

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Creating Foreigners: “Stowaways” and the Implementation of the Immigration Control System in Post-war Japan**

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In Asia after World War II, there was an unprecedented gathering of momentum for national independence and the formation of national identity, following the dissolution and disruption of the colonial system. The fluctuations of this time also reached Japan, whose empire was dismantled along with the country's defeat. In this context, ethnic groups which had been absorbed during the imperial era were excluded, through the process of narrowing down the category of “citizen” to only consist of pure Japanese. For Koreans who had put down roots in Japan during the colonial period, this took the shape of “foreignization”, that is, of incremental exclusion based on the logic of nationality and citizenship.

As can be seen from the title “Creating foreigners,” this book is a work that, through a focus on the “stowaway” phenomenon, considers the issue of “foreignization,” which is the starting point for the question of the Korean diaspora in the post-war era. Many Koreans in Japan chose to undertake a journey of repatriation to their home country along with liberation in 1945. However, due to political confusion, lack of food, and the spread of disease in the context of the divided occupation of Korea by the US and the USSR, not a few Koreans returned to Japan. By necessity, this return to Japan by members of the Korean diaspora took the form of “stowing away.” The occupation army (General Headquarters, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) strongly forbid reentry into Japan for Koreans who had temporarily repatriated to their home country, so the majority of those who were discovered as stowaways were labelled “illegal immigrants” and deported to Korea.

This book “relies on both written sources and the recounting of the experiences of individuals to shed light on how Koreans who voyaged to Japan were discovered and registered.” Recently, much research has accumulated about the voyages of Koreans including during the occupation period, about the legal status and immigration control system of the Korean diaspora more broadly, and about related social movements. This book can be positioned, for the time being, as the culminating academic accomplishment of this research at its present stage.

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\* 朴沙羅『外国人をつくりだす—戦後日本における「密航」と入国管理制度の運用』ナカニシヤ出版

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The structure of the book is as follows:

- Introduction The Korean diaspora and “stowaways”
- Chapter 1 Describing the society of the past: Oral history and sociology
- Chapter 2 The administrative structure of occupied Japan
- Chapter 3 Repatriation and deportation: “Stowing away” and related laws
- Chapter 4 Distinguishing “Koreans.” Conditions and categories of “stowaways”
- Chapter 5 Registering “foreigners”
- Conclusion The other side of “apparent consensus”

In the introduction, after relevant previous research is introduced, the main stance of the book is set out; that is, the author claims that “it is possible to shed light on how Koreans came to be treated as ‘foreigners’” (p.17) by focusing on the actions of those involved with the “stowaway” phenomenon. Furthermore, the book “focuses on the interchanges of identifying and being identified, through the problem of individual identification that accompanies migration” (pp.18-19). This is accompanied by a focus on a “mixture of inconsequential behaviors,” such as the perceptions of the people who discovered stowaways and the “efforts” by stowaways to escape this, the “ingenuity” of those who applied for registration, and the “carelessness of the responses by bureaucratic offices” (p.19). In order to elucidate these “interchanges,” in addition to relying on written sources, the author also conducted interviews with nine people, including both people who experienced the act of stowing away and former Australian army officers who were involved in the occupation.

Chapter 1 examines the relationship between data obtained from interviews and data obtained from written sources, referring to existing debates about oral history and the historical study of documents. Chapter 2 considers the characteristics and actual conditions of the Japanese occupation, which were formed through bargaining among the victorious countries of WWII.

Chapter 3 reviews the background and formation process of the “Alien Registration Ordinance (Japanese: 外国人登録令 *Gaikokujin-tōroku-rei*)” (1947), and reveals the scale, routes, and methods of stowaways, as well as their regions of origin and reasons for making the crossing. This can be considered as a valuable study that ranges widely over the related materials. In this chapter, it is argued that the “Alien Registration Ordinance,” created as a way of preventing “stowaways,” once enacted became a way of exerting legal control over members of the Korean diaspora in Japan, who had resided in Japan since before the war and should have had Japanese citizenship (p.109).

Chapter 4 considers how Koreans who entered the country secretly were “discovered” as “Korean illegal immigrants” through the “Alien Registration Ordinance,” although in terms of citizenship they should have been considered Japanese. Police, under the supervision and auspices of the occupying army, carried out crackdowns on stowaways, and “by request from the police, civilian surveillance groups were formed to look out for stowaways; they coordinated with fishermen’s unions, firefighting groups, and local police to enforce crackdowns” (p.122). This book pays attention to the ways that the three categories of “suspicious person,” “Korean,” and “stowaway” were bound together through these crackdowns. The Korean stowaways included some communists; based on the perception that their entrance into the country would result in a threat to security, “the desire to deter stowaways led to the formation of a kind of circular reasoning, in which people who did not seem Japanese—that is, people who behaved in suspicious ways, or ways that the observers were unaccustomed to—were seen as

'stowaways,' and 'stowaways' were assumed to not be Japanese." This argument is truly interesting.

Chapter 5 examines the question of the "foreignization" of Koreans from the perspective of the procedures to issue an alien registration certificate, sprinkled with interviews with people who were in fact issued these certificates. Here as well, the author points out the lack of logic and the "sloppiness" of the procedures, which arose "from the fact that some citizens were being forcibly changed to the status of "foreigner"" (p.195).

The conclusion summarizes the points covered so far, centering on the "circularity" described above. There is particular emphasis placed on the fact that the "redefinition" of "Koreans" was "also carried out through circular processes outside the law." These "circular processes" included "the conduction of registration in a careless way, and other trivial acts of minor ingenuity and evasion," as well as elements that "at first appear insignificant, such as mistaken beliefs and prejudices, the atmosphere of a particular place, and the feelings of the people involved at a particular moment;" these "made it possible for laws to be put into practice that defined a certain group as "Korean"" (p.216).

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As described above, it would be fair to call this book a benchmark of the research of the occupation-era Korean diaspora, which sheds light on the details of the process of "foreignization" of the Korean diaspora under the occupation, based on extensive written sources and interviews, including even "minor ingenuity and evasion," the "sloppiness" of the registration procedures, and the "trivial and insignificant elements" such as "mistaken beliefs and prejudices."

However, it is difficult to draw from the book a clear message about the essential question of the significance of the "foreignization" of the Korean diaspora. Looking at ethnicity and nationality from a rather dogmatic point of view, Japanese citizenship was conferred on Koreans during the colonial era through mere compulsion, and the Koreans in Japan during the occupation who were repositioned as foreigners were, in fact, originally foreigners. This book seems to fundamentally share this premise.

The Koreans who put down roots in Japan during the colonial era were a group that included a great deal of diversity in terms of shades of "Korean" identity and reasoning about the choice of where to live, in the highly dynamic context of "liberation". The question of what citizenship should be granted to Koreans in Japan was not self-evident and could not be regulated as such. The fact that a group of people who had these kinds of historical characteristics were uniformly positioned as "foreigners" is the problem, and I think that many of the issues faced by the Korean diaspora during the post-war period spring from this problem.

Either way, the discussion of members of the Korean diaspora who were positioned as "foreigners" does not become truly dynamic without sufficient consideration of the historical existence of the Koreans in Japan at the time. This is what I am hoping for in the future research of the author.