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First Korean representations in Japanese cinema.

Category: **Migration**

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Discovering minorities in Japan:
First Korean representations in Japanese cinema.

It is often assumed that there is a general absence of minorities represented in Japanese cinema, a statement which is justified by the Japanese official discourse that Japan contains "no minorities"[1]. The Japanese government's response to the United Nations' call for the elimination of discrimination against minorities was an official statement that no minorities existed in Japan and therefore there is no discrimination against minorities in Japan. The statement added that Japan believed minority groups should not be discriminated against in those countries where they did exist". [2]

Since minorities often deny their own minority status, population figures are difficult to verify, but include about: 800,000 resident Koreans, 50,000 resident Chinese and Taiwanese, 50-60,000 Ainu, nearly 2 million Burakumin, who are descendants of the earlier *Eta-Hinin* outcasts, and over 1 million Okinawans and other minorities who hold Japanese citizenship but are excluded from the Japanese mainstream, such as *hibakusha*, survivors of the atom bombs, recently naturalized foreigners (*kikajin)* or individuals with interracial parentage (*konketsujii).* In sort, more than around 4.5 million people belong to Japan´s "non-existent" minorities (which is more than 4% of Japan's 125,000,000 residents).[3]

Western studies regarding Japanese discrimination towards minorities must not serve to to seek the mote in another's eye while ignoring the beam in one's own, but on the contrary, they must be used to understand how other Western societies actually resemble Japan in the manner in which they support discrimination against indigenous, aboriginal and foreign minorities, by the use of similar psychological and cultural rationale.

Through this paper I will try to analyze what have been the most significant cinematographic representations of Japanese minorities since the defeat of the Japanese Empire in the Pacific War, focusing in the Korean case. This community became the largest foreign ethnic group, and has especially suffered the consequences of an ambiguous status and discrimination since 1945.

The problem of minorities' recognition in Japan is deeply rooted with the self-concept of the Japanese nation itself. Although nationalisms are rarely consistent in content, what remains permanent are their basis in national consciousness. Japanese nationalism idealized cultural and "racial" homogeneity, an idea which emerged from the foundation of the nation-state during the Meiji Restoration[4]. There were efforts by the new Meiji state to infuse a heterogeneous population with a sense of homogeneity and community[5].

Ethnocentric ideas linked to the conception of nationalism during the Meiji industrialization actually originated in European imperialism, drawing a distinction between the terms civilized "Self" from the uncivilized "Other". Within the colonial context, social-Darwinism made it possible to "demonstrate" that some cultures were advanced and civilized while others remained backward and uncivilized[6]. Thus, the Japanese sense of superiority towards Koreans, and the cause of their discriminatory treatment today, which goes back to the Meiji Restoration.[7]

According to David White[8], it was not until the late 1980s when Japan´s resident minorities started to have a relevant presence on the big screen, mainly after the great commercial success of films like Sai Yōichi´s *Tsuki wa docchi ni detteiru* (All Under the moon, 1993) and Yukisada Isao's *Go* (2002)[9]. *All Under the moon* really opened the

representation of foreigners in Japanese film substantially. It has a zainichi Korean and a Filipino character as its main focus. But, while All Under the moon develops a strategy to subvert the conventional representation of zainichi, *Go[10]*, about a Korean teenager born and raised in Japan who uses his Japanese name to disguise his ethnic identity, remains confined to the traditional images of zainichi as "victims", but used these images to develope a new stylish cinematography and introduce a new stereotype - a good-looking young hero.

About this time, the Korean community in particular, had started to produce works with repercussion in the medium of literature, with writers winning prestigious literary awards. Writers of Okinawin descent also became prominent. This has culminated in a general awareness of the existence of "others" within Japanese society itself. From the early 1990s we can find a sort of "new trend" of immigration in Japanese cinema, with films such as: Oguri Kohei*'s Kayoko no tame ni* (For Kayoko, 1984); Igarashi Takumi's *Nanmin rodo* (Refugee Road, 1992), about Vietnamese refugees. Or other films can be found about the "newcomer immigrants" in Japan and the difficulties they face making a living in Japan: Odayashi Nobuhiko's *Pekinteki suika* (Beijing Watermelon, 1989) about Chinese students; Yanagimachi Mitsuo's *Ai ni tsuite, Tokyo* (All about love, Tokyo, 1989) or Hanawa Yukinari's *Tokyo Skin* (1996). [11]

Apart from this recent period mentioned above, there has been a relative absence of cinematographic minorities in the course of Japanese film history , an observation which is explained by Desser through the fact that there has been virtually no tradition of the "social problem" film in Japan[12]. To be sure, there have been cycles of film devoted to certain overt political issues such as the *keiko eiga* (tendency films) of the 1930s and a string of anti-war films in the late 1950s, but there is not a tradition of social problem films which transcend concrete political concerns.

Representations of Koreans in Japanese cinema during the pre-war and war-time period can be found in a few films from the early 1930s, such as *Arigatosan* (Mr. Thank You, Hiroshi Shimizu, 1936) and *Hanakago no uta* (Song of the Flower Basket, Gosho Heinosuke, 1937). Shimizu made several films which either included Korean characters or were set in colonized Korea, such as *Tomodachi* (Friends, 1940).

However Desser claims that the lack of social consciousness regarding this minority caused Koreans in this period to be depicted as part of the "landscape". These representations belong more to an exotic and naïve curiosity towards the Koreans rather than to social comprehension or understanding. While in the late 19th century Japan was an exotic "object" for the western gaze, in the early 20th century, after the victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1895), Japan was on its way to changing into a modern nation-state and imperialistic power, and transforming itself from the "object" into the "subject" of the gaze by making Korea, Taiwan and the Ainu its own objects. [13]

In the late 1930s, with Japan´s growing militarism and increasing military control over the film industry, which led to the enactment of the Cinema Law in 1939 (based on Nazi Germany´s movie regulation), pre-war Japanese censorship did not prohibit Korean-related subjects. Nevertheless, it was difficult for filmmakers to deal with the Korean cause, since any criticism of Japan´s colonial regime was severely policed. For instance, *Kono haha o miyo* (Look at This Mother, Tasaka Tomosaka, 1930) and *Renga jokō* (The Brick Factory Girl, Chiba Yasuki, 1940) were severely censored or prohibited from screening because of their depictions of the misfortunes of Koreans. Actually, despite the fact that representation of Koreans in the poor quarters of the town would be more realistic, such depictions were not acceptable to the Japanese authorities, since colonial discourse claimed that Japanese colonialism had brought the Koreans happiness rather than misery.

In the early 1940s, Japan had mobilized a policy of assimilation towards Korean people, both in Japan and Korea. Although this project had already been in place both in Korea and Taiwan, the *kōminka* ("imperial subjectification") project was intensified

under the slogan of *nai-sen ittai* (which implied that Japan and Korea formed one body). Propaganda films were mobilized to project a utopian vision of Japan´s colonialism onto Korea[14].

Korean characters were often represented as obedient subjects who appreciated Japanese control. Curiously, the films even encouraged inter-ethnic marriage between Japanese and Koreans in order to emphasize the importance of the *nai-sen ittai* ideology. A good example is Honatsu Eitaro's *Kimi to boku* (You and Me, 1941) about young Korean volunteers, loyal to the Emperor, in which the main character also marries a Japanese woman just before he proceeds to the front. Obviously war-time cinema totally hid the hardships of Koreans under Japanese colonialism[15]. Together with films made in Manchuria, this film production must be considered as a part of Japanese imperial propaganda produced in the Japan-led *Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*.

At any rate, realistic depictions of Korean problems were not depicted until New Wave filmmakers dealt seriously with the issues of minorities after the postwar period. As a part of their efforts to portray the dark side of the economic miracle, they focused in on the lowest and most vulnerable end of the social scale: prostitutes, dealers, yakuzas… Thus, even if they were not specifically committed to the cause of any minority, they occasionally found in the minorities a mean of projecting the most grotesque and most bitter side of the just established liberal capitalist democracy, while condemning discrimination in general.

Despite of not being the central subject, Burakumin characters appeared in New Wave films such as Oshima's *Ai to kibo no machi* (A Town of love and hope, 1959) and *Shinjuku dorobô nikki* (*Diary of a Shinjuku Thief*, 1969); or Shohei Imamrua's *Nippon Sengoshi - Madamu onboro no Seikatsu* (History of Postwar Japan as Told by a Bar Hostess, 1970) - in which Etsuko (Madam Omboro) mentions that she is of *eta* origin, and tells the directors that her mother insisted to her that she could never "wipe out my background". Imamura addresses the Burakmuin issue in a direct way in his documentary *Karayukisan* (1975)[16].

With a different spirit but in the same stream, Post-war Humanist directors such as Kinoshita Keisuke and Ichikawa Kon also addressed the Burakumin question through the adaptation of Shimazaki Toson novel *Hakai* (The Broken Commandment, 1906) into film in Keisuke's *Apostasy* (1948) first, and then in the 1962 Kon remake *The Outcase*, later. Despite Desser's assertion of a lack of such a tradition in Japanese cinema, if there is indeed a social conscious cinema in Japan, Tadashi Imai is probably one of the best examples. He confronted the Burakumin problem in his social conscious film *Hashi ga nai kawa* (River Without a Bridge, 2 parts 1969-70) and looked at the question of exclusion suffered in postwar Japan by a couple of mixed Japanese-Afro-American brothers in *Kiku To Isamu* ("Kiko and Isamu", 1959).

Other minorities will be represented by politically committed and left-wing filmmakers such as Noriaki Tsuchimoto, who tells the story of a Malaysian youth at Chiba University, who is persecuted by the police for political reasons in *Echange Student, Chua Swee Lin* (1964) or Kei Kumai in *Chi no mure,* (Apart from Life, 1970) who looked at prejudice against not only Koreans and Burakumin but also *hibakusha*.

Korean diaspora

New Wave filmmakers, and some other directors from the late 1950s, represented the first cinematographic efforts to portray the problems of minorities in a more realistic way. Unlike the films of the war-time period, which were forced to avoid negative images of Korean lives, these later films tended to disclose the hardships and discrimination suffered by these communities.

Among other minorities, the Korean case is especially complex due to their particular historical circumstance. Actually, Korean diaspora is not exempt from contradictions, since first of all the group is considered to be "Japan´s foreign minority", even if they are 2nd or 3rd generation, as if to conform to Japan's official stance of monoethnical national-state.

We can place the origin of the current Korean diaspora in Japan around the end of World War II, and more decisively the Korean War (1950-53) when the group was firmly established. That is not to say that there weren't Korean residents in Japan before World War II, because in fact there had been an even bigger community of Koreans living in Japan before 1945 (around 2,000,000), but I am considering here the question of diaspora, not simply when people began leaving their homeland but rather when they reached a sense of self-consciousness as a displaced community[17].

By the time of Japan's unconditional surrender on August 15, 1945, a US Joint Intelligence Study estimated that three to four million Koreans resided overseas at this time, however several postwar political and economic circumstances discouraged many Koreans in Japan from repatriating.[18] As a consequence, 600,000 Koreans remained in 1948 and they formed the core of the diasporic Korean population in postwar Japan. In Japanese literature this community has been given different names: *zainichi chōsenjin, zainichi kankokujin, zainichi kankoku chōsenjin, zainichi korian* or simply *zainichi*[19]. Nevertheless, the Korean diaspora is not a social issue that has stood immutable in the face of passing time, but on the contrary, changes in filmic representation echo mutations in its own idiosyncratic nature, given generational differences carried through from 1945 up today. Focusing on the first generation of Koreans after World War II, the group can be defined as a "classic Diaspora": a community which shares a collective memory, myth and desire to return. [20] This first generation considered that their sojourn in Japan was temporary (there was a general belief that all Koreans would be repatriated soon or later)[21].

Yobo – "poor and shabby Korean"

These filmic representations of Koreans produced from the late 1950s onwards create what we can call "*Yobo* stereotype". The term *Yobo* comes from the colonial period (1910-1945) and maybe translated as "you", but it conveys an image of inferiority and impoverishment, recalling the Japanse onomatopoeia *yoboyobo* (old and shabby)[22].

Koreans had been crossing between the peninsula and the islands looking for job opportunities since the beginning of Japanese rule, often occupying low qualified and harsh jobs[23]. This means that the working conditions of Koreans, had in actuality, not changed a lot after the war. In the beginning of the economic recovery several filmmakers reintroduced images of "wetback" Korean laborers, which evidently seem not to have originated in postwar Japan but rather originated in the colonial period. Masaki Kobayashi first dealt with the Korean issue in his 1956 film *Kabe atsuki heya* (The Thick-Walled Room), in which he criticizes Japan's wartime policy by depicting the tragedy of a Korean who was listed as a Japanese war criminal.

However, the first honest depictions of these Korean laborers and their struggles in Japan were Tomu Uchida's *Dotanba* (1958), a film about Korean miners who are shown rescuing Japanese miners locked in the depths of a mine cave by accident, and Shohei Imamura's *Nianchan* (My Second brother, 1959), an adaptation of a best-selling book based on the diary of a ten-year-old zainichi girl. Featuring a poor Korean family in a small mining village, the film examines poor working conditions, unfair educational opportunities and discrimination, despite the fact that Korean identity is not foregrounded. The film is notable for the presence of the then-rising star Yoshinaga Sayuri (one of Japan's biggest stars in the 1980s).

By the late 1950s Japan was immersed in the reconstruction project and the war was considered a nightmare that was to be forgotten. "The colonial experience was rejected as prehistory; it is as if Japan were born anew in 1945. Not coincidentally, it is almost impossible to find anything in the postwar years without the prefix "new" (shin)"[24]. This postwar Japanese mentality - the postwar renunciation of the prewar world of war and empire - is encapsulate in the popular television drama, *Watashi wa kai ni naritai* (I Want to Become a Seashell, 1959) based on a successful novel by Tetsutaro Kato.[25]

Other examples are Tadashi Imai's *Are ga minato no hi da* (That is the Port Light, 1961), which features a young Korean fisherman who works whilst hiding his Korean ethnic background, on a Japanese fishing boat operating at the controversial border with Korean territorial waters[26]; but one of the most relevant examples of the archetypal Korean image as poor but honest and full of dignity is Urayama Kiriro's *Kyūpora no aru machi* (Foundry Town, 1962). Like *Nianchan,* friendship between a young Japanese brother and sister and their Korean friends constitutes an important part of the film´s story.

The low place occupied by the first generation of Korean *zainichi* in postwar Japan is depicted in Shohei Imamura's *Nippon Konchuki* (*The Insect Woman,* 1963), in which he introduces a refugee from the Korean War who marries a prostitute and subsists by working in a garden. But among New Wave filmmakers, Oshima was the one who made the Korean question a particularly strong motif in his oeuvre. *Yunbogi no nikki* (1965), the first of four films made on the Korean issue, deals with Korean poverty as a consequence of Japanese actions[27]. The systematic cycle of poverty and destruction of the Korean family system and the exploitation of the young are the direct result of Japanese and US imperialism. It is not a call for social understanding and humanistic sympathizing, but rather the film is a direct call to revolution. Oshima shows images of August 15th, Korean Independence Day, and photographs of the massive student demonstrations against the rule of President Syngman Rhee, prompting the narrator to assert, "Yunbogi, you will be throwing stones one day!" The film arose out of Oshima's trip to Korea to make a television documentary *Seishun no hi* (A Tomb for Youth, 1964). There he took photographs of poor children living in the streets of large cities.

The Korean "Otherness"

With the emergence of the two antagonistic regimes, the Korean diaspora were divided but despite ideological differences, both groups (supporters of North Korea and South Korea) shared a firm common consciousness as foreign minority. New Wave directors proved to be sensitive to the feelings of alienation held by some minorities who were denied entry into the Japanese mainstream. That sense of alienation emerged occasionally when the Korean problem was portrayed. Koreans in Japan seen as "Others" are well represented in Hiroshi Teshigahara's *Tanin no kao (The Face of Another,* 1966), though it is certainly not the primary focus of the film. A point in common between the story's faceless hero and Koreans in Japan is expressed in the novel:

> "seeking points of similarity between myself who had lost my face and Koreans who were frequently the objects of prejudice, I had without realizing it, come to have a feeling of closeness with them" (*The face of Another,* Kobo Abe)

Oshima problematises the question of Korean "otherness" in Japan through the films *Nihon shunka-ko* (A Treatise on Japanese Bawdy Song, 1967), in which a group

of high school students imagine themselves in the place of Koreans dominated by Japanse imperialism, and *Kaette kita yopparai* (Three resurrected Drunkards, 1968). As we will see, in *Koshikei*, Oshima looks at the Koreans from outside, addressing the conscience of the Japanese audience, but here the spectator takes the place of Koreans, as in the film three students are mistaken for Koreans and chased by the police as illegal immigrants.

Nevertheless, as the "temporally residence" in Japan was becoming longer and more Koreans were growing up within Japanese culture, issues like a "crisis of identity" within the Korean diaspora rose up, and the problem of "otherness" in their homeland started to be depicted, when favorable conditions in North Korea caused a massive repatriation in 1960. [28] As part of this repatriation project, about 1,800 Japanese women followed their ethnic Korean husbands, partly in order to avoid their problematic existence as "mixed" couples in Japan. The 1960 film *Umi o wataru yuujou* (The Friendship that Crossed the Sea), the best-known Japanese film on the repatriation project, deals with this historical issue. The story portrays a "mixed child who decides to give up trying to be "pure Japanese" in order to be "pure Korean" in North Korea. It shows how generations of Koreans settled in Japan when the war ended also faced cultural barriers that complicated their efforts to resettle in their homeland since some of them had been raised in Japan and could neither speak Korean nor follow Korean customs and mannerisms adequately.

Other politically motivated activities such as the Korean uprising in the Kobe and Osaka areas against Korean school closures led Occupation Authorities to conclude that Koreans, rather than returning to Korea, were intent on establishing political autonomy in Japan, and they were not seen to be assimilated by the majority of the Japanese population, which would reinforce the notion of "otherness" of the Korean population[29].

Black marketers and communist spies

Thus, negative images of Koreans were being spread among Japan, in response to two factors: the association in the collective Japanese imaginary of Koreans with both illegal markets (yakuzas) and communism.

The origin of the fear towards Korean communists goes back to the Occupation period. Soon after the surrender, Japan-based Koreans formed the League of Koreans in Japan (*Jaeil joseonin ryeonmaeng* or *Joryeon*) with a leftist leaning. After 1947, SCAP ordered the Japanese government to purge communists from professions of influence, including education, politics, and the arts, and Occupation and Japanese authorities attributed any problem concerning Koreans to alleged communist ties. The US believed that the southern peninsula and the Korean people in general "were extremely fertile ground for the establishment of Communism."[30] However the communist question has been overcome in the recent years, as can be seen in Yang Young-Hee's *Dear Pyongyang* (2006).

Even if during 1960s, as Japan was becoming more and more prosperous, many zainichi Koreans were stigmatized as poor, dirty and often associated with the black market and other illegal activities. That is why New Wave filmmakers, while looking at the dark side of Japanese society, also found the Korean community there. While the term *sangokujin* ("third-nation people) reproduced the prewar, colonial discourse of *futei senjin* ("unruly Koreans"), it also reflected the postwar-Cold War ideology of the three-world theory, which divided the world into three camps: the democratic and developed first-world, the socialist and semi-developed second world, and the unstable and underdeveloped third word. *Sangokujin* became not only stigmatization as third-class citizens but also as third-world denizens in the supposedly first-world nation of Japan. [31]

This term *futei senjin* gained currency after the Great kanto Earthquake of 1923, when rumors of Koreans rioting, looting and poisoning wells led Japanese police and vigilante groups to massacre thousands of Koreans in the Tokyo-Yokohama area. But it was the earlier anxieties about the Korean independence movement of March 1, 1919, when the term *futei senjin* marked the Korean colonial subject as dangerous and subversive. The discourse of *futei senjin* did not simply disappear after 1945. Instead, it reappeared in zainichi Korean discourse reincarnated as: spies (*supai),* rapists (*gokan hannin),* ghosts (*yurei),* and queer (*okama*) stereotypes.[32]

The descent of Korean residents into the black market was a consequence of Japanese domestic regulation after the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Koreans in Japan were stripped of their Japanese nationality rights in 1952 and they also lost the right to almost all forms of welfare. "At the beginning of the 1950s, more than three quarters of working zainichi Koreans were either unemployed or engaged in casual work, with unreliable earnings".[33] Thus, the historical cause of the Korean yakuza stereotype can be easily found in the lack of legitimate job opportunities, which resulted "in illegal means of subsistence such as the black market".[34]

From the mid-1960s, *zainichi* characters in Japanese films reinforced these images and created a duality between *zainichi* as passive victims of discrimination and prejudice versus *zainichi* as source of problems. Despite the fact that those who opted for South Korean nationality gained permanent residence rights in Japan after an agreement signed in 1965 with that country, zainichi stereotypes have continued to be created around the notion of "other" (*soto*). Since their identity is constructed through confrontation with Japanese, the zainichi identity emerges vis-à-vis Japaneseness. Refer to the scene in *Otoko no kao ha rirekisho*, where a flashback in the narration goes back to the end of the Pacific War in Korea, where Koreans differentiate themselves from the Japanese officers and take revenge by beating them up after the surrender, which also reminds us of Nagisa Oshima's *Wasurerareta Kogun* (The forgotten imperial military, 1963) which depicted Korean soldiers in the Japaense military.

It should be noted here that Koreans depicted in *Otoko no kao ha rireksho*, as victims/source of social problems are not necessarily contradictory: the image of zainichi as the source of social problems is mobilized by yakuza films. But the yakuza, despite often being identified as problem, do not exceed the "victim" formula, since the film´s narrative inscribe the Korean yakuza characters as falling into gansterism as a result of prejudice, poverty and racial discrimination.

Korean crimes in the media

Headlines of illegal activities and crimes committed by Japan-based Koreans, along with Taiwanese residents, definitively did not help to create positive among the Japanese mainstream. A searing media portrayal of a sensational 1958 murder case know as the "komatsugawa Indicent", played a large role in later representations in literature, film and popular culture. A Korean teenage boy named Ri Chin´u murdered a Japanese female classmate and taunted the media and the police for nearly two weeks afterward. He later confessed to murdering another Japanese woman and Ri was sentenced to death.

Ri´s crime and punishment lived in the cultural imagination of the postwar Japan through literary, visual and theatrical representations[35]. The questions of rape and the recurrent representations of the Komatsugawa incident caused a sort of "myth" of the zainichi Korean rapist from the 1960s. As Suh Kyung-sik argues:

> *From the 1950s to the 1960s, representations of the "Komatsugawa Incident!" had extremely political repercussions. Later, those memories were suppressed, and now hardly anyone takes a second look at the incident. Although the*

memories of how that incident was represented and what kind of repercussions it had have been forgotten, the ghostly image of "Koreans" as "monsters" still lurks deep in people's psyches and rears its ugly head from time to time. (Suh 376)

The most famous work based on Komatsugawa Incident was Nagisa Oshima´s *Kōshikei* (*Death by hanging*, 1968). Although many of the film-makers who dealt with Korean issues in this period tended to be left-wing in their political orientation, it was Oshima who handled zainichi subjects most critically from a leftist perspective. That is why, *Death by Hanging* is not actually a film about Komatsugawa Incident, but rather Oshima uses it as a pretext to critique the irrationalism of the Japanese authorities and the death penalty.

The film does not follow the common humanistic approach, which tends to attribute the cause of the misdeeds of minority groups to their disadvantaged social position. The main character, R, invites neither sympathy nor condemnation. However, the claim made by R´s sister figure - that his crimes are a revolt of the oppressed Koreans against the Japanese society - is denied by R himself. As Tadao Satō suggests, R refuses to be seen as a representative of "the Korean nation-state". Rather he stands as an individual confronting the Japanese state. Thus, Oshima denounces the "state" by criticizing its own criminal murders - that is, the death penalty.

On the formal level, the film is a dramatic break with traditional filmic convention. Oshima criticized some of his fellow left-wing film-makers such as Imagi Tadashi and Yamamoto Satsuo for making independent films that displayed conventional sentimentalism. For Oshima, they "unfortunately restore the traditional filmic conventions of a major studio production". In the film it is obvious that Oshima is aware of the need to challenge conventional cinematic form, particularly conventional narrative realism, in order to communicate political strength. "Oshima successfully achieves a politically avant-garde film combining political and aesthetic radicalism".[36]

Just weeks after *Koushikei* was released, another relevant crime involving a zainichi Korean happened, the so-called "Kin Kirō Incident" of 1968. A 39 year-old zainichi Korean man named Kim Kirō (kim Hui-ro) shot and killed two yakuza in Yokohama and then fled to the hotspring town of Sumata-kyo, in Shizuoka prefecture, where he took thirteen Japanese people hostage in the Fujimi-ya Inn. For the next 88 hours the hostage crisis became a major media event. Unlike the Komatsugawa Incident, the Kin Kiro Incident was broadcast live on television.

Curiously, this crime did not have the same cultural repercussions as the komatsugawa Incident, but one direct representation of the Kin Kiro Incident was produced: *Kimu no senso* (Kim's War), a 1991 television movie starring Kitano Takeshi.

Because of the visibility of the Korean minority caused by the Komatsugawa Incident, which "appeared precisely when the discourse of Japaneseness (Nihonjinron) was popular" (Lie 2001: chap.3), the Kim Kirō murderers and other cases actually served to reinforced Japanese identity by distinguishing the "self" (the civilized) from the dangerous "others" (the "louts"), which were actually a central part of another postwar myth, the reconfiguration of Japan as a homogeneous nation (*tan' itsu mizonku shinwa*).

If we compare the early representations of Korean residents with those produced from the postwar period onwards, we can observe that even though much has changed in Japan between 1945 and 2011, much has also stayed the same in terms of the imagery and discourses surrounding zainichi Koreans. Those first representations of Koreans, despite their own contradictions, help us to understand the foundation of this minority in Japan, whose residence was at first considered "temporary" but with time has taken on an important role in Japanese cultural productions and enriched many aspects of contemporary Japanese life.

Notes

[1] See for instance, S. Hall, D. held and T. McGrew (eds). *Modernity and its Future,* Cambridge: Polity press and Open University press, 1992 and H.K. Bhabha (ed). *Nation and Narration,* London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

[2] Thomas, Roy. *Japan: The Blighted Blossom,* Vancouver: New Star Books, 1989, pp. 224

[3] One of the areas which have a largest minority group is particularly Osaka and Kansai area, with a big population of Burakumin, and Koreans (in Kinki reside 40% of all Burakumin and 48% of all Koreans residing in Japan). Thus, Osaka and Kyoto prefectures have experimented an especial case of overlapping these two principal minority groups (Burakumin and Koreans). De Vos, George a. & Wetherall, O. *Japan's Minorities. Burakumin, Koreans and Ainu.* London: Minority Rights Group

[4] Actually, the roots of this idealization are the European maturation of nation-state utopias in French Revolution, in which, the concept of one nation-one state, would also imply the idea of homogeneity in different levels. Revolutionary France became an example of the centralized state and centralized culture (non French-speakers could be considered enemies of the republic. Ideas of Nation-State extended to all European modern new regimes, and also influenced the construction of Japanese modern State build in the time of the Meiji-Restauration. Schott, Crhistopher Donald. *Invisible men: The zainichi Korean presence in postwar Japanese culture.* Doctoral thesis. Standford University, 2006.

[5] Regional identities were either suppressed or subjected to a process of cultural redefinition. The *Kazoku kokka* (family state) was imbued with a new sense of national purpose and identity, projecting "Japaneseness", as an extended family, with the emperor as semi-divine father to the national community and head of state. During the period of militarism was evident the conflation of cultural and "racial" criteria in which the biological basis of *minzoku* was reinforced: "We cannot consider *minzoku* without taking into account its relation to blood" (Kanda Tetsuji. *Jinshu Minzoku Sensou,* Tokyo: Keio Shobou, 1940, pp. 70-1) arguing a "scientific explanation" for the superiority of the Japanese people. That is in part the cause why resident Koreans are not considered Japanese even if they share the same language, cultural patterns… Japanese *minzoku* is understood as a manifestation of common ancestry rather than shared culture.

Actually, as Sonia Ryang claims, this notion of Nation-state had already tried to be exported to Koreans during the colonial period, especially since 1939, when Japanese authorities reformed the Korean household by using Japanese name, which also had a symbolic meaning: each family name embodied one unit within the emperor's extended family. In the original Korean household registry, however, it was a record of one´s own lineage and clan (*pongwan*), and it did not have a concept of family-state with the sovereign as their national ancestor. Koreans worshipped, on the contrary, clan ancestors and lineage origin avoiding endogamy within the same clan (they preserved wife's maiden name after marriage as a proof of exogamy, in the book of clan genealogy – *jokpo*). The imposition of the Japanese registry was actually a way of symbolic domination and real assimilation. (Sonia Ryang & Lie John. *Diaposra Without Homeland. Being Korean in Japan.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 2-7)

[6] Darwinian theories were already used to explain by some Japanese scholars the victory towards Russia in the Japan-Rusian War in 1905 (when the scholar Kato Hiroyuki claimed that the Japanese victory was due to the superiority of a homogeneous policy which had been thoroughly integrated within the emperor system.) (Weiner *The Origins of the Korean community in Japan 1910-1923,* Atlantic Islands: Humanities Press.)

[7] An extremely popular vehicle for the celebration of modernity /civilization was the *Fifth Industrial Exposition* in Osaka held in 1903. The plan to exhibit the "races" in their natural setting encountered rigorous opposition from Chinese, Koreans and Ryukyuans, who objected to representations of their cultures as frozen in the past (uncivilized, louts..). In representing the inhabitants as moribund and incapable of adapting to current realities, Japanese national imaginary promised a progressive future under Japanese governance:

> The very physiognomy and living of these people are so bland, unsophisticated and primitive, that they belong not to the twentieth or the tenth- nor indeed to the first century. They belong to a prehistoric age… The Korean habits of life are the habits of death. They are closing the lease of their ethnic existence. The national course of their existence is well-nigh run. Death presides over the peninsula (Nitobe, I. 1909, *Thoughts and Essays,* Tokyo: Teibi Publishing Company: 214-16).

Representations of the primitive "Other" were also the sustainer of the mainstream Japanese imaginary. They exhibition offered a further justification for paternalistic control. In the *Japanese Nation* written in 1912, Nitobe Inazo described the "hairy Ainu as a stone age population (pp. 86-7) and therefore doomed to extinction. Nitobe´s assessment of the Ainu also bears comparisons with a similar account of the Korean people in the early twentieth century. Weiner, Michel. "The invention of identity: 'Self' and 'Other' in pre-war Japan" in *Japan's Minorities. The illusion of homogeneity.* London & New York: Routledge.

[8] White, David. *How East Asian Films are Reshaping National Identities.* Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, pp. 167. See also Ko, Mika. Chapter 6. "REPRESENTING THE ZAINICHI" in *Japanese Cinema and Otherness Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness*.). London & New York: Routledge.

[9] *All Under the moon*, made during the economic recession and the increase of foreign immigration, legal and illegal, mainly from neighboring Asian countries. The Koreans represent the long-term foreign community and the Filipino a member of the newcomer minority. It opened the difficult topic that had been considered taboo and emphasized on the film that people other than Japanese could speak Japanese (especially the Filipino, who speaks with heavy Osaka accent). Also portrays issues of identity, generational and political differences among the Korean community. The film portrays generational conflicts between the "older" immigrants and those newly arrived and conflicts between the North and South Korean communities as well. It is based on a semi-autobiographical novel by Yang Sog-Il *Takushi Kyosokyoku* (Taxi Crazy Rhapsody)

[10] It is basically a *Romeo and Juliet*-style love story between a zainichi Korean boy and a Japanese girl. Go is a film based on a novel of kaneshiro Kazuki, 2000 and also a manga version was published between 2002-2004.

[11] Furthermore, we can find recent examples of Koreans in Japanese cinema in *Ajian blue* (Asian blue, Horikawa Hiromichi, 1995), about Korean war time laborers; *Aoi chong* (Blue Chong, by the zainichi Lee Sang-il, 2000), with a existentialist debate about the director feeling neither Japanse nor Korean; *Dograce* (Sai Yoichi, 1998); *Mo ichido kisu* (kiss me once more, 2000) or *Mitabi no kaikyo* (Three trips across the strait, Koyama Seijiro, 1995), the first J film open in Seoul. White, David. *How East Asian Films are Reshaping National Identities.* Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press.

[12] Desser, David. *Eros plubs Massacre.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp 145

[13] Ko, Mika. Chapter 6. "REPRESENTING THE ZAINICHI" in *Japanese Cinema and Otherness Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness*. London & New York: Routledge.

[14] About 250 propaganda films were made during the period from the early 1920s to August 1945. These films were made by Koreans and Japanese film-makers. The censorship was established in Korea from the beginning but it became stricter in the mid-1930s, and Korean film-makers were forced to produce pro-J films. In 1940 the Korean Film Directive was enacted and in 1942 all Korean film production and distribution companies were integrated under the government's supervision, into the *Chōei (Choson Film Production Ltd)*, and the use of Korean language in films was also banned.

[15] This film is a good example of the *nai-sen ittai* attempt, both in representation and film production (represented imperial ideology and at the production level, employed both Japana and Koreans stars and was premiered simultaneously across Japan and Korea).

[16] Desser, David. *Eros plubs Massacre.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press

[17] Ko, Mika. Chapter 6. "REPRESENTING THE ZAINICHI" in *Japanese Cinema and Otherness Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness*. London & New York: Routledge.

[18] Korean communities could be found in Russia and different parts of the Japanese Empire: Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong, Philippines, South Pacific and Taiwan, the island of Sakhalin, and also Australia and Hawai, although the majority of overseas Koreans resided in Japan, 1.45 millions - and Manchuria 1.475 millions (*United States Joint Intelligence Study Publishing Board* 1992: 271).

Liberation encouraged many overseas Koreans to return to their ancestral homeland, and after the war´s end the population of Southern Korea increased by an estimated 22%, nearly 3.5 million, this figure includes repatriated Koreans, 510.000 refugees from the North and 700.000 births over this period ("Report on the Occupation Area" 1992:488).

On the other, any remote connection with the communist North meant risked for Japan-based Koreans to imprisonment, torture and possible death if they attempted to return to southern Korea (the ancestral home of the majority of this population (98% of first-generation Koreans in Japan). Moreover, they were often regarded by Korean authorities with distrust following the idea that "Koreans who lived in Japan for a number of years as laborers or business men are most likely to be imbued with the Japanese ideas" (Ko, Mika.*Japanese Cinema and Otherness Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness*. London & New York: Routledge)

[19] Sonia Ryang & Lie John. *Diaposra Without Homeland. Being Korean in Japan.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

[20] Usually associated to the Jewish Diaspora, means an original ethnic persecution as the cause of loss of homeland accompanied by a strong sense of connection to home (homeland) unlike later generations of in zainichi characters represented in films from the late 1980s, in which there is an ongoing crisis of identity, specifically related to the loss of an original homeland (real or imaginary) since they are born in a place that is not considered homeland by the community. In this generation, as well as its cinematographic representation, the picture becomes more complex and will need to be understood through another perspective, in the light of another Diaspora model. (Sonia Ryang & Lie John. *Diaposra Without Homeland. Being Korean in Japan.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 81-106).

[21] They called themselves *zairyū Chōsenjin* "Koreans remaining in Japan". In fact US Occupation and Japanese authorities too, assumed that the Korean community would disappear from reborn postwar Japan. Then the term *chōsenjin* became common. Although it lit. means "Korean" it was used for a long time in Japan evoking denigration and dehumanization.

Both, Republic of Korea and the Democractic Peopple's Republic of Korea were founded in 1948, and with the Korean War braking out in 1950, splitting the Korean population (into South Korea or North Korea supporters), North and South Korea regarded each other as "inauthentic" and traitors, denying the other's existence as illegitimate. From the Japanese

point of view it did not matter either way since Japan had no formal diplomatic relations with either Korean government until 1965. Thus, *chosenjin* or *kankokujin* made no difference, for Japanese 's authorities they had the same degree of statelessness and thus unstable residential status.

   Actually, the return of sovereign power to the Japanese nation, in San Francisco Peace Treaty, 1952, all former colonies were freed from Japanese control but also it freed Japan from ensuring rights and compensations to Koreans or other former colonials subjects reaming in Japan.

[22]Sonia Ryang & Lie John. *Diaposra Without Homeland. Being Korean in Japan.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

[23] Mark points out several reasons for discrimination of Japan-based Koreans, in the main, "very poor, uneducated, and unskilled, even by low Korean standards, was vastly inferior to the Japanese" according to the report prepared by the Office of Strategic Services, "Alliens in Japan", the Korean-Japan relationship in rather negative terms since the "Korean people were seen as living apart from the Japanese, unwilling to assimilate". (Mark E. *Occupations of Korea and Japan and the Origins of the Korean Diaspora in Japan.* in *Diaspora without Homeland*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press).

[24] Zainichi Lie, John. *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of CaliforniaPress

[25] The novel and television-drama turned film in 1959 by Shinobu Hashimoto. There was a remake by Katsuo Fukuzawa released in 2008.

[26] The main character reveals his Korean ethnicity to his fellow Japanese crewmen and is well accepted. But at the end, Kimura is captured by a Korean ship, his Japanese fellows label him a Korean spy while he is in fact accused of being *pan-chopparai* (half-japanese), and beaten to death by Korean soldiers. This film represents well the empty space that zainichi occupied between the Koreas and Japan, as aliens in both places. As Tadao Satō suggests, this is one of the first films which dealt with the tragic in-between status of the *zainichi*, who were not accepted either by the Japanese or by the Koreans in (South) Korea.

[27] It is based on a book by Yi Yunbogi. It focuses on one 10-years-old-boy living in poverty on the streets of Taegu, South Korea. He describes Yunbogi's poverty and situates it within the context of Japanese exploitation of Koreans and the opens for rebellion and revolution. Yunbogi is the oldest of 3 boys and a girl. Their mother left them and the father is ill. Yungobgi tries to support his brothers and sisters as gum peddler, goatherd, a shoeshine boy and a newspaper seller. The narration informs us that there are 50,000 war orphans on the streets of Korean's cities. Both aesthetic and content may call to mind the Italian Neo-Realist cinema, especially Vittorio de Sica *Sciuscia* (shoeshine, 1946), but unlike de Sica, Oshima does not blame conditions on war and social customs. Ko, Mika. Chapter 6. "REPRESENTING THE ZAINICHI" in *Japanese Cinema and Otherness Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness*. London & New York: Routledge

[28] Despite the announcement of an assistance package to ease the return to Korea in 1959, under the "principle of free choice" (meaning remain in Japan, or be repatriated to either North or South Korea), the conservative and anticommunist South Korean administration of Rhee prevented Koreans affiliated with the pro-North *Joryeon* group from returning to South Korea (to where 98% of the community originally belonged). However, North Korea had offered free transport, jobs and housing to "returnees". This policy caused the 1960s mass repatriation to North Korea out of ideological conviction.

[29] "US report", Deparmtent of Diplomatic Section GHQ SCAP, 1948

[30] US authorities were afraid that communist agents were entering Japan in "in the guise of [Korean] refugees" (Report on the Occupation Area" 1992:489). And another US study claimed "Koreans served as the link between Japanese communists and those of the continent of Asia – Korea, Chinese and Russian" (US Department of Diplomatic Section GHQ SCAP, 1948).

[31] Koshiro, Yukiko. "Review of Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan" in *American Historical Review*, Apr., 2001, vol. 106, no. 2, p. 542-543

[32] Ko, Mika. Chapter 6. "REPRESENTING THE ZAINICHI" in *Japanese Cinema and Otherness Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness*.). London & New York: Routledge.

[33] Morris-Suzuki, Teresa. "Cap. 2. Freedom and Homecoming" in *Diaspora without Homeland.* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp 49.

[34] Ryang, Sonia & Lie, John. *Diaspora without Homeland.* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp37.

[35] The first work inspired by the Komatsugawa Incident was the 1959 Fukuzawas Shichirō's short story *kenran no isu* (The magnificent chair), about a Japanese boy named Yoshio who molests and murders two women; in 1961, Kinoshita Jinji screenplay *Kuchibue ga fuyu no sora ni…* (A whistle in the Winter sky…), broadcasted on NHK but it ends with a suicide instead of a rape/murder; Shirosaka Yoshio´s 1962 screenplay *Tanin no chi* (Blood of a stranger) is the story of a zainichi Korean boy who rapes and murders his girlfriend after she finds out he is zainichi Korean; in November, 1962, the same month of Ri´s execution, Ōe kenzaburō published *Sakebigoe,* a novel that includes a half-Japanese, half-Korean character named Kure Takao who fantasizes about raping Japanese women; In 1967, the avant-garde playwright Satō Makoto restaged the Komatsugawa Incident as a play-within-a-play in *Atashi no biitoruzu* (My Beatles): the two main

characters rehears a play based on the original incident; in 1981, the zainichi Korean author Kim Sok-pom revisited the Komatsugawa Incident in his novel *Saishi naki matsuri* (The priestless festival), which depicts a zainichi Korean man tormented by fears of raping and murdering women.

[36] This is a political representation in which the film "comes back to the reality by ways other than those that reality proposes. It refuses the conventional mechanism of identification and employs the Brechtian "distantiation effect" to encourage spectators to maintain a critical distance, something very characteristic in Oshima 1960s' films. He operates the renewal of the cinematographic language together with a political commitment and a reflexive concern of the cinematographic media itself, looking for a new film expression, within the international experimentations, aimed at dismantling the "artifice". Ko, Mika. *Japanese Cinema and Otherness Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness*. London & New York: Routledge, pp.140

Such a strategy of distancing is most vividly exemplified in the film´s ending, when Oshima´s voice-over addresses to the film´s spectators, he questions the spectators' position in the relation to the film, asking "where are you in this film and what is this film for you to be there?" (Ollman, B. "Why does the Emperor need the Yakuza: Prolegomenon to a Marxist Theory of the Japanese State" in *New Left Review*, 8 March/April 2001, p. 89).

And the last image of the sole rope, where the main character has disappeared makes the spectator thing about several questions, who is R? Is that Oshima wants to remember using "R" the case of the Korean who set himself on fire in 1971 after writing "I´m just too tired. I don´t have the energy to go on anymore?" (Scott, Christopher. Cap."R is for Rapist" in *Invisible Men: The Zainichi korean presence in Postwar Japanese Culture.* Doctoral thesis. Stanford University, 59). Or is Oshima with the shot of the rope addressing to the notion of invisibility of Koreans within the Japanese society?