

# Meanings of Modern and Post-Modern Phenomena: Formation of Trans-national Communities of Korean-Chinese

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## **Introduction**

The exact number of Korean-Chinese in the United States is not known. Since they have People's Republic of China nationality, it is almost impossible to count their number. They are officially "Chinese." Further, most Korean-Chinese in the United States are illegal residents. However, in Koreatown of Los Angeles, we can see Korean-Chinese almost everyday, although most Americans do not know this fact. Globalization makes many invisible people.

This paper interprets meanings of modern and post-modern phenomena in terms of the analysis of the network communities Korean-Chinese in Los Angeles. Globalization is both a modern and a post-modern phenomenon. Because of globalization Korean-Chinese relocate around the world and create network communities.

Section 1, "The Formation of Korean-Chinese," presents a history of Korean-Chinese from the late nineteenth century to present. Through this section, we can understand the historical continuity of Korean-Chinese and their motivations for relocation. In Section 2, "The Relocation of Korean-Chinese and Its Macro and Micro Causes," the relocation process of Korean-Chinese is described and its macro and micro causes are analyzed. Their relocation is associated with globalization and the economic policies of the Chinese nation-state. Through this process their life-world is drastically changed on the surface. But we must recognize the historical continuity of Korean-Chinese from the slash-and-burn farming in the late Choson and Qing periods to present.

Section 3, "Formation of the Korean-Chinese Community in the United States," describes the short history of Korean-Chinese in the United States, one that is unknown to most Americans. Section 4, "Trans-Border Lives of Korean-Chinese in Koreatown of Los Angeles," describes daily lives of Korean-Chinese and interprets their trans-border lives. We can understand meanings of trans-border lives as modern and post-modern phenomena. Section 5, "Human Relationships of Korean-Chinese in Koreatown" discusses the human relations of Korean-Chinese principally with South Koreans. Korean-Chinese create their networking within the structured human relations in the Koreatown. In the "Conclusion," it will be suggested that Korean-Chinese in Los Angeles use modernity and post-modernity as tools and create an Asian identity beyond national borders.

## 1. The Formation of Korean-Chinese (中国朝鮮族)

The establishment of the People's Republic of China created several non-ethnic Chinese members of this nation state and named these people—*zu* (族). One of these ethnic communities is the Korean-Chinese.

Since people in the Korean Peninsula could easily enter Qing China in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the national border between QING China and Choson Korea was irrelevant for them. They moved around the land border and practiced slash-and-burn farming in China. They traveled back and forth within and across the border and engaged in their agricultural activities.<sup>1)</sup> These agricultural activities were accelerated by the immigration policy of the Qing government after 1882. Those farmers were used for the agricultural development within the border. After 1910, trans-border people rapidly increased in number because of the influence of the Japanese occupation of Korea. They escaped from colonialism by moving to slash-and-burn border land. The establishment of Manchuria caused the mass migration from the Korean Peninsula to Manchuria because Japanese colonialists needed agricultural farmers for the cultivation of japonica rice there.<sup>2)</sup> The number of people from the Korean Peninsula to Manchuria became the largest during this period (Table 1).<sup>3)</sup>

After 1945, about 1,100,000 Korean residents in Manchuria decided to continue their livelihoods in China. Whether or not they wanted to become Chinese, Korean communist political elites in China decided to accept Chinese nationality. These Korean residents are today called “Chaoxianzu” in Chinese and Chosŏn-jok” (朝鮮族) in Korean. Today, the younger generations of Korean-Chinese regard themselves as Chinese nationals and Korean offspring because of the Chinese national education. The elder generations, or people in their

Table 1 Korean Population in China

Period	Population
1620 – 1677	Several ten thousand
1677 – 1881	Several ten thousand
1882 – 1910	About 260,000
1911 – 1920	515,865
1921 – 1931	630,982
1932 – 1945	2,150,000

Source: (<http://www.chinapresscenter.com>)

Note: created by Li, Gangzhe

<sup>1)</sup> Tsurushima Setsurei, *Chūgoku Chōsenzoku no Kenkyū* [A Study in the Korean Minority in China] (Osaka: Kansai University Press, 1997), 9–12.

<sup>2)</sup> *Ibid.*, 221–229.

<sup>3)</sup> Li Gangzhe, “Network no keisei to Tōhoku Asia Keizaiken: Chūgoku Chōsenzoku no Ichizuke to Yakuwari” [Formation of Network and the Economic Area of the Northeast Asia], *Bulletin of Faculty of Economics*, Akita Keizaihōka University (2003): 55.

70s and older, regard themselves as Koreans based upon their historical experiences.

Those historical experiences include Chinese domestic issues as well as Chinese international relations with North Korea. During the Korean War (1950–1953), Korean-Chinese soldiers were sent to the Korean Peninsula by the Chinese government. Because of their powerful activities, Korean-Chinese residing in the PRC gained the Yanbian Independent State and national recognition as Chinese. But from Korean-Chinese perspectives, they had to proclaim that they are not North Korean nationals but Chinese nationals although a large number of them have relatives in North Korea. They have communicated with North Koreans until now, and thus can know both the Chinese nation-state and the North Korean nation-state.

According to Korean-Chinese proclamations of their political legitimacy as Chinese, in the Chinese official historical interpretation, the Korean-Chinese fought against the Japanese colonialists and supported the Chinese communist party. They served in the Chinese army, but their purpose was to achieve independence from the Japanese colonialists. Among Koreans, there were those who attacked Japanese colonialists, supporters of the Japanese colonial government, non-political everyday workers, and many other types of people. After Japanese colonialists founded colonial rule in Manchuria, That rule functioned well in governing Koreans, Chinese, and other people: Japanese governed Koreans and Chinese, and Koreans were made superior to other non-Japanese people there.<sup>4)</sup> Koreans were regarded as quasi-Japanese rulers by Chinese. Additionally, Korean resistance in general against Japanese colonialism was not for communism but for national independence. Korean Christians and communists coordinated with each other in order to fight against Japanese colonialism.<sup>5)</sup> Although Christianity was influential among Koreans in China and northern Korea before 1945, Chinese interpretations of history of Korean-Chinese have neglected this fact.

However, whether or not young generations of Korean-Chinese do not know their own history, “natural” acceptance of Chinese nationalism prevailed among them. But this naturalization based on the modern Chinese nation-state could not continue because China changed politically and economically during the 1980’s. For example, China signed a diplomatic treaty with South Korea in 1992. This agreement was based on economic interest in both countries. As a result, Korean-Chinese gained opportunities to go to South Korea.<sup>6)</sup> Since the Chinese government decided to abandon the communist ideology in essence and to prepare for the domestic capitalistic open market system, Korean-Chinese had to give up their ideas about

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<sup>4)</sup> Harajiri Hideki, *Korean Town no Ethnography* [Ethnographies of Koreatowns] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2000), 64.

<sup>5)</sup> Tsurushima, 256–265.

<sup>6)</sup> After 1988, Korean-Chinese could visit their relatives in South-Korea. But the number of Korean-Chinese in South-Korea increased after 1992. Park Kwang-song, “Kankoku ni okeru Chōsenzoku no Rōdōsha Shūdan no Keisei: Shinsō Mensetu Chōsa ni yoru Shiryō Bunseki” [Formation of the Korean-Chinese Laborer Group: Data Analysis based upon the Deep Interview Survey], in *Tōhoku Asia Chōsen Minzoku no takakuteki Kenkyū* [Researches on Korean Nation in Northeast Asia from Multiple Perspectives], ed. Sakurai Tatsuhiko (Nagoya: Yunitē, 2004), 133.

communism and begin reconstructing their ideology. They chose to move from their rural cities or villages to global cities in China or to other countries in order to survive. But from an ideological perspective, Korean-Chinese searched for alternative ideas to substitute for communism for their ideological survival. This means that Chinese communism or the Chinese ideology of its nation state can not give Chinese the idea for national integration and actually gave them mammonism shared by most Chinese nationals. This also indicates that Korean-Chinese followed this nationwide tide, but tried to create a new ideology for their ideological survival based on their Korean-Chinese networks. In other words, the Chinese nation-state can not guarantee national ideology and Chinese nationalism, but did provide the group category as Korean-Chinese.

Today, Korean-Chinese live in Beijing, Shanghai, and other large cities in China. They also live in, Moscow, Tokyo, Osaka, Los Angeles, New York, and other global cities around the world. Although they can speak Chinese and Korean, they regard themselves not as South Koreans or as Chinese but as Korean-Chinese. “Korean-Chinese” originally meant that their background was Korean and they were Chinese nationals or members of the Chinese multi-ethnic nation-state. In spite of this fact, they think of themselves as Korean-Chinese regardless of the Chinese nation-state and other nation-states at this point in time. The human group category created by the Chinese nation-state became substance although the Koreans had been called Koreans by Chinese and Japanese before the establishment of the Chinese nation-state.

## **2. The Relocation of Korean-Chinese and Its Macro and Micro Causes**

Before the large-scale nationwide and cross-border dispersal of Korean-Chinese from the 1980's, some of them had moved to other cities in China or to other countries. In order to succeed in life, Korean-Chinese have attached importance to education and expect their children to climb the social ladder. Successful young Korean-Chinese have left their hometowns for Beijing, Tokyo, and other locations. Although the Cultural Revolution (1966–1977) prevented Korean-Chinese from getting better educations, this historical event was not particularly important in the way of thinking of Korean-Chinese. Further, since most Korean-Chinese had chosen Japanese as their first foreign language for study in school prior to the 1990's, many had had a chance to go to Japan.

In order to achieve successful lives, Korean-Chinese move to global cities in China or to other countries today. This important change is associated with the burgeoning Chinese economy and with the world economy, although the relocation of Korean-Chinese from their rural villages and cities to large urban centers has not changed. The concept of “successful life” is related to their historical way of life, or slash-and-burn agriculture. In their subjective interpretations, moving to other places is not a new way of life but a natural tactic method. But economic environmental conditions have changed from domestic issues to globalization.

Because of the Chinese government's open market economic policy, global cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, Chingdao, and others have developed rapidly and radically, and immense

economic differences have opened between these cities and rural areas. Minority ethnic groups in China live in border areas; Korean-Chinese case is typical among ethnic minorities. Since Korean-Chinese live in the northeastern part of China, they seriously feel and consider these differences separating rural and urban China. For example, the economic development of Yanji, the capital of the Korean-Chinese autonomous zone of Yanbian, is meaningfully lower than the nationwide average (Table 2). This is partly because the population of Korean-Chinese there is decreasing. As noted, Korean-Chinese relocate to large cities to pursue better lives. Thus, the population decrease is associated with the lower economic development and vice versa.<sup>7)</sup> There are economic reasons that urge Korean-Chinese to move to large cities.

In Yanbian are large differences among each district (Table 2). There is the structure between the center and the periphery. These unbalanced hierarchical economic situations in each area can be the miniature of the Chinese economic structure. But world system theory can not explain this phenomenon. Although the population is decreasing in Yanbian, Korean-Chinese are forming and developing network communities. Korean-Chinese living in global cities in China or overseas are not concerned about their present place of residence but rather in developing personal networks all over the world. The formation of these network communities is associated with globalization.

Globalization<sup>8)</sup> around the world has been the basic tide of the world economy since the 1970's. Nation-states in general achieve their economic interests in terms of their association

Table 2 Economic Indicators in Korean-Chinese Yanbian Independent State in 1999

	Area	Population	GDP (hundred million Yun)	GDP per individual (Yuan)	Ratio to whole nation (100)
Yanbian State	42.7	2,185,597	120.8	5,527	84.4
Yanji city	1.4	886,008	37.5	9,715	148.4
Tumen city	1.1	136,844	8.7	6,358	97.1
Dunhua city	11.5	479,479	30.0	6,257	95.6
Hunchun city	5.1	210,281	11.3	5,374	82.1
Longjing city	2.6	263,131	9.7	3,686	56.3
Helong city	5.1	225,402	8.0	3,549	54.2
Wangqing xian	9.0	264,465	8.6	3,252	49.7
Antu xian	7.4	219,987	12.1	5,500	84.0

Source: (<http://www.chinapresscenter.com>)

Note: created by Li, Gangzhe

<sup>7)</sup> Li, 56; Liu Jingzai "Tōhoku Asia no Kōzu kara mita Chōsen Minzoku no Ryūdo to Kakusan" [Relocation and Diaspora of Korean Nation from the Perspectives of Northeast Asian Composition], in Sakurai, *Tōhoku Asia Chōsen Minzoku no takakuteki Kenkyū*, 122.

<sup>8)</sup> Basic concepts such as globalization, modernity, and post-modernity refer to Arjun Appadurai, ed., *Globalization* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001).

with globalization and vice versa. China was not an exception. For example, China achieves its national economic interests because of the development of global cities where former farmers come to labor as city workers. China also accepts economic and political interest through overseas Chinese, who send money and information from developed countries such as the United States to China. Globalization as cross-border economic activities needs workers from under-developed countries. Global cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and others, in particular, need urban workers. They provide cheap labor and substitute for former ethnic minority workers. But through their subjective interpretation of their work, they can make much money because of the difference in the exchange rates. Each under-developed country can also get this money. Both globalization and nation-states depend on each other.<sup>9)</sup>

Globalization as a macro-process entails requires the movement of people at the micro level. Korean-Chinese have moved from their local hometowns to large cities since the 1980's. In their understandings, they can make money in those cities. But members of other ethnic minority groups in China have been less active in migration to city areas. During the 1980's, most Korean-Chinese ran small business, kimchi shops, Korean restaurants, and other enterprises. These Korean-Chinese encountered another opportunity for relocation and making money during the 1990's.

Since the treaty between China and South Korea, South Korean firms have entered China and established branches. Korean-Chinese are employed by these firms because they can speak Chinese and Korean. (The modern Chinese nation-state guarantees the ethnic-language education of ethnic minority people.) These Korean-Chinese can learn management skills at the South Korean firms as they did not have experience at firms run by capitalists before they were employed by South Koreans. In time, they will be able to develop their adaptation ability to capitalism and will be able to manage their own firms if they want. Korean-Chinese can leave rural areas for large cities. In addition, some Korean-Chinese are employed by Japanese firms in the large cities in China because most Korean-Chinese choose Japanese as their first foreign language for study in school.<sup>10)</sup> They can speak Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.

Also because of the treaty between China and South Korea, South Koreans can visit China. Some seek a bride, and some Korean-Chinese young women move to South Korea for marriage. Since some Korean-Chinese women disguise marriage, it is difficult to know the

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<sup>9)</sup> Saskia Sassen, "Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global: Elements for a Theorization," in Appadurai, *Globalization*.

<sup>10)</sup> Seki Hiromitsu, *Hokutō Asia no Sangyō Renkei: Chūgoku Hoppō to Nikkan no Kigyō* [Industrial Collaboration in the Northeast Asia: the Northern China and Japanese and South Korean Firms] (Tokyo: Shinhyōron, 2003), 611-612.

<sup>11)</sup> The number of Korean-Chinese women who left for South-Korea for their marriage was 1463 in 1993. But after 1996, over ten thousand Korean-Chinese women left for South-Korean for their marriage in each year. Chong A-young "Henbōsuru Tōhoku no Chōsenzoku Shakai: Shijō to Minzoku no Hazama de [Transformational Korean-Chinese Society in the Northeast Area of China: Between "Market" and "Ethnicity"] in *Gendai Chūgoku no Minzoku to Keizai* [Ethnicities and Economy in Contemporary China], ed. Sasaki Nobuaki (Kyoto: Sekai Shisoshu, 2001), 83.

actual real number.<sup>11)</sup> After their marriage, these women can easily obtain a South Korean passport. But there are many illegal Korean-Chinese residents in South Korea, too.<sup>12)</sup>

At the beginning of the communication between Korean-Chinese and South Koreans, it was relatively easy for Korean-Chinese to visit their family and relatives in South Korea. But because the number of illegal Korean-Chinese residents in South Korea has increased, it is now difficult for them to legally enter South Korea. However, South Korea must accept foreign laborers for its economic stability and development. (Japan shares the same problem with South Korea.) Korean-Chinese can speak Korean and adapt to South Korean national culture although their Korean language and culture are not identical with those of South Koreans.<sup>13)</sup> Korean-Chinese are helpful and useful people in the South Korean labor market.

Even before the treaty between China and South Korea, Korean-Chinese had gained information on South Korea through South Korean radio broadcasts. In the Yanbian area, in particular, Korean-Chinese can collect information on North Korea, South Korea, Russia, and Japan. And through several broadcasting systems, they can hear world information unknown elsewhere in China. After Korean-Chinese settled in large cities in China, South Korea, and elsewhere, through these people Korean-Chinese in other locations have gained information about the job market in those cities. Globalization has made Korean-Chinese networking active, though the radio broadcasting system functioned prior to the 1980's.

### 3. The Formation of the Korean-Chinese Community in the United States

Korean-Chinese today live in global cities all over the world. In South Korean cities, most Korean-Chinese are illegal residents and blue collar workers. It is difficult for them to create their own life plan because of their illegal status. Contrary to this situation, Korean-Chinese residing Japanese cities can establish livelihoods because of their legal status. Most of them have student visas or other visas, although some Korean-Chinese are illegal workers. Korean-Chinese in Japan are developing communication networks and opening web sites.<sup>14)</sup> They have relatively higher levels of education and can communicate with Korean-Chinese in other countries through the internet. In addition to Korean-Chinese in South Korea and Japan, Korean-Chinese with similar attributes are living in Russia. Since it is not difficult for them to enter Russia legally and some Korean-Chinese speak Russian, they can make money in Russia. But political and economic instability in Russia prevents them to some extent from living there.

Since South Koreans have moved to several countries for business and for better lives, Korean-Chinese can catch up with them. South Korean who have immigrated to or are now

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<sup>12)</sup> According to "Korean-Chinese Net" <http://www.searchnavi.com/~hp/chosenzoku/news/050215-4.htm>, in 2005, over seven hundred thousand Korean-Chinese live in South-Korea.

<sup>13)</sup> The languages and cultures of Korean-Chinese are influenced by (1) their original Korean native language and culture, (2) Japanese national language and culture during the Manchuria, and (3) Chinese national language and culture.

<sup>14)</sup> <http://tokyo.cool.ne.jp/chugokuchyosenzoku/>; <http://www.tianchinet.com/>; <http://shimto.com/>; <http://www.searchnavi.com/~hp/chosenzoku/>, and others.

nationals of the United States, Australia, and other countries offer changes to Korean-Chinese to follow them. Relocation to the United States seems to be an inevitable choice because Korean-Chinese have searched for available global cities for better lives. American global cities offer greater job opportunities than Seoul, as will be mentioned later.

Although most Korean-Chinese can not speak English, they have information on Koreatowns in the United States. Since they can communicate in Korean, they are able to collect information on Koreatowns and consider whether they can make money there. This kind information is available through television, radio, returnee Korean-Chinese from South Korea to their hometowns, and other avenues. Some Korean-Chinese reach the United States via South Korea. They know of success stories of South Koreans in the United States and expect that they too can succeed.

While I carried out fieldwork in the Koreatown in Los Angeles from 1993 to 1997, I was able to learn about Korean-Chinese.<sup>15)</sup> Before this period, no Korean from South Korea had mentioned Korean-Chinese to me. Here, we will consider the cases of ex-Korean-Chinese women who married Korean men and then immigrated to the United States. These women were anonymous and did not have to confess what they were. Visible Korean-Chinese have organized their personal Korean-Chinese networks in Koreatown. Their history in the United States is at most eight or nine years long as of 2005.

Today, in Koreatown of Los Angeles, Koreans meet Korean-Chinese almost daily, at the Chinese restaurants run by ex-Chinese residents in South Korea, Korean saunas, hostess bars, massage parlors, and other enterprises. Korean-Chinese work at these facilities. However, most of these Korean-Chinese are illegal aliens. Since there are uncountable illegal aliens in the United States, Korean-Chinese do not have to hide themselves in Koreatown.

At the beginning of the formation of the Korean-Chinese community in Los Angeles, there were only Korean-Chinese students supported financially by the Chinese government. Those students applied for refugee status after the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989, and received American passports. After Korean-Chinese illegally entered the United States, these ex-students from China supported them. But as the number of illegal residents increased, the personal contacts between ex-students and illegal residents decreased. The interaction of Korean-Chinese immigrants with local Korean-Chinese is managed by the ex-students and other legal residents. But the Association of Korean-Chinese was not so active during my field work in Koreatown in 2003 and 2004. Korean-Chinese are developing personal networks and forming their communities.

When Korean-Chinese entered the United States after the 1990's, they could be categorized into three types: (1) those living well and holding better social status in China, (2) those making enough money without good social status in China, (3) those without enough

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<sup>15)</sup> In order to research Korean-Chinese in Koreatown of Los Angeles, I carried out fieldwork in 2003 and 2004. I stayed there for about one month in each year. And I visited Korean-Chinese in Seoul, South-Korea, and in Yanbian, China in 2004. I communicated with Korean-Chinese in Korean.



money and good status in China but who gained opportunities in South Korea or Japan to relocate to the United States. It cost from US\$10,000 to US\$30,000 in 2003 for their travel from China to the United States when Korean-Chinese ask a black market broker to transport them via a third country. (For example, they pass through Thailand and Mexico en route to the United States.) Since it is very difficult for Korean-Chinese to pay this amount of money, a limited number of Korean-Chinese can go to the United States. It is, of course, not impossible to apply for a tourist visa or a business visa. But legal entrance into the United States is rare. Most of them do not know how to apply, and they can not read and write English. Though they ask a black market broker to assist in applying for a visa, this help costs them additional money.

After Korean-Chinese reach the United States, they immediately seek out Korean-Chinese in Koreatown. In order to survive and find a good job, they need human resources. They prefer artisan jobs such as sushi chef, anna masseuse, taxi driver, factory worker, painter, cook, bar hostess, and prostitute. These jobs are managed by Koreans from South Korea. The illegal immigrants do not have to speak English, but can use Korean. But for their survival and better lives, they must master South Korean language and culture.

At the beginning of their life in Koreatown, Korean-Chinese borrow a room and several persons share this room. After they have saved enough money, they tend to live with Korean-Chinese as neighbors. Without the Korean-Chinese networking, it may be difficult to survive economically. This networking is often based upon hometown human relationships. One informant said, "I came also from Tomun. I was in... My elementary school classmates were ?? Kim." Another replied, "Oh ?? Kim is my friend's brother!" This acquaintance network based upon their hometowns can be extended to Korean-Chinese in general.

Since Korean-Chinese can get better job opportunities and Korean environment in Koreatown, they prefer the Korean town to the China town. Some Korean-Chinese who do not speak Korean well can not enter and live in the Koreatown. But the number of such persons is relatively small. Most Korean-Chinese in the United States can speak Korean. Otherwise, they would not have come to the United States. They sometimes, for example, visit the China town for shopping or meals once a week.

Korean-Chinese have broader cultural acceptance<sup>16)</sup> than do South Koreans in Koreatown. Since most South Koreans dislike coriander and love Koreanized Chinese cuisine, Chinese restaurants in the Korean town do not serve Chinese-Chinese cuisine. This is a reason why Korean-Chinese sometimes go to Chinatown.

#### 4. The Trans-Border Lives of Korean-Chinese in Koreatown of Los Angeles

One Korean-Chinese informant said to me, "We can not study Korean history in Chinese or Korean ethnic schools in China. We do not know our parents' and grandparents' whole history. We have to know. But here, in America, I want to become an Asian Kim, not Korean

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<sup>16)</sup> For example, Korean-Chinese cuisine in China constitutes of several cultural elements: North Korean cuisine or *kaijang*, Chinese spices, *hyangche* or coriander, Uigur barbeque and other foods.

or not Chinese.” He is an art painter. He applied for refugee status and received an American green card. He knows that his grandfather was a farmer who moved Ch’ungch’ōng Province to Manchuria. Both his grandfather and father were successful in China. But he decided to leave China and spend the rest of his and his family’s life outside of China. First they moved to Russia. But Russia was not a good place for them. “Russia has a security problem,” he said. Although he can speak Chinese, Korean, and Russian, he can not speak English. However, he decided to go to the United States. He thought that he could survive and make good use of his talents in Koreatown. He has succeeded and expects that his son will become a good interpreter from Korean and Chinese to English in his business after his son completes undergraduate studies in the United States.

This example means that he is not concerned about nationality and creates his own identity as an Asian Kim.<sup>17)</sup> This informant knows the trans-border lives of his grandfather and father. He thinks that his grandfather entered China early and succeeded, but latecomers did not have good chances and could not settle into better lives in China. Since he moved to the United States earlier than other Korean-Chinese, he is confident that he can succeed as his grandfather did. While he uses languages and cultures as tools, he thinks that he will become an Asian Kim. This is his own neo-ideology based on his interpretation of Korean-Chinese history and his family history. He tries to reconstruct his own and Korean-Chinese ideology.

However, He is not a typical Korean-Chinese. Many Korean-Chinese are interested in their survival and in making money. But their practice in everyday life is trans-border and suggests that they are reconstructing their own future identity and ideology.

For example, Korean-Chinese can reach their hometown and people outside of the United States almost everyday. While they use a telephone card for international telephone service, it does not cost much money. Domestic calls and international calls cost \$15 for 500 hours. Through international phone calls, Korean-Chinese exchange information about job markets. One informant received a phone call from a friend in Japan who said, “I’m working at a sauna. In Japan we can make much more money than in America. The Japanese sauna pays us much money.” Through such information exchange, Korean-Chinese strengthen their ties and networking.

As hard-working laborers Korean-Chinese have to communicate with South Koreans everyday. Although they share a Korean background, they are not acquainted with the national culture and language of South Korea. They have to learn that culture and language for their survival and livelihood. Each person responds differently to this situation. One Korean-Chinese watches South Korean videos almost everyday and becomes a “South Korean,” or a *Hanguk-saram*. To learn South Korean culture and language is not a purpose but a means for most Korean-Chinese. The example above indicates that means becomes a purpose. Some

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<sup>17)</sup> This idea is shared by an elite Korean-Chinese in Japan. Li Gangzhe, “Tōhoku Asia Kyōdōtai ni Yume wo egaku Watasino Identity” [Holding Dream for Northeast Asian Communities: My Identity], *Saenulee* (April 2005).

Korean-Chinese behave like South Koreans. This is a kind of sociological passing. But these persons do not cut their relationships with other Korean-Chinese; they maintain their networking. Some Korean-Chinese, on the other hand, limit their contact and relationships with South Koreans. But without relationships with South Koreans, they can not survive in Koreatown. They learn about South Korean culture and language to some extent.

Korean-Chinese become assimilated into South Korean culture and language, though this is differs for each person. This process entails their self awareness as Korean-Chinese. Most Korean-Chinese in Koreatown realize that South Koreans are different from them: "We are not South Koreans but Korean-Chinese." This statement is shared by Korean-Chinese in South Korea although they proclaim their double nationality of China and South Korea. This difference does not mean that Korean-Chinese do not want to maintain contacts with South Koreans but that we are among several "Koreans" all over the world and we are Korean-Chinese. Their trans-border everyday experiences with South Koreans strengthen their Korean-Chinese identity.

Because of their disability with the English language, Korean-Chinese mostly do not interact with English speakers although some of them learn English eagerly. But their life-world is extended from Koreatown to Chinatown. When they want to apply for the American green card, they always visit a Chinese attorney in Chinatown. Chinese attorneys know Chinese laws well and charge lower fees than Korean lawyers. While to ask a Korean attorney costs about \$10,000, a Chinese lawyer seeks only \$5,000. Korean-Chinese collect various kinds of information on Koreatown and China town. Both language and cultural ability are survival and life weapons for Korean-Chinese. The trans-border attitude of Korean-Chinese to Chinese in Chinatown is a useful life-strategy.

## **5. Human Relationships of Korean-Chinese in Koreatown**

People from various ethnic groups are employed in Koreatown. Latinos are largest in number, but because of their illegal status, are the cheapest laborers. Mongolians from the Mongolian People's Republic also are employed. From South Korean subjective perspectives, Mongolians are the same as South Koreans. This idea is based on Korean ethnic ideas. In spite of their unstable residency and their inability to speak Korean, Mongolians can be employed in Koreatown. Their status is not lower than that of Latinos. Korean-Chinese can speak Korean and communicate well with South Koreans. And South Koreans share ethnic ideas with Korean-Chinese. The status of Korean-Chinese is higher than that of Mongolians in the job hierarchy of Koreatown.

Since most Korean-Chinese borrowed money in order to pay their brokers, they must work hard. After repaying the broker, they must send money to their family. They can not rest in Koreatown. Korean-Chinese want to rapidly accumulate income in order to survive. Their jobs reflect this situation. Young women can make much money more rapidly than young men. For them, working as a bar hostess is the best option for that reason. This option is also chosen in China, South Korea, and Japan. Gender differences emerge in response to the class

hierarchy<sup>18)</sup> Since Korean-Chinese in South Korea, in the Korean towns of America, and in Japan are basically dominated by powerful people, Korean-Chinese women are used and consumed as hostesses. Since Korean hostess bars in Koreatown are managed by South Korean methods, hostesses are also prostitutes. Korean-Chinese prostitutes work at the massage parlor, too. Although they can make money, their first prostitute experiences sometimes entails their life collapsing.

Koreatown needs prostitutes. Men come from South Korea to Koreatown for business. These men need hostess bars and prostitutes. “Hard working” Korean American men need the same facilities and women. This is linked to the American labor market. The American nation-state needs laborers through globalization whether these laborers are men or women. Korean-Chinese in their daily lives as new comers fight against this power of nation-state and globalization and try to establish their strategies for survival.

Among the hardest jobs in Koreatown are those at the sauna. South Koreans love to visit saunas, and Koreatown supplies this need. Before Korean-Chinese came to Koreatown, South Koreans had worked at the saunas. But providing massages and doing cleaning work there is straining labor. Some South Korean workers quit working at saunas, thus the managers need new staff. Korean-Chinese fill this labor gap. Today, Korean-Chinese work in large numbers at these enterprises. The masseuses are women, the cleaning staff men. Globalization needs large amounts of human-power and abolishes gender differences as laborers in general between men and women.<sup>19)</sup> But characteristics of woman’s work such as bar hostess, masseuse, prostitute, and other jobs are emphasized. Since cultures in Koreatown are constituted by those of globalization and South Korea, women are used in both aspects. In short, women as laborers are useful because they are consumed as laborers in general and as women specified workers.

Waitress in Chinese restaurants in Koreatown is another job available for young Korean-Chinese women. These restaurants are managed by ex-Chinese residents in South Korea who speak Mandarin Chinese and Korean. For communication in the restaurant, speakers of either or both languages are available. Job opportunities are limited for older women, however. Again, the point about gender differences emerges. Cooking at Korean restaurants is the typical job for these women. This labor is easier than that of masseuse in the sauna. But these older women work six days a week. To make money is the most important issue for Korean-Chinese.

Korean-Chinese men prefer artisanship to manual labor. For example, they work as electronic construction engineers, construction engineers, painters, sushi chefs, cooks, and taxi drivers. Immediately after arriving at Koreatown, they seek work just for immediate survival, but later try to find a better job. There are blessed professions in the community. For

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<sup>18)</sup> Harajiri, 18-22.

<sup>19)</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

example, working as a Chinese medicine doctor is outstanding. These doctors can have special status not only in Koreatown but also outside the town. There are immigrants Korean-Chinese who work in the investment industry, too. Both cultural capital and economic capital have power among Korean-Chinese.

### Conclusion

One Korean-Chinese informant said to me, “There many people from all over the world, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Mexico, China, and others at the front desk of the national border. They aim for their survival and for a better life in America.” They want to survive, and globalization pushes them to relocate. From their family and individual experiences Korean-Chinese know of this circulation.

In spite of the modern category of Korean-Chinese, these people regard themselves as Korean-Chinese. As Koreans, they communicate with North Koreans and with South Koreans. Although modern Chinese communist ideas can not provide them with ideology at this point in time, Korean-Chinese use the ethnic category of “Korean-Chinese” in order to integrate their personal network communities and communicate with other Koreans. Globalization is associated with post-modernity. People are free from some modern ideas and institutions. But post-modernity is not trans-modernity. Since post-modern phenomena such as globalization are actually related to modernity and strengthen the modern institution of the nation-state, those who spend trans-border lives will be used by modernity and post-modernity without taming globalization. However, Korean-Chinese use modern tools such as airplanes, telephones, and videos in their trans-border lives in order to establish trans-border network communities. Both democracy and human rights in the United States as modern products are also used by Korean-Chinese. In order to establish their community lives they need these modern products, and the modern nation-states provide them.

Another informant stated, “I will become an Asian Kim.” He does not mean “Asian American.” He will live as an Asian Kim in the trans-border Korean-Chinese networks. National borders and the nation-state are tools in this context. He will be able to extend his identity to that of Asians created by Europeans during the colonial age. This possibility will also create the trans-national Asian network. Their grouping based on the category of Korean-Chinese will be open to trans-national Asian communities while nation-states and national borders are used for their activities.

Postcolonial studies criticize globalization studies because globalization studies emphasize the temporal uniqueness and newness of globalization phenomena today and deny the historical continuity of globalization from the pre-modern to the modern and post-modern times.<sup>20)</sup> Although for postcolonial studies historical continuous imperialism so far is important, globalization specialists proclaim the postnational accelerated globalization process which can

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<sup>20)</sup> Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Anthinette Burton, and Jed Esty, eds. *Postcolonial Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Ali Behdad, “On Globalization, Again!” in *Postcolonial Studies*.

be free from the power of nation-states. My anthropological research on the network communities of Korean-Chinese means that postcolonial studies contribute to historical analysis of globalization phenomena invisible in globalization studies but overlook tactics of human agents in particular trans-modern phenomena.