

## **Ethnic Buddhist Temples and the Korean Diaspora in Japan**

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### **Abstract**

This article reviews the ancestral rituals of the Zainichi, as the Koreans in Japan are known in Japanese. The Zainichi tried to establish their own identity in Japan through their mortuary rituals, and thus to reorganize the Korean diaspora in Japan. Their ancestral rituals have been changed from a Confucian style to a Buddhist style.

### **Part One: Introduction**

Immigrants, in general, whether they migrate willingly or unwillingly to a new country, are obliged to adapt themselves to its culture, language, rules of social etiquette, food, housing style, dress, etc. Despite their efforts at enculturation and adaptation, frequently even the second and third generations of immigrants have found themselves victims of prejudice and discrimination by the host country citizenry even after legally obtaining a nationality which guarantees their rights. Whilst these external factors rooted in the racial, political and cultural issues of the immigrants are a serious problem and handicap, on a deeper level too identity problems exist beyond the first generation of immigrants, so that they question themselves concerning who and what they are vis-à-vis their new home country. Because of these external and internal conflicts, the immigrants do not feel safe and secure, and these stresses can lead to crime and mental illness.

My research has discovered that many immigrants have a difficult time caring for their well-being. One elderly *zainichi*<sup>1</sup> expressed her lot in life to me in the following words: “There is no place for us *zainichi*, neither in this world nor in the next; there is just no place to feel at home.” These heavy words were uttered by a beautiful old *zainichi* woman as she prayed in front of an unlabelled ceramic pot of bone and ash on a shelf reserved or allotted for *zainichi* in a Buddhist temple.

The term “diaspora” is now in vogue in the field of research concerning immigration.<sup>2</sup> Even in countries with no connection to the Judaeo-Christian world,<sup>3</sup> “diaspora” is a term used for refugees and those who have found themselves in exile from their native homes for various reasons. The term likens these people to the famous dispersion of the Jews from the Promised Land of Israel thousands of years ago. The concept of “diaspora” is useful to analyse the establishment and changes in the immigrants’ community and the evolution of their identity from the different angles of the stereotypical “majority versus minority” relationship in their new country. Not only in these aspects of immigration, but also in the relationship between their original home and their new home far away, we can observe changes. Therefore it is possible to observe and study the lives of immigrants as they deal with religious and cultural challenges. So I will next explain the historical background of the *zainichi*.

## **Part Two *Zainichi* : Historical Background**

70 years have passed since the end of the Second World War, which eventually finished with the defeat of the Empire of Japan in 1945 by the allied military forces. At the same time colonisation of the neighbouring countries of Korea, China and Taiwan by the Empire of Japan ceased. At that time approximately two million Koreans, willingly or unwillingly, had already migrated to Japan, alone or with family. During colonisation by the Empire of Japan, the Korean people were forced to accept Japanese nationality. Soon after the war ended, most of the people from Korea returned to Korea, but some opted to stay in Japan. They preserved their Japanese nationality until 1947, when the ‘Alien Registration Act’ was enacted. By it, Koreans were henceforth officially regarded not as

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<sup>1</sup> *Zainichi* literally means “being in Japan” away from home. More specifically, they are former colonial immigrants and their descendants.

<sup>2</sup> Esman, 2009, pp.13-21.

<sup>3</sup> On the Korean diaspora, see Matsuda & Chon ed., 2013; Ryang & Lie ed., 2009; and Ryang, 2008.

Japanese but as foreigners, *gaijin* in Japanese. *Chousen* was the title used to identify Koreans living in Japan; it was tantamount to a sentence of no identity, because of the political instability on the Korean Peninsula after the end of the Second World War.

By the end of the 1940s, politics had split the Korean Peninsula into two new countries. In the north, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, customarily referred to as "North Korea", was established with support from the People's Republic of China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In the south, in 1948, the Republic of Korea, customarily referred to as "South Korea", was established with support from the United States of America. Soon after that announcement, on Cheju Island, a small, mostly recreational island paradise off the southwest coast of South Korea, many citizens revolted at the news of the division of their country. In retaliation for the uprising, one third of the islanders were slaughtered by the South Korean Army<sup>4</sup>. Ultimately these political differences on the peninsula contributed to and caused the Korean Civil War from 1950 to 1953. For survival and safety, some Koreans for the first time, and others who had formerly resided in Japan, decided to seek asylum in Japan, either legally or illegally (through smuggling). Some people were suspicious of these smugglers from the Korean peninsula and Cheju Island, known as *zainichi* who had supported the South Korean government could submit a form entitled 'Korean Residents Union in Japan' (*Mindan* in Japanese)<sup>5</sup> and could thus easily obtain South Korean nationality. However, members of the 'General Association of Korean Residents in Japan' (*Soren*<sup>6</sup> in Japanese) could not obtain it because this organisation had supported the North Korean Government.

From 1948, the South Korean government requested the Japanese government to grant South Korean citizenship to all the *zainichi*. There was only one way to receive this new identity. If Koreans in Japan submitted a form entitled *Mindan*,<sup>7</sup> they could easily obtain South Korean nationality. However, *Soren*<sup>8</sup> members of *zainichi* could not obtain it in due course.

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<sup>4</sup> Saishu-to 4-3 Jiken 40 Shunen Tuitou Kinenn Ko-en-shu henshu-iinkai ed., 1998 and Nomura, 1997, pp.213-40.

<sup>5</sup> Formally called 'Zai-Nippon Daikan-minkoku-mindan'.

<sup>6</sup> Formally called 'Zai-Nippon Chousen-jin Sorengo-kai'.

<sup>7</sup> Formally, it was called "Zai-Nipponn Daikan-minkoku-mindan" or, in English, "Korean Residents' Union in Japan".

<sup>8</sup> Formally, it was called "Zai-Nippon Chosen-jin Sorengo-kai", or in English, "General Association of Korean Residents in Japan".

After the Second World War Japan was occupied by America and partially ruled by American military leaders; their *GHQ* (General Headquarters) aimed to revive the country under a new Constitution.

Aiming to preserve their Korean culture and language, the *zainichi* established ethnic schools around Japan through voluntary mutual aid associations. These ethnic Korean *zainichi* schools were known as *Chousen Gakkou* in Japanese and *Uri Hakkyo* in Korean.<sup>9</sup> Gradually these local voluntary associations united into one association.

The *GHQ* (General Headquarters) was comprised of American military leaders who for a while invaded Japan after the Second World War in order to revive the country under a new Constitution. It was very anti-socialist and anti-communist in its ideology. For this reason it worried about these locally established new private schools and pressured the fledgling Japanese government to close them. However, some *zainichi* protested against the closings. In retaliation, North Korea supported these schools with money and supplies, enabling them to continue without Japanese governmental support. From that time on the *Uri Hakkyo* system was recognised by the Japanese as a North Korean institution. Accordingly, *zainichi* society in Japan imitated the national split back home on the Korean Peninsula in its separation of local ethnic schools between supporters of the North and of the South.

Most scholars agree that Japanese and *zainichi* in ethnicity belong to the same race of people. They are hardly distinguishable in appearance of skin tone, hair colour or eye colour. Nonetheless the *zainichi* have been discriminated against in various ways; for example, they have been the target of hate speech.<sup>10</sup> This discrimination was partly caused by the cultural difference between Koreans and Japanese, but its roots are mainly linked to the colonization of Korea by Imperial Japan from 1910 to 1945. People of the Korean Peninsula at that time were forced to assimilate to be Imperial Japanese citizens. The Koreans temporarily lost their language, names, clothing, etc.; in essence the whole Korean culture was taken away from them and they were subservient to the colonizing Japanese. During the colonization period, the Koreans could not even move freely around their own country. Thus the *zainichi* were born as colonised people who had formerly been discriminated against by the suzerain Japanese colonists.

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<sup>9</sup> Song, 2012 and Pak, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Morooka, 2013 and Mindan Chuou Honbu ed., 2013.

The historical background of discrimination, inequality and prejudice during the Japanese colonisation period and the split of the *zainichis*' home country following the Korean War have negatively affected and moulded the personality of the *zainichi* down through the generations until the present day.

### **Part Three: Zainichi of the third and fourth generation**

By and large, there is little difference of attitude between the first and the second generation *zainichi* immigrants, because they all grew up observing the struggles of the previous generation in their new home in Japan. Some of them dreamed of returning to Korea. Despite their struggles, the first and second generation *zainichi* managed to establish a life for themselves in Japan.<sup>11</sup> It seems that the third and following generations of *zainichi* no longer even consider returning to the mother country of Korea. These newer generations are quite self-reliant and self-confident and they are succeeding in their life in Japan. Most of them do have South Korean citizenship now, and can freely travel back and forth between the two countries. However, there is now a new kind of discrimination among *zainichi* against long-term residents in Japan: they are referred to as *pan-choppari* or “half Japanese”, a pejorative term. Some of them try to go back to South Korea to live but many find that adapting to Korean ways is too difficult.

One of the professional *zainichi* soccer players in Japan had this experience. Lee Chu-son was born in Tokyo in 1985 as a third generation *zainichi* with South Korean nationality. After graduating from a Japanese High School, he became a professional soccer player in the Japanese National Professional Soccer League. Through his great ability and popularity he was eventually recruited by his native Korea to become a member of its national soccer team. However, Lee Chu-son discovered that he was treated as a “half-Japanese” person even in his native Korea, so he resigned from the team and returned to play in Japan. Finally, he changed his nationality to Japanese. Lee Chu-son was selected to join the Japanese national team for the Asian Cup in 2008 and contributed his talents to winning the Cup for Japan that year. He is quite unique because even though Lee Chu-son changed his nationality to Japanese, he kept his Korean name and even consistently used the original foreign Chinese characters. Most other famous *zainichi* sports stars and movie stars have hidden their ethnic name and preferred to adopt a Japanese style name instead.

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<sup>11</sup> Kim pointed this out for both the first and the second generation of *Zainichi*, Chosen ethnicity is crucial to their identity though there is a slight difference between these two generations. See Kim, 1999, pp.63-136.

Another good example of a third generation *zainichi* is another professional soccer player named Chon Tese. He was born in 1984 in Nagoya. But his case is much more complicated. His father held South Korean nationality but his mother held North Korean nationality. She was a teacher at the Korean ethnic school in Japan for North Korean students. Chon Tese had South Korean nationality, but having been educated in the Korean ethnic school for North Korean students he wanted to play professional soccer in North Korea and play for that country in the World Cup in South Africa. Afterwards he played professional soccer in Germany; and at present he plays for one of the South Korean professional soccer teams.

These two examples show that the categories of *zainichi* cannot necessarily be applied to the third and fourth generations.

### ***Zainichi* Nationality, Affiliation and Style of Name**

Historically, for *zainichi*, there were only three ways to live long term in Japan. Those who obtained *Chousen* nationality, recognised as North Korean, belong to *Soren* and use Korean style names; those who took South Korean nationality belong to *Mindan* and use both Korean and Japanese names; those who naturalised as Japanese leave the *zainichi* diaspora and use a Japanese name only. Nationality, affiliation of diaspora and style of name are combined together to form *zainichi* identity. The way the third and fourth generation *zainichi* form an identity living in Japan differs from the first and the second generation migrants.

Recently the relationship between Japan and the two Koreas is not good. But in the world of secular entertainment relations between Japan and South Korea seem quite cosy. Korean movie stars and pop-star singers frequently appear on Japanese TV programs. Many middle-aged women love Korean TV male stars, and young Japanese girls also have idols among the Korean Pop Song Stars. *Kimchi* and Korean food are also very popular with the Japanese people. *Kimchi* is available even at most convenience stores as a staple food item.

Across the ocean, in Korea, the situation is similar: there is interest in Japan and its cultural assets. For instance, Korean nationals seem to really enjoy Japanese food and there are many Japanese restaurants in Korea these days. Karaoke also is a huge export item from Japan with a Karaoke shop on practically every corner in Korea. *Manga* comics originated in Japan but are now very popular in Korea too. The young people are using the Manga genre as a means to study Japanese culture and language. Such sharing of cultural assets seems to be creating a kind of borderless society between Korea and Japan.

Whilst the *zainichi* seemed to have lost their identity by living in Japan, there is hope for a brighter future nowadays, due to interest in one another's culture.

There are still some real obstacles to overcome for *zainichi* in order to feel fully accepted in both cultures. Recently a third generation *zainichi* wrote a book about her experience and compared obtaining her Korean nationality to obtaining a driver's license but never using it to actually drive.<sup>12</sup> She is saying that it takes some personal effort and action on her part to learn more about being Korean. One *zainichi* actually wrote a book about the *End of Zainichi*.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately those *zainichi* who have been lucky enough to obtain North Korean nationality are not allowed to visit South Korea.

#### **Part Four: Buddhism and Ancestral Rituals in Japan: from “Funeral Buddhism” to “Disappearing Buddhist Temples”**

I have described how and why *zainichi* identity has been moulded and modified by historical events since 1910, when Imperial Japan colonized the Korean Peninsula. Let me now explain how and why the ancestral rituals have influenced successive generations of *zainichi*. Let me begin by explaining ancestral rituals in Japanese Buddhism.

##### **(1) Relationship with Shintoism**

One of the chief features of Japanese Buddhism is called “Funeral Buddhism”. For Japanese, it is most common to request that funerals, burials, and annual ancestral prayer services, whether in the home or at local temples be conducted by the local Mahayana Buddhist priests. Concerning the rites of passage for common Japanese, Buddhism has dominated the nether world namely issues associated with death, eternal destiny and associated ancestral rituals. On the contrary, Shintoism rules events in this world and all associated rites of passage associated with it, such as the rite of passage for new-born babies, children's third-fifth-seventh birthday blessings, marriage ceremonies, and festivals associated with a fruitful harvest. Thus Shinto shrines are intimately involved with life issues, whilst Buddhist temples, assist believers with issues surrounding death. Somehow in Japanese lives within both this world and the nether world, there is compartmentalization between Buddhism and Shintoism, because the latter dislikes “impurity” (*kegare* in Japanese).

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<sup>12</sup> Lee, 1997.

<sup>13</sup> Chung, 2001.

This compartmentalization of Japanese religion seems to be prominent among Japanese since the Meiji Restoration; it has promoted modernization, as well as the Westernization of Japanese society. The Japanese government tried to separate Shintoism to legitimate the Japanese Empire as set apart from the rest of the religious world in Japan. Before the Meiji era there had been an amalgamation between Buddhism and Shintoism and other folk beliefs. A good example of this can be experienced at the shrines and temples of Nikko (Nikko Toshogu in common Japanese), which were registered in 1999 as a World Heritage Site. Actually this sacred area consists of two main shrines and one temple, but most Japanese regard it as just one religious site, not two distinct ones. Besides this example, most Japanese in their private homes maintain both a small Shinto shrine and a Buddhist altar at which the family gathers in the morning and in the evening to pray for all living and deceased family members. Also in daily life we utter “There are no gods or Buddha in this world” when we face miserable hardships such as great natural disasters.

In academic society, we refer to this relationship between Buddhism and Shintoism as “syncretism”, or more specifically, as a “manifestation theory” in that the Shinto gods are actually manifestations of the Buddha, or even sometimes vice versa. Historically speaking, Buddhism was imported into indigenous Shintoism around the 7th century from China via the Korean peninsula. Ikegami, a sociologist of religion in Japan, has pointed out that it is quite unique in the world that indigenous Shintoism has survived after Buddhism spread as the “Great Religion” among the Japanese.<sup>14</sup> Ikegami also mentions the relationship between Buddhism and Shintoism in relation to ancestral rituals. For Japanese, he says, it is very important for the surviving relatives to change the dead “stormy spirit” (*araburu-mitama*) to the “peaceful spirit” surviving through various ancestral rituals. Shinto priests use the “ritual of purification” (*harai*) for the relatively weaker deceased “stormy spirit”, which is submissive to human power. On the other hand, a Buddhist ritual related to “ancestral memorial services” (*ekou*) and “anathematization of the stormy spirit” (*chobuku*) is held by Buddhist priests when it manifests itself as stronger than human power. Thus Ikegami argues that there is a sense of collaboration between Buddhism and Shintoism regarding ancestral rituals.

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<sup>14</sup> Ikegami, 2003, pp.7-121.

## **(2) Marriage and Meat-eating by Buddhist priests and *danka seido* / *terauke seido***

Buddhist sects unique to Japan evolved during the Kamakura era (1192-1333), when Japanese society was changing from a hedonistic aristocratic society to a militaristic Samurai society. One of those sects, named “Pure Land and True Doctrine” (Jodo-shin-shu) was founded by Shinran (1178-1263). He, following the Pure Land (Jodo) sect established by Honen (1133-1212), pronounced that only Amida Buddha in the “latter day of the Law” could save people if they sincerely chanted a prayer to him. Shinran furthermore encouraged others by living the lifestyle of a layman, eating meat and marrying, even though these were prohibited for Buddhist clergy. Thus Buddhist monks’ ability to marry and eat meat is Shinran’s interpretation of Honen’s belief in Amida Buddha and “latter day” eschatology. The Meiji government eventually promoted the way of life proposed by the Jodo-shin-shu Buddhist sect for other sects too, so that they might become more secularized, like Shintoism. As a result most Japanese Buddhist sects now permit marriage, eating of meat and consumption of alcohol by their clergy, like lay Buddhists.

There also exists in Japanese Buddhism a unique organizational structure called *danka-seido*. It was first established under the name of *terauke-seido* (“temple guarantee system”) in the middle of the 17th century. The Edo Shogunate forced common people to register at their local Buddhist temple, in order to confirm their allegiance to the Buddhist faith. This provided a guarantee that those registered were neither Christians nor members of an anti-Tokugawa Buddhist sect. In return, the local temple promised to care for members’ funerals and family tombs, and assist with annual memorial prayer services and other ancestral rituals. Thus common people were coerced nominally to become Buddhists without a true conversion experience or any initiation; they were merely Buddhist by registration. As a result, “Funeral Buddhism” has been accepted into local village community life by familial adherence to Buddhist style death rituals for generation after generation. In this manner, Mahayana Buddhism in Japan has not only survived but thrived out of obedience to local customs.

## **(3) Buddhism before and after the Rapid Economic Growth from 1955 to 1973.**

In the Meiji era, Buddhism lost power in Japanese society because of a policy called *haibutu-kishaku*, which set out to abolish Buddhism in order to strengthen the power of state Shintoism. On the other hand, the civil law of the Meiji government promoted the patriarchal family system of the Samurai

(the ruling class), which dictated that only the eldest son could succeed to the family inheritance. Hence, the first son had to take care of his patrilineal ancestors by diligent and thoughtful reverence to the ancestor tablets and his family's tombs. Local Buddhist temples could survive by maintaining their parishioners' family tombs to pay respect to the patrilineal ancestors.<sup>15</sup>

However, later on the Buddhist temples in Japan found it hard to survive under the modernisation and industrialisation of a westernised society. This phenomenon became quite obvious after the end of the Second World War, when Japanese society had to face rapid economic growth (1955-73) and rural to urban migration upset the traditional family system. In 1940, before the Second World War, 44.6% of the Japanese population worked in primary industries such as agriculture and fishing, 26.2% in the secondary industries such as heavy industry and chemical industries, and 29.2% in service industries such as business, banking and information technology. In 1960, 5 years after rapid economic growth had started in Japan, the number in primary industries had fallen to 32.7%. In contrast to this reduction, those in secondary industries increased to 29.1% and those in service industries increased to 38.2%. This tendency continued to escalate until in 1980, 7 years after the end of rapid economic growth, those in primary industry had decreased to 10.9%, those in secondary industry sector had increased to 33.6%, and those in service industries to 55.4%. In short, most of the people in Japan have moved from the local village community, where the primary industries are located, to the cities, where the secondary and third sector industries are situated. Urbanization thus spread throughout the Japanese islands.

Unfortunately this rural-to-urban migration has destroyed not only the village communities around Japan, but also the patriarchal family system, because many young people opted to leave their home villages to seek work and higher education in the cities. Consequently, after moving to the cities, the migrants tended to find partners to begin their own nuclear families there. The parents of these nuclear families could still maintain a relationship with their home villages and support their *danka-dera* (family temple) through ancestral rituals for their deceased grandparents and parents.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Inoue, 1990, pp.98-101.

<sup>16</sup> Ukai, 2015. In contrast to the journalistic book mentioned above, sociologists of religion have demonstrated how Buddhist temples can reorganise the community in a depopulating society. Also see Sakurai & Kawamata, 2016.

However, the children of migrants eventually maintain very little relationship with their parents' home village, which it is troublesome to visit. Gradually, those left in the home village age, and other relatives die, or migrate to other places. Some have tried to move their family tomb to a closer cemetery, or have made up their minds to close the family tomb (*haka-jimai*)<sup>17</sup> by reburying their ancestors' bones (*kai-sou*) in large public graves (*gassou /shugo-baka* or *goudo-baka*) to ensure that their ancestors will be prayed over in their absence by others visiting the public grave. Japanese opt to be buried in these public graves either because they are single or because they themselves are childless. They are afraid of being buried in the tomb of someone who has no relatives to mourn their death (*muen-baka*).

It also happens that white collar workers are transferred for work and live outside their home village in towns or cities far away, sometimes without the possibility of returning. These internal migrants similarly easily lose their relationship to their family temple. Familiarity with the problem of modern migration itself provides insight into the decline of the family temple system in Japanese society, not only in rural but also in urban areas. The destruction of the family temple system and consequential breakdown of the patriarchal family system have created new funeral and burial styles. In a traditional Japanese community, not only relatives of the dead family member, but also neighbours and members of the company selflessly work together to assist with the funeral rituals.

Nowadays, funerals attended by family members only (*kazoku-so*) and cremations without a funeral (*choku-so*) are becoming popular options among Japanese. As for the burial, not only are *goudo-baka* (collective public grave), *shugo-baka* (columbarium niche), and *sankotu* (scattering ashes at sea or over the countryside) attractive new options for urban migrants faced with uncertainty about their graves. Some Japanese have totally rejected religion and opt to perform the rites of the funeral themselves as friends of the deceased (*yujin-so*)<sup>18</sup>, and some decide on interment in non-religious gravesites; these too are now becoming popular.

Thus desire for freedom from the family temple system has generated various new styles for funerals and burial; individuals can choose their own style of funeral and burial.

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<sup>17</sup> Kikkawa, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Toyotetsugaku-kenkyu-jo, 2006.

In the next Parts I shall discuss the ancestral ritual of *zainichi* in origin and in Japan, then how this change of ancestral rituals in Japan has created a new pattern of ancestral rituals among *zainichi*.

### **Part Five: Ancestral Rituals in origin and among the first and second generation of Zainichi.**

Before Imperial Japan colonised Korea in 1910, Confucianism had already spread among Koreans ever since the Choson Dynasty (1392-1910) chose it as the national religion in the late fourteenth century. Patrilineal kinship groups in clan and village communities were organised in relation to Chu Hsi Ierei's (朱熹) Confucian domestic rules. Buddhism and other folk beliefs sometimes led to syncretism. Shamanism had been suppressed by the government because it was regarded as superstition by Confucian scholars. Yet among Korean ordinary people, these folk Buddhist monks, Posaru, Shamans, Mudans and Shinban, play a very important role in ancestral rituals and in fishery and agricultural annual festivals for the prosperity of clans and peace for the dead who will care for their living descendants.

According to Chu Hsi Ierei, the chief of the clan, namely the first son of the head family, should enshrine the fifth generation of the head of the family on the anniversary of each ancestor's memorial day as well as during the New Year Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival of the lunar calendar. Every ritual for the ancestors was conducted by the first son of the family at his house with all the clan members. Each time, the offerings for the ancestor were prepared by the women of the family, but they could not attend the formal ceremonies.<sup>19</sup>

The cost and time involved in preparing for these ancestral rituals caused great hardship for the whole family. And from a gender point of view, women sometimes condemned these Korean traditional rituals and their customs. At the present day, partly because of the spread of Christianity, these ceremonies have been modified and both genders now partake in the ancestor worship ceremonies; it is more like a time of prayer and conversation with the deceased loved ones.

Obviously, among the first and the second generations of Korean immigrants to Japan, the new style of ancestral ritual has been occurring since the late 1980s, when the *zainichi* were obliged to settle down in Japan. They established their

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<sup>19</sup> Kim, 2008.

own tombs and tried to re-organize their patrilineal family clans, who share the same tomb. For instance, the Kam-sum Kim clan established a Japanese branch of the worldwide clan by creating their own tombs in Japan and announcing that the dead father was the first ancestor of the branch of the paternal line family tree in Japan.<sup>20</sup> In order to register this new faction of the Kam-sum Kim clan, the successor of the dead father tried to contact the original clan in South Korea. Thus Japanese members of the branch visit and celebrate the clan at the original site in South Korea. Of course, only *zainichi* who had obtained South Korean nationality could do such ancestral activities after the Basic Treaty between Japan and South Korea was concluded in 1965.

The first generation of *zainichi* preferred to bury their bodies back in Korea when they died in Japan. So some *zainichi* tried to send the bodies to the home village or town to be buried; the family and kin group did not want to let the dead body be burnt to ashes, because cremation was not the Korean custom<sup>21</sup>. At that time, it took more than one month to send a corpse back to South Korea and without embalming the remains decomposed rapidly.

Around 1990 Cheju City created a graveyard for *zainichi* to bury deceased family members. Even though some *zainichi* can travel back and forth between South Korea and Japan, it is inconvenient, and most prefer to carry out these responsibilities as close to Japan as possible. So many *zainichi* are inclined to establish graves close by and to preserve their own unique Korean ancestral rituals as exactly as possible. The ancestral rituals maintain their own culture and serve to reunite the clan, even when it is located in Japan.<sup>22</sup>

The Korean tradition of ancestral rituals is very important for *zainichi* to preserve their Koreanness both within the family and at the kinship level; it also serves to help individual identity. However, among the first and the second generation a change can be observed. The chief difference between the Korean manner of ancestral worship and the Japanese is that Korean rituals are performed in accordance with Confucian ideas but the Japanese ones in accordance with Buddhist ideas. Also, approximately 1% of Japanese are Christian, and while there is some syncretism with the local religions regarding the timing of the rites of death, the basic ideas regarding eschatology are quite different.

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<sup>20</sup> Lee, 1992 and Ogawa & Teraoka, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> Yan, 2004 and Kim, 1985.

<sup>22</sup> Lee and Ogawa & Teraoka above mentioned.

In Japan, most of the Korean style ancestral ceremonies used be performed by the first son of the successor of the family or the kin group at his house, and started from midnight. Each ritual for an ancestor in the past five generations should be performed on the exact anniversary of their death. All the offerings for the ancestor and the celebration party afterwards for the family and kinship members are prepared by women. Criticism of Korean ancestor worship includes the cost and the diminished role of women in the family *zainichi*.<sup>23</sup>

First and second generation immigrants in general try hard to preserve their original culture. This also applies to Korean immigrants in Japan. Especially, immigrants from the Cheju Island in Korea have shown loyalty to the traditional way of performing the ancestral rites. Focusing on the ancestral rituals, Shamans (called Shinban and Posaru in Korea) had been treated indifferently by the ruling classes in the Chosen Dynasty period, but they contributed to the ancestral rituals by being mediums to the dead ancestors' spirits. When descendants wanted to celebrate their ancestors, they asked shamans to perform special rites named *Kku*. The *Kku* rituals are held in small temples and shrines on Ikoma Mountain in Nara prefecture, which is home to many Japanese folk beliefs related to both shamans and mountain-dwelling ascetics.

Koreans as well as Japanese believe that prosperity and adversity, happiness and unhappiness, health and illness in this world may be related to the efforts they devote to performing ancestor worship. Sometimes Buddhism and shamanism become syncretised in their beliefs and rites, as mentioned above.

Iida, a sociologist of religion at Otani University in Kyoto, has since the 1980s studied the religious practices of *zainichi*. He with other scholars conducted research on Korean Buddhist temples (*chosen-dera*) in the Ikoma Mountains from 1983 to 1984, and discovered that the *zainichi* were using syncretic rituals and rites of Buddhism and shamanism within their ancestral rituals.<sup>24</sup> Most of the *zainichi* came from Cheju Island off the coast of South Korea and settled outside Osaka City, in the vicinity of Mount Ikoma.

Iida also surveyed the religious facilities of Koreans in the Ikuno area of Osaka city from 1988 to 1989. In order to analyse these Korean Buddhist temples, he categorised them by the location and affiliation of the Korean residential association of the temple: “temple of Mountain and temple of City”, as well as *Mindan-kei* (South Korean) and *Soren-kei* (North Korean). Also he pointed out

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<sup>23</sup> Lee, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Iida, 2002, p. 64.

that there existed Branch Buddhist temples from South Korea. He then found out that on Ikoma Mountain there were *chosen-dera* which performed Buddhist and shamanic syncretic rituals for the dead ancestors of *zainichi* from Cheju Island.<sup>25</sup> In contrast to the Mountain type, he found that there were some branch temples of one of the biggest factions of the South Korean Buddhist sect called Jogyejong. He found red Suwasuchika (meaning Posaru – Buddhist shaman), small advertisement boards, on ordinary residences. He reported that there were no Buddhist shamanic syncretic rituals in *chosen-dera* of the City type because of the loud sound of drums and cymbals used during the ceremony.

The actual ancestral rituals of *zainichi* have been studied by Yan, another sociologist of religion.<sup>26</sup> He observed second generation *zainichi* and interviewed them with a questionnaire in the Osaka area from 1996 to 99. He noticed different attitudes among the *zainichi* towards the local culture. Yan discovered a stronger identification to the homeland than to the migrated new country in the first and second generations compared to the third, fourth and fifth generation migrants. The former generations continued to perform the ancestral rituals exactly as they had at home, while the later generations paid little attention to details. After the 1980s a drastic change occurred in *zainichi* ancestral practices because of aging in the membership and the loss of the first generation.

Some new types of ancestral rituals can be observed only among *zainichi*. These are a mixture of Buddhist style ancestral rituals which are simplified and scaled down from ancestral rituals held at Korean Buddhist temples in Japan. In Korea, there are very few reports of ancestral ritual held at Buddhist temples. Only those who have no son perform ancestral worship at Buddhist temples.<sup>27</sup> When ancestral worship does happen at Buddhist temples, prayers may be chanted in Korean. This type of ceremony was observed in my fieldwork experience in both the Tokyo and the Osaka areas where *zainichi* live.

### **Part six. Present situation of Ancestral Ritual: data from fieldwork and surveys**

My previous research study of ancestral rituals among ethnic school teachers' families found that 18 out of 22 interviewed ethnic school teachers, aged from the 20s to the 60s, did their *chesa* (ancestral worship ceremony in Korean) at

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pp.61-180.

<sup>26</sup> Yan, 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Kim, 2008, p.77

home.<sup>28</sup> Only one said that he had not attended it because the first son of his grandfather was living in the Korean peninsula. None of them belonged to the first generation of immigrants from the Korean Peninsula; they were the second and third generations. Also we found that it was extremely difficult for them to prepare it properly, because they had less experience of attending the *chesa* in Korea. They had to prepare for the *chesa* when their parents passed away. At that moment, they watched the promotional video about the *chesa* provided by Soren in the area. These *zainichi* were strict about wanting to prepare and perform the *chesa* correctly in the Korean manner to reflect their own Korean identity.

During fieldwork in 2009 my colleagues and I visited two *zainichi* Buddhist temples in the cities of Osaka and Tokyo to interview the chief priests of the temples about ancestral rituals of the *zainichi*. Again in 2011 we did a follow-up site visit to the same temples because they seemed to be very popular for performing ancestral rituals by the *zainichi* teaching at the *Uri-hakkyo*, ethnic schools. All teachers still preserved their nationality and had been educated from kindergarten level to university supported by Soren who supports North Korea. Most members performed the ancestral rituals at home and they enshrined their parents' and relatives' remains in these temples.

These *zainichi* admitted that they used to follow funeral rites and rituals in Japanese Buddhist fashion. Now however they try to preserve their Korean cultural heritage concerning rites for the dead, for instance, by wearing traditional mourning clothing made out of rough white and yellow hemp. Also if possible they request sutras to be chanted in Korean.

90% of the first generation of *zainichi* came from South Korea before the Second World War. However, *zainichi* related to Soren and/or to their ethnic school *Uri-hakkyo* cannot return to their home town or village because they possess a North Korean passport. Although *zainichi* with North Korean nationality holders belong to the same patrilineal kinship group or clan, it is hard for them to travel back into South Korea where they might be regarded as North Korean spies. As the teachers of *Uri-hakkyo* should act as role models for the *zainichi*, those who remember the colonisation of their home country by Imperial Japan use their original ethnic names with pride, as Chousen nationality embodies the history of their exile.

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<sup>28</sup> This research study was planned by the author, and carried out with co-researchers Yuri Inose, associate professor, Ryukoku University, and Lee Hyoungyon, lecturer, Tokai University. For details see Inose, 2011 and Tajima, Inose & Lee, 2010.

This group of *zainichi* who possess North Korean passports really do exemplify the truest notion of diaspora in the original Jewish meaning because they were forced to leave their homeland and live in a foreign country. Because these teachers seemed ideal for our fieldwork we interviewed them most thoroughly. Still the *zainichi* from North Korea can neither visit South Korea nor freely travel to North Korea. In this difficult situation the North Korean *zainichi* strive hard to preserve their own identity through ancestral rituals for the dead, much as the Jews in the diaspora tried to preserve their own religious life through the observance of traditional rites of passage and celebrations.

One of the highlights of our research findings was discovering that there are two relatively new ethnic Buddhist temples just for *zainichi* with North Korean nationality. The chief Buddhist priest of these two temples graduated from the highest level of *Uri-hakkyo*, equivalent to a university degree. Besides being a priest of the Tokyo temple he also worked for this Chosen University as professor of natural sciences. The chief priest of the new temple in Osaka also taught at an *Uri-hakkyo* soon after graduating from that university.

There are similarities between these two temples. Both temples are located in big cities and described as “City Type *Zainichi* Korean Temples.” They do not operate any services related to shamanism but do accept performing the “*chesa*”. The latter is traditionally performed at home but for those who have family and resources performing them at the temple is a practical alternative.

The names of these temples evoke in the *zainichi* good memories of their home in Korea, including the value of unity and peace. Toukoku in Osaka means “Unification of the Country”, and Kokuhei means “Peace in the Country”. Inside the Tokoku-ji in Osaka, part of the Berlin wall is exhibited. Each name embodies the hope and ideal for the home country. At the same time, in Buddhist practice, both temples put stress on lectures in Korean on Korean culture. At both temples they chant the Buddhist sutras in Korean and use “Buddhist mortuary tablets” with the name of the dead written in Korean, instead of the Buddhist name used in Japanese style funerals.

As for the facilities, both temples have a large ossuary which can house the remains of more than 1000 people. Remains of the dead are put into ceramic containers and carefully wrapped in white cotton. Some remains have the traditional Buddhist mortuary tablet inscribed with the name of the deceased along with a photo. Prayers are also offered for the unknown dead who have no one to pray for them. Both priests said that these are unknown dead Koreans who were taken away from their homes during the colonisation of the Korean peninsula by Imperial Japan.

The first generation of *zainichi* remained faithful to their cultural origin in the Korean peninsula such as Cheju Island, where syncretic religious practices involving both shamanism and Buddhism were dominant. Therefore the mountain type of *zainichi* Korean temples on Ikoma mountain were popular among Koreans, especially those who came from Cheju Island and had lived together in the Osaka area. However, for the third and the fourth generations of *zainichi*, because of their marriage with Japanese or *zainichi* outside Cheju Island, it is difficult to preserve this local belief in later generations. *Zainichi* prefer to choose more standardised Korean practices like the *chesa* or keep as close as possible to the image in their memory of how it was performed before their diaspora experience.

Both *zainichi* temples, Toukoku-ji<sup>29</sup> in Osaka and Kokuhei-ji<sup>30</sup> in Tokyo, belong to Zai-nippon Chousen Bukkyou-to kyoukai (in English by author's translation: Korean Buddhist Association in Japan), established in 1955 soon after the Soren organised. This was at first organised by a Korean Buddhist named Ryu, who came from Korea in 1937 after practising at the Kain Temple in South Korea. He then studied to graduate from one of the Buddhist universities located in Kyoto. He stayed at the Japanese Buddhist temple named Manjyu-ji in Kyoto. Practising Buddhism at the temple, he invited Buddhists from the Korean peninsula and let them stay at the temple while studying Buddhism in Japan. Using his private network of Korean Buddhists, he with thirty-three other priests joined the Korean Buddhist Society under the umbrella of Soren.<sup>31</sup>

Later, this Korean Buddhist society was split when one of the Korean Buddhists who worked at the South Korean consulate in Kobe city found that its activities had been inclined to be political. With some other members, he left this Buddhist society, and established the South Korean Buddhist society in 1963. However, this society disappeared, and then another was established. In 1991, it was renewed under the name of the Korean Buddhist Community.<sup>32</sup> Thus the Korean Buddhist society is also split in accordance with the split of the Korean peninsula and their resident societies.

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<sup>29</sup> <http://toukokuji.com/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.kokuheiji.jp/>

<sup>31</sup> Miyashita, 2012 and Iida, Takafumi; Tani, Tomio; Ashida, Toshirou; and Akiba, Hiroshi, 1985.

<sup>32</sup> Formal name in Japanese is “Zai-nippon kan-bukkyou-to sorenngou-kai”.

Not only for *zainichi* with North Korean nationality or with South Korean one, ancestral rituals constitute the chief value in Confucianism. To preserve this value is very important for *zainichi* people, not only for the family or the clan but also for the individual, to help integrate family and kinship structure and stabilize their identity. *Zainichi* who hold South Korean nationality have access to Korean temples where South Korean monks serve. Also they can attend the ancestral rituals of their clans held in their home towns or villages in their home country, South Korea. However, for the *zainichi* with Chousen nationality, it is rather difficult to make contact with South Korean monks or to attend the rituals held in South Korea, because of political differences. Therefore, the Buddhist temple for the North Korean *zainichi* has been vitally needed for the *zainichi* with Chousen nationality. Monks of both temples answered our questions concerning the nationality of the members, and most of them seem to belong to North Korea. But they do not care whether people have South Korean nationality or Japanese nationality, or are newcomers or of long standing; they say that all belong to the same Oriental or Asian ethnicity.

*Zainichi* in Japan should adopt their ancestral rituals in accordance with their socio-cultural milieu. In Japan, rituals and thoughts related to death always have been moulded and operated by Buddhism and Buddhist temples. Funerals are held in the Buddhist way, chanting in front of the body before it is put in the coffin. Buddhist Otsuya (wake for the dead) and the following funeral service and cremation service are traditional among Japanese. It was common long ago to bury ashes in the graveyards located at Buddhist temples, because even after these death rituals are complete, on the anniversary of the death Buddhist monks would pray for them. *Zainichi* also have attended these ceremonies in Japan. It is quite natural that the second, third and fourth generation of *zainichi* follow these customs.

*Zainichi* have become accustomed to Japanese culture. However, they would still like to preserve their own Korean culture in order to connect to their roots on the Korean peninsula. In this situation, *Zainichi* have tried to demonstrate Korean style in ceremonies as against Japanese style. In this sense, Korean Buddhist temples are essential for *zainichi* to settle into the diaspora situation, especially for those who hold Chousen nationality, because they cannot return to their ancestors' home country.

### **Part seven . Concluding Thoughts**

I began by outlining the historical background of *zainichi*. Their diaspora was born from the Imperial Japanese colonisation of the Korean Peninsula, and this Korean diaspora in Japan was later divided into two in accordance with the political split

into North and South Korea since the Truce Agreement at the end of the Korean Civil War (1950-1953). Then I introduced a new type of *zainichi* in Japan have been obliged to adapt their ancestral. To understand it more thoroughly I quoted comments from two professional soccer players who have chosen to settle down in Japan. Then I mentioned the ancestral rituals of *zainichi*, based originally on the Confucian style of the Korean Peninsula. When the first generation of *zainichi* left Korea they tried to preserve the Confucian style of ancestral worship. However, while living in Japan the *zainichi* found that in order to adapt and continue their practices they had to rely upon the local Buddhist temples and so create a new style. This new style is necessary because particularly the *zainichi* who possess Chousen nationality cannot return to South Korea and travel to North Korea is difficult at times. Thus the Buddhist temples have become more and more important sites for continuing their worship of their ancestors.

Finally, I would like to mention the relationship between *zainichi* identity and the Korean diaspora experience. In Part Three, I mentioned that a new type of identity can be observed among the third generation, using the example of the *zainichi* professional soccer players. Also, I have mentioned that there are new types of Buddhist temples welcoming ancestral rituals by *zainichi* in accordance with their time-cherished traditions but in a new hybrid form. In this sense, a new type of identity is needed to identify a new type of diaspora. *Zainichi* Korean temples must be the anchor point for the new identity of the third, fourth, and future generations. This phenomenon is perhaps best expressed by the Biblical maxim that new wine needs new wineskins.

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