Stateless Identity of Korean Diaspora: The Second Generations in prewar Hawai'i and postwar Japan

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Abstract

Statelessness has been the key element to understand the history of the Korean diaspora. The colonial/post-colonial history of Korea and the collective displacement of the Koreans in the 20th century provoked ethno-nationalism and an independence movement among Korean diasporic communities. Thus, Korean diaspora studies have examined how these populations have developed nationalism and strong connections to their ancestral homeland. However, these studies tend to question and highlight the national belonging(s) of Korean diasporas in relation to their ancestral homeland and/or to their adopted homeland, while neglecting the diasporic consciousness that does not reside on the conceptual basis of a nation-state. Therefore, this article will focus on two diasporic Korean communities that became stateless in the twentieth century — Koreans in prewar Hawai'i and in postwar Japan — focusing on the narratives on statelessness, interwoven by the second generations. And as a conclusion, this article will argue that the statelessness is a byproduct of a nation-state system and modernist project, which promotes the idea that it is "natural" to have a sense of national belonging(s), while those who have no nation to attach their sense of belonging to are understood to be rootless wanderers. It will also discuss the importance of conceptualizing statelessness in Korean diaspora studies by examining the ways in which national identities have emerged as a major discourse in diasporic identities, while non-national identities such as statelessness are silenced.

Key Words

Stateless identity, National identity, Korean Diaspora, prewar Hawai'i, postwar Japan

I. Introduction: Statelessness in the History of Korean Diaspora

Statelessness has been the key element to understand the history of the Korean diaspora. The colonial/post-colonial history of Korea, as well as the collective displacement suffered by Koreans, became the primary cause of the rise of ethno-nationalism that prevailed among Korean diasporic communities in the 20th century. These sentiments turned community leaders as well as community members into ardent nationalists who supported the Korean independence movement in the first half of the 20th century: Koreans in Hawai'i were even referred to as the "the Irish of the Orient" due to their strong nationalist sentiments in the US (B. Kim 1937: 126). Thus, Korean diaspora studies have examined how these dispersed Korean populations developed a collective and political sense of belonging and shared a strong connection to their homeland as well as to their compatriots in other locales (R. Kim 2011, Yoo 2010)

However, these studies tend to highlight two extreme senses of belonging that Koreans in the diaspora have developed. One is a strong connection to the homeland, which is seen most predominately among first and sometimes second-generation diasporic Korean. Their commitment to preserve their original culture, heritage, and co-ethnic ties, as well as their attempt to maintain their transnational ties to the homeland and to their compatriots have been the subject of investigation for previous studies. Another is the gravitation toward the adopted homeland that has been a frequent topic of research, which is evident among the younger generations of diasporic Korean communities, such as the second generation of Koreans in prewar Hawai'i who laid claim to American identities, as well as third and fourth-generation Koreans in postwar Japan, who came to see Japan as their home. The assimilation and socialization processes, as well as the cultural conflicts between older and younger generations, become critical issues in this context.

By shedding light on these two versions of identity, national belonging that is directed towards their ancestral homeland and/or adopted homeland, becomes the lens for understanding identities of the Korean diaspora. However, this framing tends to neglect diasporic consciousness that is not conceptually based on a nation-state. In the twentieth century, where almost all people are interpolated in the nation-state system, national and ethno-national identity has come to predominate immigration and diaspora studies (Parreñas and Siu 2007). Korean diaspora studies are no exception, and placed great emphasis on the nationalism of dispersed Korean populations and remained reluctant to raise issues that goes beyond national and ethnic origin.

Therefore, this article will focus on the Koreans in Hawai'i and Japan in order to shed the light on the experience of becoming stateless after their migration. This is because Koreans in Hawai'i, became stateless in the prewar years, when their homeland ceased to exist after the Korean Empire was annexed by the Empire of Japan in 1910, while Koreans living in Japan became stateless in the postwar years, after their homeland regained its independence[1]. By comparing these two different Korean communities, this article aims to grapple with the ways in which stateless has been imagined and experienced by the diasporas at different times throughout history of the twentieth century — when the homeland of one diasporic Korean community ceased to exist and when the homeland of another diasporic Korean community regained its independence, so that it was no longer an imaginary. It will

also focus on the narratives interwoven by the second generations on their route of travel and their root of origin, since the second generations developed narratives that placed emphasis, not only on their ancestral homeland, but also on their adopted homeland and their domestic racial hierarchies.

II. The Narratives of Second-generation Koreans in prewar Hawai'i

Migration to Hawai'i from the Korean Empire started in 1903. The initial migrants were mostly single men who sought work in the sugar plantations as migrant laborers. The sugar plantation owners expected the Koreans to replace Chinese workers and serve as strike-breakers for the Japanese migrant workers, who composed nearly two-thirds of the plantations' workforce (Patterson 2000: 1-2). However, the Korean government ended the migration of their nationals to Hawai'i in 1905, a few months before the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905 that made Korea a protectorate of the Empire of Japan; As a result, migration took place for only two and half years, leaving about 7,800 Korean men and women in Hawai'i.[2] Of them, one-third of the migrants went back to Korea or migrated further into the US (Cho'e 2007: 18). Consequently, only a small group of Koreans remained, composing less than 2% of the Hawaiian population in the prewar era, with Japanese making up 38%, Filipinos making up 17%, and Chinese making up 7% of the Hawaiian population in 1930 (Nordyke 1989: 178-179). Thus, Koreans became the "minority of the minorities" in Hawai'i (Harajiri 2000).

When the Korean Empire was placed under Japanese rule via the Governor-General of Korea in 1910, Koreans came to be regarded as Japanese imperial subjects and were once again eligible to travel and family members to migrate to Hawai'i under the US-Japan Gentlemen's Agreement (1908–1924). Some married men reunited with their families, but most of the Korean migrant workers had been single when they arrived in Hawai'i. Thus, they began to get married via matchmakers, and as many as 951 Korean women migrated to Hawai'i by 1924 (W. Kim 1971: 22-23).[3] The arrival of Korean women began to balance the number of men and women on the islands and led to an increase in the number of second-generation Koreans being born in Hawai'i. The proportion of second-generation residents started to grow, and by 1930 second generation Koreans would constitute 54% of the Korean community.

As soon as Koreans started meeting on the sugar plantations where they worked, they started to build a sense of unity as fellow "Koreans." On the sugar plantations, migrant workers were housed and divided into work units according to their national origin. This was intended to enhance the competition among migrant workers from different national origins, but for the migrant workers it also became a space to develop membership, and in some cases comradeship. Korean migrant workers came from various parts of the Korean peninsula and had different social and cultural backgrounds, sometimes with different dialects that made it difficult for them to communicate. But working and living together Korean migrant workers quickly developed a sense of belonging as a "Koreans".

These diasporic Koreans first focused their way of life around a traditional community — a patriarchal village community or *dongji hoi*, like those often seen in rural parts of Korea, but soon they placed the Christian Church at the center of their communities. Duk Hee Lee Murabayashi (2001: 15) notes that there was a 300% increase in the Methodist churches from 1903 to 1905 in Hawai'i, and Wayne Patterson (2000: 67) points out Koreans were becoming overwhelmingly Christian during this time; by

the start of World War II, among the diasporic Koreans living on the islands, there were about 1,000 Methodists, 1,000 Korean Christian Church members, 200 Episcopalians, 200 Seventh Day Adventists, and 100 to 300 Catholics.

These diasporic Koreans increasingly adopted the Christian faith for two reasons: The first was because there were already a number of Christians among the migrant workers, especially among the initial migrants. Even among those who were not Christians prior to migration, many got in contact with Christian churches and ministers prior or during their migration and settlement because churches in urban areas of Korea often provided people who were looking for work with a place to stay. Korean ministers also often accompanied migrant workers on their journeys and during the settlement process, serving as translators and intellectual leaders, teaching migrant workers and their families how to write Korean and English (Yi 2007: 46). The second reason for Korean migrant workers' adoption of Christianity, was the way that they had already been affected by the displacing forces of modernization; unlike most migrant workers on the sugar plantations of Hawai'i, the Koreans had already become wage laborers prior to migration (R. Lee 2015: 51-68, R. Lee, 2017). Historically, when Koreans had suffered due to famine and political unrest, they had crossed the border between Korea and China to seek work and make a living (Harajiri, 2005: 85). Moreover, at the turn of the 20th century, Koreans, including farmers in rural areas, migrated to Russia and China to support their families back home. Migration within and across the country was fairly common in Korea at the turn of 20th century, and those who already had experience with migration were part of the wave of Korean migrant workers who made their way to Hawai'i. Therefore, when Korean migrant workers settled in Hawai'i, they were not reluctant to move out of the plantations. Eventually, many Koreans found better jobs in the cities, with some engaging in laundry businesses around the American military base. This was a clear contrast to Japanese migrant workers, who came from farming areas in rural regions of Japan and formed communities with strong familial and hometown connections. Thus, as these diasporic Koreans moved into the cities they adopted Western values, acclimating to a modern way of life, and Christian churches became a source of information, providing not only the language skills but also the resources migrants needed to adapt themselves into the American society.

In 1910, when these diasporic Koreans learned that their homeland had lost its sovereignty, they realized that they were left without a nation-state to protect their well-being. However, when the Japanese consulate in Honolulu announced that they should register as imperial subjects, many of these diasporic Koreans refused on the basis that they had arrived in Hawai'i with Korean passports. In turn, Koreans showed their support for the Korean National Association, the KNA or *Kungmin-hoi*, an organization established in 1907 by Koreans in Hawai'i and the US mainland that represented the people of Korean in the US after their country had been annexed by Japan.

In the 1910s, KNA mobilized the community members into the independence movement, and charismatic Korean independence leaders started to arrive in Hawai'i from the US mainland. One prominent leader was Rhee Syngman, who later became the first president of South Korea. During this time, the spirit of ethno-nationalism prevailed in the Korean community, and Koreans in the diaspora became known as the "Irish of the Orient" for their strong affection toward their homeland. However, when the Provisional Government was established in China in response to the March First (S*amil*) Movement

in Korea (1919), Shanghai became the new center of the diasporic independence movement and leaders in Hawai'i moved onto Shanghai to continue their nationalist activities. The independence movement in Hawai'i started to fade in the early 1920s and the Japanese consulate in Honolulu even reported back to Tokyo in 1925 that "the Independence movement in Hawai'i is getting less and less popular" (Japanese Consulate-general in Honolulu), and Government-General of Korea, Bureau of Police Affairs concluded in 1933 that "there is no influential group that can be recognized" (*Chōsen Sōtokufu Keimukyoku*).

For members of the second generation, who did not have experience living in Korea and had lived most their lives during a time when Korea was under the colonial rule, Korea was their ancestral land but not a homeland as it was for the older generations. Second-generation Koreans witnessed the homeland nationalism of their parents, but they were American nationals by birth, who were taught that they were "Americans" at US schools. But second-generation Koreans were simultaneously aware that they were viewed as second-class citizens. Although at this time Hawai'i was being held up as a model of racial harmony, on the islands the division between the white population, generally known as "Haoles," and the non-white population, including racial and ethnic minorities and native Hawaiians, was explicitly marked and hierarchal, making the non-white population a target of racial prejudice. For instance, the Commanding General of the Hawai'i Department, Charles P. Summerall, offered a stereotypical comment on Hawai'i's non-white groups, referring to Koreans as "somewhat easily excited, superstitious and inclined to timidity" (Linn 1997: 162). In addition, as a minority of the minorities in Hawai'i, Koreans were usually not distinguished from the rest of non-white society. Most of the time, they were regarded similarly to Japanese migrants, as is noted in the confidential military research of 1930: "[Koreans] physiognomically resemble the Japanese very closely" (US Army, Hawaiian Department, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Military Intelligence 1930: 1). This perception eventually resulted in Koreans being categorized as "Japanese" and "enemy aliens" during World War II, simply because the government had difficulty distinguishing Koreans from Japanese (Macmillan 1979: 3-4).

National origin continued to matter for the second-generation Koreans in Hawai'i, affecting their way of living in terms of their social and racial category in the census, drivers' licenses and various kinds of permits, as well as their economic life: Many Koreans were engaged in laundry businesses around American military bases in the 1920s and 1930s because the Japanese, who were the largest minority group in Hawai'i, had been precluded from obtaining commissions at the bases. Thus, non-Japanese groups, like Koreans, were able to quickly establish laundry and tailoring businesses (R. Lee 2015: 90-95). The second-generation Koreans in Hawai'i engaged in activities that enhanced companionship among their diasporic community, like ethnic clubs at schools and ethnic performances at cultural events, while also associating with non-Koreans on a daily basis.

As a result, second-generation Koreans did not see themselves simply as American, but as American and Korean at the same time. The editor of The American-Korean emphasized that second-generation Koreans should be proud of their Korean heritage, because they would be regarded only as Korean no matter what:

"I should like to emphasize that this group of citizens must never forget that they will be recog-

> nized by other nationals as Koreans and therefore will be expected to know and to discuss their Korean national background" (Kang 1930: 15)

On the one hand, many second-generation Koreans stressed that their sense of national belonging was tied to two nations — America and Korea — but on the other hand, the colonialization of their homeland made it difficult for them to assert that they were "Korean." They did not have any nation-state that they could claim as "Korea," nor did they have any experience or memory of having lived in Korea, which left them with a sense of insecurity. For example, in 1935 one second-generation Korean wrote about how he began to recognize himself as a person with no homeland, and noted that this way of thinking was shared not only by other second-generation Koreans, but also by many first-generation Koreans:

> "Some young people think that Japan is too powerful to overthrow right now; therefore the subject of independence, they argue, is impractical for the present. They consider themselves a forgotten people 'without a country'... The younger generation as well as the old intend to make Hawaii their home." (G. Lee 1935, 8)

The second generations could not assert a sense of belonging as Koreans by advocating for the independence of their homeland like the older generations. A political split also complicated their involvement in diasporic politics. The independence movement in Hawai'i had started as a unified front, but because the leaders had different ideas about how to go about campaigning for independence, the movement suffered a political split. This breach went so deep as to even cause violent attacks between opposing groups, and eventually divided the diasporic Korean community on the islands in half. This rupture changed the ways in which Koreans associated within their community, even after the end of the independence movement, and second-generation Koreans regarded this split as a byproduct of issues related to the homeland, which complicated their relationship with the first generation, as well as their understanding of themselves as "Korean."

As a result, second-generations Koreans felt the urge for a new sense of unity among themselves. They organized groups to bridge the split among the Korean community: One of them was the student organization, the Korean Students' Alliance of Hawaii, which was established by junior high school, high school, and university students in the 1930s. The activities of these students were significant, since one-third of the Korean population consisted of students in 1930 (*Korean Student Annual* 1932: 18). They held social activities like dances and picnics, as well as conferences, youth rallies, speech contests, publishing yearbooks that listed all Korean graduates in the Hawaiian Islands. The Korean Students' Alliance of Hawaii also provided a platform for second-generation Koreans to speak for themselves on issues including the dual sense of national belonging that second-generation Koreans had developed and the non-national sense of belonging that came from their having no homeland, no way to assert their identity as Koreans. Among the students, there were those who stressed the importance the Christian Church's central role in the Korean community, rather than nationalistic organizations. The essay that won the first prize in the speech contest in 1936 read: "nationalistic organizations, fostering

nationalistic sentiments and fanning the already dead embers of the Korean nation in an effort to recreate its original glow, will find the Youth seemingly unresponsive and dull in respect to their principles. It is very unlikely that their organizations will be maintained, least of all improved upon" (Choy 1936-1937: 6). Second-generation Koreans questioned the centrality of a sense of Korean national belonging to their ancestral homeland, and searched for new ways to posit their sense of belonging.

However, the attack on Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of the Pacific War brought a completely different mode of self-consciousness to the Korean community and to the Hawaiian community as a whole. Koreans, were now labeled as "enemy-aliens" and, because they were considered Japanese subjects by the wartime US government, many Koreans on the islands stopped speaking of their insecurity because of their lack of a homeland. Instead, they started to speak about their support of the US war effort in the Pacific, emphasizing that Korea was on friendly terms with the US and claiming that Koreans should be seen as "friendly-aliens" by the US (L. Kim 2007; R. Lee 2008). As a result, their enemy-alien status was repealed in 1943, while their support for the war effort continued. The Korean community, now became a group of people with an explicit national belonging: The older generations once again asserted their support for the independence of their homeland, the younger generations pledged their allegiance to the US national body, and as a result both strengthened their sense of national belonging.

III. The Narratives of Second-generation Koreans in postwar Japan

In Japan, Koreans became stateless in the postwar years. During the colonial period, Koreans were Japanese imperial subjects and technically became "Japanese" in legal terms. Many Koreans came to Japan during the colonial period (1910–1945) and worked as laborers: This included migrant workers who came to make ends meet, as well as forced laborers who worked in severe conditions. The number of Korean migrants vastly increased during late 1930s and into the 1940s, reaching 1,190,444 in 1940 (1.63% of Japan's population); the Korean population of a few prefectures, like Osaka and Yamaguchi, even reached more than 5%, so that 1 out of 20 people in some areas were Korean (Tonomura 2004: 55-56). After the colonial era ended and Korean migrants in Japan were freed from colonial rules, the majority went back to Korea and the number of Koreans in Japan by 1946 had decreased to 647,006 (Morita 1996: 176).

The legal status of the Koreans remaining in Japan was unclear. Under the Alien Registration Order of 1947, all former colonial subjects, including Koreans, were instructed to register with their local city, town, village, or ward office, and Koreans were categorized as people of "Chōsen," which signified the geographical area of the Korean peninsula but did not denote any particular state. There were 598,507 Koreans registered under the Alien Registration Order of 1947 (Ibid.). Then, in 1952, with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, former colonial subjects residing in Japan, including Koreans, were classified as "foreign nationals," turning Koreans into people living in a foreign land. However, Japan did not recognize the two nations founded on the Korean peninsula in 1948, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Thus, Koreans in Japan continued to be considered people from "Chōsen," and did not belong to any nation-state. As a result the Koreans who had remained in Japan, a total of 535,065 people, became stateless (Ibid).

After this, Koreans and their descendants in Japan, who are called *Zainichi* Koreans (literally, "Koreans staying in Japan"), remained stateless for decades, with some even staying stateless for generations, because Japanese nationality was "granted by blood"; the children of stateless Koreans would go onto become a stateless people themselves. In 1965, when the Basic Relations Treaty was signed between Japan and the Republic of Korea, some *Zainichi* Koreans acquired South Korean nationals, but those who refused to choose between the North and South or who were politically affiliated with the North continued to be stateless.[4)]

In the postwar years, *Zainichi* Koreans were also identified as people with a different racial and ethnic background from "Japanese" people. As Chikako Kashiwazaki (2009) argues, the significance of making Koreans "foreign nationals" in Japan, was not only about dividing Koreans from Japanese in terms of nationality, but was also a shift from the "imperial-colonial order" to an "ethno-national order" that classified Koreans in the Japanese/foreigner dichotomy as people with different racial and ethnic origins. Further, as Hideki Harajiri (2000) has shown, the registration system in Japan continued to mark Koreans who became naturalized Japanese citizens, maintaining the division between the "pure" Japanese and people who had acquired Japanese citizenship through the naturalization process. In this way, even those *Zainichi* Koreans who obtained Japanese nationality through the naturalization process were not able to become "fully" Japanese.

Moreover, racism and discrimination directed toward Koreans remained significant in post-war Japan. One of most common ways that *Zainichi* Koreans avoided racism in their everyday life was by using "Japanese" names (these names are known *tsumei* or "aliases"). First-generation Koreans in Japan were recognizably different due to cultural markers and their language, but the second generation spoke fluent Japanese and together with the use of Japanese names, this allowed them to pass as "ordinary Japanese." By the second generation, the differences between *Zainichi* Koreans and "Japanese" were no longer obvious, but prejudice, racism, and exclusion remained and was now carried out in more subtle and implicit ways. John Lie (2001: 80-81) explains that Koreans made themselves invisible in Japanese society through the use of "Japanese" names, a practice which is a byproduct of the "ideology of monoethnicity" in Japan.

The racism and exclusion that *Zainichi* Koreans faced in their everyday lives made it difficult for them to improve the image of Koreans in Japan. Because they were now a group of people living in a foreign country, who were considered racially and ethnically different, *Zainichi* Koreans came to long for ties with their homeland. First-generation Koreans and many second-generation Koreans devoted themselves to a form of ethno-nationalism that stressed their ties to their homeland, whether it be South, North, or a unified Korea. The political climate of the Cold War intensified this sense of belonging to either the South or the North. Some of the first groups that began promoting ethno-nationalism among Koreans in the postwar years were Marxist organizations that claimed Koreans should not belong to Japan but to their homeland and that Koreans should participate in building the Korean nation in order to regain their national and ethnic pride (Tonomura 2004: 431).

Koreans realized that they had a homeland, and this sense of belonging linked Koreans in Japan to their homeland, be it North, South or a united Korea. The connection to the homeland, then, came to essentialize Korean's racial and ethnic origin, as well as their sense of national belonging. One second-

generation *Zainichi* Korean wrote an essay asserting that having a homeland gave him hope to endure the racism that he faced in his life in Japan:

> (Things were stolen at school and) I realized that everyone thought of me as a thief, just because I was Korean... It was around that time when I first thought about my homeland. Seeing me crying, my father said to me "bear it until we go back to our homeland"... Since then, whenever I heard the word "homeland" I started to feel a vague excitement ... The fact of having a homeland made me believe that I was Korean (Pak 1975: 171).

Strong connections to the homeland even provoked "return" migration to Korea for some *Zainichi* Koreans. Although most of the Koreans in Japan were originally from the southern part of the Korean peninsula, homeland nationalism led both first and second-generation Koreans to return to North Korea under The International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) repatriation project (1959–1984). The number of returnees peaked in 1960, and eventually 93,340 Koreans returned to North Korea for good (Morris-Suzuki 2011: 1).

Other *Zainichi* Koreans chose to begin visiting their homeland now that it was no longer imaginary. Although Cold War politics did not allow all *Zainichi* Koreans to travel freely, sometimes preventing them from entering multiple times or at all, still it was a place that they could visit. Koreans visited their ancestral homeland to assert their being "Korean." However, for second-generation Koreans, such visitations did not always heighten their connection to the homeland, but rather made them feel disconnected. Korea, both North and South, was a nation with an "ideology of monoethnicity," just like Japan. *Zainichi* Koreans, who spoke little Korean, often were not regarded as co-ethnics by the people of their homeland, and were sometimes referred to as *pan choppari*, or "half-Japanese." The narrative presented earlier, which spoke about the longing for a homeland, continues as follows:

> Ten years have passed since then. My image, my love, my nostalgia for the homeland has vanished from my life. My visit to the homeland was the cause. It opened my eyes and confirmed what the homeland meant to me and it made me realize that I do not have a homeland to return to... I do not know where my homeland is now (Pak 1975: 173).

There were also *Zainichi* Koreans who were not able to pursue this connection because of their linguistic and cultural difference. Second-generation *Zainichi* Koreans often spoke little or no Korean and found that they had a different cultural background when they visited their homeland. Some felt they were rejected from their homeland and were denied for not being "fully-Korean." One second-generation Korean expressed this feeling as follows: "I wanted to be a perfect Korean (*Chōsenjin*) and went to Seoul to study, but I felt like I was rejected as a Korean and decided to go back to Japan" (U. Lee 1976: 51).

Consequently, some started to question the ways Koreans had developed their sense of belonging to their homeland. In *Zainichi* Korean magazines and books published in the late 1970s and 1980s, this became known as the "identity issue" (Mizuno & Mun 2015 196-206). One of the most significant narra-

tives was about their search for a homeland. Along with these narratives, some had concerns over their lack of connection to any state. One second-generation Korean said that his belonging did not lie in Korea or Japan, or in any other existing national body: "We face discrimination by Japanese when we live in Japan, and we are rejected by our homeland and face reverse discrimination when we go back" (Chang 1976: 52).

Was it possible, then, for Koreans in Japan to develop a sense of belonging as "Japanese" or "Korean-Japanese," in the same way that some second-generation Koreans in prewar Hawai'i had claimed themselves as "American" and "Korean-American"? In terms of nationality, it was after all possible for Koreans to acquire Japanese citizenship and become "Japanese," but as mentioned earlier, *Zainichi* Koreans were not able to become "fully Japanese" even when they acquired Japanese nationality. In 2009, Youngmi Lim (2009: 104-105) reported that there were about 5,000 Koreans being naturalized each year, but that naturalized Koreans still faced racism, treatment as "ex-Korean," and were "impregnated [by] non-acceptance and singling-out," leaving them alienated from the Japanese national community (104-105). Moreover, for many years in the postwar era, obtaining Japanese nationality was regarded as a betrayal by Koreans. Being rejected by the *Zainichi* Korean community, in addition to the prejudice coming from Japanese society, alienated naturalized *Zainichi* Koreans from any community, In 1970, one naturalized Korean, Masaaki Yamamura, self-immolated at his university and left a note saying that he had nowhere to connect his belonging:

> I wished to live as a Korean rather than a luke-warm half-Japanese. But... I was rejected because I am a naturalized citizen...For them, in fact, I was a traitor who abandoned the homeland. I am not Japanese. I am no longer a Korean but a person who lost his homeland (Yamamura 1971: 24-25).

The term "half-Japanese," *pan choppari* was originally used by the Koreans in the colonial period to refer to those Koreans who fawned upon their colonizers. But in the postwar years, as noted above, this word was used in Korea to pejoratively describe Koreans who lived in Japan and were not able to speak the Korean language. However, it was also used by *Zainichi* Koreans to refer to people who "betrayed" their co-ethnics, i.e., the children of inter-marriage between Korean and Japanese or those who acquired Japanese nationality (Harajiri 1998: 108-109). Therefore, for Masaaki Yamamura, it was not possible for him to develop a sense of national belonging to his adopted homeland, nor to seek connection to his ancestral homeland. The idea of being "Korean" and the idea of being "Japanese," were defined by ethno-national origin. As a result, *Zainichi* Koreans who obtained Japanese nationality were also left with a sense of stateless that made it difficult for them to connect to any nation or state.

IV. Conclusion: Conceptualizing Statelessness in Korean Diaspora Studies

Why is a sense of statelessness excluded from the project of Korean diaspora studies? The answer is because Korean diaspora studies, while aiming to unveil the histories, memories and subjectivities of the globally dispersed Korean population, approach diaspora as a state of being caught between two nations, questioning the national belonging(s) of the diaspora. Although the world today has entered an age of globalization, with all the post-modern values this implies, national belonging remains important,

and Korean diaspora studies has continued to celebrate and investigate the sense of national belonging(s) among Koreans.

Examining statelessness then, we see that what is often lost in diaspora studies is the unspoken history of non-national identities. Statelessness is the flip side of nationalism and statehood, and both Korean diasporas examined in this article exemplified the insecurity that statelessness has caused with regard to those communities' sense of being; this provoked political movements and the rise of ethno-nationalism to regain the independence of their homeland in the beginning and developed into complicated intertwining forms of self-affirmation for later generations. Statelessness is a byproduct of the nation-state system, which promotes the idea that it is "natural" to have a sense of national belonging(s), while those who have no nation to attach their sense of belonging(s) to are understood to be rootless wanderers. As a consequence, statelessness matters not only to diasporas that have experienced such a situation or members of diasporic communities whose lives are affected, shaped, and touched by the history and memory of statelessness, but is also crucial to nationalistic projects that prioritize national belonging over non-national belonging. Thus, it is essential to highlight non-national identities, including narratives of statelessness, to understand the ways in which national belonging(s) has emerged as a major discourse in the history of Korean diasporas in the modern era, while other identities have been silenced.

By comparing the two different Korean communities, this article provided two different type of stateless diasporic communities that have emerged in the modern nation-state system. First, Koreans in prewar Hawai'i can be classified as a *de facto* stateless person.[5] The Japanese consulate in Honolulu announced that all nationals of the Korean Empire should register as Japanese subjects, but many Koreans refused on the basis that they had arrived in Hawai'i with their Korean passports. At that time in Hawai'i, Koreans were not able to become American nationals because as foreigners of Asian descent they were "ineligible for citizenship." As a result, they were left without a state to protect their well-being. Second, Koreans in postwar Japan can be classified as a *de jure* stateless person. Koreans were nationals of The Empire of Japan during the colonial period. The end of World War II freed Koreans from their colonized status, but the legal status of Koreans who stayed in Japan remained unclear. Then, in 1947, all non-Japanese residents in Japan were entered into the alien registration system, which designated Koreans as people from Chōsen, a term signifying the geographical area of Korean peninsula. With the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952, all former colonial subjects who remained in Japan were designated as foreign nationals, transforming Koreans who stayed into a group of people living in a foreign land, designated with the nationality "Chōsen" and did not belong to any nation-state.

Another important aspect that these two diasporic communities have exemplified is the difference on the sense of statelessness that they have developed, and its implication to the modernity. The narratives of second-generation Koreans in prewar Hawai'i exposes what it means to become stateless in the modern era, the reality of living the flipside of the coin. Second-generation Koreans in Hawai'i were American nationals by birth, but they lived in a society where "national origin" mattered in every aspect of their lives, though they did not have an independent state to which they could attach their sense of "national belonging." As a result, some diasporic Koreans stressed their identities as both

Korean and American, and other members started to question these senses of belonging that were anchored to a nation-state, and instead started to claim a sense of belonging that lay outside national frameworks. On the other hand, the statelessness of Koreans in Japan demonstrates the ways in which diasporas have been left out of the modernist project; statelessness is not like the flipside of the coin, but it is rather like what a coin becomes without its connection to a nation-state. After becoming "foreigners" and stateless in the postwar years, *Zainichi* Koreans faced racism in their everyday lives and this in turn heightened a sense of ethno-nationalism that stressed ties to the homeland — South, North, or a unified Korea. Most second-generation *Zainichi* Koreans continued to support this ethno-nationalism for their homeland, but among them, there were those who questioned this connection, especially individuals who could not connect a sense of belonging to their ancestral homeland because they had been rejected as "fully-Korean," leaving them with no homeland to claim as their own. In addition, it was possible for *Zainichi* Koreans to naturalize and become Japanese nationals, though it was difficult for them to become "fully" Japanese or make Japan their homeland. As a result, they were stuck in the situation where they had no place that they could attach sense of belonging to. Second generation *Zainichi* Korean scholar Suh Kyungsik (2003), refers to this sense of disconnection as being "half-refugee": The term "refugee" refers to people "who think it is okay to have no flag or state for themselves, and who are shaped to think this way from their everyday experiences (298)." He claimed that *Zainichi* Koreans are half-refugees in this sense, and statelessness remains an ongoing experience for *Zainichi* Koreans.

The UNHCR estimates there are at least 10 million people around the world today who are without any form of nationality (UNHCR 2017). These people "may have difficulty accessing basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement. Without these things, they can face a lifetime of obstacles and disappointment" (Ibid.). Statelessness is not merely a part of history but is an ongoing issue affecting a significant number of people that is likely to continue in the future. Therefore, it is essential to conceptualize statelessness and bring statelessness into a constructive dialogue, in order to develop a field of research and gain insights into modern history that, up until this point, has been examined through the lens of national belonging.

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Notes

1) Abe (2010) claims that Zainichi Koreans are not stateless person today because they are able to claim their nationality to the Republic of Korea or to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, this article will highlight the historical significance of *Zainichi* Koreans being categorized as a person of "Chōsen" in 1947, which signified the geographical area of the Korean peninsula but did not denote any particular state. For Abe's discussion, see Kohki Abe, "Overview of Statelessness: International and Japanese Context, Commissioned by UNHCR Representation in Japan", (Tokyo: UNHCR, 2010). Retrieved from https://www.unhcr.org/jp/

wp-content/uploads/sites/34/protect/pro_8_Overview_of_the_Statelessness_2012.pdf

2) In the "Report of the Commissioner of Labor Statistics on Hawai'i 1915", the United States Department of Labor stated that the number of Korean migrants who arrived during these two years was 7,859 (6,717 men, 677 women, and 465 children). However, according to the passenger list compiled by Duk Hee Lee Murabayashi, 7,291 Koreans boarded ships to Hawai'i. Retrieved from http://www.korean-studies.info/pdf/pass200a.pdf.

3) Cho'e (2007: 28) points out that the exact number of Korean picture brides cannot be identified from the resources currently available.

4) Today, the vast majority of *Zainichi* Koreans have become the nationals of the Republic of Korea or Japan. There are 29,550 people who are registered as a person of "Chōsen" under the foreign registration system in Japan, while 288,787 people are registered as "Tokubetsu Eiju (Special Permanent Residency holders, referring to a person or descendant of former Japanese imperial subject living in Japan)" among 449,634 people who are registered as a person of "Kankoku (the Republic of Korea)" nationality holder in 2018. (Data retrieved from the Official Statistics of Japan https://www.e-stat.go.jp/stat-search/files?page=1&layout=datalist&toukei=00250012&tstat=000001018034&cycle=1&year=20180&month=24101212&tclass1=000001060399) The number of *Zainichi* Koreans with Japanese nationality is not statistically available.

5) As set out in Article 1(1) of the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, *de jure* statelessness refers to a person who "is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law" (Arakaki, 2016: 35). A stateless person also refers to a person who has "nationality legally but cannot receive effective protection from the state of nationality," who are sometimes called *de facto* stateless persons (Ibid.).

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