

# **Korean Communities in Hong Kong and Macau: Study of the Intercultural Communication and Identity of Korean People in Overseas**

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## **Abstract:**

Up until very recently, scholars tended to focus on studying the Korean communities in Japan and the U.S. With more than 600,000 *Zainichi Chosenjin* (the term which has been commonly known in Japan for ethnic Koreans permanently living in Japan) living in Japan currently, their political and social status have always been under the limelight.<sup>1</sup> The large population of Korean immigrants in the U.S attracts the attention of scholars about their ability of adaptation to the U.S life and their education problem.<sup>2</sup> However, the number of Korean people living in other regions, in particular Asian countries, has been increasing due to the rapid economic development in Asia. Thus, further studies about them are required in order to understand the cultural exchange and relationships between Korea and other Asian countries.

Studies of Koreans in China tend to focus on the Korean people living in the Northeast China, in particular the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture. However, we can see the numbers of Korean people living in other parts of China such as Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macau are increasing.<sup>3</sup> Hong Kong and Macau attract the attention of Korean people in recent years and the number of Korean people living in these two places has been increasing every year. This research project examines the Korean community in Hong Kong and Macau, including the historical relationships between Hong Kong, Macau and Korea, the formation and present situation of the Korean communities, and the prospects of Korean nationals in Hong Kong and Macau. The focus of this research project is on their identity problem – how they consider themselves in the Macau society and as Korean people – by studying their activities such as working and social life, education and language use.

This research project is based on the research project done by Higuchi Ken'ichiro and the author in 2009 about the Korean Community in Hong Kong.<sup>4</sup> The author further develops the project by studying the Korean community in Macau so as to have a clear picture of the Korean community in Hong Kong and Macau, the two special administrative regions of China. The project has not finished yet so it is inappropriate to make a conclusion in this paper. However, the author reports the results of the project until now which reflects some characteristics of overseas Koreans. This paper is divided into three main parts. The first part is about the historical relationship between Hong Kong, Macau and Korea and history of the Korean communities in the two places. Due to the fact that little is known about the historical relationships between the Macau and Korea, I rely on primary sources such as official documents from the Japanese government and the South Korean government in order to understand the personal exchanges and bilateral relationships between Macau and Korea. The second part is about the education and language use of Korean nationals in Hong Kong and Macau. Since no similar research has been conducted before, especially in Macau, there is no secondary source research for which I can use as

reference. Thus, I conduct interviews of Korean people in the two places in order to examine their education and language use in daily lives, thereby to find out influences of overseas experiences on Korean people, in particular their identity. Since the project has not finished yet, the results cannot reflect the whole picture of the Korean community in Hong Kong and Macau. However, this project explores the study of Korean community, especially the study of the Korean community in Macau. In this paper, I will try to make use some of the interviews I conducted to explain the situation in both Hong Kong and Macau. The third part is the analysis of the identity and acculturation of Korean people in Hong Kong and Macau by using John Berry's model about acculturation.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Yasunori Fukuoka, Translated by Tom Gill, *Lives of young Koreans in Japan*, (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2000); David Chapman, *Zainichi Korean Identity and Ethnicity*, (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008); John Lie, *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Sonia Ryang and John Lie (eds.), *Diaspora without Homeland: being Korean in Japan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> For example, Insook Han Park (et al.), *Korean Immigrants and U.S. Immigration Policy: A Predeparture Perspective*, (Honolulu : East-West Population Institute, East-West Center, 1990); Curtis Andressen, *The Educational Mobility of Korean Overseas Students*, (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Press, 2001); Rochelle L. Dalla (et al.), *Strengths and Challenges of New Immigrant Families: Implications for Research, Education, Policy, and Service*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> 외교부 재외동포과, 「재외동포 본문 (지역별 상세)」, 『재외동포현황 (2011)』, 2011, 51,53 쪽.

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<sup>4</sup> For details, see Higuchi Kenichiro and Kwong Yan Kit, *Multilingual Hong Kong: Language and Experience*, (Japan: V2 Solution, 2012).