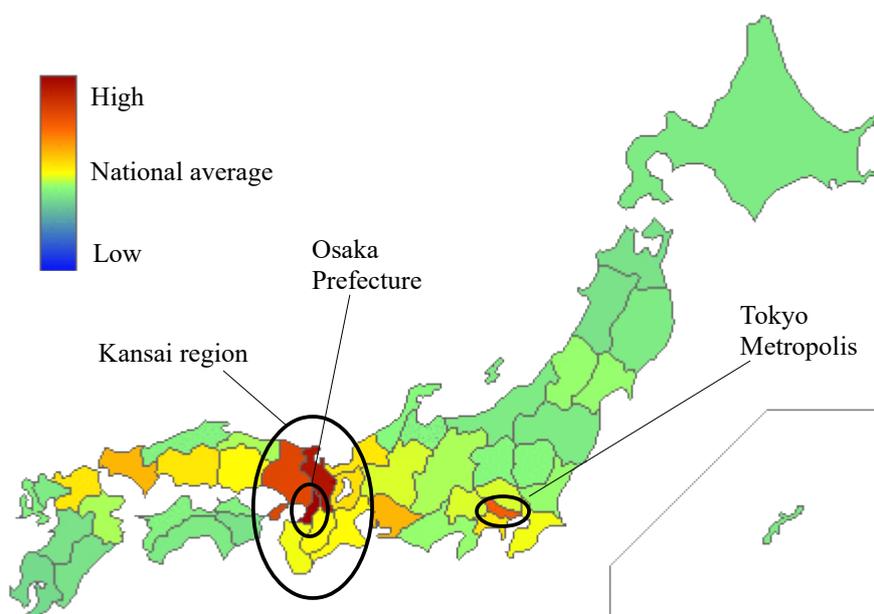
332 Data refer to 2015. See Table 11.

333 MIYACHI Hidetoshi, “Chōsenjin rōmusha boshū jōkyō” (Situation on the recruitment of Korean workers), *Keizaigaku Kenkyū*, 77, 1, 2010, pp. 143-162, cit., p. 158.

at least one office in every Japanese prefecture with the exception of Okinawa³³⁴, whose territory is being taken care of by one of the offices in Fukuoka Prefecture. Nevertheless, of the forty-seven Japanese prefectures, only twenty-eight have *Chōsen* institutions of any level (Mindan schools are immensely less numerous and present in even less municipalities), which means that Korean residents of these areas either have to commute to the nearest prefecture with an ethnic school, if this option is available, or enroll into a Japanese public school.

Instead, the prefecture with the largest *Zainichi* Korean population is Osaka where Korean residents occupy the highest percentage over the total population (1.28 *Zainichi* Koreans every 100 people) compared to other municipalities³³⁵. Table 11 below shows the percentage of Korean residents over the total population (how many Korean residents every hundred people) as of 2015.

TABLE 11: Variation in the Number of Korean Residents every 100 People per Prefecture³³⁶



334 The population of *Zainichi* Koreans in Okinawa Prefecture, though incredibly small, is not the lowest both in terms of number and of percentage over the total Okinawa population. I was not able to find data to explain the lack of a Chongryun's office in this prefecture, therefore the following reflection is merely my speculation. I think that this absence can partially be reconducted to the American occupation of the region which lasted until 1972. Similarly to *Chōsen* schools, which sprung up in great numbers during the repatriation rush around 1959, several Chongryun's offices were erected during the same period in order to provide information about the repatriation program, and to carry out registrations of would-be returnees. Since Okinawa was still governed by the U.S., which though tolerating it were not supportive of the repatriation initiative in Japan, it can be assumed that founding such offices was not permitted.

335 Todo-ran, 2015, <https://todo-ran.com/t/kiji/11618>, retrieved on 02/09/2018.

336 Sources: “Todo-ran”, 2015, <https://todo-ran.com/t/kiji/11618>, retrieved on 02/09/2018.

Shades tending to dark brown indicate a higher presence of *Zainichi* Koreans over the total population compared to the national average colored in yellow (about 0.25 *Zainichi* Koreans every 100 people), whereas shades tending to blue indicate the opposite.

Osaka stands at top of the ranking, followed by Kyoto and Hyogo (being respectively in the upper right and upper left of Osaka Prefecture), and eventually Tokyo. Table 11 shows the density of *Zainichi* Koreans but if we look at their population, Osaka still sits at the top (113,408 people) while Tokyo comes second (96,099 people). As for children in compulsory education years (population of or under 15 years old), Osaka Prefecture numbers 6.905 *Zainichi* Koreans in 2013. How are these children educated? In comparison with Tokushima or other rural municipalities, Osaka Prefecture can offer a wide pool of options, arguably the widest, for *Zainichi* Korean parents who can choose between four main paths.

First of all, they can of course send their children to *Chōsen* schools which, as seen in the previous chapter, are present in high numbers in Osaka. By enrolling in *Chōsen* schools, a child will experience the school life that we have investigated until now, with its benefits and its drawbacks. *Chōsen* schools can, above all, provide a safe environment where a child's Korean heritage will be valued and cultivated; the child will not have to fear discrimination and will be free to use his Korean name instead of his Japanese name (*tsūshōmei*), always used in social situations involving Japanese people. Children may find themselves in a close-knit environment where it is easy to make durable friendships with classmates and teachers, in addition to enjoy the support of the compatriot community and Chongryun's network. Furthermore, the child will benefit from learning a new language, which can be brought, with proper exercise and dedication, to native level, not to mention acquiring a double perspective (*Zainichi* Korean and Japanese) on matters.

As a downside, *Chōsen* schools charge tuition, potentially accruing a family's financial burden, without actually providing modern and efficient infrastructures or many services in return. Moreover, *Chōsen* education is still marginal from the mainstream Japanese education system and that of other foreign schools, as a consequence, despite the many improvements, transfer to another institution, proceeding to a university, or gaining any type of state aid might be impossible or more difficult. In light of the international status of North Korea, *Chōsen* education might be negatively regarded, both within Japan and abroad, narrowing possibilities of employment or chances of integration. *Chōsen* schools generally accept only children with Korean heritage and are characterized by a small and close-knit environment which some may retain little stimulative and monotonous, not to mention that, other than the Korean language, these institutions offer no qualifications usable in foreign countries but North Korea, that nearly nobody regards as possible future residence. Finally, many parents might question an education that, although not anymore

heavily politically oriented, still elects North Korea as a point of reference.

It is estimated that in 2011, 23.6 percent of the 3,458.9 *Zainichi* Korean children in primary school age in Osaka, Nara, and Wakayama Prefectures (all in the same school district as for *Chōsen* education) are enrolled in *Chōsen* schools. As for middle school age and high school age, the percentages are 17.6 over a total population of 2,194.8, and 12.9 over a total population of 2,924.8 respectively³³⁷. The proportions are relatively high in Osaka Prefecture compared to the national average probably because of the great availability of such institutions in the prefecture and nearby areas. Curiously, despite the continuous decline of students, data show that the percentage of *Zainichi* Korean children enrolling in *Chōsen* schools has been increasing over the last decades in Osaka Prefecture. Kaji motivates this fact on the ground that the denominator on which the proportion is calculated, i.e. the total number of *Zainichi* Korean children, is shrinking at a such fast rate in just one generation that the overall percentage eventually results higher³³⁸.

Secondly, parents may send their offspring to one of the two Mindan-affiliated schools located in Osaka Prefecture. The focus of my research is of course on *Chōsen* schools, yet Mindan schools, which constitute another alternative within the realm of Korean ethnic education, seldom appear in this thesis. This absence can be explained with the fact that Mindan schools were founded on a much smaller scale compared than *Chōsen* schools. Some Mindan schools, or South Korean schools, boast a long history that date to the post-war period, yet they are present only in Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo Prefectures. Mindan did not engage in a large scale promotion of ethnic education also because South Korea was opposing the repatriation of compatriots in Japan, not to mention the fact that, at least at the beginning of its history, this *Zainichi* Korean association could count on a much smaller membership compared to Chongryun. Mindan schools located in Osaka Prefecture, which we will look to more in details in the next chapter, have the unique characteristic of receiving support from South Korea and meeting Japanese Ministry of Education's standards for full accreditation³³⁹. They therefore are, at the same time, South Korean schools and Japanese 'art.1' schools. This implies that, while some teachers are dispatched directly from Seoul, a large part of the lessons have to be in Japanese, in fact these schools actually combine the Japanese standard curriculum with electives in Korean subjects.

This solution has multiple advantages such as that of finding a protected environment where to nurture one's own Korean heritage while not being fenced off from the Japanese education. The 'art.1' accreditation entails that these schools are fully recognized as Japanese institutions therefore

337 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 147.

338 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 148.

339 HESTER, in Ryang, *Koreans in...*, cit., p. 181.

can enjoy automatic qualification for university entrance exams, money aid and integration into the mainstream education system. The schools are also accredited South Korean institutions, as a consequence, they grant to students the possibility of pursuing tertiary education in Japan as well as South Korea. The cultural enrichment deriving from acquiring a double cultural perspective might be further developed in Mindan schools as they cater to both oldcomers and recent South Korean immigrants; this allows for a further cultural confrontation between the two groups which is not possible in *Chōsen* schools whose student body is composed exclusively of oldcomers. The presence of South Korean teachers and recent immigrants, both native speakers of Korean, may facilitate the acquisition of the language for oldcomers normally accustomed to speak Japanese only.

On the other hand, like in *Chōsen* schools, students are not exempted from paying a tuition; in fact, despite the 'art. 1' accreditation they still are private institutions which in some cases charge even more than their *Chōsen* counterparts. As of 2013, Mindan-affiliated Keonguk³⁴⁰ School's primary section has a monthly tuition of 15,000 yen (Seibang charges 8,000 yen monthly), while its middle section charges 20,000 yen per month compared to Seibang and *Tongjung's* 12,500 yen. Only from the high school level do *Chōsen* schools become more expensive. Moreover, South Korean schools are not totally dedicated to help the oldcomer community as they need to bargain both their interests as well as those of newcomers. It follows that *Chōsen* schools' close-knit environment where individuals feel part of a network may not be present in South Korean schools where oldcomers' and newcomers' different cultural background and future expectations are liable to lead to confusing educational approaches.

Besides, if on one hand some teachers and students are native Korean speakers, on the other hand the curriculum is not entirely taught in this language and it is instead dominated by Japanese, used in all subjects with the exception of Korean and English language classes and Korean-related courses. This situation is liable to lead to difficulties in fully mastering the Korean language which schools like Keonguk attempt to ward off through increasing the number of classes for Korean electives. It follows that students have an exceptional workload at any level of schooling, consistently higher than Japanese schools, and may suffer from too much academic pressure. In South Korea, preparation for universities' entrance examinations, notably way more competitive than in Japan, oblige pupils in high schools to study for long hours, not rarely stretching until very late at night. South Korean schools in Japan, with their aim of preparing for entrance examinations in both Japan and South Korea, have similarly started to require students to study long hours,

340 The institution's full name is Educational Foundation Baekdu Hagwon Keonguk (Japanese name: Hakutō Gakuin Kenkoku).

exerting much pressure on them. Parents may question whether this method is appropriate, especially if they aim to send their children to less competitive Japanese universities. Finally, if some parents might be concerned with the political orientation of *Chōsen* schools, others might oppose an ethnic education focused on South Korea. It is estimated that Mindan-affiliated schools were attended by not quite 4 percent of Osaka's Korean youngsters in 1996³⁴¹. Although more recent data are not available, given that there are only two South Korean schools in Osaka, the percentage should not be too much higher today.

The most popular choice is of course represented by Japanese public high schools which, as said above, are usually the only option available for Korean children living in more rural prefectures. Even in Osaka, Japanese public schools provide advantages in terms of distance, in fact, given the high population density in Osaka Prefecture, people usually live at a walkable distance from the nearest primary or middle school. The few *Chōsen* and South Korean schools are normally found in neighborhoods densely populated by Koreans, yet they sometimes require a relatively long commute for children living more far off. Most importantly, Japanese public high schools are certainly advantageous money-wise as they are free of tuition. Needless to say, their 'art. 1' accreditation means full integration into the wider education system, with more assistance and less hassle for matters regarding university entrance, educational possibilities, and even job hunting.

The downsides are evident in the fact that these schools have nothing Korean. They are indeed Japanese institutions where a student's Korean heritage may not be acknowledged and valued, even experiencing discrimination in some cases. Almost without exception, Korean students will use their Japanese passing name with classmates and will not be taught how the *Zainichi* Korean community emerged or how it is composed. It goes without saying that they will not learn the Korean language, being therefore deprived of a bilingual education with all the benefits coming with it. As stated by Kanno, Japanese public primary schools usually bargain a full integration into the school life with the annihilation of a foreign child's cultural background³⁴²; pursuit of both integration and cultivation of one's own foreign cultural roots is usually not given as an option. Ethnic classes in public schools can possibly circumvent this binary choice, acknowledging and legitimating children's Korean background. Nevertheless, ethnic classes are implemented in very few Japanese institutions, and with their extracurricular status and free-participation basis they cannot provide children with good Korean language skills nor with the extensive knowledge on Korean culture offered in *Chōsen* and South Korean institutions. In Osaka Prefecture, more than 80 percent of Korean children are educated in Japanese public schools.

341 HESTER, in Ryang, *Koreans in...*, cit., p. 181.

342 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p.156.

A fourth possible alternative, emerged only in 2008 and uniquely available in Osaka, is represented by Korea International School (*Koria kokusai gakuen*). This school, not affiliated to neither the Chongryun nor the Mindan, has recently appeared as a substitute to the traditional educational choices open to Korean residents. Korea International School, though receiving enrollments from many South Korean expatriates and offering a suitable preparation for South Korean universities, asserts to embrace an international profile, without specifically looking at the North or the South. In fact, one of its major characteristic is that of devoting several classes to the English language, attempting to offer the necessary skills to enter universities outside of both Japan and South Korea. Witnessing an evolving Zainichi Korean community, which increasingly does not feel affiliated to neither the Chongryun nor the Mindan, Korea International School does not employ the politically-charged words *Chōsen* or *Kankoku* (South Korea) but instead uses the English word “Korea” rendered in Japanese *katakana*.

This school, which we will later analyze more in details, offers the benefits of both an ethnic and international education, in fact English, Korean and Japanese languages are equally strengthened. Consequently, students acquire the sufficient skills to become good applicants to Japanese, Korean, and English-medium universities. Moreover, the school has an exceptionally small student population, a part of which reside on the campus dorm, creating a familiar environment with a low student-teacher ratio. Korea International School is accredited as a 'miscellaneous school' but its students are eligible university applicants in Japan, and the school is included in the *kōkō mushōka*. Its tuition is however quite expensive, although the high school section only charges 1,000 yen per month more than Osaka *Chōkō* as of 2013. Other downsides may include the ambitious approach of effectively implementing a trilingual education which results in a demanding curriculum with long study hours. Moreover, given the recent history of the school, parents might have legitimate doubts on whether teachers have successfully been able to properly carry out in practice the school's ambitious educational mission. Lastly, the school's small and cozy environment can be reputed suffocating or devoid of new stimuli. As a matter of fact, Korea International School covers only the middle and high school levels, therefore it cannot really constitute the sole choice for a child's compulsory education years. Yet, it is definitely worth noting its emergence within the educational choices for *Zainichi* Koreans.

After this analysis, it is evident how the striking majority of *Zainichi* Korean children go to Japanese public institutions, even in cities, like Osaka, which are plentiful with institutions offering an ethnic education. This being said, I would like to note that Japanese high schools should not be strictly seen as practically advantageous, financially and in terms of integration, and culturally detrimental with regards to one's child Korean identity; Japanese public schools can give justice and

legitimize a child's Japanese identity. In fact, it is important to remember that many Korean children, whose family have “resided” in Japan for generations, may consider themselves to be Japanese and may not easily welcome enrollment in a school where lessons are held in a foreign language. Speaking of which, today virtually the totality of children of Korean oldcomer origin are Japanese mother-tongue and know no words in Korean. Furthermore, taking into account that Japanese-Korean mixed marriages have since the 1970s comprised the majority of marriages involving Korean residents, the current generation of children has often an entire side of the family with no origins in the peninsula. These Japanese citizens who are ethnically half Japanese, half *Zainichi* Korean are not counted in the survey. Given the percentage of Japanese nationals among students of *Chōsen* schools analyzed normally averaging no more than 4 percent, it can be assumed that the overall majority of these children go to Japanese schools. This low percentage might indicate that only parents with deeper ties to the compatriot community who normally do not intermarry, are eager to send their children to *Chōsen* schools. On the other hand, Japanese parents may prefer for their children the same type of education they themselves went through or may hold negative opinions with respect to *Chōsen* schools.

Another point that it is important to mention is that, although *Chōsen* schools are the primary channel for Chongryun education, they are not the only. The *Zainichi* Korean association has always implemented Korean language classes for adults which were instrumental in homogenizing the various dialects spoken by the first generation. These classes are held even now in Chongryun's offices throughout Japan, in the evening or late afternoon to favor workers and students. In addition, Chongryun organizes Saturday or summer ethnic classes targeting students enrolled in Japanese schools. Korean children dwelling in prefectures with no *Chōsen* schools can often resort to these options if they are near a Chongryun office. Even in the case where a *Chōsen* school is within reasonable distance, attendance to Chongryun weekend or holiday ethnic classes while enrolled in Japanese schools might be common. Therefore, the percentage of children going to Japanese public schools might encompass students who simply are not interested in receiving an ethnic education, to those considering enrollment in Japanese schools with attendance to Chongryun ethnic classes a good trade-off when negotiating their Korean identity.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PARALLEL

South Korea-affiliated Mindan has always constituted the big other *Zainichi* Korean association in addition to Chongryun. Mindan was formed on 3 October 1946 by compatriots who were against the leftist orientation of the League of Koreans, and was recognized by the government of South Korea shortly after the latter emerged in September 1948. Browsing the Japanese website of

Mindan, the differences with the Chongryun's equivalent can be easily noticed: Mindan's website is much more modernized, has a much more elegant sophisticated layout, and contains updated information, not to mention several useful demographic statistics on Korean residents. Enjoying the support of a country recognized by Japan, with which there are prosper economic ties, Mindan can carry out its activities with the direct help of the South Korean government. Unlike Chongryun, it can host cultural activities with experts or artists dispatched from the peninsula and can appeal to the South Korean newcomers residing in the archipelago. Mindan's webpage displays links to the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Overseas Korean Foundation, and many organizations³⁴³; in other words, it is part of an international network from which it can receive precious funds.

Mindan, similarly to Chongryun, upholds as its purpose that of improving the lives of *Zainichi* Koreans, promoting cultural activities and advocating for good international relations and the development of the 'fatherland' (*sokoku*). In its website, it is interesting to note diverging perspectives on events of *Zainichi* Korean history. Mindan highlights occurrences such as the dispatch of volunteers to fight for the South during the Korean War, the support to South Korean athletes during Tokyo Olympics, and milestones in the fight for *Zainichi* Korean rights in Japan, such as the obtainment of permanent residency. The repatriation issue is narrated from a much different viewpoint: first of all, rather than repatriation (*kikoku*), the event is labeled “sending to the North” (*hokusō*), secondly, Mindan's efforts at boycotting the enterprise in order to prevent compatriots from 'experiencing the hardships in North Korea' are praised and recounted. Interestingly, Mindan reports very precise data on the number of returnees for each year of the repatriation program and links the operation to the current issue of North Korean defectors (*datsuhoku*), i.e. people fleeing North Korea, who do so while facing serious consequences such as imprisonment, given that emigration from the country is prohibited. Mindan particularly turns its attention towards North Korean defectors of *Zainichi* heritage, who upon successfully fleeing the socialist regime, want to return to Japan and need help to start a new life. Links to Mindan centers which provide help to defectors and collect donations for the cause, are displayed in the homepage.

The website of the two *Zainichi* Korean associations diverge in another aspect as well: Chongryun proudly shows well visibly in its homepage the item “ethnic education”, full of information such as the history of ethnic education, its principles, the content of textbook reforms, *Chōsen* schools' curriculum, and so on. On the other hand, Mindan's website only reports scant information on its affiliated schools, limiting to listing all the institutions with relative address and phone number. No further data are provided regarding the educational mission or curricular content,

343 “Mindan”, 2018, <http://www.mindan.org/>, retrieved on 09/02/2018.

and this very list, which also includes simple language schools, does not have a shortcut in the association's web-page but it is instead found scrolling down the section “affiliated organizations”. This being said, it does not follow that Mindan underestimates the importance of ethnic education – more detailed explanations are found in the website of each institution – yet, ethnic schools acquire a more marginal role in the association's overall endeavors.

The foundation of *Chōsen* schools has always been a major reason of pride for Chongryun, which continued the project of ethnic education taking over the great legacy of the defunct League of Koreans, which had laid the basis for the enterprise. Furthermore, a pivotal impulse for the creation of such institutions was given from the need to prepare children for the eventual repatriation to North Korea. With no intentions to pursue a repatriation program, due to the adversity of Seoul to any project of this kind, and being in opposition to the League, the pioneer of Korean ethnic education, Mindan never actively engaged in establishing a big scale education system for *Zainichi* Koreans. Setting off on such enterprise would have been difficult also because of the relative small portion of *Zainichi* Koreans supporting Mindan at the onset of its history, and the likely unwillingness to back up the project from South Korea, troubled as it was by inner conflicts and economic crisis.

Some of the oldest South Korean schools in Japan were born upon initiatives of single educators who had their personal vision of ethnic education and subsequently affiliated to the Mindan. Keonguk School, boasting a section for every single level of instruction from kindergarten to high school, located in Osaka Prefecture, was founded in 1946 by two *Zainichi* Koreans, one of them having arrived to Japan aged twenty, and having worked as a teacher in a private school after graduation from university. From the very onset, the intention of the two founders was to create a school that could become an 'art. 1' school as they were convinced that, in order to contribute to and reconstruct the fatherland, it was necessary above all to provide Korean children with a high-quality education which would allow them to go on to high school (not common at that time) and to university³⁴⁴. The 'art. 1' accreditation was therefore vital to ensure graduates eligibility to high school and university entrance examination. Keonguk was consequently established according to the following principles: “importance of holding an official recognition as school”, “not let education being influenced by politics” and “be accepted by Japanese and international societies”³⁴⁵. The school achieved the status as 'art. 1' school in 1951.

Keonguk was confronted with the possibility of closure from the 1960s when it had started experiencing a huge decrease in enrollments. Besides the already declining birthrate, the primary

344 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 103.

345 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 104.

target of Keonguk, i.e. *Zainichi* Koreans aiming to pursue tertiary education in Japanese universities, was switching preferences. In fact, given the importance of a brilliant academic background for top careers in the medical field for example, *Zainichi* Koreans aspiring to these professions would have attempted to enroll in Japanese renown middle and high schools, which could offer a better preparation for university entrance tests. Keonguk as well was, and is, a Japanese school but, for simple matters of academic performance, held a less prestigious status. In other words, *Zainichi* Koreans with great career or academic ambitions, or their parents, would have preferred to attend schools offering supplementary preparatory courses for entrance examinations rather than Korean-related subjects. Needless to say, Korean language or Korean history were not tested subjects.

In any case, due to the continuous dwindling number of students the school was on the brink to shut its doors, when in 1976 finally came the recognition as a South Korean school by the government of Seoul. Since the school also maintained the 'art. 1' accreditation, recognition from the South Korean government implied being funded by both states which helped Keonguk reviving its financial status. This recognition made the school appealing to South Korean newcomers who tremendously increased after the liberalization of international travel in the country following 1988 Seoul Olympics³⁴⁶. As of 2012, ethnicity-wise the school demographics is composed by *Zainichi* Korean oldcomers (55%), South Korean newcomers (25%), and Japanese (20%)³⁴⁷, for a total of 413 students distributed in all sections from kindergarten to high school³⁴⁸. Among parents, not many are alumni of the school but instead people who developed an ethnic awareness and were active in the *Zainichi* Korean movement at a young age. Japanese with no Korean ethnic background attending Keonguk are students with an interest in the Korean language or culture, students who consider studying abroad in South Korea, as well as children of parents who attend South Korean churches³⁴⁹, and students who aim to enter the school's strong women volleyball team. To sum up, the student population results to be quite mixed with pupils coming from diverse backgrounds.

Similarly to *Chōsen* schools, Keonguk attempts to foster an ethnic pride in its students together with a international way of thinking supported by a trilingual education. Contrarily to Japanese and *Chōsen* schools, English is taught from the very first year of the primary level

346 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 106.

347 Children with one parent of *Zainichi* Korean heritage are counted in the *Zainichi* Korean category, while children of unions between a Japanese and a South Korean newcomer are counted in the South Korean newcomer category.

348 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 106.

349 The Christian religion is very widespread in South Korea and consequently among South Koreans in Japan who in many cases founded their own churches.

although its number of classes, usually one per week in the first years and two per week from the fourth year, is substantially lower compared to Japanese and Korean. At primary level, due to the status as 'art. 1' school, Keonguk teaches Japanese standard curriculum, which is entirely taught in Japanese combined with Korean translations for specific words and terms. To the standard curriculum, the school adds the aforementioned English language classes and Korean language classes (around six or five hours per week depending on the year), which are the most numerous after the Japanese language classes, around eight per week as required by the 'art. 1' status. Announcements, notice boards, greetings at school events are all made and written in Korean, and a student ethnic identity is always protected and valued since Korean students use and are called by their ethnic name, a practice which would generate anxiety in “normal” Japanese schools³⁵⁰. Due to the many classes dedicated to Korean, Japanese and the inclusion of English, the workload is consistently higher than Japanese and *Chōsen* primary schools: as of 2012, the total number of classes for the six years of primary school is of 6566, compared to Japanese public schools' 5645 and *Chōsen* schools' 5402.

The same approach is pursued at the middle level with the Japanese standard curriculum, taught in Japanese with occasional explanations in Korean, paired with Korean language classes which nevertheless are half the number of Japanese classes. Contrarily to *Chōsen* schools, in both the primary and the middle level Korean history and Korean geography are not taught, yet music, art and home economics classes embody Korean cultural elements such as Korean folk songs or Korean cuisine recipes; furthermore, the second year of middle school sees the introduction of Korean Society as a subject once per week. In the middle level pupils have much more math classes per week in contrast with Japanese schools, possibly to keep up with the math knowledge required in South Korea, and the total workload is equally quite demanding. In fact, summing the weekly total amount of classes for the three years Keonguk has 114 classes (thirty-eight classes per week every year), Japanese public schools have 87, and *Chōsen* schools have 90. As a result, classes are regularly held on Saturday, both at primary and middle school level.

At the high school level, students get to choose between a special university-preparatory curriculum (*tokushin kōsu*), suggested for students wishing to pass examinations at selective universities, and a comprehensive curriculum (*sōgō kōsu*), further divided in a Anglo-American culture major and a South Korean culture major³⁵¹. The latter in particular focuses on Korean ethnic education and sees the implementation of subjects such as History of the formation of *Zainichi* Korean communities or Korean history, not to mention several hours of Korean language

350 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 110.

351 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 113.

instruction. The remaining subjects are standard courses taught in Japanese which may be tested on the National Center Test. Even in the case of high school, the weekly number of classes at Keonguk, 34, is slightly higher than that of *Chōsen* and Japanese counterparts, usually 30 or 31 (although more variation is found depending on each high school).

Keonguk takes the most efforts to be faithful to its idea of being a school which offers both an ethnic and university preparatory education. In order to boost up students' chances to enter top-notch tertiary institutions, supplementary lectures in each subject are held everyday after school. On top of this, the school makes available a self-study room open from 4pm to 9pm on weekdays³⁵². The latter is apparently an idea conceived from the school's current (in 2012) principal who was directly sent by South Korea. Although it is not certain whether this method is actually effective, a large part of of Keonguk graduates proceed to universities, with a 31.4 percent going to South Korean universities and another 31.4 percent going to Japanese universities. Taking into account that the rest is split between junior colleges, study abroad and *rōnin*, virtually the totality of graduates enter tertiary education.

The wish to empower as many *Zainichi* Koreans as possible with the tools to receive a college education was certainly in the minds of Keonguk's founders. However, the same cannot be said for the accreditation as a South Korean school, which though offering a relief from budgetary issues, was not met with enthusiasm by many teachers and parents in 1976. Not few in fact feared that the school's apolitical character, a principle underlying its foundation, might have gone lost with the influence of South Korea in educational matters. The school attempts to maintain a neutral position by selecting textbooks including both Japan's and South Korea's perspective on internal and international issues³⁵³. Nevertheless, the alleged inability to balance two countries' accreditations is often targeted by critics coming from parents and former graduates. Many actually lament that the need to follow Japanese standard curriculum excessively constrains time dedicated to learn Korean language and culture. In this regard, in the 1990s the school apparently used to be quite infamous for the poor level of Korean language instruction, but many parents have reported that the quality of education has substantially improved since then and now graduates of Japanese mother-tongue are able to speak Korean fluently³⁵⁴. Tools to enhance Korean language ability include preparatory classes for the TOPIK, a widely used Korean proficiency exam, which students are mandated to take, and frequent school trips as well as short research stays in South Korea. Therefore, it seems that at least the language instruction obstacles, stemming from the need to combine Japanese

352 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 113.

353 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 115.

354 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 116.

curricular subjects with ethnic subjects, have been resolved.

It is interesting to note the initial little success of this “middle way” position envisioned by Keonguk founders, who attempted to foster an ethnic education coupled with the Japanese standard curriculum that would have allowed access to universities. It probably can be said that given the few rights granted to resident foreigners back then, few *Zainichi* Koreans would retain that such “middle way” alternatives could grant them any real possibilities of integration. Considering that one racial background could undermine a person's chance to get jobs in top firms, people wishing to live within Japanese society (or hide within Japanese society) would have preferred “pure” Japanese schools, which also offered the advantage of not having a tuition (Keonguk is a private school). On the other hand, those believing in the importance of ethnic education were going to *Chōsen* schools, where the Korean language and the Korean focus embraced all the curriculum and not just secondary subjects. Because of this reason, *Chōsen* schools could better respond to the educational desires of families intending to repatriate to North Korea, not to mention providing access to the Chongryun network, which could support marginalized *Zainichi* Koreans. The compromise of a Japanese education within an ethnic institution could possibly be equated to attempts to acquire Japanese nationality while self-identifying as Korean, which used to be frowned upon by a large part of the *Zainichi* Korean population; there was less space for “middle way” positions because legal and racial segregation did not allow them in the first place.

This compromise between an ethnic and a Japanese education can better be accepted by *Zainichi* Koreans today who in light of their better integration, are more willing to and interested in maintaining links with their heritage while still being active members of Japan's society. Furthermore, South Korean government's accreditation drew children of South Korean newcomers to the school, while the importance of investing in foreign languages perceived by many Japanese parents, as well as a deeper interest towards South Korea, solidified by the popularity in East Asia of Korean culture in the last decade (a phenomenon known as *hanryū*), attracted some Japanese students, appealed also by the security of remaining within a Japanese-accredited institution. Therefore, Keonguk appears to have successfully diversified its school population and now wants to promote itself as an “ethnic school with an international education”³⁵⁵, through a multilingual instruction. Not only thanks to its 'art. 1' status, Keonguk was able to expand outside the *Zainichi* Korean community, much in contrast with *Chōsen* schools.

However, as mentioned above the school is not exempted from challenges. As a Japanese school, Keonguk students' performance is constantly rated and compared to results coming from other Japanese schools, particularly at high school level. Performance of each school is usually

355 TANADA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 116.

evaluated according to its students' results in mock tests administered nationally by educational organizations that then calculate a deviation value (*hensachi*) for each school. In simple words, this deviation value indicates how much a given school (its students) scores higher or lower than the national average, and it is often adopted as a criterion to judge the quality of instruction of each institution. If a school reports a deviation value well above the general average, it means that its students generally score very well on mock tests and have therefore higher chances to pass entrance examinations at selective and prestigious universities. Needless to say, parents and students constantly refer to each institution's deviation value when choosing the future school and they generally aim to institutions with deviation values above the average. In this regard, Keonguk is reported to have a deviation value quite below the average, and whereas all its graduates proceed to tertiary education, few of them actually enroll in prestigious Japanese universities. Of course, the quality of education should not be judged only by numbers and deviation values, and it is undeniable that Keonguk offers unique features within Japanese mainstream education. Nevertheless, given the widespread use of these mathematical estimates when considering a future school, the danger for Keonguk is to be or result in the eye of Japanese and *Zainichi* Koreans a “bad” Japanese school with some ethnic Korean features.

THE IMPERATIVE OF GOING INTERNATIONAL

Throughout the thesis, one trait has emerged as common to every school analyzed: the need to pursue an internationalization. As a matter of fact, although characterized by a different history and diverging goals in the past, South Korean schools such as Keonguk and *Chōsen* schools alike, do not starkly clash in their educational ideals today: they equally attempt to pursue an ethnic pride and awareness together with an international viewpoint on things and a cooperation with the local Japanese community. Osaka *Chōkō* as well as Keonguk, have different teaching methods and curricula but they both do not refrain from labeling themselves schools offering a trilingual education in Korean, Japanese, and English. An educational vision embracing the Korean minority, expanding in the Japanese majority, and then projecting itself in the global world is a shared feature of many ethnic schools.

Indeed, '*kokusaika*' (“internationalization” or “globalization”) has long been an imperative in Japan as well as other countries, and it can be said that the formation of people able to compete in the international arena is something that virtually all schools aspire to, each institution prioritizing of course this or other aspect. In very banal and simple words, this urge is motivated on the grounds that, if in the past, proficiency in one or more foreign languages was requested to people effectively conducting business abroad, today, with an increasingly globalized world dominated by information

technology, this type of knowledge has often become a precondition or a preferred skill even for many people who will work their all life within their native country, whether Japan or other territories.

Needless to say, with its status as world's lingua franca, the English language is a necessary prerequisite underlying almost any process of internationalization. In this regard, it is not surprising that educational departments of many countries have striven to promote English language learning, mandating it as a subject since the first grades of primary school. Japan's education system, effectively implementing English learning only from middle school, still introduces the study of a foreign language relatively late compared to other countries, but has established high school curricula such as the 'Super English High School' (SELHi) or the 'Super Global High School' (SGH) which focus, among other things, on boosting English language proficiency. In addition, more initiatives in that sense are also taken by the single institutions through, for instance, entering exchange programs with foreign schools located abroad.

If English is a precondition, knowledge of a second or even a third foreign language is a preferred skill, if not a requirement, that can open the door to much more career opportunities. Thus, with proficiency in foreign languages being much more valued today than in the past, and thanks to their bilingual education, ethnic schools can reinvent themselves as international schools in order to expand beyond the traditionally targeted ethnic minority. Becoming attractive to Japanese students can help these schools counteracting the effects of an aging population trend which is undeniably affecting Japan's historical ethnic minorities, especially when schools cannot rely on a continuous enrollment from the temporary expatriate community, hence newcomers.

When the ethnic school can instead rely on continuous arrival of newcomers as a major source of enrollments, the situation might slightly change. For instance, Tokyo South Korean School (*Tōkyō kankoku gakkō*), was initially established in 1954 as an ethnic school for the *Zainichi* Korean oldcomer community, similarly to Keonguk or other Mindan-affiliated schools with the exception that in the past like today it lacks the 'art.1' accreditation. For a long time, oldcomers constituted the majority of enrollments, however, since the mid-1990s, they have been outnumbered by newcomers, many of them being in Japan on a temporary visa. As of 2012, at Tokyo South Korean School, students born in South Korea constitute the 60 percent of pupils at primary level, 71 percent at middle school level, and 75 percent at high level³⁵⁶. At Tokyo South Korean School, the curriculum is taught in its entirety in Korean (unless for Japanese and English language classes), employing textbooks which are used in schools in South Korea and approved by the country's Ministry of Education. Nowadays, attracting oldcomers or Japanese with no Korean

356 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 149.

background can benefit the school, yet it is not its main priority since Tokyo South Korean School chiefly targets children of South Korean expatriates, often in Japan only on a temporary basis, who expect to eventually return to South Korea and therefore seek continuation with that country's education system. Quite interesting in this regard, the school's website has only a Korean language version with no Japanese translation, unlike *Chōsen* schools or Keonguk. This huge contribution by the newcomer expatriate community is possible in areas such as Tokyo, traditionally hosting a big oldcomer population but continuously attracting new immigrants, rather than Osaka, mostly an oldcomer-majority area (see chapter 1 for the division in oldcomer, newcomer, or mixed regions).

Nevertheless, even the enrollment of newcomers of the same ethnicity does not happen automatically and ethnic schools need to nurture their appeal to the newcomer community. Of course, on one hand, ethnic schools have the inevitable advantage of offering the maintenance of newcomers' L1, a possibility which is often denied in Japanese public schools which, as demonstrated by Kanno, fail to carry out at the same time, the preservation of a mother-tongue and an effective acquisition of Japanese³⁵⁷. Yet, on the other hand, ethnic schools need to resort to specific tools, for example they first of all might want to seek an accreditation from the country of reference, so that students have a qualification allowing them to pursue education in their homeland. It goes without saying that possibility of continuing education in the country of reference does not work only in the sense of providing the necessary study titles but also in the sense of putting efforts in developing the required skills to enter university for example.

Secondly, many expatriate parents will likely wish for their children an education allowing them to work abroad or hold high job positions back home, therefore an instruction inclusive of good English skills. In fact, ethnic schools can address at the same time, the needs of parents who do not want their children to fall out of the home-country's education system because of the transfer overseas, and of parents who retain that living abroad may turn into a valuable chance to make children more proficient in English or other foreign languages³⁵⁸. This is why newcomer-focused ethnic schools such as Tokyo South Korean School equally stresses English learning. In conclusion, nowadays involvement of newcomers can itself be defined as another step towards internationalization and a significant expansion outside of the traditionally targeted oldcomer community. Moreover, it can also be said that the imagined community that some immigrant parents project onto their children does not starkly differ in many aspects from that of Japanese parents putting their children in ethnic schools: they both wish for their offspring a multilingual education which can empower them with a bright future in Japan or abroad; a thing which they

357 KANNO, "*Language and...*", cit., p.156.

358 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 151.

retain not adequately fostered in the traditional education system.

Naturally, each school addresses this push towards internationalization with different methods, which can be more, or less successful. Furthermore each institution finds or attempts to find its own way to negotiate how the arrival of newcomers, “pure” Japanese, or other new categories of students may threaten the existence of ethnic education. In fact internationalization can entail the risk of upsetting the principles on which an ethnic school was founded and institutions need to devise a specific strategy if they want to evade this possibility. Internationalization cannot be pursued imitating English-medium international schools which have a completely different origin and notably diverge in the way they deal with their language policy. In fact, Kanno notes that the powerful status of English can even permit some prestigious international schools to neglect Japanese, the local official language, whose acquisition is not strictly required for students who are English native speakers³⁵⁹. Rather than proudly advertising a multilingual education, the principal of Hal International School (fictional name), that Kanno visited, affirms: “We are not a language school though. We are a school”³⁶⁰. In fact, while bilingualism is an important goal at Hal, the school's policy is not to let language instruction undermine a more important mission of fostering international citizens³⁶¹. Ethnic schools can hardly adopt this approach. As regards the Korean ethnic education landscape, among the many possible educational strategies, an example certainly stands out for its originality: Korea International School (*Koria kokusai gakuen*).

Korea International School (hereafter called KIS), located in the outskirts of Osaka and founded in 2008, breaks the long tradition of having Korean ethnic schools in Japan either affiliated with Chongryun or with South Korea. In fact, the institution does not identify itself neither with the South neither with the North, but instead incorporates in its educational programs the point of view of both states. However, this does not imply a denial of one's Korean identity, in fact a student's Korean ethnic heritage is valued and cultivated, although not necessarily reconducted to a specific state or fatherland; simply, the school regards its Korean students as people having roots in the Korean peninsula. This unprecedented approach is reflected in the school naming as well: rather than *Chōsen* or *Kankoku* (South Korea), the English loanword *Koria*, rendered in Japanese with the *katakana* alphabet, free of any political connotation, is employed in the school's official name and in all subjects likewise. Therefore, students will study the *koriago* (“Korean Language”), the *koriashi* (“Korean history”) and if they are Korean residents in Japan, they will be called *Zainichi korian*, instead of *Zainichi kankokuchōsenjin*.

KIS's educational mission is to form people who “cross borders”, global citizens who can

359 KANNO, “*Language and...*”, cit., p.151.

360 KANNO, “*Language and...*”, cit., p. 86.

361 KANNO, “*Language and...*”, cit., p. 86.

feel comfortably in any part of the world. Rather than starting as an ethnic school and subsequently acquiring a cosmopolitan outlook, KIS has always possessed, since the very onset, an international orientation. A symbol of KIS-branded education is the effort in fostering a solid command in English, Korean and Japanese, in fact, while most of the classes are taught in Japanese, a considerable amount of time is dedicated to language learning. The school covers all grades from middle school to high school (grade seven to grade twelve) and until recently, each year students had to take ten classes a week of English – thus 2.5 times as much as Japanese public middle schools and 1.5 times as much as Keonguk – and four hours of Japanese language. As regards the Korean language, in middle schools students were taking six classes per week, therefore two times the amount of Keonguk, and 1.2 times the amount of *Chōsen* middle schools³⁶². Taking into account the big number of language classes, the curriculum resulted in a heavy workload with around thirty-nine or forty classes per week depending on the grade.

As recently as last year (2017), KIS adopted the IB (International Baccalaureate) curriculum, consequently making substantial changes to its courses, which brought down the number of classes per week to around thirty-two depending on the grade. KIS, in particular is implementing the IBDP (International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, hereafter DP), aimed at students aged sixteen to nineteen, which is therefore adopted only in high school, although curricular changes have affected the middle school level as well. The IB, which can cover all levels of schooling, is an international curriculum, widely adopted in many international schools worldwide, and assessed both internally, by the teachers of the school, and externally by the International Baccalaureate Organization. It is one of the oldest international curricula and is recognized by many universities worldwide, including Japanese universities which, as seen above, approved it as a qualification granting eligibility to university-entrance examinations. Since the program is positively evaluated internationally, the Japanese Ministry of Education has launched the project of 'IB 200 schools' which aspires to introduce the IB curriculum in 200 or more Japanese schools.

After the curricular change, KIS saw the introduction of DP's core subjects, taught in English, composed of: Theory of knowledge (TOK); Extended essay (EE); Creativity, activity, service (CAS). Not necessarily all of these elements correspond to specific courses but can indicate activities, evaluations (such as the final essay on a given theme required to complete the DP) or projects relating to the CAS concepts³⁶³. The rest of the curriculum is in fact quite similar to that of

362 KAJI, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 152.

363 International Baccalaureate Organization, <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/>, retrieved on 09/02/2018.

Japanese high schools, with the exception of teachings such as *Zainichi* Korean History or Korean History, and the several classes dedicated to the English and Korean language, which compared to the old curriculum have been reduced from ten to six lessons per week for the former. Despite the curriculum change, KIS has maintained the characteristic, since its foundation, to organize language classes in middle school not according to grade but according to level of proficiency³⁶⁴. Afterward, in the high school sections, students then normally follow language lessons based on their grade with the final goal of achieving a proficiency in the three languages required to attend Japanese, Korean, or English-medium universities. KIS attempts not to limit the use of Korean and English, the non-local languages, to the classroom, but to employ them in posters, announcements, and extracurricular activities. Tools to boost mastery of all the three languages include speech contests, mandatory study trips abroad, and assessments of students' proficiency level through internationally recognized tests such as TOPIK (for Korean) and TOEFL (for English), which ultimately can serve as certifications for entering university³⁶⁵.

Other features of the education in place at KIS is the teaching of Liberal Arts (*kyōyō*) in middle school and, before the introduction of the DP curriculum, in high school as well. The subject is based on the principle of 'Education for Sustainable Development' (ESD) which consists in nurturing, among others, a 'systematic and coherent ability to think', the 'values undermining a sustainable development', as well as analytical and communication skills³⁶⁶. Furthermore, the school routinely invite students to discuss issues regarding *Zainichi* Koreans, relationships between Japan and the two Koreas, and other international affairs by also holding conference led by university professors or scholars. An approach inclusive of all points of view permeates, where possible, every class, as documented by Higa who, during his fieldwork in the institution, writes about a Korean language lesson in the high school section centered on the topic of “ school uniform”. For this lesson, students were divided into groups and were supposed to prepare a presentation in Korean about the meaning of wearing uniforms, by comparing uniforms used in *Chōsen* schools, South Korean schools, and Japanese schools³⁶⁷. Finally, KIS largely promotes school clubs, volunteering activities, and an active engagement in the local community through collaboration with schools or organizations in the vicinity.

The student body is extremely small (eighty-seven students in total as of April 2018), but it

364 HIGA Yasunori, “Ekkyōjin wo sodateru: koria kokusai gakuen chūtōbu – kōtōbu” (Raising people who cross borders: Korea International Middle - High school), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, 2014, pp. 132-145, cit., p. 138.

365 HIGA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 138.

366 HIGA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 140.

367 HIGA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 135.

has been growing steadily. Pupils come from very diverse backgrounds, in fact Higa calculates that as of 2012, Korean oldcomers constituted about the 40 percent, Korean newcomers were in between 20 and 30 percent, and Japanese with no roots in foreign countries a little less than 10 percent³⁶⁸. Interestingly, KIS has also drawn some students with no Korean roots but of mixed Japanese-foreign parentage. In 2012, it was estimated that about 30 percent of students held Japanese nationality³⁶⁹. The school is equipped with dormitories, in fact students coming from outside the Kansai area as well as South Korean students with no previous record of permanence in Japan are enrolled. Academic backgrounds of both students and professors are equally diverse with people having previously attended or taught at *Chōsen* schools, Japanese schools, South Korean schools based in Japan, South Korean schools located in the peninsula, or even schools in China and America (this is the case for the English mother-tongue teachers). The school requires an entrance examination where either Korean or Japanese are tested, yet no previous knowledge in both of them is requested, therefore children who pass the Japanese test but have zero proficiency in Korean, as well as the opposite case, can likewise be admitted. English becomes a requirement only from the high school level and it is not tested in the entrance examination for the middle school section³⁷⁰. There is no condition on the child's ethnicity, in fact KIS ideally wishes to create an extremely various school environment, in line with the principle of multicultural coexistence (*tabunka kyōsei*)³⁷¹.

KIS is a miscellaneous school and, while trying to maintain a neutral position, has applied for accreditation from South Korea also in order to increase possibilities of carrying out study trips in the country, although no approval has been received so far. Needless to say, given the school philosophy and lack of ties with Chongryun, direct collaboration with or accreditation from North Korea (which would not be legally recognized in Japan) are not viable choices. KIS is included in the *kōkō mushōka* provision and even before the adoption of the DP, its students were eligible for university entrance examinations. Nonetheless, similarly to *Chōsen* schools, the institution was deprived of financial funds from Osaka Prefecture in March 2013 as a miscellaneous school³⁷². KIS experienced episodes of discrimination also at the time of its opening when many locals opposed the establishment of a 'Korean' school. In its first decade though, the school seems to have made many steps forward, increasing its enrollment every year, and managing to send some of its

368 HIGA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 136.

369 HIGA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 136.

370 Korea International School, <http://kiskorea.ed.jp/entrance>, retrieved on 09/02/2018.

371 HIGA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 136.

372 HIGA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 145.

graduates to universities not only within Japan or South Korea, but located also in the U.S., Canada or Europe. Its position outside the previous seemingly unavoidable binary choice between Chongryun-affiliated schools and Mindan-affiliated schools as well as its thorough approach to internationalization and foster of multicultural understanding, definitely makes KIS an unseen case within Korean ethnic education in Japan. Instead of a school where students reproduce their identity, it is a school where everybody altogether find and create their own identity³⁷³.

To my knowledge, existing literature on Korea International School is mostly based on the old curriculum, hence before the recognition in 2017 as a IB school. It will certainly be interesting to investigate how the school will evolve after the adoption of the DP, and whether this new experiment in Korean ethnic education will equally be successful in the future.

ETHNIC EDUCATION IN A CHINESE SCHOOL

Zhonghua Chinese Ethnic School³⁷⁴, is an example of ethnic education in Japan outside the realm of all types of Korean schools. The *Zainichi* Chinese community has very ancient roots in Japan, and for decades it has been the second most numerous minority in the archipelago after Koreans, until reaching the first position in 2008 (see Table 1 in chapter 1). Chinese ethnic schools have always been very few – also due to the fact that the *Zainichi* Chinese population has historically been consistently smaller than that of *Zainichi* Koreans – yet they date back way before the foundation of Korean schools in the post-war period. The forerunner school of Zhonghua, for instance, was founded in 1898, and lasted until 1952, when due to the creation of the communist Popular Republic of China (PRC) and the capitalist Republic of China (ROC, hence Taiwan), there was a split into two institutions, one, Zhonghua, sympathetic to the PRC, and another, favorable to the ROC³⁷⁵. Both institutions still exist today and are located in the same neighborhood.

Chinese ethnic schools have never been reunited under a nationwide network headed by a *Zainichi* Chinese organization, as in the case of Chongryun, but have always been independent, with each institution choosing which textbooks or educational policies to adopt. Therefore there never was an overwhelming influence from the 'homeland' as witnessed in *Chōsen* schools' old curriculum, overtly shaped by Chongryun on North Korea's educational ideologies. Recognized as a miscellaneous school by its prefecture, Zhonghua, like every Chinese ethnic school in Japan, was a

373 HIGA, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 144.

374 In order to respect one of my sources' intention not to reveal the original name of the school, I will not disclose the school's location and will employ the fictional name Zhonghua even when quoting from sources using the original name.

375 SHIBANO Jun'ichi, "Jidai ni macchi shita gakkō wo tsukuru" (Building a school matching the current times), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, pp. 167-180, cit., p.168. (Original name of the school removed).

sanctuary where Chinese children could receive an education sheltered from any type of discrimination³⁷⁶, in fact, similarly to Koreans, Chinese in Japan had to endure segregation and exclusion from the social welfare system. The community gathered and still gathers around the school where Chinese culture and identity are protected; though the atmosphere has somewhat changed as the school grew bigger in the last decades, Zhonghua has been a place of close-knit human relations, perhaps even more so than some *Chōsen* schools like Seibang. In fact, if in Chongryun's education teachers first study at Korea University and then find employment in available posts in one of the many *Chōsen* schools, at Zhonghua, teachers' vacant positions have often been taken by former students, therefore favoring a strong bond not only among different generations of students and parents but also among different generations of teachers.

Starting from the 1980s, Zhonghua entered a period of transformations, some of them triggered by the concern about access of its graduates to Japanese universities. In fact, before 2003, when Chinese ethnic schools' graduates were officially declared eligible for university entrance examinations, Zhonghua's students were barred from enrolling in public universities, and as for private universities, eligibility was granted at discretion of each institution, in a way quite similar to *Chōsen* schools. However, unlike the latter, Zhonghua could not rely on the presence of a Chinese ethnic university, nor could it send graduates to Chinese institutions which did not recognize their study titles. Taking into account that in the 1980s much fewer universities were prone to accept graduates from ethnic 'miscellaneous schools', Zhonghua resorted to the decision of abolishing its high school section in 1982, in order to allow its students to eventually pursue tertiary education in Japan. The rationale behind this choice was that, back then, students of ethnic schools could access Japanese high schools much more easily than Japanese universities. Therefore, even today Zhonghua's graduates are obliged to attend Japanese high schools which eventually will give them the necessary qualifications to smoothly sit for university entrance examinations.

Since 1982, the school has been composed only by the kindergarten, primary, and middle sections, with educational content of each level being shaped according to the expectation that students will continue to Japanese high schools. Namely, in the curriculum of primary school's grades the presence of Japanese language in the curriculum is minimized as much as possible: all subjects are taught in Chinese, in a sort of 'language across the curriculum' approach where language teaching permeates any subject, much the say way of *Chōsen* schools³⁷⁷. Conversely, as students proceed to middle school, Japanese language becomes prominent in many subjects in order to prepare students to high school's entrance examinations. Therefore a language immersion

376 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 60.

377 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 64.

approach as in *Chōsen* schools is only found at primary level while it is partially abandoned in middle school. Kanno estimates that as early as grade six (last year of primary school) instructional time in the two languages is roughly fifty:fifty. In grade seven (the first of middle school) Chinese is reduced to twenty-five percent and subjects like math are switched to Japanese³⁷⁸.

This method, adopted by Zhonghua since 1982, leaves Kanno a bit critical as she retains that the level of exposure to Chinese in middle school is not sufficient³⁷⁹. She reports that, as children learn more specific Japanese vocabulary, their Chinese becomes poor and they become reticent about using it which makes her wonder whether the transition to Japanese high schools poses a major cultural shock on children, despite the atmosphere in middle school being very Japanese³⁸⁰. To make another comparison with *Chōsen* schools, we have seen in fact that the nearly totality of students in middle schools would choose to stay within Chongryun education even in high school. Due to the introduction of laws granting eligibility for university to Chinese ethnic schools, it will be interesting to see whether Zhonghua will eventually reintroduce a high school section, even though this would mean another heavy transformation of the curriculum.

After 1982, other curriculum reforms followed suit, one of the most important happening in 1993 which stressed the significance of learning a “usable” Chinese, hence a current version of the language less based on literary forms. This was also made possible by more lively interactions with the government of the PRC which had begun sending Chinese native teachers from 1983 as well as some funds. The content of this shift parallels Chongryun's big curricular revisions, which were curiously enacted much during the same time, which introduced a more colloquial version of Korean in lessons. Without going too much into details, it can be said that such transformations were due both to reasons specific of each case – the abandonment of Chongryun's heavily politicized formal version of Korean mirrored the end of the old curriculum exclusively focused on North Korean propaganda – and reasons related to the overall increased arrival in the 1990s of many foreigners in Japan, to whom it was necessary to communicate. I believe that the phenomenon of language teaching reforms should not be restricted to ethnic schools or to Japan; in fact, before the 1990s the teaching of foreign languages was in general excessively based on study of literary classics or grammar forms since there probably was a little assumption that learners would have been compelled to effectively use the foreign language with native speakers.

In any case, language teaching reforms at Zhonghua paved the way for the gradual shift from ethnic education to language education. This element brings us to analyze the great advantage

378 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 80.

379 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 81.

380 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 82.

that Zhonghua has over other ethnic schools in pursuing an internationalization: Chinese language's huge cultural capital. While Korean schools wishing to enter an internationalization process necessarily need to heavily incorporate English in their educational strategy – with many institutions marketing themselves as schools offering a trilingual (Korean, Japanese and English) education – Zhonghua can more easily attract people outside of the Chinese community, lured by the simple possibility of becoming proficient in the Chinese language. A good command of the latter in fact, with the emergence of China's economic superpower, has come to be considered as a powerful asset, not only in Japan but worldwide. Zhonghua as well cannot ignore English learning, which is of course included in the curriculum, yet the presence of English in educational mission statements is much more reduced; English serves as a complement to the bilingual Chinese-Japanese instruction given at Zhonghua rather being a vital element.

When Kanno visited the school around the year 2000, the student population breakdown was as follows: a 60 percent was composed by oldcomer ethnic Chinese (including people with Japanese nationality), a 30 percent by newcomer immigrants from mainland China and Taiwan, and a 10 percent by Japanese with no connection to China³⁸¹. Back then, the school was in surging popularity among Japanese, although some parents recall that their decision was met with suspicion by other Japanese parents, possibly suggesting a veiled discrimination toward China. From that time though trends have varied multiple times as demonstrated in table 12.

Reading the table from left to right, one can firstly notice the decrease in oldcomers with Chinese nationality, already few in 2003. This is due to the fact that Chinese oldcomers are diminishing, and like Korean oldcomers, they are increasingly nationalizing as Japanese.

Table 12: Zhonghua Student Population Breakdown in 2003, 2008 and 2013 (Total: 100.0%)³⁸²

	Chinese nationality*		Japanese nationality		Other	Total population
	Oldcomers	Newcomers	Chinese roots	No Chinese roots		
2003	6.3%	35.4%	34.3%	21.7%	2.3%	396 people
2008	3.6%	26.8%	58.8%	10.3%	0.4%	447 people
2013	2.1%	28.7%	65.0%	3.7%	0.4%	515 people

*: Includes both Taiwan and mainland China (PRC) nationals.

The number of newcomers too have slightly fallen while the number of Japanese nationality

381 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 80.

382 SHIBANO, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 170.

holders with Chinese roots have nearly doubled. Quite contradictory to what said above, the number of Japanese nationals with no connection to China has plummeted. The explanation behind this trend lies in the method of selection that Zhonghua has been adopting. Currently, there are two stages of selection for enrollment at the primary level, and in none of the two does nationality or ethnicity become a requirement. In the first stage, the school evaluates applications only from children or descendants of former graduates, siblings of students presently enrolled, and pupils of the attached kindergarten³⁸³. Each applicant is required to take a small test (no previous knowledge of Chinese or alternatively Japanese requested), followed by an interview with the child together with his parents. If, through this first candidate screening, the school reaches the maximum number of people to be admitted (as for the prospective 2019 school year the number is set at seventy-six), the second stage of selection is not carried out. In case the number is not fulfilled, the school then proceeds to the second stage of selection, open to people with no connection to the school, and carried out with the same method of the first stage.

This preferential treatment in the admission procedure was devised to limit the enrollment of Japanese students with no Chinese heritage who had dramatically improved. In fact, the popularity of Zhonghua among Japanese parents had accrued to the point that school authorities were fearing that an uncontrolled admission of people with no Chinese roots could have upset the institution's historical bond to the *Zainichi* Chinese which Zhonghua was supposed to serve. This led to an intentional reduction of Japanese freshmen enforced also through the above admission procedure³⁸⁴. The surge in enrollments of Japanese people with Chinese roots somewhat reflects the demographic trends of the *Zainichi* oldcomer Chinese community, who is increasingly naturalizing as Japanese. Not few are the cases of *Zainichi* Chinese families holding Japanese nationality who for a generation have not attended Zhonghua, but then due to the school's popularity, decide to send their children there³⁸⁵. For the same reason, even *Zainichi* Chinese with no prior connection to any Chinese ethnic school, enroll their children in Zhonghua if they are admitted to the second selection stage. It is important to note that people of Chinese heritage who naturalize as Japanese are not solely composed by oldcomers but by a growing percentage of newcomers and people born in China as well who after a long permanence in Japan might opt out for naturalization for multiple reasons including the obtainment of a Japanese passport, much more powerful and granting free-visa access to much more countries compared to a Chinese (PRC) one.

From these data, it is evident how the school has evolved in little time and its popularity is

383 SHIBANO, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 169.

384 SHIBANO, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 170.

385 SHIBANO, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 170.

also witnessed by the increasing number of students over time. Enactment of an entrance examination in both the first and second stage implies that the school needs to select between a pool of applicants, quite the opposite of *Chōsen* schools, whose number of students has been continually declining. It would be interesting to investigate how the school's demographic has changed in the period between 2013 and 2018. Confronting data from Shibano and Zhonghua's website, the maximum number of students to be admitted in 2013 and for the upcoming 2019 is roughly the same (seventy-two and seventy-six respectively), and the admission procedure has remained unaltered, therefore as regards entrance policies the school seems to have stabilized.

In any case, Zhonghua today is sharply different from the end of the 1990s when Japanese students with no connection to China were still a rarity. The school was similar to a big family, where teachers approached students not only as teachers but as old-timers trying to educate the community³⁸⁶. Their authority was never questioned and they were deeply trusted by parents who took active participation in school's matters³⁸⁷. Not necessarily this strong sense of allegiance towards the school has disappeared, yet according to a former Japanese student, the school she attended in the early 2000 has definitely changed even in appearance: students are not packed anymore into a tiny old building with poor infrastructures but attend a modern and grand seven-floors building erected in 2010.

However, even in the early 2000s Zhonghua was gradually surging in popularity, in and outside the *Zainichi* Chinese community, and had already started to challenge assumptions relegating Chinese minority children to a life within their community or in the Japanese working-class. At the time, Zhonghua was already wishing to send its graduates into the professional world as members of the economically powerful transnational Chinese community³⁸⁸. Since then, the school has ideally imagined its students to become a cultural bridge China and Japan as witnessed by an excerpt of the school's educational vision that reads: "In this institution, an internationally minded Overseas Chinese (*kakyō*) schools, founded and run by overseas Chinese themselves, we teach the culture and language of both China and Japan"³⁸⁹. Not limited to that, today Zhonghua essentially wants its students to thrive globally, and according to a former teacher, the school has made a transition from an educational goal devoted to protect the culture of overseas Chinese to the current mission of producing talented people in match with our times³⁹⁰. As said by the school's

386 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 76.

387 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 77.

388 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 71.

389 SHIBANO, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 169.

390 SHIBANO, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 174.

principal, rather than the ability of reading Chinese classics, the school wants to foster creativity, adaptability, and communication skills in children. In other words, despite the importance of understanding the traditional Chinese culture studied at school, acquiring good communicative skills in both the Chinese language and the Japanese language as well as an updated knowledge, are the abilities requested in the current global era³⁹¹.

What kind of problems is Zhonghua facing nowadays? The popularity among Japanese parents may suggest that enrolling Japanese children of no Chinese origin is not met anymore with much criticism from the Japanese majority as reported by Kanno in her fieldwork in the early 2000s³⁹². Kanno also wrote about a risk concerning Japanese nationality holders who attend miscellaneous schools. She asserts that according to the Japanese constitution, sending Japanese children to non-accredited institutions could be considered a violation of their legal responsibility to have their children receive compulsory education, and that it is up to the single school district whether to ignore or prevent such cases. This issue mostly concerns schools such as Zhonghua, where Japanese nationals constitute the majority of students, or to a lesser extent Korea International School, rather than *Chōsen* schools, which have a minimum amount of students holding Japanese nationality, or Keonguk, an 'art.1' institution. The problem does not surface in other sources and, since the Japanese government has made foreign schools' graduates eligible for Japanese universities (except for *Chōsen* schools) effectively granting them more integration in the education system, it is my belief that the above situation would very unlikely represent an issue. Yet, this is only my speculation as I do not have further data on this potential legal problem. It would be interesting to investigate whether educational choices of Japanese parents are actually impacted by this potential issue and if the latter prevents enrollment of Japanese children in certain miscellaneous schools from growing.

More pressing issues that Zhonghua needs to address are for example financial matters. The school receives a small part of its funding from the Japanese prefecture where it is located as well as from the PRC, and it is less affected by financial constraints compared to *Chōsen* schools. However, as a miscellaneous school, it still needs to rely on tuition and as of 2014 charges 24,000 yen per month for the primary level (Seibang charges 8,000) and 26,000 yen per month for the middle school level (Seibang and *Tongjung* charges 12,500) plus enrollment fee and other various expenses³⁹³. As for *Chōsen* schools, Zhonghua tries to keep expenses as low as possible in order not

391 SHIBANO, in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, cit., p. 174.

392 KANNO, *Language and...*, cit., p. 178.

393 ISHIKAWA Tomoko, "Minzoku kyōiku kara aratana feezu e" (From ethnic education to a whole new phase), in Shimizu, Nakajima, Kaji, *Nihon no...*, pp. 160-166, cit., p.165.

to preclude to low-income families the possibility to enroll, yet tuition is something it cannot get away from. Furthermore, Zhonghua has resorted to a peculiar way to control the student population composition in the attempt of maintaining ties with the Chinese community while pursuing internationalization. Will this positive discrimination be effective in the future or will it turn counter productive?

CONCLUSION

Despite the huge progress in making foreign schools more integrated in the Japanese education system, *Chōsen* schools still stand at a lower step compared to other ethnic schools because of the targeted limitations imposed by the Japanese government. Furthermore, it can be said that, due to the emergence of delicate political issues between North and Japan, not to mention the socialist regime's unstable and unpredictable position in international affairs, the situation has recently even worsened for *Chōsen* schools with prefectures withdrawing money funding, and the Japanese government excluding such institutions exclusion from provisions such as *kōkō mushōka*. Not lastly, *Chōsen* schools are penalized by the continuous decline of *Zainichi* Korean children, which results in fewer and fewer enrollments. Moreover, *Chōsen* schools still do not allow people with no Korean heritage to enroll, meaning that they do not envision an expansion outside the community nor they retain it possible. However, they so far have not able to appeal neither to the newcomers from South Korea, remaining, as a matter of fact, confined to the oldcomer community. Instead, other ethnic schools successfully managed to diversify their student population and reach both newcomers as well as Japanese.

Keonguk's expansion outside the traditional oldcomer community was cemented by its 'art.1' status which made the school attractive to Japanese, reassured of remaining within the mainstream education. Its recognition as a South Korean school, which now dates back to about forty years ago, equally helped drawing South Korean newcomers. Indeed, although we have considered it a Korean ethnic school, Keonguk is by the law a Japanese private school and not a miscellaneous school. Nevertheless, its 'art.1' accreditation may also represent an obstacle liable to prevent the adoption of more flexible curricula. Korea International School was conceived from the very beginning as an institution with a global outlook, ideally producing graduates proficient in three languages and able to thrive in every corner of the world, therefore an internationalization and the concept of a diverse school population were embodied from the onset. Zhonghua on the other hand, was established as a school with the goal of offering a Chinese ethnic education and for a long time it has been the lighthouse for the local Chinese community, a place where Chinese culture and identity could be protected and maintained. Since the emergence of China as an economic powerhouse, the school

has gradually attracted Japanese, drawn to a great extent by the possibility of becoming fluent in Chinese, and it is acquiring an international outlook.

Through the curriculum changes, *Chōsen* schools provide good academic skills which also allow students to challenge the widespread assumptions of the Japanese majority and have an original perspective on matters. Yet, the sole beneficiaries of this education remain *Zainichi* Korean oldcomers as *Chōsen* schools' imagined communities are still highly focused on the traditional *Zainichi* Korean community and on their chances to succeed within Japan. The virtually total lack of economic ties between Japan and North Korea prevent schools from situating their graduates in the international arena as powerful intermediaries. Their role as “goodwill ambassadors” is within Japan and mainly in relation with the rights of the *Zainichi* community. Indeed, a *Chōsen* school is *the* ethnic school, having little been affected by waves of internationalization. As we have analyzed, the appeal of an ethnic school for a newcomers' immigrant is not solely determined by the possibility of maintaining and cultivating the home-country's mother-tongue but also by other factors such as continuation with the home-country's school system, obtainment of study titles granting eligibility to university or possibility of internationalization. Failing *Chōsen* schools to provide the above advantages to South Korean newcomers, as for now, Chongryun education seems to have little possibility to expand its target outside a community which is slowly disappearing.

CONCLUSION

In her analysis of *Zainichi* Koreans in Japanese civil society, Chung, employs a classification proposed in 1997 by Suh Kyung Sik, a second-generation Korean resident and scholar, who asserts that Korean identity in Japan can be divided in three categories directed towards: A) the homeland, B) the *Zainichi* community in Japan, and C) Japan³⁹⁴. Koreans in category A identify themselves as members of a unified Korean nation or citizens of either the DPRK or the ROK. Category B refers to Korean nationals who identify themselves primarily as Korean permanent residents in Japan and citizens of Japanese civil society or their local societies³⁹⁵. Between the categories A and B, Suh devises the subcategory “a” indicating an autonomous Korean nation in Japan centered around Korean (and *Chōsen*) schools and organizations (such as Chongryun)³⁹⁶. Category C is constituted by naturalizers or ethnic Koreans with Japanese nationality who identify as Japanese. Between categories B and C there exists a further subcategory labeled “b”, referring to Koreans who are Japanese nationals (either by birthright or through naturalization) but maintain their Korean ethnic identities³⁹⁷. Additionally, Chung devises also the category D, not following category C but instead stemming from category B, which she calls “cosmopolitan”. It is constituted by Korean residents who believe that their aim should go beyond integration within Japanese society and should instead consist in creating a society inclusive of all foreigners, in other words, contributing, as long-time foreign residents adapted to Japanese customs, to the formation of a multicultural (*tayōsei*) Japan³⁹⁸.

These categories have always co-existed at the same time since the postwar, yet, according to Suh, the majority of the Korean community has followed a sequential transition from categories A to B and from B to C³⁹⁹. This shift can be reconducted to the events that characterized *Zainichi* Korean history from 1945 which began with the desire to return to a liberated homeland and the deprivation of Japanese nationality in 1952 with consequent exclusion from welfare and health benefits to which repatriation to North Korea could provide a chance for a better life. These harsh living conditions were subsequently followed by a progressive legal and cultural integration, as well as by a growth in wealth spurred by Japanese booming economy. Today, *Zainichi* Koreans live in an increasingly multicultural Japan and while they used to be the biggest foreign ethnic community,

394CHUNG, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 128.

395CHUNG, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 128.

396CHUNG, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 128.

397 CHUNG, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 128.

398 CHUNG, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 139.

399 CHUNG, in Lee, Murphy-Shigematsu, Befu, *Japan's...*, cit., p. 128.

they are now gradually becoming a minority among foreigners. Moreover, with the dogma equating nationality to identity slowly shattering, many Korean residents now assert to be Japanese with Korean roots.

The transition from categories A to C was also an inter-generational one which started with a first generation longing for the native country and often harboring ill feelings toward the Japanese colonial oppressors. The shift evolved with increasingly unstable 1.5 and second generations, torn between affiliation to the fatherland and Japan, and then it continued with the third and successive generations, almost totally unable to speak Korean, who regard the peninsula as a foreign country and instead feel more affiliated to Japan. *Chōsen* schools as well mirrored this transition, undergoing several educational reforms throughout their history, most notably that of 1993. Before this reform, *Chōsen* schools had a curriculum overtly focused on North Korea, based on the imagined community of students as the next generation of the socialist country. On the other hand, after the reform, the curriculum came to be structured according to the assumption that students will ideally live as Koreans in Japan, thus as active members of Japanese society.

If we were to fit *Chōsen* education in Suh's category, we can say that it used to gravitate on category A, and now mostly falls on category B. Suh actually locates it in subcategory “a”, yet I believe that *Chōsen* institutions, since Suh's classification of 1997, have increasingly shifted toward category B. On one hand, as demonstrated by Chongryun's educational mission and the statements of some teachers analyzed in chapter 4, it is true that *Chōsen* schools still raise children as people of Japan's Korean community, indicate North Korea as the fatherland, and consider Korean as the “national mother-tongue” of students. Moreover Chongryun's network is unique in the aspect that it can provide an ethnic education from kindergarten to university as well as an employment wholly within the realm of the *Zainichi* Korean community. However, still in chapter 4, we also saw that it is equally true that *Chōsen* schools seek cooperation with Japanese society, wish for their students an active role in Japan, and support them in pursuing educational and career paths outside of the community; as a matter of fact, 1993's reforms were to a large extent designed also to allow *Chōsen* schools' graduates to be competitive in Japan's labor market and in Japanese schools' entrance examinations.

Of course, I think that the above categories should not be interpreted strictly but should instead be understood as tools which can help framing the study. *Chōsen* schools cannot be reconducted to a single category reflecting a specific *Zainichi* Korean identity and, while in my opinion their educational mission mostly reflects category B, they embody some elements of categories A and “a” as well as category D (cosmopolitan), since, as we have seen in chapter 4, Chongryun wants its students to become champions of multicultural understanding, a successful

example of ethnic education within Japan.

The key point is not to which of Suh's category *Chōsen* schools fall into, but that they do not expand out of them. Suh's categories, devised to analyze the identities of *Zainichi* oldcomer Koreans, are in my opinion simply not applicable to the educational philosophy of other examples of Korean ethnic schools. As emerged from the analysis of other Korean ethnic schools' student composition in chapter 5, institutions like Keonguk or KIS, no matter their origin, curricula or legal status, have successfully diversified their student body, attracting oldcomers, newcomers and Japanese students with no Korean roots, consequently securing for now stable sources of enrollments and chances to renovate.

On the other hand *Chōsen* schools have not been able to expand outside the oldcomer community as they cannot rely on the arrival to Japan of North Koreans, being emigration from the socialist regime strictly prohibited. As for South Koreans, the schools' affiliation with North Korea, a state ideologically opposed to their home-country and from which South Korean nationals are barred from entering⁴⁰⁰, the schools' diploma not being recognized in South Korean institutions, not to mention the incomplete integration with the Japanese system, are all negative factors which make *Chōsen* education totally unattractive to them. In fact, statistics examined in chapter 4 show that virtually all students in *Chōsen* schools, even the tiny portion of students with Japanese nationality, are ethnically Korean and have at least one parent being oldcomer. In addition, chapter 4 also reveals that, in most cases, close to ninety percent of the parents with children in *Chōsen* schools attended themselves a *Chōsen* school, which further demonstrates that these institutions keep receiving enrollments from the same families and the same community.

Chōsen schools had historically kept a position of defense against Japanese society, with the overall perception that ethnic Korean culture needed to be protected⁴⁰¹. These stances have for the most been abandoned, yet people with no Korean roots still cannot enroll, despite the declining number of students. This ban maybe stems from the reasoning that the schools would not be able to draw Japanese students with no Korean heritage but it can also represent a remnant of a perceived necessity to protect Korean ethnic culture from deep-rooted fears of assimilation into Japanese society. Perhaps the realization itself that schools rely on a community which is slowly disappearing

400 The prohibition of entering North Korea concerns South Korean nationals who are newcomers, therefore South Koreans who do not possess a special permanent residence status in Japan. Holders of the latter can instead travel to North Korea even with a South Korean passport. As seen in chapter 4, South Korean nationals constitute the majority of the enrollments in *Chōsen* schools and they can equally take part to school trips to the socialist country, which are an important element of school life in high school and university.

401 Although, as we have seen, the need to carefully protect the ethnic culture used to be perceived by many ethnic schools.

further magnifies the attachment to Korean ethnic culture leading to attempts to exclude outsiders.

The affiliation of these schools to North Korea is negatively perceived by the Japanese government as well which, in the wake of the political issues between Japan and North Korea and heated diplomatic relationships, has adopted a tough approach with respect to *Chōsen* schools, tightening access to certain benefits open to other foreign schools, which further aggravates the difficulties stemming from the status as 'miscellaneous schools'. Indeed, chapter 1 and 5 demonstrate that recent political events had a direct consequence on educational policies concerning *Chōsen* schools.

To sum up, no matter how *Chōsen* schools have changed their curriculum and how close they actually are to North Korea, through their ties to Chongryun they remain to a certain extent affiliated to North Korea; it is my opinion that, unless North Korea radically improves its international status and enormously increases its political and economic relations to Japan and other countries, *Chōsen* schools will not be able to expand outside the *Zainichi* Korean oldcomers, a community dwindling at an increasingly faster rate. In fact, as we discussed in chapter 3 and chapter 5, every year, more and more *Zainichi* Koreans are naturalizing as Japanese and intermarriages with Japanese are now the most common, which implies that many children of Korean heritage now possess Japanese nationality. Yet, despite these trends, children with Japanese nationality are little represented in *Chōsen* schools' population, with a percentage normally not being higher than 5 percent. Moreover, as we saw in chapter 5, the *Zainichi* Korean community has been greatly affected, similarly to the overall Japanese population, by a drop in the birthrate which is further contributing to its decline.

This being said, *Chōsen* schools certainly constitute a unique example of ethnic education, not only within Japan, but possibly in the whole world. I am not sure whether in other countries there have been similar cases of a foreigners' organization founding schools on such a large scale as Chongryun did. The *Zainichi* Korean organization, taking over the legacy of the League of Koreans, was able to establish an entire education system, with schools for each level of instruction from kindergarten to university. No other ethnic school in Japan is part of such a big network of institutions regulated by a central organ, responsible for the curricular content of the courses and for printing textbooks through an affiliated publishing company. Teachers in *Chōsen* schools all receive their instruction at Korea University, and unless for some specialized subjects, a *Zainichi* Korean can obtain a university degree without going out of the Chongryun ethnic education realm. Finally, it is also worth mentioning that, much like a national education system, Chongryun divides Japan's municipalities in school districts, assigning to each school a specific catchment area, a fact that can demonstrate the widespread distribution of *Chōsen* schools throughout the archipelago. Therefore,

Chōsen schools are not just part of a small educational institution but enjoy the support of a wide network that can somehow back them up and help preventing closures due to financial problems. Notwithstanding that, I still believe that, as for now, *Chōsen* schools do not have a chance to grow and might face a further decline in enrollments in the upcoming years. Thus, my overall analysis remains pessimistic as regards these schools' future.

In this study I investigated the historical evolution of *Chōsen* schools attempting to provide a picture of their past, present and future. My research should not be intended as a judgment on the quality of *Chōsen* schools' education, on how well do their students perform in university exams or on language certification tests, or on the academic preparation of their teachers. These topics fall out of the scope of my study, yet it would be interesting to investigate them and compare results with Japanese schools or other ethnic schools. In addition, there are many questions that I have left unanswered or points that require a further investigation. For instance, I limited my analysis to Korean ethnic schools and one Chinese school, leaving apart international schools, Brazilian schools and other examples of foreign schools in Japan which could be compared to the *Chōsen* schools' case. Even among the institutions analyzed, Keonguk or Tokyo South Korean schools do not represent the sole examples of South Korean schools in Japan, nor does Zhonghua represent the only example of a Chinese school in Japan; a more in-depth analysis of other schools of this type or even of *Chōsen* schools located in Tokyo or in most sparsely populated municipalities outside the Kansai area would be of great interest.

Furthermore, it would be fascinating to conduct a detailed comparative research of how countries outside of Japan specifically deal with the educational needs of the ethnic minorities and what type of policies are in place. Speaking of which, in my study I have also mentioned very little on the education systems of South Korea and North Korea, and although gathering information on the country led by Kim Jong Un is probably extremely difficult, it would be of great interest to examine the similarities (or the differences) with the current North Korean education system and the pre-1993's *Chōsen* schools curriculum. According to the witnesses of some North Korean defectors, it seems that the education system of the socialist country has maintained many features of the previous *Chōsen* schools' curriculum, such as the many subjects about the life of Kim Il Sung.

Still in connection to North Korea, a high school trip to this country undoubtedly represents something unusual and I would eagerly read a recounting of the impressions and travel experiences of the many *Chōsen* high-schoolers, or also university students, who set off for this experience every year. Finally, talking about the future of the political situation in the peninsula, it will be meaningful to follow its developments for the upcoming years and to verify whether the seemingly good progress made since Moon Jae-in became president of South Korea in 2017, will actually help

a gradual rapprochement between the North and the South.

In addition to the subjects above, there is an abundance of interesting topics related to *Zainichi* Koreans and their education that could be analyzed, and I strongly hope to stimulate in the people who will read my research a further interest in this field.

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- Osaka Chōsen High School, 大阪朝鮮高級学校
- Korea International School, コリア国際学園
- Korea University, 朝鮮大学校
- Seibang Chōsen Primary – Middle School, 西播朝鮮初中級学校
- Tokyo Korean School, 東京韓国学校
- Zhonghua Chinese Ethnic School (fictional name)