Voices from In-Between: Korean Chinese Identity under the Gazes of China and South Korea

by

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Abstract

This thesis concerns the identity construction of the Korean Chinese who were Chinese citizens of China but had Korean ancestry, and who "returned" to South Korea, their forefathers' homeland, in the 1990s. The factors underlying the hybrid identity of the Korean Chinese and their identity crisis following their "return" to South Korea are addressed. This involves an examination of the specificities of the socio-historical context of Korean Chinese that contribute to their hybridization of identity and their consequent identity crisis. Prior studies have tended to frame the Korean Chinese identity within the context of either the People's Republic of China (PRC) or South Korea, leading to inadequate accounts of the making and unmaking of Korean Chinese identity by both two nation states.

This thesis provides an alternative approach to Korean Chinese identity issues by considering the nation-buildings efforts of both China and South Korea. It (re)contextualizes the Korean Chinese as the "others" who were "otherized" and marginalized in both the PRC and South Korea, causing them to feel "betwixt and between." Arif Dirlik has highlighted the need to ground this hybridization in a particular socio-historical context in order to avoid abstracting the difficulties of the marginalized and to better understand the reality of subaltern people. To understand and address the identity crisis of Korean Chinese, the arbitrary processes of othering them in the discourses of both the PRC and South Korea are probed by tracing the historical trajectories of Korean Chinese identity formation under two othering and hegemonic gazes, that of Han-dominated communist China and that of South Korean-centered Korea. This is followed by an examination of the subjective experiences of Korean Chinese identity through an analysis of the novel *Windflower*. The literary analysis of the novel in this thesis serves sociological ends, giving voice to the Korean Chinese experiences. To be specific, the use of the novel *Windflower* in this thesis serves as a window into the lives of Korean Chinese. This method of analysis and

use of novel are preferred, in part, because the Korean Chinese ethnic identity is difficult to approach more directly due to the political controls on the public debate of Korean Chinese role and identity in PRC. Moreover, the practical considerations made it impossible to travel to China and South Korea and conduct the anthropological field work.

By historicizing Korean Chinese hybrid identity in this research, I demonstrate that hybridity should always be closely considered within a historical context, and illustrate that hybridity means different things for different groups and peoples at different times.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. Korean Chinese and their Identity: An Introduction 1

1.1 Korean Chinese as Contested People 1

1.2 Current State of Research on the Korean Chinese and their Identity 8

1.3. Research Gaps and Main Argument 13

1.4 Theoretical Perspective for Approaching the Identity Issues of Korean Chinese 16

1.4.1 Applications of Postcolonial Perspective in the Case of Korean Chinese 16

1.4.2 Hybridity and the Necessity of Historicizing the Korean Chinese Hybrid Identity 20

1.5 Notes on Chapters and the Role of the Novel in this Thesis 29

1.5.1 Chapter Outline 29

1.5.2 Role of *Windflower* and Purpose of Literary Analysis in this Research 31

CHAPTER 2. Korean Chinese as Other under Two Gazes: Historicizing Korean Chinese Hybrid Identity 33

2.1 The Contested Status and Identity of Koreans in Manchuria 33

2.1.1 Under the Japanese Empire: *Chosŏnin* and Japanese Colonial Subjects 33

2.1.2 The Post-Liberation Era: Dual Allegiances to Communist China and Korea 35

2.2 Redefined Ethnicity: Becoming *Chaoxian Zu* of the Chinese Nation under the PRC 38

2.2.1 Becoming Seemingly Unambiguous: The CCP's Policy towards Korean Chinese 38

2.2.2 China's State Nationalism and the Han Chinese Gaze on Ethnic Minorities 46

2.3 "Homeland" Disillusionment and the Re-examination of Identity in South Korea 53

2.3.1 Dual Status of Korean Chinese: Familial Kin and Foreign Laborers 53

2.3.2 South Korean Nationalism and Immigration Policy towards Co-Ethnics 56

2.3.3 The South Korean's Internalized Racism and their Gaze on Korean Chinese 62

2.4 Conclusion: Fluctuating "Third Space" and Korean Chinese Hybrid Identity 64

CHAPTER 3. Betwixt and Between: Korean Chinese Identities in Hŏ Ryŏnsun's *Windflower* 67

3.1 A Brief Plot Summary 67

3.2. First-Generation Korean Chinese Hong Pŏm-san's Journey of Being in Diaspora 69

3.3 Hong Chi-ha’s Experiences as a Second-Generation Korean Chinese 71
3.3.1 Feeling “Homeless at Home” In China 71
3.3.2 Encounter with South Korean “Family” 78
3.3.3 Encounters with Other Korean Chinese and South Koreans.. 82
3.4 Disillusionment in Korean Dream: Ch'oe In-gyu, Chi Hye-gyŏng, and Ko Ae-ja 94
Conclusion 100
Bibliography 106

CHAPTER 1. Korean Chinese and their Identity: An Introduction

1.1 Korean Chinese as Contested[1] People

Korean Chinese are Chinese citizens of Korean ancestry who are part of the Korean diaspora living outside the Korean peninsula. Most of them were displaced from the Korean peninsula to China during the period of Japanese colonial rule over Korea (1910–1945). While the migration of Koreans to Northeast China can be traced to a much earlier date,[2] it was significantly influenced by the Japanese annexation of Korea and the later Japanese imperialist penetration into Manchuria. Korean Chinese are the Koreans who (in)voluntarily left the Korean peninsula and later stayed in China instead of returning to the liberated Korea. *Chaoxian Zu*, meaning the "Korean ethnic group," is the official name of the Korean Chinese in their capacity as one of the 55 ethnic minority groups (*shaoshu minzu*) in China.

Many Korean Chinese settled in the region that became the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in 1952.[3] The early involvement of the Korean Chinese with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the anti-Japanese war and the liberation of Northeastern China, and their contributions to the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) helped them to

[1] I borrow the term "contested" from Peace Lee, who has argued that "[Korean Chinese] have evolved an identity that is tagged with the term 'contested'" due to complex, controversial and multilayered historical relations of Korean Chinese with Japanese colonialism, China, and the Korean peninsula. For more details, see Peace Bakwon Lee, *Contested Stories: Constructing Chaoxianzu Identity* (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2011).

[2] The migration of the forefathers of today's Korean Chinese dates to the middle of the nineteenth century. Three major waves of Korean migration to China took place: (1) from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1910, (2) following Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, and (3) following Japan's occupation of Manchuria and the establishment of the Manchukuo regime in the 1930s and 1940s. This information about migration periods is from Enze Han, *Contestation and Adaptation: The Politics of National Identity in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 66.

[3] In addition to Yanbian, there are other smaller Korean autonomous areas in the northern part of China. These include the Changbai Korean Autonomous County in Jilin province and various autonomous townships throughout Jilin and the neighboring provinces of Heilongjiang and Liaoning. See Enze Han, 65. About 2 million Korean Chinese are living in China, and about 35% of them (700,000) are living in the borderland of Yanbian. See June Hee Kwon, *Mobile Ethnicity: The Formation of the Korean Chinese Transnational Migrant Class* (PhD diss., Duke University, 2013): 23.

acquire autonomy in Yanbian, as well as Chinese citizenship, despite their "foreign origin."[4] Autonomy (and citizenship) was not an exclusive privilege for the Korean minority because it was guaranteed to other minorities as well. What makes these Koreans stand out from the other minorities was not only their status as "the most important minority group in the already relatively industrialized Northeast China" but also their role as a model minority and a "testing ground" for CCP minority policies intended for later implementation on a nationwide scale.[5]

Their allegiance to the PRC in the Korean War and their enthusiasm for the socialist reform provided the central government and the CCP with justification for labeling the Koreans a "model" for other minority groups to emulate. Yanbian was also praised as a "model autonomous" region in China."[6] However, the identity of the Korean Chinese was quite ambiguous due to their relations with Korea, their ethnic "homeland." Although they were proud to be Chinese nationals and one of the officially recognized ethnic groups, they still regarded Korea (be it North or South) as their homeland. The equivocality of the Korean Chinese identity discourse first appeared in Manchuria during the Chinese Civil War between 1945 and 1949.

Regarding the issue of nationality, the Koreans favored the "Three-Nationality Theory," which meant "[regarding] the Soviet Union as Proletarian Motherland, Korea as a Racial

[4] Upon taking power in 1949, the CCP introduced a policy regarding the 55 ethnic minorities in the PRC. The minority policy granted these minorities autonomy in terms of their political and cultural rights and local administration. However, this autonomy undoubtedly entailed remaining part of China, based on the notion of China being a "multiethnic unitary state" and did not challenge China's territorial integrity and national integration. For more details, see Colin Mackerras, *China's Minority Cultures: Identities and Integration Since 1912* (Melbourne: Longman, 1995), 10.
[5] Bernard V. Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993): 61.
[6] The official designation of "model minority" was granted because of the Korean Chinese community's significant achievements concerning culture and education (the highest literacy rate), demographics (the lowest birth rate), and the socio-economic sphere (active participation in the CCP's land reform and contributions to wet rice cultivation in Northeastern China). See Jeanyoung Lee, *China's Policy towards the Korean Minority in China 1945–1995* (PhD diss., University of London, 1999): 23, 203-205. See also Fang Gao, *Becoming a Model Minority: Schooling Experiences of Ethnic Koreans in China* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010). According to Adam Cathcart, "Beijing's facilitation of Tibetan delegations to Yanbian … to observe how a faithful and nominally autonomous ethnic region should be run" also attested to the Koreans' status as a "model minority" in late 1950. For more details, see Adam Cathcart, "Nationalism and Ethnic Identity in the Sino-Korean Border Region of Yanbian, 1945-1950," *Korean Studies* 34 (2010): 46.

Motherland, and China as the Motherland of Liberation."[7] The idea of multiple motherlands was useful for the Koreans, who considered themselves as belonging in China while also being related to China, rather than being considered totally "alien." However, this theory was rejected by the political leader of the Korean Chinese, Chu Dŏk-hae (Chinese: Zhu Dehai; 1911–1972),[8] who thought that his firm support for "unequivocal Chinese nationality for Koreans in the Northeast" would "place him squarely in the mainstream of CCP policy."[9] The ambiguous identity of the Korean Chinese, expressed as dual loyalty to China and Korea, re-emerged during the Korean War. This phenomenon was reflected in the fact that the Korean Chinese were "happy to be able to fight for their *mother country,*"[10] Korea, without necessarily opposing their host country, the PRC. This dual loyalty of the Korean Chinese continued until 1957.[11] However, after the Korean War, the Korean Chinese community took up the state-sanctioned status as the "model minority *of China*" and contributed to the (re)construction of their adopted homeland.

It was not until China's Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) that the Korean Chinese began to experience an "identity crisis."[12] Their ethnic ties with North and South Korea made them a target for political persecution. Everything related to "Korean-ness" was forbidden and regarded as a betrayal and a symbol of challenging the Chinese state. During this period, Koreans in China were exposed to random purges and persecution,[13] which caused them to view "Chinese-ness" and "Korean-ness" as incompatible. They subsequently adopted a fully Chinese identity at the expense of nearly eradicating their sense of being Korean. To survive the harsh persecution, they

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[7] Cathcart, 34.
[8] Chu Dŏk-hae is the first governor of Yanbian.
[9] Cathcart, 34.
[10] J.Y. Lee, 194 (emphasis added).
[11] Ibid.
[12] Cathcart explains that the Cultural Revolution included an attempt to "demonize all aspects of Korean identity that had made Yanbian a model autonomous region," from "language instruction" to "loyal cooperation with North Korea." See Cathcart, 47.
[13] Kwon, *Mobile Ethnicity*, 47.

had to demonstrate absolute loyalty to China by severing all connections with North and South Korea, and by repressing their ethnicity. The Korean Chinese were redefined as an ethnic group that "fully belong[ed] to the *nation* of China (*Zhonghua minzu)*" and that had no legitimate relationships with the nation-states of either North or South Korea. Following their drastic assimilation during the Cultural Revolution, the identity of Korean Chinese became "seemingly unequivocal."

During the Cultural Revolution, China's central government completely prevented North Korea from influencing Yanbian. However, China nonetheless maintained a positive relationship with North Korea due to their similar political systems and the revolutionary bond they had forged during the Korean War.[14] The two states' geographical adjacency and political affinity, along with the lengthy separation from the South Korea, became the main reasons for which the Korean Chinese were more exposed to the North Korean state than to the South. Thus, they felt more attached to the North. This illustrates the fact that their sense of belonging to their ethnic homeland was determined more by politics and ideology than by their "ancestral origin."[15] The North Korean influence over Yanbian, especially in the linguistic and educational domains, might be another important factor explaining this sense of belonging. For instance, the linguistic resemblance (e.g., speech patterns, accents, and expressions) between the Korean Chinese (especially in Yanbian) and North Koreans was partly due to Zhou Enlai's (1898–1976)[16] designation of Pyongyang "topolect"[17] as the "standard language of instruction in Korean

[14] Enze Han, 71.
[15] An estimated 80% of the Yanbian Korean Chinese are of North Korean ancestry, while the remaining 20% hail from South Korea. Outi Luova, "Mobilizing Transnational Korean Linkages for Economic Development in Yanbian, China," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 5, no.0 (2007): 2, accessed September 17, 2017, http://apjjf.org/-Outi-Luova/2388/article.html.
[16] The first Premier of the PRC.
[17] This term is cited in Freeman. The use of this term was proposed by Victor Mair, who suggested that scholars employ the term "topolect" rather than "dialect" when translating the Chinese-derived Korean word *pangŏn* (Chinese:

Chinese schools in northeastern China" in 1962.[18]

Nevertheless, with the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea in 1992 and the rise of South Korea's economic and political power, the sense of ethnic affinity to North Korea gradually weakened, whereas the sense of affinity to South Korea was reignited. This ethnic affinity and desire for migration to South Korea were also motivated by the poverty and marginalized status of the areas in which Korean Chinese were residing in China. Tens of thousands of Korean Chinese immigrated to South Korea in search of their "Korean dream" and "roots."[19] Beginning in 1986, Korean Chinese were allowed to take short trips to South Korea in the name of "visiting relatives," but these visits were quite limited due to the complex administration procedures between the Chinese and South Korean governments. Many Korean Chinese overstayed their visas and remained in South Korea illegally. Soon they were joined by more followers, most of whom entered South Korea by illegal means. For example, many of these individuals, from "desperately poor farmers" to "well-established, urban professionals,"[20] entered South Korea on the basis of "falsified kinship identities" established through fake marriages and forged visas.[21] They were engaged mostly in illegal menial work, which caused numerous social problems and conflicts with South Korean citizens. The Korean Chinese were initially welcomed and favored by the South Korean government and South Korean employers, because of their assumed similarities in "language and cultural background." Moreover, the perception that "they were physically similar" meant that these new arrivals,

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fangyan 方言). See Caren Freeman, *Making and Faking Kinship: Marriage and Labor Migration between China and South Korea* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011): 19.

[18] Ibid.

[19] By 1996, more than 260,000 Korean Chinese (approximately 18% of the total population of Korean Chinese) had been to South Korea since the early 1990s, and roughly 70,000 were staying in South Korea. Jaeun Kim, "The Making and Unmaking of a 'Transborder Nation': South Korea during and after the Cold War," *Theor Soc* 38 (2009): 153.

[20] Freeman, 155.

[21] Ibid., 154.

unlike other foreign laborers, were not considered a threat to South Korea's "ethnic homogeneity."[22]

However, the Korean Chinese interpretation of Korean ethnic identity, which had been maintained and developed by utilizing the Korean language and culture, did not quite fit into South Korean society. The encounters between the two groups greatly disturbed the meaning of "being Korean" and "Korean-ness" for both the South Koreans and Korean Chinese. The Korean Chinese disputed the South Koreans' belief in the homogeneity of the Korean nation and culture. South Korean citizens questioned the self-identification of the Korean Chinese as ethnic Koreans of China and their authenticity as Koreans. To be specific, their perceptions of the criteria for being "authentic Koreans" were challenged, since speaking Korean and having preserved Korean habits and traditions did not necessarily fit the South Koreans' conception of an "authentic Korean." On the other hand, the mass exodus of Korean Chinese to South Korea and their "rediscovered" ethnic ties with South Korea raised questions about the PRC's "model minority" discourse and minority policy. This movement, in turn, led the Chinese government to reassess the Korean minority community and reclassify it as one of the "dangerous ethnic groups" that threatened China's national integration.[23]

"Reconnection" with the state and people of South Korea reminded the Korean Chinese of their dual identity and heightened their ethnic consciousness. Their dual identity motivated them to negotiate their legitimacy as "co-ethnic returnees"[24] with a desire for treatment that was equal to that of South Korean citizens. However, the Korean Chinese unexpectedly felt another marginalization upon their migration "back" to South Korea, due to South Korea's notion of

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[22] Enze Han, 72.
[23] J.Y. Lee, 97.
[24] Jaeun Kim, *Contested Embrace: Transborder Membership Politics in Twentieth-Century Korea* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016): 159, 173.

"hierarchical nationhood," which produced a subaltern classification of Korean Chinese, both legally and socially.[25] The Korean Chinese people's assumptions of cultural commonality with the South Koreans were seriously disturbed, because they realized that their supposedly "Korean" cultural attributes, which had qualified them to be recognized as "Koreans" in China and which motivated them to seek permission to enter South Korea, were ironically insufficient to qualify them as "authentic" Koreans in South Korea.

Once again, the Korean Chinese's identity and sense of belonging became ambiguous. However, in this case that indistinctness reflected their status as *between* China and South Korea, as opposed to the sense of dual belonging to both China and (pre-divided) Korea that had been formed in the early days of the PRC. It was also contrary to the "seemingly unambiguous" and "exclusive" feeling of belonging to China that was formed by the cultural assimilation and political persecution that occurred during the Cultural Revolution. In China, these individuals were "almost Chinese but not quite," while in South Korea they were "almost Korean but not quite."[26] Thus, the identity crisis engendered by this double rejection of full identities, was demonstrated in the sense that "I belong neither here nor there."[27] This was articulated by many Korean Chinese people upon their migration to South Korea. They had previously been living as marginalized minorities who were excluded from full economic, political and social identities as others in relation to their dominant counterparts, the Han Chinese,[28] but then found out that they did not qualify as Koreans in South Korea. Moreover, the Korean Chinese self-identification of being not fully Korean and not fully Chinese did not express itself unvaryingly. The individual experiences of Korean Chinese influencing their identities were undoubtedly diverse and

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[25] Dong-Hoon Seol and John D. Skrentny, "Ethnic Return Migration and Hierarchical Nationhood: Korean Chinese Foreign Workers in South Korea," *Ethnicities* 9, no.2 (June 2009).
[26] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 122.
[27] Kwon, 211.
[28] Helene Kim Lee, *Bittersweet Homecomings: Ethnic Identity Construction in the Korean Diaspora* (PhD. diss., University of California, Santa Barbra, 2009), 171.

reflected more complex factors, such as educational background, social status, visa type, and kinship with South Koreans.

Korean Chinese individuals expressed their experiences of legal and illegal migration to South Korea and their encounters with South Koreans through novels and autobiographical works in the 1990s. The literary trend toward the "pursuit of the discovery of the 'self'"[29] at the end of the Cultural Revolution facilitated this movement, as did the formalization of diplomatic relations between South Korea and China. The "South Korean Wind" (*han'guk param*), which referred to the "Korean dream," swept across the Korean Chinese community and attracted numerous Korean Chinese writers to discuss the identity of the Korean Chinese in relation to two "homelands" in a literary context. Among those narratives, Hŏ Ryŏn-sun's *Windflower* (*Paramkkot*)[30] serves as a resource that conveys the subjective identity negotiation of Korean Chinese people in China and South Korea, along with the identity crisis of the Korean Chinese that was experienced in South Korea in the early 1990s. The Korean Chinese identity discourse of "neither/nor" in-between two nation-states is vividly depicted in this personal and fictional narrative.

1.2 Current State of Research on the Korean Chinese and their Identity

The past three decades have seen a substantial volume of research focusing on Korean Chinese and issues related to their identity. Scholars such as Chae-Jin Lee, Bernard Vincent

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[29] Chengri Zhao, "An Overview of Contemporary Korean Literature in China," in *Koreans in China,* ed. Dae-Sook Suh and Edward J. Shultz (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1990), 156. According to Zhao's overview, with the establishment of the PRC, Korean Chinese literature in China was isolated and highly affected by complicated political movements. For example, from 1957, literature dealing with the "individuality of the author," "[ethnic] minority literary tradition and Korean language," and "humanism and human traits" was belittled and criticized as "revisionist literature and the literary claims of the bourgeois." Later, during the Cultural Revolution, all ethnic literature became a "forbidden zone" and was regarded as against the idea of "unified culture, unified people, unified feeling, and unified lineage." For more about the development of Korean Chinese literature, see Zhao, 144-163.
[30] Ryŏn-sun Hŏ, *Paramkkot* (Yanji, China: Yanbian Renmin Chubanshe, 2011). The first edition of *Windflower* was published in 1996.

Olivier, and Jeanyoung Lee have contributed significantly to studies on the Korean Chinese in Western academia, especially in terms of offering substantial resources for examining the factors underlying the construction of the Korean Chinese identity. Written during the early period of Korean Chinese research (from the late 1980s to the late 1990s), these studies sought to shed light on the PRC's creation of the Korean ethnic minority group through the reconceptualization of the Korean Chinese status, from "Korean immigrants in Manchuria" to "Korean ethnic minority in the PRC."

Chae-Jin Lee's book,[31] published in 1986, was the first English scholarly work on the topic, and it serves as a vital cornerstone for studying the Korean Chinese community.[32] Lee investigated the development of ethnic-based education in the Korean Chinese community, especially in Yanbian from 1936 through the 1980s. He illustrated the pivotal role of educational and cultural autonomy in preserving their Korean ethnicity and highlighted the Korean Chinese people's experiences of asserting and securing their Korean ethnicity in the educational sphere "without upsetting China's overall national interests."[33] Following Lee's academic study, Olivier's monograph,[34] published in 1993, provides considerable insight into China's minority policies, with special reference to the case of the Koreans. He examined the factors driving the CCP to constantly modify its policies and explored how the Korean Chinese responded to those shifting measures from the pre-PRC period to the post-Mao era (until 1989). Building on existing studies (including Olivier's), Jeanyoung Lee approached China's policy towards ethnic minorities differently.[35] Lee's focus was not the policy itself but its major underlying factors and implementation. He argued that the major motivation for China's minority policies was the

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[31] Chae-Jin Lee, *China's Korean Minority: The Politics of Ethnic Education* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986).
[32] Cathcart, 27.
[33] C.J. Lee, 164.
[34] Olivier, 1993.
[35] J.Y. Lee, 1999.

historical links between its ethnic minorities and not its communist ideology, the variable that Western academics had emphasized. He also offered a new perspective for examining how the Korean Chinese, who had previously been foreign nationals, became successfully integrated into the Chinese nation; to that end, he proposed a new term: "state nationalism."[36]

These studies are valuable in terms of explaining the significant influence of China's policies on the Korean Chinese identity as a Korean minority group in China, constructed prior to their migration to South Korea. Nevertheless, these studies focused more on the implementation of those policies and the factors underlying them than directly engaging with their effects on Korean Chinese identity (trans)formation. Only Jeanyoung Lee briefly discussed a "third identity,"[37] which had been debated by intellectuals seeking a solution for the identity crisis of Korean Chinese struggling in South Korea. While he neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea of a third identity, he claimed that Korean Chinese identity was highly dependent on China's future policy and the South Korean influence on the Korean Chinese community and its economic progress. However, more research is needed into how South Korea's influence on and policies towards the Korean Chinese community have affected that group's identity, because identity issues, including identity crisis, have grown more common as interactions between the South Korean state and citizens, and the Korean Chinese community have increased.

Peace Bakwon Lee examined Korean Chinese identity formation through Korean Chinese

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[36] Ibid., 17-18. Lee argued that "state nationalism" is a newly invented CCP ideology for integrating 56 ethnic groups to the newly defined "multi-ethnic" Chinese state and nation. He also claimed that CCP's state nationalism is added with Han-centric "Chinese nationalism," which was invented by intellectuals during the Qing dynasty as a means of resisting Western imperial powers and Manchu powers. For more information, see Lee, 17-19. More elaboration on and the connection of this term with my argument will be illustrated in Chapter 2.

[37] Ibid., 368-369. South Korean intellectuals' argument on the "third identity" of Korean Chinese which was mentioned by J.Y. Lee was: (1) Korean Chinese were neither South Koreans nor North Koreans; (2) Korean Chinese should live in China as a separate group from those Koreans living in the Korean peninsula. For more information, see J.Y. Lee, 368-369.

storytellers' personal narratives, songs, and stories that he collected via fieldwork.[38] Lee's work offers insight into the Chinese government folklorists' efforts to collect and protect Korean Chinese oral and written works to represent Korean Chinese as a Chinese ethnic minority group. He argued that these efforts entailed "constructing a Korean ethnic paradigm *within* the context of Chinese ethnic minority classification."[39] This outcome has resulted in the PRC government largely excluding works and narratives of the "displaced histories of Korean Chinese" due to their "inappropriateness" for China's "official framework of the representation of ethnic identity" and Chinese nation-state's narratives and ideology.[40]

Research focused on Korean Chinese identity began to shift along with the "return" migration of the Korean Chinese to South Korea following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states in 1992. Shortly thereafter, studies on the dual identity of the Korean Chinese began to appear. Scholars such as Woo-Gil Choi, Jin Woong Kang, In-Jin Yoon, Yihua Hong, Changzoo Song, and Julie Park examined the dual identity of the Korean Chinese by investigating that community's processes of immigration and adaptation from sociological and anthropological perspectives. According to these researchers, the Korean Chinese identity is "politically Chinese and ethnically Korean,"[41] and members of this community are more likely to demonstrate a "sense of belonging to their political identity."[42] Moreover, they called Korean Chinese identity "reactionary and situational." At the same time, this identity is sometimes "dependent on [Korean Chinese people's] needs and interests," such as "strategically [strengthening] their Korean or other identities" in response to the shifting economic and political

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[38] Lee, *Contested Stories*, previously cited in note 1.
[39] Ibid. 2
[40] Ibid., 2-3; 270.
[41] Woo-Gil Choi, "The Korean Minority in China: The Change of its Identity," *Development and Society* 30, no.1 (2011): 199-141.
[42] Jin Woong Kang, "The Dual National Identity of the Korean Minority in China: The Politics of Nation and Race and the Imagination of Ethnicity," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 8, no.1 (2008): 101-119.

conditions characterizing their "transnational" lifestyle.[43] These studies indicate that the Korean Chinese community's (re)connection with the South Korean state rekindled their dual identity, which had been repressed since the political turmoil in China.[44] Furthermore, these studies attest that a belief in a culturally homogenous Korean nation is problematic.

Two pieces of ethnographic scholarship have interrogated how "return" migration affected the identity formations of Korean Chinese and altered their ethnic identity. Both researchers observed the hybrid and "in-between" identities of the Korean Chinese in their interviews and observations of Korean Chinese participants. Specifically, Helene Lee argued that the Korean Chinese experiences in South Korea reaffirmed their own "diasporic version" of Korean-ness, expressed in a "*Korean Chinese*-ness," that was qualitatively different from that of the South Koreans.[45] Moreover, she observed that many interviewees struggled with psychological dilemmas about where exactly to position their hybrid identities, in China or South Korea, and that they subsequently demonstrated a feeling of "belonging nowhere." June Hee Kwon framed the Korean Chinese as a "vigilant" transnational working class caught between China and South Korea, and, similarly to Helene Lee's observation, she noticed the Korean Chinese feelings of belonging neither here nor there.[46] Moreover, Kwon argued that the unambiguous display of these people's political affiliation to the Chinese state should be understood as a conscious strategy for them to survive the political context in China, where

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[43] Yihua Hong, Changzoo Song, and Julie Park, "Korean, Chinese, or What? Identity Transformation of Chosŏnjok (Korean Chinese) Migrant Brides in South Korea," *Asian Ethnicity* 14, no.1 (2013): 29-51; In-Jin Yoon, "Migration and the Korean Diaspora: A Comparative Description of Five Cases," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38, no. 3 (2012): 413-435.
[44] As previously stated, dual identity was reflected in Korean Chinese people's ambiguous dual loyalty towards the PRC and Korea (and the North Korean regime in particular) before 1957. However, their loyalty towards North Korea gradually declined, and the North Korean influence over the Korean Chinese community gradually did the same. Thus, this thesis does not explore the relationship between the Korean Chinese community and North Koreans. The previous illustration of North Korean influence was mainly intended to create a historical context for understanding the early identity of Korean Chinese and their interpretation of Korean-ness.
[45] Helene Lee, 202.
[46] Kwon, *Mobile Ethnicity.*

ambiguous belonging has been forbidden; thus, political loyalty to China is not inconsistent with their identity crisis. The work of both Lee and Kwon, each of which contains sufficient first-hand data regarding Korean-Chinese people's articulation of their identity and position between two nation-states, is most relevant to this thesis. This study also constitutes an endeavor to build on the discussion of identity discourse by focusing specifically on the in-between-ness and identity crisis of the Korean Chinese.

1.3. Research Gaps and Main Argument

Most prior studies have addressed the identity construction of the Korean Chinese in the context of either China or South Korea, which has sometimes led to insufficient and biased accounts of the dual identity of the Korean Chinese. Active discussions about their dual identity evolved only along with the "return" migration of Korean Chinese to South Korea. The political context in China, which discourages ambiguous "belongingness," explains the lack of discussions on the dual identity of ethnic minorities in China. Furthermore, the lack of attention in English-language scholarship paid to the identity issues of Korean Chinese before their mass migration to South Korea, on the one hand, and the limitations on studying the Korean Chinese identity, on the other, constitute two further potential explanations, according to one scholar's assessment. Lee notes, firstly, "the inaccessibility of data due to China's maintenance of a closed door policy towards the West until the 1980s."[47] Secondly, he argues that "the release of historic documents and the publication of books and articles…[including] the written records published in China concerning the Korean minority…are still carefully censored by the Chinese Government."[48] This assessment also explains why ethnographical methods were utilized for the few existing studies on the identity of Korean Chinese, such as interviews, surveys, and participant

[47] J.Y. Lee, 15.
[48] Ibid., 25.

observation, and through personal narratives, songs, and stories.[49]

Although Korean Chinese identity issues have been discussed more often since the "reconnection" of the Korean Chinese with the state and people of South Korea, many researchers have tended to dismiss the role of the Chinese state and its nation-building narrative in constructing Korean Chinese ethnicity and in causing their identity crisis in China and in South Korea. This tendency emerged partly because the identity crisis of the Korean Chinese became more evident upon their "return" migration to South Korea, and their awareness of Chinese national identity ironically increased outside of China. Additionally, the objectives of many prior studies were to investigate the presence of Korean Chinese and the partial or differential embrace of these "returnees" in South Korea, mainly with a view to questioning the national discourse in South Korea. For instance, the aims of these studies were to question the shared belief in Korean ethnic homogeneity and internal hierarchies within Korean nationhood, and to illuminate the post-colonial nation-building efforts of the state of South Korea.

I see this one-sided approach as problematic with respect to fully understanding the issues of Korean Chinese regarding their identity and their identity crisis. Tsuda's assertion about the necessity of considering the influence of both the sending and the receiving country when conducting research on transnational migrants, and examining their ethnicity and identity offers theoretical support for the attempt made in this study to examine the ethnic identity of Korean Chinese in relation to both the PRC and South Korea. Without a comprehensive understanding of the prior status and identity of migrants in their home country, a full understanding of their ethnic status and identity in the host society is impossible, or will be seriously biased, because the "sociocultural experiences back home inevitably condition how they interpret and react to their

[49] Such studies include the research done by Helene Lee, Hee June Kwon, Caren Freeman (ethnographic methods), and Peace Bakwon Lee (literature).

ethnic experiences abroad."[50] Likewise, insufficient examinations of Korean Chinese ethnic experiences in China will lead to the interpretation of their experiences in South Korea being "ethnically decontextualized." These pitfalls of a focus on either nation in isolation once again help to indicate the research gaps that arise from an almost exclusive focus on the context of the South Korean state when addressing the identity issues of Korean Chinese.

As emphasized in the previous discussions regarding the literature review, two anthropological studies on the Korean Chinese provide valuable information concerning how their identity crisis is articulated. I further discuss these in the next section, where I explain the theoretical perspective utilized when addressing the identity and sense of belonging of the Korean Chinese, shown as something in-between and "belonging neither here nor there,"[51] as well as the factors that engender this position. The starting point of this thesis is to understand the process of identity construction and the resultant identity crisis of the Korean Chinese upon their "return" migration to South Korea. However, I do not merely repeat what their identity/identities is/are, because these have often been discussed in the field. Rather, because no study that includes these two perspectives has scrutinized the reasons for which the Korean Chinese came to experience being a minority and other in both China and South Korea, I explore the processes and underlying factors that are responsible for the sense of (un)belonging experienced by many Korean Chinese who "returned" to the ethnic homeland of South Korea.

The main argument in this thesis is that the otherizing of the Korean Chinese in both the PRC and South Korea in the processes of nation building in each state is responsible for their sense of belonging being located in the liminal space, usually defined by being "neither/nor." Moreover, these double otherizing processes were legitimized by means of the rather

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[50] Takeyuki Tsuda, *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Return Migration in Transnational Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 55.
[51] Helene Lee, 29.

contradictory historical and contemporary links between and gazes of two states towards each other. Distinct but contradictory hegemonic gazes are reflected in Korean Chinese identity construction, and the identity crisis that arose is a consequence of this. I argue that the identity crisis of Korean Chinese does not result exclusively from the legal and social discrimination of the South Korean state and people; rather, it is the consequence of the "double marginalization" of Korean Chinese by China and South Korea. Furthermore, the Korean Chinese sense of strong ethnic consciousness and their belief in purity, homogeneity, authenticity in Korean-ness hindered their recognition of their hybrid sense of culture and identity. Moreover, it also caused the Korean Chinese identity crisis in South Korea, because their hybridized Korean identity and culture became an "inauthentic and contaminated" one. I explain how I build this argument based on existing theories in next section. I will also explain how to understand the in-between-ness of Korean Chinese identity from a postcolonial perspective and my justification for the relevance and necessity of the postcolonial theory in the examination of Korean Chinese identity issues.

1.4 Theoretical Perspective for Approaching the Identity Issues of Korean Chinese

1.4.1 Applications of Postcolonial Perspective in the Case of Korean Chinese

Postcolonial theory has rarely been applied when approaching the identity issues of Korean Chinese, even though it is useful for analyzing the ambivalent status of the Korean Chinese between two distinct "post-colonial" nation-states. I use the term "post-colonial" to denote the status of China and South Korea as two nation-states that were constructed after Japanese colonial rule over East Asia. Japan's colonial rule over the Korean peninsula (1910–1945) and the region of Manchuria (1932–1945) resulted in many Koreans being displaced from their homeland, the Korean peninsula, to Manchuria. The effects of Japanese colonization thus should not be ignored in a discussion of Korean Chinese identity formation, because it resulted in

their displacement (be it voluntarily or forcefully). Moreover, the racial hierarchy constructed by the Japanese colonizer was internalized by the Koreans and Han Chinese. It thus engendered antagonism and rivalry between the Koreans and Han Chinese in that area from then on.

With the end of Japanese colonial rule, both China and South Korea started to engage in decolonization and post-colonial nation-building. The Koreans in Manchuria subsequently became Chinese citizens with Korean ancestry and were recognized as an official ethnic minority group under the name *Chaoxian Zu.* It was not until after almost a half century of isolation from their ancestral land, in the 1990s that mostly first and second generation Korean Chinese visited South Korea as co-ethnic migrant laborers.

The Korean Chinese are not colonized subjects in either the post-colonial states of China or South Korea, so I will not try to argue this in this analysis. However, previous studies show that both the Chinese and South Korean leaders had internalized orientalism, the ideology of the European colonizers of the East, and that was evident in their nation-building propaganda. To be specific, the political authorities in both nation-states adopted the dichotomy of self/other from Western orientalism and constructed their own versions of this. They consequently deemed ethnic minority others and (internal) foreign others as inferior, and controlled and excluded them. Scholars such as Louisa Schein and Dru C. Gladney have critically examined the relationships between the Han Chinese and ethnic minorities in China. Borrowing Edward Said's critical concept of orientalism, Schein and Gladney respectively proposed the terms "internal orientalism" and "oriental orientalism" to describe how the Han Chinese constructed the identities of ethnic minorities as "internal others."[52] Similarly to how European colonial discourse defined the Eastern "Orient" as a corrupted and decaying civilization that could not

[52] Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 101; Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 53.

match European progress,[53] the Han Chinese consolidated their identity as modern, urban, and civilized by defining ethnic minorities in China as backward and primitive. Likewise, Gladney argued that objectifying minorities in a colorful and romanticized fashion was essential to the construction of the Han Chinese majority, which was "the very formulation of the Chinese 'nation' itself."[54] Ethnic minorities (together with women and peasants) were "collectively stamped as backward ... [and] remained consigned to a secondary position in the Chinese social order," regardless of how their cultural practices were "positively" portrayed and lauded in public discourse.[55]

Mi Ok Kang contextualizes South Korea as an "economically semi-imperial" nation-state that had upgraded itself from its previous status as a post-colonial state thanks to its rapid economic development since the 1980s.[56] Addressing inequity and discrimination in South Korea's multiculturalism, Kang examined the binary views of "we-Koreans" versus "them-migrants" based on the concept of "copied orientalism" in South Korea.[57] She argues that orientalism has been adopted and reversed in South Korea, causing South Koreans to see "ethnically similar Asian migrants as marginal, abnormal, and deviant from the White, the standard of human ethnicity."[58] Moreover, the dichotomy of "us-civilized Korean" versus "others-barbaric migrants" from other, less-developed Asian countries causes many South Koreans to alienate themselves from those "inferior" Asians and to identify their socio-cultural

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[53] Ibid., 101.
[54] Gladney, 52-53.
[55] Schein, 130.
[56] Mi Ok Kang, *Multicultural Education in South Korea: Language, Ideology, and Culture in Korean Language Arts Education* (London: Routledge, 2015), 29.
[57] Kyŏngt'ae Pak, *Sosujawa han'guksahoe: ijunodongja, hwagyo, honhyŏrin* (*Minorities and Korean Society: Migrants Workers, Chinese-Korean, and Half-Breeds*) (Seoul: Humanit'asŭ, 2008). The concept of "copied orientalism" was cited in Mi Ok Kang, *Multicultural Education in South Korea*, 32.
[58] Kang, *Multicultural Education in South Korea*, 32.

and ethnic status as the same as Whites.[59] Migrant groups, as the "others" who were labelled by their "race/ethnicity, nationality, gender and potential" in South Korea, contributed to the state propaganda of promoting a multicultural society; at the same time, they contributed to the discourse of South Korean superiority and cultural homogeneity and hegemony due to their difference and so-called inferiority.[60]

The Korean Chinese, as both an ethnic minority in China and co-ethnic non-national migrants in South Korea, thus may have fallen into the fixed category of "internal others"[61] in both states. Eurocentric orientalism caused the people in the West see themselves as superior to Asians, and it justified their colonial rule over Asia. Likewise, the adopted orientalism in the nation-states of China and South Korea caused the Korean Chinese to be seen as inferior and subjugated to the dominant groups, namely the Han Chinese and South Korean citizens. I see the struggles of Korean Chinese regarding their identity issues as related to the discourse of orientalism that was adopted in the post-colonial nation-building drives of these two states. Thus, it can be argued that a (re)examination of both discourses, and their related justifications and actions towards Korean Chinese, would be a significant step in disentangling the identity issues of Korean Chinese. More importantly, in this context, a postcolonial perspective can be applied to the case of Korean Chinese in relation to the states of China and South Korea. Such an analysis may help to explain the ambivalence in the identity discourse, deconstructing the binary oppositions and analyzing the power relations underlying the struggles of Korean Chinese.

The above points illustrate the applicability of the postcolonial theory to a case in which the Korean Chinese do not actually identify themselves as colonial subjects of either China or South Korea. I have endeavored to theoretically (re)contextualize Korean Chinese identity in

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 32-33.
[61] Schein, 103.

relation to the similar but conflicting discourses evolved from the colonial legacies in post-colonial nation-states. Moreover, I have justified the necessity of using a postcolonial perspective to examine the inequities, binaries, and hierarchies in these states' nation-building efforts. Continuing the brief discussions of the effects of two versions of adopted orientalism on Korean Chinese, I further discuss the Korean Chinese hybrid identity in the following section.

1.4.2 Hybridity and the Necessity of Historicizing the Korean Chinese Hybrid Identity

In the preface of *Windflower*, the author introduces a "windflower" metaphor to illustrate the oscillating and uprooted identity of the Korean Chinese between two worlds.[62] It demonstrates an ambivalent and floating status, leaving these people "floating" between the two worlds of China and South Korea, which they have become aware of after migrating to South Korea. Their sense of belonging, depicted in the statement, "I belong to both worlds, while at the same time I escape from both worlds," symbolizes their identity as both Korean and Chinese, and simultaneously as neither Korean nor Chinese. The "windflower" metaphor is not an exceptional image found exclusively in the fictional context of one Korean Chinese novelist's writing. It reflects the commonalities in the identity discourse of Korean Chinese, especially of those who had ancestral "homeland" experiences in South Korea. The Korean Chinese individuals in Helene Lee's anthropological work likewise expressed their struggle of ambivalent identity as follows: "We are referred to differently wherever we are … we just feel stuck somewhere in the middle."[63]

These metaphors and expressions show that Korean Chinese identity is much more unstable and conflicted than the seemingly stable identity of being "ethnically/culturally Korean

[62] The preface of *Windflower* is as follows: "I am a windflower floating without direction. I have been moving back and forth, not staying between where the wind is coming from and where the wind is going. I have flown here and there, continuously remembering and forgetting, blaming and missing the other world. I belong to both worlds, while, at the same time, I escape from both worlds. Who am I, the one who has flown all around? I am the wind…" This preface was translated by June Hee Kwon and included in his dissertation. See Kwon, 1.
[63] Helene Lee, 172.

and nationally/politically Chinese" found in earlier literature.[64] Moreover, even though duality and flexibility were recognized in their identities in previous literature, in their discussions the authors have nevertheless problematically reduced Korean Chinese identity to a simple combination of distinct "Chinese" and "Korean" cultural identities.[65] Likewise, an abstract description of Korean Chinese identity as a combination of two identities or as somewhere "in-between" Chinese identity and Korean identity essentializes both identities. In other words, previous researchers have made the problematic inference that there are inherent essences in Korean and Chinese identities and that pure Chinese-ness and Korean-ness exist.

The identity issues of the Korean Chinese in South Korea are closely related to their in-between status and their hybrid identity. However, such hybrid identity should not be understood as a harmonious fusion of two different identities that produces a third, uniform identity; it is instead a complicated process of negotiation, identification, and positioning under the multilayered influences of migration, displacement, and localization throughout history. However, this hybrid identity that characterizes the daily, lived reality of most Korean Chinese is rarely represented in the public domain in either China or South Korea. Earlier discussions about the orientalism adopted in China and South Korea tell us that primordial Chinese-ness discourses regarding Han superiority and South Korean superiority are nothing more than constructions. Moreover, they continue to be consolidated in a hegemonic way, with their proponents ignoring the reality that Chinese and (South) Korean culture and identity are in fact hybridized.

On the other hand, Korean Chinese who were in China and later migrated to South Korea held a shared belief in their ethnic and cultural homogeneity and authenticity as Koreans, and the belief that Han Chinese ethnicity and Korean ethnicity were divergent and incompatible.

[64] Choi, 138; J.W. Kang, 115-116.
[65] Choi, 2011; J.W. Kang, 2008.

Moreover, a tendency to equate Han ethnic identity and Chinese identity was also not uncommon, and this is perhaps attributable to the racial categories that Korean Chinese had adopted under the Japanese colonization of Manchuria. After all, Han Chinese is undoubtedly identified with the Chinese nation, while the same cannot be said decisively of ethnic minorities such as the Korean Chinese in South Korea.[66] Although many scholars have argued that the Korean Chinese (re)identified themselves with the Chinese nation after they migrated to South Korea, this argument should not be understood to indicate that they subsequently neglected their identities as Korean or severed their ethnic relationships with South Koreans. However, as Korean ethnicity served as a transnational "currency,"[67] the Korean Chinese had to forcibly adjust to fit the model of an essentialized Korean identity that had been (re)defined by the South Korean state in order to qualify as co-ethnic transnational laborers.

Therefore, the identity issues and real struggles of the Korean Chinese in South Korea can be understood through their struggle to negotiate a *hybrid* Korean identity (as Korean *Chinese*) and Korean identity (as *South Korean*). The shared misunderstandings regarding a homogenous and pure Korean culture cause both Korean Chinese and South Koreans to see Korean Chinese as not quite South Korean; thus, the Korean Chinese struggle, because they see their hybrid identity as "belonging nowhere" or only "something in-between the two 'authentic' identities." Thus, they are forced to view it as inauthentic and "not quite." In order to better conceptualize and contextualize the hybrid identity of Korean Chinese in this thesis, the concept of hybridity will be discussed in the following paragraph.

Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity is useful for understanding the process of interaction

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[66] Chih-yu Shih, *Negotiating Ethnicity in China: Citizenship as a Response to the State* (London: Routledge, 2002), 4.
[67] Kwon, 10.

and intersection of identities, and the underlying power relations involved in such a process.[68] Bhabha describes hybridity as a "liminal space in-between the designations of identity" and an "interstitial passage between fixed identifications," which "entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy."[69] It is thus in this "interstitial and liminal" space that hybridity rejects all dichotomy, along with the hierarchies created by the colonizer. It does so by blurring or destabilizing the cultural differences that are grounded in differentiation, which the authorities produced to solidify their dominance and supremacy.[70] In this sense, hybridity (along with its associated terms, "in-between-ness" and "third space") is linked to the powerful goal of undermining the assumption that boundaries can be drawn around nationality, ethnicity, and race on the grounds of cultural homogeneity.[71] This hybrid third space, according to Bhabha, is an "ambivalent" site at which "cultural meanings and symbols have no primordial unity or fixity."[72] The Korean Chinese hybrid identity can then be understood as positioned within this space of the "inter," that is, the "cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space."[73] One could then suggest that Korean Chinese people can be simultaneously authentic Koreans *and* authentic Chinese in their own ways,[74] regardless of whether they are in China or in South Korea.

It is appropriate to suggest to Korean Chinese that while their identity is different from that of South Koreans, this does not mean that they are inauthentic Chinese or inauthentic Koreans. However, for Korean Chinese who have been doubly marginalized, this suggestion

[68] Chang-Yau Hoon, "Between Hybridity and Identity: Chineseness as a Cultural Resource in Indonesia," Working Paper Series No. 32 (Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, 2017), accessed February 15, 2018, http://ias.ubd.edu.bn/assets/Files/WORKING.PAPER.SERIES.32.pdf.
[69] Bhabha, 5.
[70] Ibid., 51.
[71] Dirlik, 182.
[72] Bhabha, 54.
[73] Ibid., 56 (emphasis in original).
[74] Amelia L. Schubert, Youngmin Lee, and Hyun-uk Lee, "Reproducing Hybridity in Korea: Conflicting Interpretations of Korean Culture by South Koreans and Ethnic Korean Chinese Marriage Migration," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 21, no. 3 (2015): 246.

seems to overlook their situation. After all, Korean Chinese "hybridity" differs from hybridity in the West. I do not deny the applicability of Bhabha's concept of hybridity to the case of Korean Chinese identity, but I would like to illustrate that we should not overlook the difficulties and marginalities within the hybridity, as distinguished by their socio-historical specificities. In this research, I address the question of how we should understand and address the identity crisis experienced by many Korean Chinese in South Korea who have expressed a sense of marginality and of being "betwixt and between."

Several scholars, including Dirlik, have warned against a celebratory view of hybridity by positing that such hybridity requires an "elitist posture" and that its access is limited to "privileged postcolonial intellectuals located in the West."[75] Moreover, the "'complex hierarchies of power' through which hybridity is constituted and contested" have been glossed over.[76] Dirlik continued that such abstract and celebratory hybridity is also easily appropriated by the "elite of the margins …further erasing the concerns of the truly marginal." Dirlik critically observes that the concept of hybridity in recent years had been universalized in its application in such way, without "being attentive to distinguishing hybridities historically and structurally."[77] As he puts it,

> [Hybridity] is in actuality quite an elusive concept that does not illuminate but rather renders invisible the situations to which it is applied – not by concealing them, but by blurring distinctions among widely different situations…[theorists such as Homi Bhabha] have rendered hybridity (and its associated concepts of third space and in-betweenness) into abstraction with no identifiable locations…they do not intend hybridity or third space in a physical descriptive sense but rather to disrupt the hegemony of social and historical categories and to overcome binary modes of thinking.[78]

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[75] Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 70.
[76] Fabienne Darling-Wolf, "Disturbingly Hybrid or Distressingly Patriarchal? Gender Hybridity in a Global Environment," in *Hybrid Identities: Theoretical and Empirical* Examinations, eds. Keri E. Iyall Smith and Patricia Leavy (Boston: Brill, 2008), 77.
[77] Arif Dirlik. "Bringing History Back In: Of Diasporas, Hybridities, Places, and Histories," in *Postmodernity's Histories: The Past as Legacy and* Project (Lanham: Rowman &Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 183.
[78] Ibid.

Dirlik then suggests a solution to this problem of applying the concept of hybridity in actual human conditions, that is, to "historicize hybridity." He argues that hybridity, taken out of history, also "dehistoricizes the identities that constitute hybridity, which, if it does not necessarily rest on an assumption of purity, nevertheless leaves unquestioned what these identities might be."[79] Dirlik thus reminds us of the importance of grounding the process of hybridization within a socio-historical context to understand the transformations, because these processes occur in an actual condition and are caused by actual influences. Moreover, specifying the socio-historical contexts of the process of hybridization is vital, because the application of the concept of hybridity should not be limited to a "strategically disruptive idea operating at the level of epistemology."[80] Furthermore, by specifying the socio-historical trajectory, the questions that are not answered by Bhabha, such as how the process of hybridization occurs, what form it takes in particular contexts, and what kind of effects it has on specific groups of people, can be answered.

Korean Chinese hybrid identity connotes its own historical trajectory, and Korean Chinese hybrid identity is distinguished from other hybrid identities that are produced in their own concrete historical and structural locations. Grounding the socio-historical context of the hybrid identity of Korean Chinese in South Korea can illustrate the process of the hybridization of the Korean Chinese identity in China and later in South Korea. It can also illuminate the underlying power relations engendering the hybridization. On the other hand, specificities should be noted *within* Korean Chinese communities as well, based upon their socio-historical experiences. Specifically, the Korean Chinese identity should be differentiated between those who had experiences of "return" migration to their ancestral homeland (South Korea) and those

[79] Ibid., 185.
[80] Ibid., 183.

who did not. In other words, the process of the hybridization of their identity should be examined by paying attention to the differences both prior to their migration to South Korea and after their migration. Distinctions should also be considered based on their "social locations." If one does not do so, such hybridity in abstraction would again "disguise social inequality and exploitation by reducing to a state of hybridity all who may be considered 'marginal,' covering up the fact that there is a great deal of difference between different marginalities."[81] Abstracting Korean Chinese hybrid identity would then ironically essentialize it as a singular abstract category, which is the very problem it intended to overcome.

Theoretically, Korean Chinese who have access to a great deal of resources (e.g., wealth, social status, knowledge, and South Korean kinship) can perhaps easily cross the national borders and freely cross the "liminal space,"[82] benefiting from both worlds. For them, hybrid identity becomes a privilege and a currency. In contrast, most Korean Chinese, who were (and still are) the subalterns in the contemporary power structure, did not have access to those privileges in the 1990s (and still do not), and they had to deal with legal barriers and social discrimination. They felt neglected in both societies and unable to fully identify with both national identities, thus feeling "betwixt and between." Their "interstitial" identity then became a burden that impeded their full integration into the dominant discourses, producing their struggles and disillusionment.

Korean Chinese identity has not been monolithic and has not remained static. The history of Korean Chinese, from their displacement from the Korean peninsula under Japanese colonialism to their "return" migration "back" to the Korean peninsula in the 1990s, greatly affected their identity construction and hybridization. Thus, this part of their history will be examined in this thesis as a means of contextualizing the hybridization process of the Korean

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[81] Ibid., 184.
[82] Bhabha, 5.

Chinese identity. The aim is to demonstrate that Korean Chinese hybrid identity has a historical trajectory, and should not be merely defined in relation to the concept of "difference" found in the dominant discourses in both China and South Korea.

The understanding of Korean Chinese hybrid identity in this thesis is inspired by Bhabha's notion of "liminal space" (or interstitial, third space) in-between designated identifications. However, I have to make it clear that the Korean Chinese hybrid identity does not wholly match Bhabha's definition of colonial hybridity, especially in terms of the notion of a strong subjectivity. My justification for this difference is that the dominant essentialist ideology of identity, nationality, "race" and ethnicity remains prominently at play in the nation-states of China and South Korea. This results in mixture and cultural hybridity still being perceived as undesirable and as "contamination, a breach of purity and infringement of 'identity.'"[83] Korean Chinese who migrated to South Korea in 1990s lacked institutions or public forums in which to speak about their experiences. Their voices were thus either ignored or glossed over with "nuanced stories" consisting of "simplified caricatures as scheming social climbers or helpless abused wives."[84] On the other hand, the lack of "transnational" support from their home country, China, and the politically and economically dire situations back in Yanbian worsened their marginalized status in South Korea. This suggests that the Korean Chinese hybrid identity is different from Bhabha's illustration of colonial subjects' hybridity. The Korean Chinese hybrid identity seems to lack a strong subjectivity that can subvert the dominant essentialist discourse of identity in both nation-states. This explanation is also built upon —and in turn provides a clue to understanding—Helene Lee's observation that part of the struggles or identity crisis of Korean Chinese in South Korea was the "puzzlement of defining where exactly hybridity lies,

[83] Ang, 200.
[84] Schubert et al., 233.

particularly in the context of nation-states."[85]

Another cause of their identity crisis is their ignorance of and/or resistance to acknowledgment of their hybrid identity, which represents their lack of subjectivity. This ignorance arises from their belief in an essentialized Korean ethnic identity based on the notion of a "pure" Korean bloodline and kinship, and the consequent belief that all Koreans are ethnically and culturally homogenous. This belief has been protected and consolidated, because the Chinese government has built and essentialized this concept of ethnicity and ethnic categorization around this kind of imagined blood kinship.[86] It thus impedes the assimilation of the Korean Chinese people into the Han Chinese population and their full adoption of Chinese identity.[87] It likewise contributes to the identity crisis of Korean Chinese who faced struggles because of South Koreans accusing them of not being "real" or "authentic" Koreans.

Although Korean Chinese hybrid identity does not exactly equate to Bhabha's examination of colonial hybridity, the concept of "third space" (and its related terms) remains necessary for analyzing and understanding the complex entanglements underlying the hybrid identity of the Korean Chinese. In agreement with Ang's application of hybridity, I use it as a "heuristic device"[88] rather than as a solution to addressing Korean Chinese identity issues. I do not attempt to "describe" Korean Chinese hybrid identity, as such a description would reify it. I endeavor to place emphasis on "historicizing" it and to focus on the historical factors underlying the process of hybridization by tracing the socio-historical changes of Korean Chinese. In other words, the nation-building efforts of China and South Korea, and the underlying "othering" gazes

[85] Helene Lee, 172.
[86] Shih, 76.
[87] Shih has suggested a relation between ethnic minority groups' Chinese identity and their level of identification with the Han Chinese, that is, "the more an ethnic minority identifies with the Chinese nation, the less it probably needs to distinguish the Han from itself" and also that "the Chinese consciousness of a minority is stronger if its members feel less need to make a distinction from the Han." Ibid., 101.
[88] Ang, 17.

towards internal others, which contribute to the hybridization of Korean Chinese identity, are my focus in this research. As an analytical tool and a "deconstructive strategy,"[89] hybridity helps us to transcend binary modes of thinking and question fixed identities and cultural boundaries. To overcome the theoretical limitations, to transcend theory and understand the reality of Korean Chinese, I aim to ground the process of the hybridization of Korean Chinese identity in a historical context. By historicizing Korean Chinese hybridity, I wish to show that hybridity means different things to different groups and peoples at different times. Korean Chinese hybrid identity has not remained unchanged and static. It has been produced and negotiated in a particular socio-historical context under the respective nation-building efforts of China and South Korea.

1.5 Notes on Chapters and the Role of the Novel in this Thesis

1.5.1 Chapter Outline

I describe the socio-historical specificities of Korean Chinese hybrid identity in Chapter 2. This chapter is an exploration of the underlying factors in the nation-building programs of the PRC and South Korea that contributed to the hybridization of Korean Chinese identity. I first discuss the contested status and identity of the Koreans in Manchuria during Japanese colonial rule and in the post-liberation era, in order to provide a historical context for their perception of ethnic superiority, the ethnic animosity between Korean Chinese and Han Chinese, and their dual loyalty to China and Korea. The second part of this chapter examines how the Korean Chinese "seemingly unambiguous" identity was constructed in China. The focus here is on how the Korean Chinese were included and redefined as a Korean ethnic minority, separate from the Korean nation and now nationals in the PRC's framework, as well as how the Korean Chinese

[89] Dirlik, 187.

were at the same time discretely categorized as the "other." I then argue that this othering process can be attributed to the interplay of the CCP's state nationalism, Chinese nationalism,[90] and the internalized "civilizing mission" in the CCP's minority policies. China's historical relation with and gaze towards the Korean peninsula will also be examined to explain the othering of the Korean Chinese in China. This chapter moves on to a discussion of how the South Korean government has designated Korean Chinese as both co-ethnic and otherized as foreign migrant workers in its immigration policies. The South Korean state's redefined nationalism will be discussed, and South Koreans' internalized racist gaze towards non-South Koreans will also be described to support the claim that the state and its people have adopted an othering gaze towards Korean Chinese.

In Chapter 2 I retrace and reconstruct the historical trajectories and circumstances of the Korean Chinese people by examining the interplay of state policy, nationalism, and the historical and ongoing gazes turned to Korean Chinese people within both China and South Korea. In doing so, I address three of the paper's objectives. The first goal, as previously stated, is to respond to Arif Dirlik's call to ground hybridization processes within specific historical contexts in order to understand the Korean Chinese hybrid identity. The second aim is to elaborate on the socio-historical background upon that *Windflower* touches on but does not explain in detail; this information is needed to contextualize the subjectivity and identity negotiation of Korean Chinese individuals in the novel, which is analyzed in the third chapter. Last but not least, this chapter correlates with the main argument, namely that the Korean Chinese hybrid identity and the related identity crisis are the consequence of a double otherizing process, in China and in South Korea.

Rather than looking at merely an external description of the Korean Chinese, Chapter 3

[90] The difference between China's state nationalism and Chinese nationalism is explained in Chapter 2.2.2.

then provides an analysis of the ethnic identity changes and negotiation represented in a fictional narrative written by a Korean Chinese. My analysis of the novel *Windflower* focuses on the change of identity experienced by the various characters in South Korea in order to show how the hybrid identity of Korean Chinese is subjectively expressed and how it is expressed differently by different individuals. The analysis keeps in mind the specific Korean Chinese context. Over and above the double otherizing of the Korean Chinese under the gazes of two nation-states noted in Chapter 2, I also keep in mind differences in class (social status), gender, kinship and individual personal background. This enables me to disentangle the multilayered and ambivalent relationships among Korean Chinese, South Koreans, and Han Chinese, as well as within Korean Chinese society itself. I also explore how the interplay of these aspects affects the characters' ethnic belonging and suffering. My analysis of Korean Chinese women's struggles in South Korea is a response to Spivak's call to listen to the voices of women exploited by multilayered colonial and patriarchal power structures.[91] Lastly, in the concluding chapter, I summarize my findings and specify their implications.

1.5.2 Role of *Windflower* and Purpose of Literary Analysis in this Research

The following is a brief clarification of the use of the novel *Windflower* in this research and the role of literary analysis in Chapter 3 in order to make the purpose of this research clear. I use the novel *Windflower* predominantly because it provides a window into the lives of Korean Chinese. As previously stated, *Windflower* conveys the subjective identity negotiation of Korean Chinese in China and in South Korea, together with the identity crisis of Korean Chinese during their experiences in South Korea in early 1990s. It thus serves as a good example to represent the Korean Chinese experience of being otherized under two dominant gazes. Thus, the purpose of

[91] Gayatri C., Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988): 271-313.

the literary analysis the novel in this thesis is to understand the experience of Korean Chinese, and thus to better illustrate the identity negotiation of Korean Chinese and to critique and expand the understanding of existing literature on the identity discourse of Korean Chinese. Therefore, I use this novel to examine Korean Chinese subjectivity, and more importantly, to give voice to the Korean Chinese perspective, instead of engaging in a standard literary analysis as conducted in the field of literature. In standard literary analysis, the scholar uses the theory and literature to demonstrate how a novel works, while in this research, I intend to use the novel to understand and highlight the actual lived experience of Korean Chinese, to illustrate my main argument, and thus to critique and expand the literature and the theoretical perspective.

The analysis of *Windflower* in Chapter 3 thus offers a view into how one fictional narrative represents the ethnic identity of Korean Chinese through a rhetoric of subjective identity negotiation. My decision to use a novel as a tool to investigate the subjective identity negotiation is partly due to practical barriers to investigating the Korean Chinese ethnic more directly. Firstly, due to Chinese government controls, there is limited scope for public debate about the role and identity of Korean Chinese in the PRC. Secondly, the practical limitations of the department and its resources also factored in the decision of using a novel as a tool instead of conducting the anthropological field work in China and South Korea.

CHAPTER 2. Korean Chinese as Other under Two Gazes: Historicizing Korean Chinese Hybrid Identity

2.1 The Contested Status and Identity of Koreans in Manchuria

2.1.1 Under the Japanese Empire: *Chosŏnin* and Japanese Colonial Subjects

The experiences of Koreans in Manchuria under Japanese colonial rule offer major revelations regarding the contested identity and history of Korean Chinese. Before the Japanese interference in Manchuria, a number of Koreans often crossed the loosely controlled borders in both directions for hunting and farming.[92] However, these Koreans who migrated to the borderland before the period of Japanese influence were either annihilated or assimilated into Manchu society, or, as was more often the case, repatriated to the Korean peninsula.[93] One direct result of the Japanese annexation of Korea was a sudden influx of Korean migrants into Manchuria; most of them settled in the *Kando* (Chinese: *Jiandao*) region, which later became known as Yanbian.[94] Through the colonial Korean government's legal and administrative practices in terms of the membership status of its subjects, the Korean identity in relation to the term *Chosŏn* (the name of the pre-colonial kingdom and the colony itself) was undoubtedly constructed and consolidated.[95] In the meantime, the membership status also included Korean migrants in Japan and Manchuria, making Korean identity effectively independent of one's place

[92] Northeast China (the eastern part of Inner Mongolia and the provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang) has been called "Manchuria" in the West. While most Chinese provinces were established centuries ago and saw few boundary changes, this region, which was historically inhabited by various nomadic peoples, did not have a close connection with China or the Middle Kingdom. Manchus originated in this region, and Mukden (nowadays Shenyang) was their capital city. After the Manchu-formed Qing government moved its court from Mukden to Beijing, it declared its ancestral territories in the Northeast a "sacred homeland" and prohibited any non-Manchu immigration. In addition to protecting the Manchu leaders' sacred origin, the isolation policy ensured a safe retreat if they were to lose China. See Olivier, 13 and 18 and Jaeun Kim, 141.

[93] See Jaeun Kim, 142 and Olivier, 17-19.

[94] Charles Kraus and Adam Cathcart, "Nation, Ethnicity, and the Post-Manchukuo Order in the Sino-Korean Border Region," in *Key Papers on Korea: Essays Celebrating 25 Years of the Centre of Korean Studies, SOAS, University of London,* ed. Andrew David Jackson (Leiden& Boston: Global Oriental, 2014): 82.

[95] Jaeun Kim, 145.

of residence.[96] Thus, Koreans in Manchuria subjectively identified themselves as Korean (*Chosŏnin*) and were identified by others as such, regardless of their place of residence.

Under Japanese colonial rule, the Koreans in Manchuria were trapped in an ambiguous and "unfortunate" status; "though not always innocent," they functioned as "pawns in a larger political contest between China and Japan."[97] For instance, issues such as land ownership were contentious. Chinese farmers and administrators were greatly displeased because they saw Chinese land illegally seized and redistributed to Koreans by the Japanese government, and the Chinese authorities framed Korean peasants as the "tools of Japanese imperialism directed against China."[98]

However, many Korean peasants were, in fact, bitter in Manchuria. For instance, they were constantly driven away from cultivated land that they had reclaimed from the wilderness.[99] Even though the Koreans in Manchuria were permitted dual Japanese-Manchukuoan nationality, with the establishment of the Manchukuo state (1932–1945),[100] the change in the legal status of Koreans in Manchuria did not improve their ambiguous status or mean less adversity. Firstly, the change in the Koreans' legal status was not for their own benefit; rather, it reflected that the Japanese intended to rule Manchuria through advocating a multinational state.[101] Secondly, antagonism between the Koreans and Chinese was ignited as the "Manchukuo regime

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[96] Ibid. The Korean migration to Manchuria under Japanese colonial rule should not be regarded as international migration, even before the establishment of the Manchukuo regime. Rather, it should be viewed from the perspective of internal migration or as migration within the empire. The characteristics of Korean migration to Manchuria as "internal" became much more apparent after Japan consolidated colonial rule over Manchuria by establishing a puppet state, Manchukuo, in 1932. Jaeun Kim, 143.
[97] C.J. Lee, 22.
[98] Kraus and Cathcart, 83-84.
[99] Michael Kim, "The Lost Memories of Empire and the Korean Return from Manchuria, 1945-1950: Conceptualizing Manchuria in Modern Korean History," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 23, no.2 (December 2010): 206.
[100] A puppet state led by the last Qing emperor Pu Yi (1906–1967) but controlled by the Japanese government.
[101] The Han, Japanese, Koreans, Manchu, and Mongols were the five essential components of the multinational Manchukuo state.

appropriate[d] more and more land from Chinese farmers for Korean cultivation."[102] Despite the redistribution of land, the Koreans' struggles intensified because the best lands had been appropriated by the Japanese government, which made the Koreans the "semi-slaves of Japanese landlords."[103] Furthermore, racial hierarchies, in which the Koreans were the "'middlemen' or 'second-ranked citizens' in relation to the Japanese"[104] and which implied that the (Han) Chinese were the "third-class citizens,"[105] exacerbated the ethnic animosity between the Korean and Chinese populations. Moreover, the perceptions of the Koreans in Manchukuo—for example, "we [Koreans] did not treat them [Chinese] like humans at all, because we thought their level of culture was too low"[106]—illustrate how social superiority was determined by the ability to assimilate into the dominant Japanese culture. On the other hand, the discriminatory attitudes of Koreans towards the Chinese people indicate that the Koreans had internalized the Japanese-created social and racial/ethnic hierarchy that determined Korean-Chinese relationships. Moreover, one can see how the Koreans in Manchuria clearly differentiated themselves from Chinese people, who were the later redefined as Han ethnic people (Han Chinese) in the PRC. This background thus constitutes a historical account of the Korean Chinese people's tendency to conflate the culture and identity of Han with the culture and identity of Chinese, as developed under the Japanese colonial rule.

2.1.2 The Post-Liberation Era: Dual Allegiances to Communist China and Korea

The collapse of Japanese colonial rule in 1945 greatly problematized the status of Koreans in Manchuria; they were labeled foreign nationals and collaborators by the Chinese Nationalists (KMT). (Han) Chinese-Korean tensions were inflamed under the KMT, Anger towards the

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[102] Kraus and Cathcart, 84-85.
[103] Michael Kim, 206.
[104] Ibid., 210.
[105] Kraus and Cathcart, 85.
[106] Michael Kim, 210.

Japanese was replaced by antagonism towards the Koreans, whom the Han Chinese called "secondary devils" (*er guizi*), denoting both the Koreans' closeness and inferiority to the "Japanese devils" (*riben guizi*).[107] Despite the tension, mass return migration to the Korean peninsula did not occur due to the control of the Soviets, rumors of chaotic American rule in South Korea, and the potential for war on the Korean peninsula.[108] The dual allegiances towards CCP-led China and North Korea were reflected in the Koreans' alliance with the CCP against the KMT in the Chinese Civil War and their enthusiastic support for the North Korean regime during the Korean War. This dual loyalty was mainly the result of sympathetic and supportive CCP policies towards the Koreans in Yanbian. Examples of this include policies "promoting the renaissance of Korean language and culture" and "redistributing the land" via land reform (1946–1948).[109] The CCP administrator in Yanbian, Chu Dŏk-hae, also played a crucial role in strengthening the communist power and stimulating a "Korean-tinged nationalism" in Yanbian by cooperating and bonding with the neighboring North Korea.[110]

The dual loyalty of the Koreans in Yanbian was not considered a critically problematic issue until the end of the Korean War, as demonstrated by how the CCP took advantage of the Koreans' ambiguous status to secure soldiers. Koreans actively responded to the propaganda of "Resist-America, Help Korea" (*Kangmei yuanchao*) and participated in the Korean War to protect their "motherland" and the brethren from the "American invaders"[111] and to prove their

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[107] Cathcart, 30-31.
[108] Cathcart, 31. Fewer than one-third of the 1.4 million Koreans residing in the Northeast returned to the Korean peninsula. That number includes those Korean independence fighters who were thrilled to construct a new liberated Korea and those who collaborated with the Japanese, either voluntarily or forcibly.
[109] Land reform was crucial in encouraging the trust and loyalty of the Korean masses towards the communist ally. Up to 80% of the Koreans in Yanbian were poor peasants and very few of them had land. Koreans earned their own lands through the reform. See Olivier, 56. The land reform, which successfully turned the Korean population into a firm communist base, was a political movement and class revolution. Active Korean participation also earned them the trust of the CCP and the title of a "revolutionary group." See Kwon, 46.
[110] Cathcart, 26.
[111] They were also told that "American imperialists had invaded Taiwan and were planning to use Taiwan and Korea as spring-boards for the invasion of China." See Olivier, 58.

firm loyalty to the host country.[112]

Korean Chinese perceptions of and responses to this CCP propaganda reveal the ambiguity of Korean Chinese identity, especially in terms of ethnic affinity to the homeland. Firstly, the alliance with the North's regime illustrated that their ethnic affinity to Korea was not determined by their place of origin (in the sense of ancestral origin) in the Korean peninsula; rather, it was politically and ideologically negotiated in exchange for integration into the PRC. Secondly, this example reveals how these Korean Chinese perceived the South Korean regime and people. The Korean War reflected the rivalry between the communist alliance and the capitalist alliance for full control of the Korean peninsula. However, for Korean Chinese, this true aim was effectively disguised by the CCP's propaganda, which exploited their patriotism and empathy towards their homeland and brethren in Korea. The CCP's anti-South Korea propaganda in Yanbian caused the Korean Chinese to believe that their brethren on the Korean peninsula were being tortured by the "traitorous puppets" of the South Korean government, which was supported by "American imperialists."[113]

The Korean War thus reflected an ambiguous dual allegiance of the Korean Chinese to China and Korea: in supporting the North Korean regime, they demonstrated both their ethnic affinity to their Korean homeland and their strong allegiance to the PRC. This is because they participated in the Korean War, not only to protect North Korea from being controlled by the "evil capitalist" (South) Korean regime and from being invaded by "American imperialists," but also to guard the new fatherland of China and secure their position in China.

[112] 65% of the youth in Yanbian who volunteered to go to the front between 1950 and 1951 accounted for almost all of the Korean male youth in that region: In total, 5,000 to 8,000 Koreans joined the Chinese People's Volunteer Corps, and 5,740 Koreans served as support personnel. About 100,000 Koreans in Yanbian volunteered to go to Korea to "make up for the shortage of labor due to the war" and to help with initiatives such as "transportation, airfield and road repair, and other activities." Olivier, 58-59.

[113] Cathcart, 41. The ambiguity in the propaganda also caused the South Korean citizens to believe that the Korean Chinese were to help the enemy state of North Korea and to invade South Korea, illustrating a divergence from how the Korean Chinese perceived their motivations for participating in the Korean War.

2.2 Redefined Ethnicity: Becoming *Chaoxian Zu* of the Chinese Nation under the PRC

2.2.1 Becoming Seemingly Unambiguous: The CCP's Policy towards Korean Chinese

After the Korean War, it was imperative for the party to implement effective policies to strengthen the loyalty of the Korean Chinese. Regional autonomy and the CCP's minority policies, particularly those promoting ethnic language and education, significantly influenced the construction of the Korean Chinese dual identity as "ethnically Korean and nationally Chinese." These Koreans were redefined as the Korean ethnic minority of China. They were included as one of the ethnic minority groups under the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*), which was a newly-formed nation proposed by the CCP.

Mao Zedong (1893–1976) stressed that all ethnic groups were equal, and this stance was reflected in regional autonomy and other policies targeting non-Han ethnic groups in the PRC. He also emphasized equality and respect for religions, culture, and customs among all ethnic groups, along with the importance of preserving minority languages.[114] Moreover, he criticized "Great Han Nationalism" (*Dahan zhuyi*)[115] and asserted that Han chauvinism would be more of a threat than local ethnic chauvinism in regional autonomy.[116] However, this equality was gradually obscured by the "great unity" of the PRC. Any attempts to breach these rights granted by the CCP were regarded as potential risks to Chinese sovereignty and national integration. The minority policies based on the newly constructed Chinese nation were a vital CCP project since "the non-Han [ethnic groups] represented only a small percent of the total population of China (6.1%), but inhabited 60% of the territory in this heavily overpopulated country."[117] Yanbian, as the first area in which regional autonomy based on this minority policy was tested, became highly

[114] J.Y. Lee, 199.
[115] Ibid.
[116] C.J. Lee, 68.
[117] Olivier, 71.

important for the CCP.

By this stage the strong Korean nationalism, which had been previously quite prevalent among Korean nationalists in this region during the Japanese colonial period, had been gradually weakened with the liberation of Korea and the exodus of Korean nationalists.[118] It had once again diminished after the Korean War. What is more, as Park has suggested, the current national boundaries were established after the Korean War, and "[t]he rest of the history of the Korean diasporas since then has been a story of surviving in a foreign land as [a minority group]."[119] Due to these internal and external factors, Koreans in China were redefined as one of the ethnic minority groups that contributed to the revolutionary history of the PRC and, in the meantime, they were distinguished from the Koreans on the Korean peninsula.

The successful adaptation of the Koreans to communist China came to be used an exemplary case for other minorities to examine. The designation of Korean Chinese and Yanbian was propagandized as an outcome of the CCP's successful direction and policies, and the concepts of a "model minority" and a "model regional autonomy" were derived from this eventuality. However, self-government in the Yanbian autonomous region was in fact extremely limited, because all the autonomous governments were required to "obey national and provincial governments" and to "be subjected to other controlling bodies, namely the CCP."[120] Certain Korean cadres and intellectuals complained that the Han Chinese "monopolized the top party positions" in Yanbian, despite the façade of Korean ethnic autonomy.[121]

Nevertheless, due to their previous devotion, the Korean Chinese enjoyed relatively more freedom—at least until 1957 and the subsequent Rectification Movement (1957–1959), and more

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[118] Jeong-Won Park, *The National Identity of a Diaspora: A Comparative Study of the Korean Identity in China, Japan, and Uzbekistan* (PhD. diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, 2005), 67.
[119] Ibid.
[120] J.Y. Lee, 202.
[121] C.J. Lee, 80.

importantly, the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Regional autonomy was genuine between 1952 and 1957, and it was during this period that Yanbian became a model autonomous administrative entity in China.[122] Meanwhile, the Korean Chinese cultural identity flourished thanks to the success of Korean ethnic education, which included instruction on the Korean language and culture.[123] The Korean Chinese felt proud of being Korean and sometimes even radically asserted that their ethnic identity as Koreans was distinct from the Han Chinese culture (*wenhua*).[124] The sense of ethnic superiority of the Korean Chinese was further consolidated during this period, and this strong ethnic consciousness insulated them against the mainstream Han consciousness and assimilating into Han culture and identity. Nevertheless, the strong ethnic consciousness of Korean Chinese during this period should not be understood as a symbol of a weak sense of being Chinese nationals. Ethnic consciousness was not in opposition to Chinese nationalism. Due to the fact that the regional autonomy in Yanbian flourished and Han chauvinism was clearly criticized by the Han CCP leaders, it can be inferred that dual identity as "Koreans of China" was not problematic for the Korean Chinese at this time.

However, this honeymoon did not last long. The achievements in Yanbian were gradually eradicated by subsequent political movements, which entailed the elimination of the "anti-party, anti-socialist, and anti-Han Chinese" local nationalists, as well as substantial assimilation. These movements included the Great Leap Forward (1957–1958) and the Cultural Revolution.[125] Moreover, China's deteriorating political relationship with the Soviets and North Korea intensified the repression characterized by these political campaigns in Yanbian, which shared

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[122] Philip Liddell, "A Border Opening onto Numerous Geopolitical Issues: The Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture," trans. Sebestien Colin, *China Perspectives* 48, 2003, accessed July 8, 2017, https://chinaperspectives.revues.org/385.
[123] J.Y. Lee, 207.
[124] C.J. Lee, 69.
[125] Ibid, 79; Liddel, 2003, pages are not listed in this article.

frontiers with both regimes.[126] Although all Chinese, including the Han, were the victims of the Cultural Revolution, ethnic minorities experienced the "particular indignity of being coerced to renounce most of their [ethnic] identities."[127] During the Cultural Revolution, the state made strong attempts to eradicate the differences between the Han and other groups through cultural assimilation and massive suppression of ethnic minorities. These communities were occasionally persecuted and forcibly "brought to heel."[128]

The Cultural Revolution constituted a significant attack on Korean Chinese identity, especially on their view of the compatibility of ethnic consciousness and sense of being Chinese nationals, which constituted their dual ethnic and national identity. The revolution nearly eradicated the Korean ethnic culture in Yanbian through cultural assimilation and political persecution. The substantial shift from strong ethnic consciousness to a more vigilant ethnic identity, with the assertion of a fully Chinese identity (that is, no different from that of the Han) stemmed from the "national identity education program" (*zuguoguan jiaoyu*)[129] initiated by the Chinese government in 1958. It particularly affected the views of Korean Chinese youths regarding the "home country," which was an integral part of the Korean Chinese identity. Intensive education on national identity imparted the idea that "Korean Chinese were citizens of China…China was their only home country" and demanded that they "break off their national ties to the two Koreas—both North and South."[130] The limited power of the Korean Chinese in governance and legislation in Yanbian, especially after 1957, and the disastrous Cultural

[126] Lidden, 2003. As Lidden has explained, the Sino-Soviet schism in 1959, which also affected Sino-North Korean relationships from 1958 to 1970, turned Yanbian into a highly sensitive region. In fact, during the Cultural Revolution, this zone was fully militarized, and it was dominated by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) with Mao Zedong's nephew at its head. For more information, see Lidden, 2003.
[127] Herberer Thomas, *China and Its National Minorities: Autonomy or Assimilation?* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 17.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Kwon, 47.
[130] Ibid.

Revolution meant that they no longer held an advantageous—or even equal—position as compared to the Han. Rather, Korean Chinese felt they had been segregated, left with marginal land, and prohibited from entering mainstream Han Chinese society.[131]

With the end of the Cultural Revolution, the CCP, led by Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997), began reconstructing the state. Although polices towards ethnic groups became relatively lenient, regional autonomy was limited under CCP control. The legacy of the Cultural Revolution remained. The Law on the Autonomy of Regional Nationalists (1984), which was regarded as "the most far-reaching legislation to date,"[132] was purportedly intended to compensate for the destruction and mistakes of the Cultural Revolution. Nonetheless, it still insisted on the unconditional "power monopoly of the Communist Party."[133] The unity of China and the rule of the Communist Party came at the expense of political self-determination in the autonomous regions. Autonomy was thus merely administrative and did not entail sovereignty. Nevertheless, the recovered autonomy in Yanbian, although limited, helped to secure and again enhance the ethnic consciousness of the Korean Chinese.

China's policies regarding the ethnic minorities after the Cultural Revolution, especially the state's language policy with respect to ethnic minorities, are believed to have facilitated the preservation of the ethnic identity of the Korean Chinese. State-sponsored ethnic language education met the needs of the Koreans in Yanbian, because their language was taught with the specific goal of preserving their Korean identity.[134] It should be noted, however, the state-led language policy regarding ethnic minorities had complex political and cultural implications. The ultimate goal of the ethnic language education program was not to maintain ethnic identity; rather

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[131] Choi, 122.
[132] Herberer, *China and Its National Minorities*, 43
[133] Ibid.
[134] Shih, 168.

was to facilitate ethnic students' adoption of Mandarin,[135] with a gradual and ultimate assimilation into the mainstream Han culture.[136] Thus, the state-sponsored ethnic education also corresponded with the Chinese state's assimilation policy, or its "civilizing" projects (designed to improve "backward" ethnic minorities in the spirit of modernization, led by the Han).[137]

The Chinese government convinced its people that the spread of Mandarin Chinese (*putonghua*) would "remov[e] linguistic barriers to national unity," which justified the prioritization of the Chinese language as a common tool for communication across all ethnic groups.[138] In this sense, ethnic minorities, including the Koreans, whose level of education exceeded that of the Han Chinese in Yanbian,[139] were ultimately required to learn Mandarin and to learn from the "advanced culture, language, and experience" of the Han Chinese.[140] What is interesting is that the Mandarin course in Korean ethnic schools was called the "language of Han" (*hanyu*) rather than that "Chinese national language" (*zhongwen*), a term used more often to introduce the Chinese language to foreign learners. Although the term "language of Han" was more closely aligned with CCP propaganda, in which it was claimed that all ethnic groups were equal, it still reproduced Han chauvinism in culture and language because the "Chinese national language" did, in fact, refer to the "language of Han."

It is thus understandable that many scholarly works on Korean Chinese identity contain the argument that the Korean Chinese developed a dual identity that was culturally Korean, and

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[135] Ethnic children in many cases do not speak Mandarin when they start school; thus, lectures provided in the ethnic language are needed to familiarize them with the values and discourses in the texts. It is helpful for eliminating the ethnic students feeling of repulsion for Mandarin and helpful for them to learn and accept Mandarin at an older age. For this, see Shih, 166-167.
[136] Ibid., 166.
[137] Ibid., 7.
[138] C.J. Lee, 82.
[139] Lidden, 2003.
[140] C.J. Lee, 82.

ideologically and politically Chinese.[141] The identity of the Korean Chinese was strongly politicized as synonymous with Chinese citizenship, while at the same time they were stripped of political ties to the broad Korean nation. However, this dual identity did not imply the possession of two equal and commensurable identities. It implied an antithesis with internalized hierarchies. The complexities of dual identity among the Korean Chinese can be understood as the consequence of the Chinese state's inclusion of Korean Chinese and can be examined through its processes and related policies. Firstly, unambiguous political loyalty to China was a prerequisite for being granted ethnic minority status in China and for securing one's Chinese citizenship. In this sense, the Korean Chinese were required to fully identify with the "Chinese nation" rather than with the broader "Korean nation." The Korean minority was designated as an ethnic group under the Chinese nation, and the government sought to suppress attachments, especially political ones, to the two Koreas. Secondly, the complexities of the state's intent regarding assimilation are evident in the state-led language policy in China with respect to ethnic minorities. Mandarin was used as an "instrument of [the] cultural assimilation" of ethnic minorities, which was connected to the state's modernization project.[142] However, it depended on first teaching the ethnic language, and thus caused a double consciousness among ethnic minorities. Shih has argued that China's ethnic-language policy in the post-Cultural Revolution era should be assessed as a "success," because it facilitated the "coexistence and hybridization of local ethnic identities."[143] However, I see this conclusion as too rash, and as an attempt to generalize the situations of all ethnic minorities. Although I agree and argue that Korean Chinese hybrid identity was formed through their interactions with Han Chinese and through their adoption of Mandarin, I do not see the policy is a successful one, especially in the case of Korean Chinese.

[141] Examples include Woo-gil Choi, 2011, Hong et al., 2013, and J.W. Kang, 2008.
[142] Shih, 165.
[143] Ibid., 180.

The strong ethnic consciousness of Korean Chinese due to the state's permission to preserve the ethnic culture and language, together with a strong sense of ethnic superiority, enabled them to alienate themselves from Han Chinese and further impeded a full assimilation and adoption of Chinese identity. Thus, it would be difficult to conclude that the ethnic-language policy was a successful one, because the ultimate goal of the language policy was (and still is) to eventually assimilate ethnic minorities rather than cultivating a hybrid identity.

Despite their strong ethnic consciousness, the Korean Chinese were quite loyal to China and did not demand political independence, as the Tibetans had done. According to Olivier, one reason for this outcome was that "the socialist system [in China] granted the [Korean Chinese] a feeling of equality and security no competitive capitalist market economy could give a politically and economically dependent minority [group]."[144] However, the great exodus of Korean Chinese to the capitalist South Korea contradicts this view. The "feeling of equality and security" granted by the socialist system has also been challenged by the Chinese government's decision to enter the capitalist market and by internalized ethnic hierarchies. The geopolitical situation of the Korean Chinese, who had been strongly influenced by the communists in the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea, explains their relatively firm loyalty to China. Furthermore, the lack of political support from their external kin in North Korea and South Korea (due to the dire situation in the former and disconnection from the latter) militated against developing a desire to claim political autonomy or mobilize politically to resist the adoption of a Chinese national identity.[145]

Nevertheless, their political loyalty towards China should be not understood as having a strong Chinese consciousness or identity. The potentially weak and unstable Chinese identity can be examined in light of the aforementioned weak identification of the Korean Chinese with the

[144] Olivier, 163.
[145] Enze Han, 65-66.

Han Chinese due to their strong ethnic consciousness and sense of ethnic superiority, because the "Chinese consciousness of a minority is stronger if its members feel less need to make a distinction from the Han."[146] Moreover, a strong ethnic identity often leads to "a sense of crisis or lack of security,"[147] such as in the case of the Korean Chinese, as demonstrated by the desire of many Korean Chinese to go to South Korea in an attempt to "discover an authentic and legitimate form of Korean-ness" and, more importantly, their desire to (re)gain a full sense of belonging through (re)connecting to "a larger consciousness around being Korean."[148] The desire of Korean Chinese to (re)gain a full sense of belonging in South Korea furthermore implies that their previous attempt in China was not successful. The weak and unstable identification of Korean Chinese with the Chinese identity and the implied failure to fully adopt a Chinese identity thus leads to the next question: What are the underlying factors that cause and exacerbate their alienation from the Chinese identity, besides the strong ethnic consciousness and sense of superiority, which in turn reinforce the hybrid (third space) identity of Korean Chinese? To answer this question, it is important to examine the underlying rationale of China's policies, which discretely otherized the Korean Chinese and equated "the others" with inferiority.

2.2.2 China's State Nationalism and the Han Chinese Gaze on Ethnic Minorities

Jeanyoung Lee provided an alternative perspective termed "state nationalism" to examine China's policies towards ethnic minorities. Lee defined this concept, which formed the basis of the state's minority policies, as a newly-formed nationalism developed by the Chinese government in which "Chinese nationalism and factors of historical continuity such as Sinocentrism were combined."[149] He argued that Sinocentrism (*Zhonghua zhuyi*)—or Han

[146] Shih, 101.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Helene Lee, 33.
[149] J.Y. Lee, 16.

Chinese ethnocentrism—had played a key role in the historical continuity of China and likewise had a pivotal effect on China's policy towards its ethnic minorities.[150] He further emphasized that state nationalism and Chinese nationalism were different but strongly connected concepts, and he explained the connotations of both:

> State nationalism is…a nationalism of the communist state of China; [while] Chinese nationalism is a nationalism of the Han Chinese, the majority of the Chinese people, from the latter half of the 19th century. State nationalism is…a nationalism invented by the Communist Party of China to embrace 55 ethnic minorities in the name of the newly defined "Chinese." It is a fictitious concept but has been repeatedly imposed on Chinese society as an ideology by the state propaganda machines…[the] two nationalisms share the goals [of] territorial integrity and national integration…Chinese nationalism is also an invented form of nationalism and [a political form of nationalism], which was developed by intellectuals during the time when the Qing dynasty came under the influence of Western powers in the late 19th century, [with the aim of saving China] from Western powers and from the barbarian Manchu ruler.[151]

Initially, Chinese nationalism was developed with the aim of modernizing China and resisting foreign powers.[152] Chinese thinkers and the Republicans regarded the Qing government as hindering the goal of modernization; thus, anti-Manchu sentiment became another feature of Chinese nationalism. However, in order to build a Chinese state, the Manchu were needed and were thus included in the concept of the modern Chinese nation.[153] Then, the main task in the development of a Chinese nationalism that suited the modern Chinese state was to define who belonged to the Chinese nation.

The Republican leaders, however, had chosen to evade this problem through radical generalization. This took the form of, for example, uniting "all the [non-Han] into a single

[150] Ibid., 20.
[151] Ibid., 17.
[152] Schein's explanation of Han nationalism and Chinese nationalism also helps one to understand the relation between the meaning of Han and Chinese. According to Schein, "Han nationalism was concerned with boundaries between peoples within the shifting territory of the Chinese polity, specifically between the Han and those they designated as 'barbarians,'" while "Chinese nationalism rose in response to incidences of foreign imperialist aggression that prompted a unifying within the physical territory of China against the outside." Schein, 108.
[153] J.Y. Lee, 82.

cultural and political whole" or even arguing that all the inhabitants of China belonged to the "same racial stock."[154] This radical definition also illustrates why the Koreans in Manchuria favored the design of the CCP's new China as a multi-national state rather than the Republican's version. However, this does not mean that the CCP's justification of Chinese nationalism and state nationalism actually reflected equality and identical rights for all the nationalities in China.

The CCP's policy regarding the ethnic minority groups was connected to its "civilizing projects," which radiated from the center to the periphery. These entailed the goal of educating the "backward" ethnic minorities and helping them to successfully adapt to the communist regime. Steven Harrell explained that these civilizing projects were "a kind of interaction" between peoples in which the "civilizing center" interacted with other groups who became "the peripheral," based on "a particular kind of inequality."[155] This inequality, however, differed slightly from that between a military conquer and its subjects. Rather, as Harrell further explained, it "ha[d] its ideological basis in the center's claim to a superior degree of civilization, along with a commitment to raise the peripheral people's civilization to the level of the center, or at least closer to the [superior] center."[156] This civilizing mission was historically connected to Confucianism and its assumption that hierarchies should be established based on the moral values of "culture" or "literary transformation" (*wenhua*).[157] According to that perspective, people's positions relative to the center should be based on their level of culture.

Theoretically, the Confucian project did not entail the assumption that any one group, including the Han, constituted the center.[158] Moreover, being civilized was greatly connected with whether a people had acquired the requisite literary—and hence, moral—knowledge, rather

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[154] Ibid.
[155] Stevan Harrell, "Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers,* ed. Steven Harrell (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995): 4.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid., 8-9.
[158] Ibid., 23.

than race.[159] Thus, this moral scale had become essential for defining who belonged to the "people of the central country" (*zhongguo ren,* also translated as "Chinese people"). This rather broad category had been effective in absorbing the "once-peripheral" peoples as Chinese, as Harrell clarified. Race was irrelevant within the civilizing project of Confucianism; rather, it was legitimized by the ideology. However, this did not mean that all peoples "within the site of the Confucian center" were regarded as "equally capable of being civilized."[160] The distance between the Confucian center and the Confucianized periphery made hierarchies inevitable.

Han-centrism and the idea that the Han were superior were not aggressively instilled by the CCP, at least not to a notable extent. Han chauvinism was not particularly helpful in integrating the non-Han, as demonstrated by the hostile, or at least reluctant, reactions of the ethnic minorities (including Koreans) to the KMT's policy towards them. Moreover, theoretically, the aim of the Communist project was to raise all the peoples to a universal standard of progress or modernity, regardless of historical categorizations of the center and the periphery peoples, rather than to make those of the periphery more like those of the center.[161] Nevertheless, in practice the Communist project contradicted the theory. In the PRC, culture (*wenhua)* was still used as the scale of centrality and Han ethnicity as the actual center. This was inevitable, because the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural Chinese nation was redefined in order to expand the meaning of "Chinese" to include those once-peripheral (barbarian) ethnic minorities in order, in turn, to secure the national integrity and secure the territory of the unified, modern China.

The CCP had classified the population within China's political borders into 56 ethnic

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[159] Ibid., 19.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., 23.

groups using the scale of "more cultured/civilized or less so"[162] in relation to adopting the "better" and more modern culture set by the Han.[163] Thus, hierarchies were again inevitable in the PRC, with the Han as the dominant group and the minorities as the periphery and the "others." Further hierarchies were established among ethnic minorities based on who acted more like the Han. Both civilizing projects, the Communist project and the Confucian project, shared three metaphors for portraying the ethnic minorities as "female," "childlike," and "ancient" periphery peoples.[164] These metaphors served to legitimize Han-centrism and otherize ethnic minorities. Within the civilizing projects, the Han adopted the status of "male," "adult," and "modern" and assumed a politically and morally superior position.[165] For the ethnic minorities, the Han were the culturally advanced ethnicity, one that was father-like, brother-like, and teacher-like. This kind of representation of the ethnic minorities parallels how Western orientalists portray the "East," which Edward Said criticized as Eurocentric orientalism. For the Han in China, the ethnic minorities were the "orient," and Gladney labeled this concept "oriental orientalism."[166] Gladney argued that the relationship between the Han and China's ethnic minorities was similar to that between the majority and the minorities or to that between the first world and the third world. Moreover, he suggested that objectifying minorities in a colorful and romanticized fashion, for example, was essential to the construction of the Han Chinese majority, which was "the very formulation of the Chinese 'nation' itself."[167]

Jeanyoung Lee's accounts of the CCP's Sino-centric state nationalism, Harrell's explanations of the hegemonic Han power granted by the CCP's communist civilizing project, and Gladney's illustration of the "orientalized" ethnic minorities are significant in examining

[162] Ibid., 9.
[163] Ibid., 26.
[164] Ibid., 10-16.
[165] Ibid., 16.
[166] Gladney, 53.
[167] Ibid., 52-53.

China's othering gaze, which is not dissimilar to that of the colonizer on the colonized. The Korean Chinese were not spared this othering gaze, even though they had been acknowledged as the most educationally advanced group. Compared to other aboriginal minority groups in China, they had been historically "cultured" under the influence of Confucianism on the Korean peninsula and relatively more "modernized" following the Japanese colonial rule of Korea and Manchuria. Harrell also pointed out that the Koreans, along with the Han and Manchu, were appraised as superior in the objectifying measurements under the communist project.[168] However, as the Korean Chinese were redefined as an ethnic group under the greater Han-centric Chinese nation, they were hence deemed inferior to the Han. As the Han Chinese historically considered their culture and civilization to be the center of the world, they regarded neighboring tribes and kingdoms as barbarians.[169] Thus, even though the Korean kingdom was highly acculturated by Confucianism, Koreans were still seen as barbarians compared to the "people of the central country" (*zhongguo ren*). They were cultured through Confucianism, but in the discourse of Confucian civilization they were not able to become the center, the *Zhongguo Ren.* Then, under China's communist rule, the Korean Chinese, who were historically "cultured" barbarians to the *Zhongguo Ren,* were deemed inferior to the Han Chinese due to the emergent Han-centrism.

Making Korean Chinese the internal "others" is also evident in the CCP's reconstruction of the historical continuity between China and Korean Chinese by re-historicizing their origin and their experiences in Manchuria. Through systemic re-historicizing and re-presenting Korean Chinese, the CCP attempted to illustrate that becoming Chinese nationals was not only a natural process but also an inevitable one. The re-historicizing of the Korean Chinese origin focused on obscuring their connection with the Korean nation on the Korean peninsula while strengthening

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[168] Stevan Harrell, ""Ethnicity, Local Interests, and the State: Yi Communities in Southwest China," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, no.3 (July 1990): 536.
[169] Herberer, 18.

their "visceral" relationships with the Chinese nation. The 1995 version of the official narrative, *The Dictionary of the History of China's Minorities* (*zhongguo shaoshu minzushi dacidian*), described the Korean Chinese as the descendants of people originally *from China* (who originated in the region of Manchuria) who had temporarily migrated to the Korean peninsula and then returned. Thus, they were distinct from those native to the Korean peninsula.[170] Efforts to re-historicize the Korean Chinese people's relatively recent experiences in Manchuria were further focused on incorporating their revolutionary activities into the CCP's revolutionary history. The official narrative describes the Korean Chinese as "eager participants of CCP's glorious struggle against the four 'anti-'s: anti-imperialism, anti-feudalism, anti-Kuomintang, and anti-America."[171] Furthermore, all official historical narratives on the Korean Chinese armed resistance against the Japanese invariably stress the CCP's leadership and claim that CCP guidance made possible the ultimate victory of the anti-imperialist and anti-Japanese movements.[172] The CCP carefully selected certain historical events to prove its cooperation and eliminated anything related to the conflicts between Koreans and Han Chinese.[173] This process of selective historicizing made the Korean Chinese seem like an internal other and a model ethnic group within the Chinese nation of a group that had been faithful. This influence played a considerable role in establishing the notion that Korean Chinese identity meant "Korean ethnic minority of China."

However, this kind of official historical state narrative is quite problematic for both the Korean Chinese and the broader Korean nation. The narrative not only contradicted Korean Chinese view of their history and their view regarding their ethnic relations with Koreans on the

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[170] Min-Dong Paul Lee, "Contested Narratives: Reclaiming National Identity through Historical Reappropriation among Korean Minorities in China," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 5, no. 1 (Winter, 2005): 103.
[171] Ibid., 107.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.

Korean peninsula, but also challenged the historical and cultural legitimacy of the South Korean state to treat Korean Chinese as co-ethnic nationals. The CCP state's description of the origin of the Korean Chinese suggests that they endeavored to depict the Korean Chinese as an ancient and "viscerally" internal other so that they could be firmly positioned in the discourse of center and periphery. The history of recent Korean Chinese immigration and Korean Chinese experiences in Manchuria, which was not useful in that discourse, has been obscured and evaded. Their history and identity were successfully transformed by the discourse of the PRC and, more importantly, the Korean Chinese were redefined as peripheral, aboriginal other relative to the Han. Their representation as a faithful and model minority also contributed to the perception of the subordinated status of Korean Chinese relative to the hegemonic Han and Communist Party in the PRC.

2.3 "Homeland" Disillusionment and the Re-examination of Identity in South Korea

2.3.1 Dual Status of Korean Chinese: Familial Kin and Foreign Laborers

The opening up of China in the early 1980s and the normalized bilateral relationship between the socialist PRC and capitalist South Korea in 1980s and 1990s provoked a significant exodus of Korean Chinese from Northeast China, especially Yanbian, to South Korea. In Yanbian, the Cultural Revolution had destroyed the Korean Chinese achievements in all sectors that had caused them to be identified as a model minority. The CCP favored the double identity for the Korean Chinese in the hope that they might play a positive role in reconciling the two Koreas.[174] However, opening up Yanbian to (South) Korean influence[175] had a minimal impact in

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[174] Liddell, 2003.

[175] The initiation of reforms and greater openness in Yanbian were marked by Deng Xiaoping's visit to Yanbian in 1983. During the visit, he claimed to favor the "swift and improved building up of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture (*ba Yanbian Chaoxianzu zizhizhou jianshe de geng kuai xie geng haoxie*)." For more information, see Liddell, 2003.

terms of improving the economic situation of the Korean Chinese due to political instability, inadequate foreign investment, and the lack of sufficient infrastructure.[176] The economic slowdown and the widening gap with the Han disappointed the Korean Chinese in Yanbian. Furthermore, they felt their political status within their communities had also declined relative to the Han, and they felt fully dominated by the Han in economic and political terms.[177] Thus, South Korea, the economically prosperous ancestral homeland, became an ideal alternative for Korean Chinese looking to extricate themselves from economic dissatisfaction and their subordinate status.

The connections between the Korean Chinese and South Korea had been severed for decades due to the Korean War, which had turned the two nations into enemies. Then, the Cold War resulted in China and South Korea not recognizing each other as legitimate states.[178] Meanwhile, South Korea also implemented anti-communist policies and prohibited its citizens from connecting with people in communist countries.[179] The South Koreans hatred and fear of communism was intense during this period. China's policy of isolation from the West ended in 1972, and it started to develop bilateral relationships with capitalist countries. Meanwhile, starting in the 1970s, South Korea started to build connections with communist countries that were not hostile to it.[180] Even though hostile attitudes towards ideologically different countries came to an end in both China and South Korea, diplomatic relations between the two were not officially established until 1992. Nevertheless, thanks to the relative easing of tensions in both

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[176] North Korea was severely dissatisfied with the opening of China's economy in 1978. In contrast, the CCP was concerned about the possible collapse of the North Korean regime due to economic difficulties, and this anxiety exacerbated its fear concerning the Yanbian borderland. In turn, political instability and infrastructural shortcomings dragged down economic development. Lidden, 2013.
[177] Changzoo Song, "Brothers Only in Name: The Alienation and Identity Transformation of Korean Chinese Return Migrants in South Korea," in *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective,* ed. Takeyuki Tsuda (Stanford: Stanford University): 286.
[178] PRC was allied with North Korea, while South Korea was allied with Taiwan (Republic of China).
[179] J.Y. Lee, 322.
[180] Ibid., 323.

countries during the 1970s, sporadic correspondence gradually became possible between Korean Chinese and South Koreans through permitted "postal services, family visits, participation in international conferences, and international athletic competitions."[181]

The normalization of correspondence invoked long-repressed nostalgia for South Korea in the Korean Chinese community. This nostalgia was reinforced by both the political and economic adversity facing the Korean Chinese in China and the economic prosperity in South Korea. In the late 1980s, many stories about South Korean economic success were spread by those Korean Chinese who entered South Korea as "family visitors." For example, they portrayed selling Chinese medicine in South Korea as a profitable business, which drove many Korean Chinese to bring Chinese medicine to South Korea as gifts for relatives and items for sale. These stories, which included exaggerated rumors, greatly boosted the enthusiasm of the Korean Chinese for South Korea and reinforced the "Korean dream" in Korean Chinese society.[182]

Travelling to South Korea as family visitors, migrant brides, and foreign laborers enabled these return migrants to experience the ancestral homeland and re-examine their identity. Their tentative dual identity of being ethnically Korean and nationally Chinese, and especially their ethnic Korean identity negotiated in the PRC context, was questioned by the South Koreans as illegitimate. Like many other ethnic "returnees" whose "homecomings" were full of "ambivalent, if not negative experiences,"[183] those of the Korean Chinese in their ethnic homeland of South Korea constituted a bittersweet journey. On the one hand, these experiences stemmed from the discordance between what they had imagined and what they found. On the other hand, they were due to the South Koreans' racist attitudes concerning foreign migrants and the hierarchies in the

[181] Ibid.
[182] Song, 287-289; Lee, *Contested Stories*, 16; Kwon, 68-69.
[183] Takeyuki Tsuda, "Diasporic Return and Migration Studies," in *Diasporic Homecoming: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective,* ed. Takeyuki Tsuda (Stanford: Stanford University): 4.

Korean nation, which were justified by the post-colonial South Korean-centered nationalism. The multiple and ambivalent statuses of Korean Chinese as foreign migrant laborers, co-ethnic non-nationals, Chinese nationals, and communist defenders enabled the South Korean state to effectively include or exclude Korean Chinese at will.

2.3.2 South Korean Nationalism and Immigration Policy towards Co-Ethnics

The boundaries of what was considered "Korean" had been redefined by post-colonial South Korea, which constitutionally self-defined itself as the "sole legitimate successor of the historic Korean polity and the sole representative and custodian of the Korean nation."[184] To compete with the other Korean regime in terms of legitimacy, South Korea took seriously the question of defining what it meant to be an authentic Korean. Thus, an exceptionally rigid and narrow conceptualization of Korean national identity and belongingness emerged in South Korea: "To be 'truly' Korean, one must not only have Korean blood, but must also embody the values, the mores, and the mindset of [South] Korean society."[185] Thus, on the one hand, this definition automatically granted authenticity to pure-blood Koreans born and raised in South Korea, and on the other hand, it gave them the right to decide "who belong to us" and "who is close to us."

Thus, co-ethnic Koreans abroad were made and unmade on the basis of this "innate" authenticity and legitimacy. This is evident in the registration of *Kyop'o* and *Tongp'o*, and in the application of these terms in deciding which co-ethnic Koreans abroad were closer to and less threatening to South Korea.[186] As the South Korean state portrayed itself as the sole custodian of

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[184] Jaeun Kim, 154.

[185] Timothy Lim, "Who is Korean? Migration, Immigration, and the Challenge of Multiculturalism in Homogeneous Societies," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 7, no. 1 (July 2009): 1, accessed December 9, 2016, http://apjjf.org/-Timothy-Lim/3192/article.html.

[186] *Tongp'o* (Korean: 동포; Chinese: 同胞) literally means siblings or people of the same nation or ethnicity, while, *Kyop'o* (Korean: 교포; Chinese:侨胞) refers to people who migrated to other countries and lived there as sojourners. *Tongp'o* places more emphasis on shared blood (ethnicity) and thus has a transnational connotation. *Kyop'o*, however, refers to both shared blood and shared nationality and thus has much narrower implications. Thus, the status of Korean *Kyop'o* is limited to those Koreans who emigrated to other countries from the South Korean state but

the Korean nation and simultaneously controlled the physical homeland, it was in effect defining the boundaries of the nation and deciding how to treat co-ethnic non-nationals abroad who returned to their ancestral homeland.[187] Thus, this boundary could fluctuate based on the ultimate interests of the "center" of the Korean nation, South Korea. This redefined South Korea-centered nationalism provides a useful lens through which to view the socio-historical context of the othering of Korean Chinese in South Korea and of engendering the hybrid identity of Korean Chinese.

South Korean nationalism is closely related to the discourse of Korean ethnic homogeneity, which is a relatively "recent phenomenon," according to Kyung-Koo Han.[188] He further argues that Korean nationalism's incorporation of ethnic homogeneity was not specifically intended to emphasize a sense of purity and biological commonality. Rather, it served to justify the cultural distinctiveness and superiority of the Korean nation and to stress the legitimacy of succession and the continuity of Korean history, especially for the founding leaders of the *Chosŏn* dynasty. It also underscored the view that the "history of Korean political and cultural life" was "as…old as that of China."[189] He thus concludes that Korean ethnic homogeneity—with the founding father of *Kojosŏn, Tan'gun,* the biological father of the Korean nation—was not intended to exclude foreign nations and races or to discriminate against them. It

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excludes colonial-era migrants to China, Russia, and Japan before the establishment of South Korea. Furthermore, North Koreans are also characterized as *Tongp'o* rather than *Kyop'o*. Thus, in the post-colonial South Korean state, the two terms are sometimes quite effective for distinguishing between Koreans with different ideological and political views. Jaeun Kim provided a detailed account of the connotations of these seemingly identical but very different terms. According to Kim, *Kyop'o* officially registers the post-1960s emigrants by emphasizing their emigration as South Korean nationals. Therefore, Koreans in China and the Soviet Union are automatically excluded from *Kyop'o.* She argued that *Tongp'o* had a significant effect in creating bonds between the Korean peninsula and transnational Koreans during the Japanese colonial period, and even the Japanese colonial government utilized this term to expand its domination over Manchuria through the Koreans living in that region at that time. For more information, see Jaeun Kim, 133-164.

[187] John Skrentny et. al., "Defining Nations in Asia and Europe," in *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective,* ed. Takeyuki Tsuda (Stanford: Stanford University): 45.

[188] Kyung-Koo Han, "The Archaeology of the Ethnically Homogeneous Nation-State and Multiculturalism in Korea," *Korea Journal* 47, no. 47 (Winter, 2007): 8-31.

[189] Ibid., 12.

is rather the "cultural distinctiveness and superiority" that was derived from the discourse on ethnic homogeneity that is responsible for the prejudice against foreigners in contemporary South Korean society.

With the disparate geopolitical issues and the advent of multiculturalism in South Korea that resulted from globalization, however, diversity became necessary to securing South Korea's status as the only legitimate Korean nation. The Koreans' strong exclusion of other nations in defining ethnic homogeneity had emerged under Japanese colonial rule with the intention of securing Korean ethnicity and resisting assimilation, particularly against the "racio-ethnic superiority of [the] Japanese."[190] In contrast, this newly constructed Korean nationalism was highly influenced by the Japanese-style nationalism during the period of Japanese colonial rule. Japanese-style nationalism resembled German nationalism and was based on the idea of ethnic homogeneity, emphasizing common blood, as well as a shared language and culture.[191] With the end of Korean War, the sense of exclusion grew substantially clearer and stronger. Korean nationalism was split based on ideology, and both the North and South started to exclude each other. Furthermore, both states began to competitively include and exclude the co-ethnics abroad based on the ideology of the host countries. The anti-communist cultural and political environment, the so-called "Red complex," was nurtured by the South Korean political leaders. The disconnection with those Koreans residing in communist countries, such as North Korea, China, and Russia, and the endless governmental propaganda about the "evil" communists considerably increased the South Koreans' fear and disgust of communism.

During the 1980s, South Korea witnessed economic prosperity. A new kind of nationalism developed that was centered on economic success, which Kyung-Koo Han calls

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[190] Sonia Ryang, "Resident Koreans in Japan," in *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin,* ed. Sonia Ryang (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3.
[191] Kyung-Koo Han, 23.

“commercialized nationalism.”[192] On the one hand, pride in national economic success, the 1988 Seoul Olympics, and achievements in democracy became an integral part of the South Korean national identity. On the other hand, these accomplishments further alienated the Korean Chinese from this new South Korean national identity, since they were both co-ethnic *non-nationals* and nationals of the communist and underdeveloped PRC.

To resolve the shortage of unskilled labor in the late 1980s, the South Korean government started to embrace foreign laborers through state regulations, especially in its immigration policy. Korean co-ethnics abroad were favored due to the perception that they would easily integrate due to a shared ethnicity and language, and an assumed cultural affinity. Moreover, the South Korean government believed that these Koreans would be less of a threat to ethnic homogeneity in South Korea because the Korean co-ethnics were racially no different from South Koreans. However, to embrace them without disputing South Korean nationalism, the immigration policy arbitrarily included and excluded these Korean co-ethnics on the basis of their host lands. Thus, hierarchies based on the economic development, level of democracy, and more importantly, political system of these co-ethnics’ host countries were constructed within South Korea.[193] Korean Chinese from the communist and less economically developed China safely fitted into the category of the subaltern group that could do the so-called dirty, difficult, and dangerous (3-D) jobs. Moreover, the double status of Korean Chinese as both fellow Koreans and foreigners meant that the South Korean policymakers preferred them to non-co-ethnic foreign labor migrants. This is because they presumed that Korean Chinese would integrate into South Korea’s homogenous society more easily than their non-co-ethnic counterparts. Moreover, the Korean Chinese would further strengthen South Korean society by reinforcing its hierarchy of ethnically Korean people.

[192] Ibid., 26.
[193] Seol and Skrentny, 152.

The South Korean "civilizing" project for Korean Chinese is demonstrated by the South Korean Industrial Technical Training Programme (ITTP). This was an immigration initiative in which the majority of the Korean Chinese migrants participated. The ITTP was specifically designed to integrate low-skilled foreign laborers into 3-D jobs, and it was originally limited to Korean companies doing business with overseas corporations. However, it started to target mainly Korean Chinese, and participating in this program was a way to resolve illegal status due to a visa overstay. Although it did not initially target Korean Chinese, their need "to be civilized" fitted with the conception of the migrant working class in South Korean society. They were not necessarily required to be assimilated to become South Korean. The Korean Chinese needed to be "partially" civilized to meet the needs of the job market rather than being transformed into real South Koreans. This way they could serve as a subaltern working class that did not disturb the post-colonial South Korean nationalism.

The alienation of the Korean Chinese from South Korean nationhood and their status as subaltern co-ethnics were reflected in the Immigration and Legal Status of Co-ethnics Abroad Act of 1999, which the South Korean government introduced to attract foreign investment. In the hope of commercializing the ethnic affinity of co-ethnics, the South Korean government legally expanded the boundaries of nationhood and included co-ethnics in the subcategory of "co-ethnics with foreign citizenship."[194] However, there were controversies regarding when one needed to have emigrated from the Korean peninsula to legally fall within this category. The decision to use the founding year of the South Korean state as the threshold excluded Korean Chinese from enjoying the preferential rights of co-ethnics.

The double identity of Korean Chinese as communist Chinese nationals and a Korean ethnic minority with capitalist kin in the South Korean state also explains their exclusion from

[194] Jaeun Kim, 153.

the Act of 1999. China feared losing the loyalty of its own citizens and was anxious that the growing ethnic affinity of the Korean Chinese for their ethnic homeland would lead to an independence movement in Yanbian. It thus opposed the above Act. Meanwhile, several South Korean government officials were aware that including Korean Chinese in the Act might offend China, which could have had economic repercussions. Others feared the unexpected influx of the "communist" influence on South Korean society.[195] Thus, the double identity of the Korean Chinese became a source of leverage in the bilateral relations between South Korea and China. Meanwhile, the Korean Chinese suffered due to the oppressive criteria established by both states. Although legal discrimination against Korean Chinese eased due to the revision of the Act in 2002,[196] social discrimination remains a continuing problem.

Sang-bok Ha's assertion that South Koreans' "internalized racism"[197] against non-white people from less economically developed countries contributes to the argument of the othering gaze of South Korean over the Korean Chinese. Ha explains that this internalized racism was nurtured by the influence of Japanese colonialism and Western imperialism, and developed by its imitation of the former colonizers after its economic success.[198] He argues that the "coloniality of being and knowledge" has never left the Korean peninsula, even though the era of colonialism and imperialism has ended. Kyung-Koo Han supports this idea, pointing out that the legacy of Japanese colonialism and imperialism is evident in the nationalism of the South Korean national

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[195] J.Y. Lee, 1999, 368; Seol and Skrentny, 157; Jaeun Kim, 154.

[196] The revision only eased discrimination against the Korean Chinese on the surface. In practice, legal discrimination still remains in effect, and this was confirmed in 2004 by a new type of visa (F-4) for "overseas ethnic Koreans." This visa excludes those seeking low-skill positions. In contrast, the category of "ethnic Korean" was revised and expanded to encompass colonial-era migrants. For more information, see Seol and Skrentny, 158. These revisions nonetheless served to exclude the Korean Chinese in South Korea, most of whom were employed in low-skill jobs. Thus, including them in the category of "ethnic Korean" was seemingly an insult, as the skill requirement essentially prohibited most Korean Chinese from holding the status of "ethnic Korean."

[197] Sang-bok Ha, "Hwangsaek p'ibu, paeksaek kamyŏn han'guk-ŭi naemyŏnhwadoen injongjuŭi-ŭi yŏksajŏk koch'algwa tamunhwajuŭi (Yellow Skin, White Masks: A Historical Consideration of Internalized Racism and Multiculturalism in South Korea)," *Inmun Kwahak Yŏn'gu (Journal of Humanities)* 33, no.6 (2012): 525-556.

[198] Ibid., 535.

leaders who took over the position of the former colonizer.[199] Moreover, South Korea's smooth transition from Japanese colonialism to American protectorate lacked the definitive victory of a native anti-colonial struggle, thereby ensuring the adoption of Western-style modernization without critical reflection.[200]

Ha has also argues that the South Koreans' internalized racism is closely related to the racial inferiority complex of Koreans in relation to the Japanese and the "superior" Westerners who represent the more civilized and modern races.[201] Meanwhile, their admiration of the white race grew out of their attempt to fight the Japanese, who seemed "whiter" than the Koreans but who still represented an inferior non-white for the white Westerners.[202] The racial inferiority complex regarding the Japanese mainly emerged due to South Korean admiration for Japanese achievements in modernization and civilization. Japan's "whiteness" was internalized by the Koreans in the discourse of Japanese colonialism over Korea. Thus, the Koreans developed an internalized racial hierarchy based on the following understanding of whiteness: The "yellow" race is inferior to the "white" race but is fundamentally superior to the "black" race due to being more civilized, and thus, closer to the "white" race.[203]

2.3.3 The South Korean's Internalized Racism and their Gaze on Korean Chinese

The internalized whiteness of South Korea developed alongside the country's perceived economic and democratic superiority relative to other underdeveloped non-white nations and countries. This economic superiority, supported by the South Korean sense of cultural distinctiveness and superiority, legitimatized their othering gaze towards non-white foreign migrant laborers and even co-ethnic non-nationals. In this sense, Korean Chinese, as non-white,

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[199] Kyung-Koo Han, 25.
[200] Schubert et al., 245.
[201] Ha, 542.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.

foreign migrant laborers and as non-South Korean Koreans were otherized and positioned as inferior to the South Korean.

On the other hand, the South Koreans' attitudes towards China also affected how they regarded the Korean Chinese. Historically, those living on the Korean peninsula regarded China (*Zhongguo*), the "center of civilization," as superior. However, their attitude to China changed when it was occupied by the Manchu, whom the Koreans regarded as barbarians. Besides, the Koreans' sense of superiority and discriminatory attitudes towards the Han Chinese in particular were influenced by the Japanese colonial rule in Manchukuo; during this period, the Koreans typically enjoyed a higher status than the Han Chinese. The argument between the Koreans and the Han over which ethnicity was superior was frequently raised by both groups in Korean Chinese-dominated areas. For example, the Korean Chinese in Yanbian aggressively asserted that the Korean ethnicity was superior to that of the Han in that region.[204]

Whether this ethnic/racial discrimination against the Han Chinese influenced the South Koreans' view of the Chinese in general is not particularly clear, because the frequently used pejorative term for Chinese, *Toenom*, was initially a word describing the Manchu, not the Chinese in general or the Han Chinese in particular. However, what is quite clear is that the negative reification of the "Chinese," such as *Toenom*, serves to obscure the differences within the Chinese nation and to homogenize it. Thus, for South Koreans, it does not seem to matter whether or not the term is specifically referring to one ethnic group in China, especially when it is used in a pejorative and discriminatory sense, due to the perception that the Korean nation is superior. Furthermore, South Korea's othering gaze towards China is the result of South Korea imitating the West (and especially the United States) in viewing China as backward, primitive, and uncivilized. South Korea's Red complex also contributed to its disgust towards China. In this

[204] C.J. Lee, 80.

sense, Korean Chinese, as an ethnic group from the economically and democratically under-developed communist China, also become *Toenom* for South Koreans. Ironically, the Korean Chinese, who also use this term to express their scorn for the Han Chinese, would not agree with this "misuse" of that term. Nevertheless, the complicated internalized ethnic/racial hierarchies suggest that the Korean Chinese experience double oppression under the two dominant gazes of the Han Chinese and South Koreans.

2.4 Conclusion: Fluctuating "Third Space" and Korean Chinese Hybrid Identity

In this chapter the factors leading to the othering gazes of China and South Korea towards the Korean Chinese were explored. The manner in which the Korean Chinese became the internal other in the discourses of those two states was also examined. The two othering gazes toward the Korean Chinese are highly connected to the two states' perceptions of their own superiority. China, which the Han Chinese regarded as the "civilizing center" in accordance with the Confucian worldview, historically regarded the Koreans and the Korean peninsula as the "peripheral" and the "other." The South Korean state, on the other hand, viewed the PRC as a communist other and an underdeveloped country. Thus, when these two gazes encounter Korean Chinese "return" migrants, they trigger an identity crisis. This discussion raises the question of why this identity crisis emerged or became especially apparent upon their "return" to the ancestral homeland of South Korea. Some scholars have suggested that the negative homeland experiences led many Korean Chinese to renew their loyalty to China,[205] even though they had also faced discrimination in that state. The following reasons have been put forward in support of this view: Firstly, although the Korean Chinese, who were mostly from the Korean-dominated Yanbian region, suffered discrimination and persecution in their adopted land, China, they may

[205] Hong et al., 43; Song, 299.

have been able to overcome this adversity via the inherited perception that Koreans were essentially superior to the Han and that their culture and identity were distinct from those of Han. This view might have provided them with an alternative in their communities. However, their pride in being Korean came under attack in South Korea, where they were discriminated against as inauthentic Koreans or as Chinese. As there was no alternative for them in that circumstance; thus, the identity crisis became more pronounced than it had been previously. Their renewed political loyalty towards China can then be understood as part of their continuing quest for belonging and full identity in order to overcome their struggle with their hybrid identity, which is positioned in a liminal space in which they are neither (South) Korean nor (Han) Chinese.

The Korean Chinese hybrid identity was negotiated in Yanbian under the othering gaze of the Chinese state and Han Chinese. They were the others in the "civilizing" projects and also the inferior other to the Han Chinese. This third-space hybrid identity was reinforced by their strong ethnic consciousness, which impeded their full identification with the Chinese nation and preserved their awareness of their identity as ethnic Koreans. Moreover, their own sense of Korean ethnic superiority and their recognition of Han chauvinism around them hindered their full adoption of a Chinese identity. The Korean Chinese are citizens of China. They were considered a model minority, politically loyal to China and well integrated into Chinese society, because they showed a desire for assimilation by learning Mandarin and adopting Han Chinese culture in order to prepare themselves for upward social mobility in China. However, as long as the othering gaze is implemented in China and the Korean Chinese ethnic consciousness subsists, the Korean Chinese will continue to be "almost Chinese, but not quite,"[206] and their identity will continue to be located in the liminal space between Korean ethnic and Chinese national identities, in both a homogeneous and an essentialized sense.

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[206] Bhabha, 122.

On the other hand, the “return” migration of some Korean Chinese to South Korea led to an unexpected awakening. The othering gaze of the South Koreans due to that state’s narrowly defined nationalism, hierarchical nationhood, and the South Korean people’s internalized racism contributed to making Korean Chinese “almost Korean, but not quite.”[207] Because they were not fully Chinese and not fully (South) Korean, they experienced a particular “in-between-ness,” located in a liminal space in-between essentialized Chinese national identity and (South) Korean national identity. Korean Chinese “return” migrants in 1990s were doubly otherized people in China and South Korea. Under the gazes of China and South Korea, they felt inauthentic in both states, and this doubly marginalized feeling suggests the “betwixt and between” subjectivity of the Korean Chinese. Thus, their hybrid identity was formed and developed in particular historical events, under specific dominant discourses and gazes, and it has been transformed within specific socio-historical contexts, namely in Manchuria, in the PRC and then in South Korea upon their “return” migration in the 1990s.

[207] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3. Betwixt and Between: Korean Chinese Identities in Hŏ Ryŏnsun's *Windflower*

This chapter comprises an analysis of the novel *Windflower*, which was written by a Korean Chinese author to depict how the Korean Chinese negotiated their identity in South Korea. I use *Windflower* instrumentally, to demonstrate how one fictional narrative represents the identity struggle of the Korean Chinese through the rhetoric of subjective identity negotiation. In this way I endeavor to give a voice to the Korean Chinese themselves, in order to reveal how they subjectively experience their ethnic identity crisis and how at least some individuals might have dealt with it.

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the plot of *Windflower*. It outlines the protagonist Hong Chi-ha's recollections of his father Hong Pŏm-san's life as a first-generation Korean Chinese. This material sheds light on Hong Chi-ha's family background and elaborates on how Pŏm-san's experiences influenced Hong Chi-ha as a second-generation Korean Chinese. Furthermore, it indicates why the son feels nostalgic about South Korea. Connecting these personal recollections to the historical events described in the previous chapter again reveals the complexity and multiple faces of the experiences and identities of the Korean Chinese. The analysis then focuses on the second-generation Hong Chi-ha's experiences in China and his encounters with South Korean people as a "returning" Korean and a foreign migrant worker. Insight into the experiences and struggles of other Korean Chinese is subsequently provided to illustrate that the marginalized status is reinforced by social categorization, such as the class and gender of Korean Chinese. By examining their journey in China and South Korea, I endeavor to offer some insight into the Korean Chinese experiences of being the "neither/nor."

3.1 A Brief Plot Summary

Windflower outlines the "return" migration of a second-generation Korean Chinese to South Korea and supplements that description with flashbacks that reveal the character's experiences back in China. It tells the stories of several Korean Chinese characters and their experiences of identity crisis in South Korea. The novel is held together by the protagonist Hong Chi-ha, a second-generation Korean Chinese and a writer in China. Influenced by his father, Hong Chi-ha has desired to "return" to the ancestral homeland since childhood. Later, with the assistance of his Korean Chinese friend, who is already living in South Korea as an illegal migrant worker, Hong Chi-ha leaves for South Korea to honor his father's deathbed wish, namely that he reconnects with his long-lost family in South Korea and buries his father's ashes in that country. Luckily, Hong Chi-ha soon finds his father's family (Hong Chi-ha's stepmother and half-brother) there. However, they remain highly guarded towards Hong Chi-ha and exhibit reluctance to believe Hong Chi-ha is their relative. Hong Chi-ha is annoyed by their indifferent attitude and disrespect towards himself and his dead father. Later, he learns that the reason for their reluctance was that they did not want to share their inheritance from Hong Chi-ha's grandfather with him, a Korean Chinese man. Greatly disappointed, Hong Chi-ha gives up on these family ties and decides to return to China after burying his father's ashes in his hometown in South Korea.

The storyline develops by depicting the challenges facing Korean Chinese migrant laborers as vulnerable illegal workers exposed to exploitation. Chi-ha witnesses a crowd of Korean Chinese in a subway station and develops a mixed feeling of "shame and sympathy" towards these Korean Chinese migrant workers in South Korea. That conflict is also evident in his interactions with his Korean Chinese friends, all of whom are illegal migrant laborers in South Korea. The story further portrays his encounter with a South Korean journalist and his

conflicts with a South Korean employer and South Korean coworker on a fishing boat in Pusan. The novel ends with Chi-ha's decision of return to his birthplace in China due to his great dismay at South Korea, which he had believed was his ancestral "homeland."

3.2. First-Generation Korean Chinese Hong Pŏm-san's Journey of Being in Diaspora

In 1944, to meet wartime needs, the Japanese colonial government enforced universal conscription for Korean males. The protagonist's father, Hong Pŏm-san, was one of the Korean males drafted into the Japanese imperial military. He was forced to leave his homeland and relocate to Manchuria in 1944. With the end of Japanese rule in Manchuria and Korea in 1945, Hong Pŏm-san, who was among the approximately 1.3 million Koreans remaining in Northeast China,[208] found himself unable to return to the Korean peninsula. Due to his official status as a Japanese colonial subject, he feared repatriation to Japan rather than to his homeland, *Kyŏngsangbuk-to* Province in Korea. His fear stemmed from the fact that the Chinese government was sending the entire Japanese army, except for leading war criminals and their families, back to Japan after Japan's surrender in 1945. Hong Pŏm-san was a Japanese collaborator, even though he had not joined the army voluntarily. His anxiety could also have been due to China's political retribution against collaborationist Koreans;[209] despite being forcibly drafted, Hong Pŏm-san could still have been regarded as a collaborator to be persecuted.[210] Thus, he decided to escape from the prisoner-of-war camp, hide deep in the mountains and wait for the appropriate time to return to Korea.

However, his plan was interrupted by an unexpected illness. After his recovery, he

[208] Jaeun Kim, 142.
[209] Cathcart, 30.
[210] After Japan's defeat in 1945, "the Chinese began to engage in active retribution, causing a sudden exodus of Koreans seeking to return to their ancestral homeland." See Kraus and Cathcart, 87.

discovered that the railway to the South had already been cut off due to the ceasefire. He thus had to remain in China. To conceal his inglorious relations with the Japanese imperial military and to avoid political attack in China, Hong Pŏm-san changed his name, which had originally been Hong Hŭi-jun (336). Hong Pŏm-san's lifelong wish to return to the homeland was never realized because correspondence with South Korea was impossible until the late 1980s. Hong Pŏm-san's unfulfilled desire became the motive for his son Hong Chi-ha to take up the journey to South Korea in search of his home and family.

Although *Windflower* does not illustrate how Hong Pŏm-san, as a first-generation Korean Chinese, adapted to his host country, the newly-constructed the PRC, that process did not diminish his desire for his father's homeland (*kohyang*). This is clear when Hong Chi-ha recalls the final words of his father:

> "I miss my homeland…I wish I could return to my homeland and just lie there peacefully…" His [Hong Pŏm-san] eyes were not closed when he died. How could he close his eyes without seeing his homeland again?"[211]

Hong Pŏm-san's yearning for his homeland influenced Hong Chi-ha, who was born in the PRC, where Korean Chinese were legally acknowledged as Chinese citizens. They were no longer the contested people or internationalists who could freely cross the "vague geopolitical frontier" between China and (North) Korea.[212] As a second-generation Korean Chinese, Hong Chi-ha did not have any substantial contact with his father's country of origin, which became the state of South Korea. However, it was this prolonged separation from the ancestral homeland that drove his father Hong Pŏm-san, a first-generation Korean Chinese, to maintain a positive and nostalgic perception of the homeland. These positive but static memories were embellished with imaginary

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[211] Hŏ (34). All translations from *Windflower* are mine unless otherwise indicated. From this point onwards, the corresponding page number follows in parentheses after each quotation from *Windflower*.
[212] Olivier, 60.

details over time and greatly influenced the identity of the second-generation Korean Chinese. For second- and third-generation Korean Chinese, China was the natal homeland, and Korea[213] was the ethnic or ancestral homeland one could visit through the memories of parents and grandparents. Ang has pointed out what links the diaspora with the homeland is "ultimately an emotional, almost visceral attachment."[214] For Korean Chinese, the homeland is not simply a geographical place of birth; rather, the concept also encompasses the cultural and national meaning of Korea. Therefore, for Korean Chinese, the term "homeland" generally does not have the meaning of "hometown," but refers to the great motherland or fatherland.

3.3 Hong Chi-ha's Experiences as a Second-Generation Korean Chinese

3.3.1 Feeling "Homeless at Home" In China

To fulfill his father's lifelong wish to return to his homeland and search for his long-lost family, protagonist Hong Chi-ha leaves his hometown in Yanbian China for South Korea. His visit to South Korea symbolically implies "returning to the ancestral homeland." His father, Hong Pŏm-san, like many other first-generation Koreans who were relocated to Northeastern China, continued to hope for an "eventual homecoming to Korea."[215] Hong Pŏm-san remembered Korea as a "bucolic"[216] land and the hope of one day returning helped him endure hardships during the political turmoil in China. As Hong Chi-ha recalls, "'hometown/homeland (*kohyang*) meant everything for my father…He could not forget all the chestnut trees, narrow paths, clear streams,

[213] Here, Korea does not refer to either South or North Korea. As Korean Chinese were colonial-era migrants, neither of the two post-colonial states in the Korean peninsula was their home country.
[214] Ang, 32.
[215] Ryang, "Resident Koreans in Japan," 5.
[216] Hŏ (34). The term "bucolic" is borrowed from Chin-gu Kang. He argued that members of a diaspora remember or imagine the homeland differently. For those who suffered from discrimination and oppression in the host land, the homeland is usually reproduced and represented as a "peaceful" and "bucolic" land, thereby providing them with an emotional anchor. Kang added that the "bucolic" image also appears in Korean Russian (*Koryŏin*) literature. See Chin-gu Kang, "Moguk ch'ehŏmi Chosŏnjok chŏngch'esŏnge mich'in yŏngyang yŏn'gu: Hŏ Ryŏnsunŭi paramkkodŭl chungsimŭro (The Influence of 'homeland' experience on Korean Chinese identity: focusing on Hŏ Ryŏn-sun's 'Windflower,'" *Tamunhwa k'ont'ench'ŭ yŏn'gu (Journal of Multi-Cultural Contents Studies)* 7, no. 2 (2009): 110.

and weedy backyards in his hometown…He was beaten day and night during the Cultural Revolution…His yearning for 'home' did not stop until he was beaten to death'" (34). On the one hand, Hong Chi-ha cannot fully understand why his father was so obsessed with his homeland his entire life because he believes it was the father's connection with the homeland (South Korea) that caused both of them to struggle during the Cultural Revolution.[217] The father's "bucolic homeland" is a burden for Hong Chi-ha.

On the other hand, the discrimination and suffering he experienced in his country of birth makes Hong Chi-ha feel that he does not fully belong there. Hong Chi-ha begins to realize that even though he was born in China and lives in that country, he is not "from" there.[218] He feels that his family has been under the surveillance of the dominant Han Chinese and the Chinese government for calling Korea the fatherland.[219] In school, to avoid punishment due to his background, Chi-ha engages in a type of camouflage by hiding his affiliation with (South) Korea and being as unobtrusive as possible. The fear of being noticed and criticized as a "South Korean spy" like his father haunts him and causes him to keep a low profile in school. However, his background is already an open secret: "The children at school stay away from Hong Chi-ha as if he were a patient with contagious diseases. Whoever plays with him is ostracized as well" (46). All of his classmates dissociate themselves from him to avoid being isolated in the same way.

Interestingly, it is the collective physical and mental violence he endured during the

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[217] During the Cultural Revolution, Hong Chi-ha's father was accused of being a spy and was mentally and physically punished for calling South Korea his homeland and for serving in the Japanese military (34). For this reason, Hong Chi-ha was marked as the "son of a spy" and often bullied and ostracized at school (45-46).

[218] Ang argued that relation between "where one is from" and "where one is located" is quite problematic for diaspora groups. In other words, for diaspora groups, a tension also exists between two points of anchorage: the place of *origin* and the *host* land. It is the question of where one is from that prevents a member of a diaspora's complete integration in the host land. Ang, 29-30.

[219] As mentioned in previous chapters, the Korean Chinese faced a difficult situation during the Cultural Revolution. Korean ethnic nationalism, and even Korean ethnicity itself, made one a target for persecution. In 1968, even the official leader of Yanbian, Chu Dŏkhae (Zhu Dehai), was denounced. He was accused of supporting the staging of traditional Korean p'ansori dramas, such as Ch'unhyangchŏn and Simch'ŏngchŏn, to promote the idea that Koreans have more than one fatherland and that Korean culture should be appreciated and spread among the Korean Chinese. See Olivier, 148.

Cultural Revolution, triggered by the radical goal of the "complete assimilation of the non-Han [ethnic minorities] into the mainstream of Han society,"[220] that reminds Hong Chi-ha that he is not native to China, despite having been born and raised there. This reminder may also be what triggers his doubt regarding whether assimilation into Chinese society is either possible or advisable as an ethnic Korean. Likewise, it might be what causes Hong Chi-ha to hold abstract and antithetical views of Korean-ness and Chinese-ness and to perceive the two as incompatible.[221] On the other hand, his one-dimensional understanding reveals that he also perceives Chinese-ness as synonymous with Han Chinese-ness. Nevertheless, his perceptions seem significantly affected by the political attempts to eradicate all the differences between Han and non-Han.

He feels "homeless at home" in China, which becomes evident when he begins looking back on his father's homeland and identifying it as his own homeland. The dying words of his father[222] evoke a sudden nostalgic feeling for Korea in Hong Chi-ha, making him ponder what a "homeland" would feel like: "'Ah! Homeland! Would it feel like a peaceful bed or a mother's embrace?'" (34). Influenced by his father's strong affinity for Korea and his own experience of aggressive marginalization in his natal homeland (China), Hong Chi-ha begins viewing Korea as a place of comfort and belonging. At the same time, an idealized notion of Korean-ness starts to take root in his mind.

Hong Chi-ha's desire for homeland continues throughout his life in China. For example, he becomes a writer and expresses his nostalgia through writing.[223] He publishes a short novel titled *Roots*, portraying the journey of a Korean Chinese writer in search of his grandfather in

[220] Olivier, 145-46.
[221] It is especially apparent in the early stage of his visit to South Korea, which is analyzed in detail later in this chapter.
[222] "I miss my homeland so much…how nice it would be if I were peacefully lying there…" (34).
[223] As stated in Chapter 1, themes such as "pursuit of self" were readopted in Korean Chinese literature after the Cultural Revolution.

South Korea (72). His friend Ch'oe In-gyu sends him an invitation letter from South Korea,[224] permitting Hong Chi-ha to finally "return" to his ancestral homeland.

Other details of Hong Chi-ha's life in China beyond his occupation as a writer are disclosed via a flashback. The reader learns that Hong Chi-ha was jailed for three years in Yanbian before coming to South Korea, and the story later reveals that he confessed to a crime committed by his friend Ch'oe In-gyu's.[225] The three-year jail term and an unexpected affair between his wife, Ko Ae-ja, and a South Korean man end up tearing his family apart. Building on the childhood discrimination experienced during the Cultural Revolution, personal misfortunes in his adulthood exacerbates his awareness of his minority status in China and his weak belonging to that state. These events also tell us that Hong Chi-ha's identity crisis is not triggered solely by the collective discrimination against the Korean Chinese; rather, his individual problems in adulthood also play a role.

Hong Chi-ha goes to South Korea to secure the stable family relationships that he lacked in China and to search for an integrated Korean identity.[226] South Korea re-emerges as an ideal home for him because he thinks he can now overcome the problematic duality between "where he is located" and "where he is from."[227] Moreover, the ethnic homecoming underlies Hong Chi-ha's desire to not only reclaim a *full* sense of belonging as a (South) Korean, but also to seek a

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[224] The narrator tells readers that Hong Chi-ha came to South Korea thanks to Ch'oe In-gyu's "self-made (*mandŭrŏ bonaen*)" invitation letter (22). We can assume this invitation was a forged one as Ch'oe In-gyu was not South Korean, but a Korean Chinese who left South Korea earlier than Hong Chi-ha. Unlike Hong Chi-ha, Ch'oe In-gyu and his wife Chi Hye-gyŏng entered South Korea for the main purpose of making money. Throughout the novel, no clues point to his kinship with South Koreans. Thus, these details suggest that both Hong Chi-ha and Ch'oe In-gyu have an illegal status and indicate that true kinship with South Koreans is trivial when it comes to changing one's status as a Korean Chinese.
[225] Unfortunately, Ch'oe In-gyu's five-year-old daughter had leukemia. He and his wife could not afford the high hospital charges. The fear of losing his daughter, and the remorse for his poverty and incompetence led him to commit theft. Hong Chi-ha was suspected as an accomplice because his seal, which he had lent to Ch'oe, was spotted at the crime scene. Feeling sympathetic towards his friend, Hong Chi-ha "confesses" to the crime.
[226] His sense of instability is depicted as a family crisis. This crisis is attributed to his traumatic experiences (e.g., the death of his father and being isolated at school) during the Cultural Revolution and in adulthood (e.g., his wife's affair with a South Korean man when Hong Chi-ha was in jail).
[227] See note 218.

decent living in his ancestral homeland.

Hong Chi-ha's upbringing seems to suggest that although the end of the Cultural Revolution means that Korean Chinese no longer need to fear public punishment owing to their Korean heritage, they still feel a certain level of insecurity in China. The experience of physical and mental violence and humiliation appears to be rooted in the collective Korean Chinese memory and continuously reminds later generations that they are not native to China. This factor, along with economic ones, is one of the reasons for which many Korean Chinese left for South Korea after the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea in 1992.

Back in China and before his first encounter with his South Korean relatives in South Korea, Hong Chi-ha perceives a sharp dichotomy between his Korean self and the Chinese environment. At this point, he fails to recognize that what he considers Korean or Korean-ness in China (Korean Chinese) is a hybridized concept, and furthermore, he distinguishes his own identity from Chinese-ness. This misconception is related to his perception that Chinese-ness means "the Han." When a South Korean person is amazed at his fluent Korean, Hong Chi-ha replies, "'Though living in China, we *Chosŏn-in* (Korean people) use *Chosŏn* (Korean) language'" (8). In this sentence, he does not use *Chosŏnjok* (Korean Chinese) to describe himself. Instead, he uses "*Chosŏn-in*" (Korean people) to identify himself as a Korean person living in China. This indicates that, unlike the Chinese at this time, he does not specifically differentiate between South Koreans and Korean Chinese. When taking the Chinese as a reference, Hong Chi-ha sees South Koreans and Korean Chinese as both part of a broader notion of Korean.

Hong Chi-ha's self-pride of in his Korean heritage and ethnicity is also revealed. This becomes evident in a conversation between Hong Chi-ha and an old friend of his grandfather in his father's hometown. This individual appreciates Chi-ha's return as an action of "filial piety": "'Great, Great! Crossing the sea, you came here to look for the roots far away from afar.

Traditionally, the roots have never been forgotten!'" Hong Chi-ha replies, "'As the saying goes, the falling leaves return to their roots'" (29). The metaphor of leaves and roots suggests that Hong Chi-ha considers himself a part of the Korean diaspora ("leaves"), one of the "descendants of *Tan'gun*" (188)[228] dispersed across China after being uprooted from his origin ("roots") in South Korea. It proves that Hong Chi-ha regards the Korean diaspora as no different from the Koreans because falling leaves and roots are not fundamentally dissimilar. More importantly, through the "myth of *Tan'gun*" and the leaves-and-roots metaphor, Hong Chi-ha can legitimize his return to the original homeland of Korea and his desire for an authentic and integrated Korean identity.

On the other hand, the return of Hong Chi-ha, as an "offspring of *Tan'gun*" and the leaf to the roots of his parental homeland, reflects a male-centered patriarchal mission. For instance, throughout the novel, Hong Chi-ha is the only male character who visits South Korea with the mission of continuing his ancestral lineage. The visits of other Korean Chinese characters tend to be driven by money and they view their ethnicity as "currency." After burying his father's cinerary casket on a hill in his hometown, Hong Chi-ha promises his father that he will come back soon with his son and that this promise will be continued generation after generation (345). Moreover, the disputes between Hong Chi-ha and his half-brother Hong Sŏng-p'yo, triggered by the conflict over who has a claim to an authentic lineage, demonstrate that Hong Chi-ha's mere presence causes great unease for Hong Sŏng-p'yo and his mother, Mrs. An.[229]

At the very beginning of his journey in South Korea, Hong Chi-ha spots a street vendor selling baked sweet potatoes and asks for directions. Before initiating a conversation, Hong Chi-

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[228] As explained in the previous chapter, *Chosŏn* dynasty political leaders emphasized *Tan'gun,* the founding father of *Kojosŏn,* as the biological father of the Korean nation, making him a symbol of Korean ethnic homogeneity.
[229] The encounters and conflicts between Hong Chi-ha and Hong Sŏng-p'yo and Mrs. An are analyzed in detail in the next section.

ha assumes that this man must be a Han Chinese: "In China, only Han Chinese are willing to engage in selling baked sweet potatoes in the street, a task considered menial labor [by Koreans in China]" (3). His assumption seems rather absurd. However, one possible interpretation is that the perception that Han Chinese are suited to menial work is related to the internalized social hierarchy of Koreans. In particular, the older generation of Korean Chinese who adopted the ethnic/racial hierarchy constructed by the Japanese perceived the (Han) Chinese as uncivilized and inferior under the Japanese empire in Manchuria. Startled to hear the man reply in Korean, Hong Chi-ha even wonders whether he is an overseas Chinese[230] living in South Korea (3). Ironically, Hong Chi-ha begins to feel an affinity with the man solely because they both speak Korean. He finds it a mystery to hear the Korean language, a cultural symbol of Korea, from someone engaged in menial work (3).

Hong Chi-ha's overreaction to this street vendor speaking Korean instead of Chinese reveals that his worldview is profoundly affected by the dichotomy between Korean and Chinese and that he fails to realize that he is also Chinese and can likewise be categorized as an overseas Chinese in South Korea. Again, this self-contradiction is due to his exclusive identification of Chinese with Han ethnicity. His sense of superiority over the Han Chinese due to being Korean become clear when he takes for granted a correlation between menial work and the Han Chinese. This kind of "Korean superiority," however, does not change his status as a minority and a marginalized individual. Enduring the Cultural Revolution and other kinds of discrimination as an ethnic minority may have been helpful to him, as these events might have compelled him to maintain his pride, rather than to adopt an overwhelming sense of inferiority in relation to China.

In summary, comparing Hong Chi-ha's experiences in China with his initial experiences

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[230] *Hwagyo* in Korean; *Huaqiao* in Chinese.

in South Korea reveal that Hong Chi-ha considers himself a Korean[231] in China, and that he considers his problems in the context of "Korean versus Chinese." His hardships in China are triggered by his dislocated Korean ethnicity and further aggravated by his father's (South) Korean origin. While the suffering makes him feel excluded from Chinese society, he still takes pride in his Korean ethnic identity. Lastly, Hong Chi-ha's journey in search of family roots is highly gender specific and male centered.

3.3.2 Encounter with South Korean "Family"

Hong Chi-ha soon understands that his desire for full recognition in South Korea cannot be fulfilled. He does not continue to pursue his kinship with his relatives in South Korea because his South Korean family refuses to recognize him. His father's first wife, An Pun-nyŏ,[232] and his father's son, Hong Sŏng-p'yo, do not consider Hong Chi-ha to be their long-lost family member. Moreover, they not only despise him for his "ignorance," but also suspect that he is a swindler interested in their grandfather's estate. The following conversations between Hong Chi-ha and his stepmother, Mrs. An, and half-brother Hong Sŏng-p'yo, illustrate their awkward and unpleasant first encounter. Hong Chi-ha's clumsy display of manners (i.e., coffee manners) in front of the two South Korean relatives makes him the victim of discrimination, even though his sense of superiority (derived from self-pride) causes him to insist that he is different from the uncultured (Han) Chinese:

> Hong Chi-ha never had coffee before. By then, drinking tea had become more popular than coffee in China…At first it tasted a bit bitter but had a mild and light finish. Hong Chi-ha was so thirsty that he drank the coffee as greedily as water, making noisy slurping

[231] Here, "Korean" is used in a broad sense to refer to "Korean people." It is not an explicit reference to either South Koreans or North Koreans. It is used in the context of Choson people or people from the Korean peninsula (*Chosŏn-in* or *Chosŏn Saram*), instead of specifically referring to the Korean ethnic minority group (*Chaoxian Zu*/ *Chosŏnjok*).
[232] Hong Chi-ha's father married An Pun-nyŏ (Mrs. An) right before he was drafted into the Japanese imperial military. Chi-ha recalls his father's love for and guilt about An and tells her, "When thinking of his wife who was left behind in Korea, my father was always shedding tears with guilt" (38).

> sounds. Then, after finishing one cup in a gulp, he put the coffee cup on the table a bit rudely, with a clunk, and wiped his mouth with his hand. Without noticing the astounded faces of the two people in front of him, Hong Chi-ha ordered another cup of coffee…
> [Mrs. An:] "People do not drink coffee like that. You should drink it slowly and in a good manner. The etiquette matters."
> [Hong Chi-ha:] "Oh? I am so sorry! I was just too thirsty, so I drank it in haste."
> …
> [An Pun-nyŏ:] "What's your father's name then?"
> [Hong Chi-ha:] "Hong Pŏm-san. Also, my grandfather's name is Hong Sun-bo."
> A bit shocked, both Mrs. An and Hong Sŏng-p'yo quietly stared at each other.
> "My father's name is Hong Hŭi-jun, not Hong Pŏm-san, though."
> Hong Sŏng-p'yo replied indifferently, as if there was no need to continue this dialogue.
> Mrs. An seemed uninterested in Hong Chi-ha's story as well.
> "But, people can change their name anytime, can't they!" Hong Chi-ha cried out. (36–37)

Hong Chi-ha ardently provides other means of proof, such as his father's hometown address (in the *Kyŏngbuk* region), stories from his father's early life in Manchuria, and photographs, to persuade Mrs. An and her son of their kinship. Mrs. An and her son are slightly shocked to hear details such as their grandfather's name, Hong Chi-ha's father's hometown, and the reasons that compelled him to leave for Manchuria. However, Mrs. An and Hong Sŏng-p'yo continue to be skeptical and seem reluctant to recognize that Hong Chi-ha's father is Mrs. An's long-lost husband and Hong Sŏng-p'yo's father. They thus emphasize the mismatched names and old photographs, and this attitude indicates that their distrust of Hong Chi-ha is mainly a result of their negative stereotypes regarding Korean Chinese, which were common at that time.[233] These stereotypes, derived from the negative encounters between the South Koreans and Korean Chinese, are apparent in Mrs. An's description of the Korean Chinese:

> "We South Koreans cannot believe what is happening these days in South Korea. Many Korean Chinese people have been entering South Korea in the name of the 'reunion of separated families.' The South Koreans were too emotional and excited to verify whether these similar stories told by the Korean Chinese were true or not. So, one day, the South Korean people realized they had actually been deceived by those Korean Chinese who were thought to be their long-lost relatives. What was worse, they also found out that all

[233] Chin-gu Kang, 112.

their property had been robbed." (41)

Preoccupied with stereotypes about Korean Chinese, together with Hong Chi-ha's ignorance and clumsiness regarding correctly drinking coffee, Mrs. An and her son adopt a highly vigilant attitude towards Hong Chi-ha. Moreover, these stereotypes also explain their sense of superior status relative to Hong Chi-ha. Alternatively, it does not matter whether Hong Chi-ha truly has kinship with them because, in their eyes, he represents only Chinese-ness, or, more specifically, the underdeveloped country of China. After Hong Chi-ha has left, Hong Sŏng-p'yo asks his mother whether they should confirm the truth from the grandfather. Mrs. An impatiently replies, "'Forget it! There is no point in making grandfather feel confused. You are the one and only grandson of your grandfather!'" (41).

Mrs. An and her son do not consider Hong Chi-ha's presence as symbolizing a romantic "family reunion" between the South Korean and Korean Chinese because they believe his presence is related to the issue of property succession.[234] While Mrs. An agrees with this observation, she seems preoccupied with a larger, related concern, namely that Hong Chi-ha's presence appears to threaten the legitimacy of the Hong family's bloodline. Specifically, if she recognizes that her husband was Hong Chi-ha's father, she must admit that Hong Chi-ha is also the grandson of Hong Sun-bo. However, if she ignores the fact that Hong Pŏm-san is her husband, she can ignore his son Hong Chi-ha's relations with the grandfather. This helps to explain why she denies to the end that Hong Hŭi-jun and Hong Pŏm-san are one and the same person. It does not matter whether or not Hong Chi-ha is kin. What matters and what is *needed* are that he appears illegitimate and ignorant. However, the fact that Hong Chi-ha does share kinship with them suggests that the abstract and homogenizing stereotypes regarding Korean Chinese tended

[234] Ibid.

to be arbitrary.

From the encounter with Mrs. An and her son, Hong Chi-ha learns that the Korean Chinese are perceived highly negatively by South Koreans in general, including his relatives, and these negative perceptions are a hindrance to their relationship. He is also greatly disappointed that he cannot avoid discrimination, even in his ancestral homeland. He realizes that his problems and desires cannot be overcome simply by physically returning to the homeland, as proven by the fact that his South Korean family denies his kinship.

He previously perceived his Korean ethnicity as being superior to the Han ethnicity. This belief helped him to endure all the problems in China, even if he felt himself to be the other. Thus, his marginalization in China did not threaten his ethnic identity and ethnic consciousness, since his pride was not related to his status as Chinese, but came from his Korean ethnicity. However, in South Korea, he questions his pride in being Korean because his Korean-ness does not fit the South Korean model, which centers on South Korean-ness. He feels ashamed that his ignorance of manners helped his South Korean relatives to confirm their preexisting beliefs about Korean Chinese, including him. Thus, one assumption underlying the analysis of the protagonist is that the incompatible identity discourses following Hong Chi-ha from China to South Korea are internal, rather than the result of external factors only. Although the Korean Chinese as a group face discrimination in South Korea, Hong Chi-ha suffers from relatively less direct discrimination and exploitation than the other Korean Chinese around him. Hong Chi-ha's identity crisis is a more internalized one, and more or less a result of his conflicting and fluctuating feelings towards Korean-ness. In other words, it is the fissure between the Korean heritage that was a source of pride in China and the South Korean stereotype of Korean Chinese that brings him the shame that starts to develop in him and to generate agony. Furthermore, this image of a poor, ignorant, and uneducated other exactly mirrors how he viewed the Han Chinese

in China and South Korea; his sense of shame grows as he realizes that South Koreans hold the same opinion of the Korean Chinese.

3.3.3 Encounters with Other Korean Chinese and South Koreans

Hong Chi-ha's contradictory attitudes towards Korean Chinese identity are best illustrated in his description of an underground square within the Seoul subway crowded with Korean Chinese:

> There were women with heavy makeup selling medicinal herbs. There were men with stalwart figures who had failed to get jobs, roaming around in groups. There were also plenty of bored people wandering around, women chewing gums noisily and making small-talk, vendors running away from cops just like "the hen hunted by the weasel," and people surrounding the South Korean employers in order to look for decent jobs…Anyway, the underground square was in a state of chaos because of these Korean Chinese. In order to cross the underground, one needed to get through the noisy crowds and sometimes endure the offensive hitting and stepping…They were totally uncontrollable…These people seemed to be even insensitive to the police officers' warnings and detentions. Eventually, the officers chose to skip over them the way that rich parents choose to overlook a stepchild who is whining and behaving perversely after several attempts at control. (50)

He feels ill at ease and perceives the underground square as occupied by "uncivilized and filthy" Korean Chinese. He even accuses these Korean Chinese of being so uncivilized and barbaric that "all Korean Chinese are treated with contempt like filthy scum in South Korea" because of them (50). He had not expected South Koreans to hold views of Korean Chinese that mirrored his own perceptions of the Han Chinese in China. His pride in being a Korean in China is called into question by the scene in front of him. He finds it ironic that his own image of Korean ethnicity differs from—and even opposes—what he finds in reality. This is the moment at which he realizes that his one-dimensional understanding of Korean-ness and Chinese-ness is untenable. Korean Chinese are not the Koreans of whom he has been proud, and the negative image of Chinese-ness was not exclusively related to the Han Chinese.

However, we can also see how his initial binary system is reinforced and replaced by the new opposition that exists between Korean Chinese and South Korean.[235] This change illustrates how he differentiates himself from the "uncivilized" Korean Chinese. The change in his binary system even leads him to reject all that is related to "Korean Chinese" and to suppress his self-awareness of being Korean Chinese. What is more, Hong Chi-ha even feels a kind of South Korean "superiority" over China, which was still significantly underdeveloped and considered "backward" as compared to South Korea in the period depicted in the novel. For instance, he feels ashamed of the uncultured Korean Chinese people he meets in the underground and distances himself from them. Hong Chi-ha finds them highly uncultivated compared to the more modern South Koreans. On the other hand, Hong Chi-ha's contrasting perceptions of Korean Chinese relative to the South Koreans indicate that his essentialist and negative view of Chinese-ness persists and affects his assessment of the Korean Chinese. Unable to withstand the sudden disgust stirring in himself—which he likens to the feeling of a caterpillar wriggling on his face (50)—he escapes from the subway.

Hong Chi-ha's complicated feelings towards the Korean Chinese people whom he witnesses in the subway station sharply contrasts with his sympathy for the beggars lying near the entrance of the underground station. He finds himself giving money to the beggars. He is shocked by his behavior, because he never felt empathy for beggars when living in China. He used to think giving money to such individuals only encouraged laziness. However, in South Korea, he feels a desire to help them, despite not being in an economic situation to do so. He feels a strong sense of empathy, which he attributes to "fate" (49), specifically the fate of shared Korean ethnicity. However, the fact that he does not relate at all to the poor and unemployed Korean Chinese in the underground seems to be in tension with this behavior. Hong Chi-ha's offer to

[235] "Korean" without specific political references to South Korea.

help the beggars in South Korea represents his desire to resemble the South Koreans. His desire to become an ideal Korean, which he considers superior, prompts him to engage in vigilant self-regulation in the form of doing good deeds. In this way, he convinces himself that he is different from the filthy Korean Chinese in the underground. He even experiences a "sacred" moment when he gives the money to the beggars (48). Nevertheless, when he stands in the crowd of "uncontrollable" Korean Chinese, he cannot help but feel great shame stirring inside him.

When Hong Chi-ha observes South Korean white-collar employees passing by several days later, his personal view about being an "ideal Korean" unveils itself. He feels envious of these employees and ponders how fortunate they are to live in their own homeland, "where people share the same ancestry and same language, and feel proud of their own history and culture" (69). Despite sharing the "same" Korean blood as South Koreans[236] and speaking Korean, Hong Chi-ha is different because "[to] be 'truly' Korean, one must not only have Korean blood, but must also embody the values, the mores, and the mindset of [South] Korean society."[237] He feels almost the same as a South Korean and avoids the previously mentioned Korean Chinese crowd. However, he knows that he remains "not quite" South Korean.[238] He seems to realize that, because of his upbringing in China, he will never become the "authentic Korean" that he desires to be. Therefore, Hong Chi-ha develops a mixture of "envy and shame" (69): He envies the South Koreans for being "truly" Korean and feels shame because he is not one of them. He starts to distance himself from the Koreans (the South Koreans). At the same time, he continues to isolate himself from the other Korean Chinese around him, asserting his

[236] As Sonia Ryang explained, "South Korean Nationality Law is on the basis of the principle of patrilineal origin, rather than the place of origin or matrilineal parentage." This proves that Hong Chi-ha's father could be a potential South Korean and this justifies his claim to an authentic relationship with South Korea. See Sonia Ryang, "The North Korean Homeland of Koreans in Japan," in *Koreans in Japan,* ed. Sonia Ryang (New York: Routledge, 2000), 33.
[237] Lim, 1.
[238] Bhabha, 122.

superiority over them.

Nevertheless, he develops a highly contradictory attitude when it comes to Korean Chinese, especially those he encounters with South Koreans. On the one hand, he denies being treated as those Korean Chinese whom he hates; on the other, he becomes hypersensitive when other Korean Chinese receive unfair treatment in South Korea due to negative stereotypes. This helps to explain why Hong Chi-ha feels uncomfortable when gathering with his Korean Chinese friends. To celebrate Ch'oe In-gyu's discharge from the hospital, Hong Chi-ha and other Korean Chinese friends who work in construction gather in Ch'oe In-gyu's bunkhouse. In contrast to the other Korean Chinese friends, who are overwhelmed with gladness and relief, Hong Chi-ha feels that their laughter and voices are "much too loud" (110), as if they are sparing no effort to "identify their sense of existence after living in obscurity under the roof of their stepfather" (110-111). Hong Chi-ha even feels himself oppressed by the noise. He feels "anxious and suffocated" (111), and his uneasiness pushes him to escape:

> Listening to the clamor in the room, Hong Chi-ha felt an unusual anxiety and suffocation, as if being chased by someone. He opened up the windows but still felt that his mind was full of discomfort. He felt he could not calm himself unless he was constantly distracted. (111)

Hong Chi-ha is apparently unable to fit in and feels tormented by his mixed sense of superiority and hatred towards other Korean Chinese. He is the only Korean Chinese character in the novel with real kinship with South Korea, and this seems to legitimate both his "different and superior" status relative to the other Korean Chinese and his self-imposed alienation from them. However, insisting on kinship does not seem to help him at all, and this approach even appears to be too simplistic to overcome his internal conflicts. Rather, his struggle is more related to the disparity between his imagined Korean identity and the Korean Chinese identity granted by South Korea.

At the same time, his feelings of inferiority to South Koreans are reinforced by the fact that Hong Chi-ha finds it difficult to adapt to the South Korean mindset and to live up to South Korean expectations, especially at the worksite. For example, at the construction site at which he is temporarily employed in South Korea, Hong Chi-ha is caught up in an argument with his South Korean employer, Kang. Kang insults Hong Chi-ha for his defiant attitude and challenges his Korean Chinese ethnicity:

> "'Mr. Hong, Come here!'… 'Can't you just reply, 'Yes,' and come without asking why?'… 'It is the most frustrating aspect that always occurs when working with Korean Chinese. If the boss calls you, you reply, 'Yes, Sir!' and that's all! What the hell is 'What's the matter?' How arrogant you are. Is it acceptable to behave like this to superiors in China?'" (147)

Hong Chi-ha has been working for almost one month for Kang (77) without conflict. Kang becomes infuriated and hostile towards Hong Chi-ha, however, when he thinks Hong Chi-ha is attempting to challenge his authority. Kang's reaction demonstrates that he expects Hong Chi-ha to act like a South Korean but also remain in an inferior and submissive position. Kang's behavior indicates that he stereotypes the Korean Chinese and uses this perception to justify his position of dominance: "The commanding tone does not work on Korean Chinese but instead fosters their resistance…Korean Chinese are simple-minded people, so if we pretend to care about them, to cater to their needs, and to treat them with compassion, they will soon be deeply moved to tears" (170). The hierarchical order between the South Koreans and Korean Chinese is certainly exacerbated by the relationship of employment. Kang then warns Hong Chi-ha, "'In the Republic of Korea, forget it! If you don't abide by what the boss says, your employment will be terminated right away'" (147). Kang demands that Hong Chi-ha imitate the mindset and habits of South Koreans by following the rules of that country and dropping his supposedly arrogant, ill-mannered, and uncivilized demeanor, enforcing Hong Chi-ha's status as an "other." The

description of “how to tame the Korean Chinese” and Kang’s final warning seem to suggest that if Hong Chi-ha maintains the imposed subordinate role and learns to become like a South Korean, Kang will forgive—or at least tolerate—his Korean Chinese-ness.

Although Hong Chi-ha seems to win the argument when he declares that he has decided to quit before Kang can fire him, he is filled with agony and a sense of loss. Expecting to escape discrimination, Hong Chi-ha leaves Seoul for Pusan by himself and gets a job working on a fishing boat (175). He is the only Korean Chinese on the boat, and he anticipates being at least temporarily free from discrimination from South Koreans for being Korean Chinese and from the uneasiness caused by other Korean Chinese. However, Hong Chi-ha soon finds that he is still exposed to severe and direct discrimination. A South Korean co-worker named O Tu-sŏk continually mocks the Korean Chinese and expresses his negative feelings about them, directly pointing at Hong Chi-ha. When Hong Chi-ha kindly offers Chinese medicine to O Tu-sŏk, who has a fungal infection on his foot, O Tu-sŏk is not grateful at all. Instead, he humiliates Hong Chi-ha, saying, “Ho-ho—*Toenom* does have great skill, huh? What’s this? It’s unbelievable that you think this is medicine and carry it around. Is it even real medicine? …There are too many counterfeits out there to trust” (176). He then throws the gift into the sea. Firstly, it is interesting to see how O Tu-sŏk humiliates Hong Chi-ha with the term *Toenom,* which used to be a pejorative term for the Manchus but now refers to all Chinese nationals, including Korean Chinese. Secondly, Chinese medicine (real or counterfeit), which was once exclusively sold by Korean Chinese in South Korea, has become a symbol of Korean Chinese being “counterfeit” Korean.

After a while, O Tu-sŏk again refers to the ignorance of the Korean Chinese, and Hong Chi-ha finds himself defending China to a South Korean man. Hong Chi-ha feels great shame in being scorned by O Tu-sŏk because, to him, O Tu-sŏk seems like an uncultivated person, far

from his ideal Korean, who is supposed to be sophisticated, courteous, and bright. The following dialogue takes place between O Tu-sŏk and Hong Chi-ha:

> "Hey, don't you learn foreign languages in China?" Not being able to catch O Tu-sŏk's intention, Hong Chi-ha replied hesitantly, "Why not? Of course we learn foreign languages." "But why are Korean Chinese so stupid? We laughed so much when hearing the story of a North Korean defector who did not know how to use t'onŏ (toner) and rosyŏn (lotion), and applied them to their hair. However, now Korean Chinese young ladies are doing exactly the same thing these days…Moreover, if the Korean Chinese young ladies who were working in a pancake restaurant were asked to purchase some *Sosiji* (sausages), they came back with *Susemi* (dish sponge); if they were asked to bring *Naepk'in* (napkins), they came with *Naebok* (underclothes); if they were asked to bring a *Sok'uri* (colander), they showed up with a *Sogŭm danji* (salt jar)[239]…They were, of course, kicked out of the restaurant. They were too stupid to cope with the work even at a small pancake restaurant. Seoul is absolutely not the place where one can take it easy." O Tu-sŏk kept glancing at Hong Chi-ha. Hong Chi-ha's mouth was shut tight, and he appeared to be annoyed. Though not the person directly involved in O Tu-sŏk's humiliation, Hong Chi-ha felt embarrassed because he was also Korean Chinese. O Tu-sŏk appeared to be aware of this point and always used the example of Korean Chinese to cause Hong Chi-ha unease. (178–180)

O Tu-sŏk, whose attitudes are typical of those of South Korean men, distances himself from Hong Chi-ha and the young Korean Chinese ladies in his story. In the meantime, he emphasizes everything Korean Chinese that he despises and finds the anecdotes interesting and funny. Clearly, for O Tu-sŏk, the young Korean Chinese women in the story are the ideal others to use to affirm his own superiority over the Korean Chinese. The English loan-words mentioned in the dialogue suggest the prevalence of English loan-words in South Korean daily life, and this prevalence reveals how language and culture in South Korea are also hybridized. O Tu-sŏk's feeling of superiority in relation to the use of these English loan-words can then be understood as

[239] O Tu-sŏk's examples demonstrate that many Korean Chinese, including young generations at that time, found it difficult to fully understand South Korean words, and especially those terms and expressions borrowed from English. As the Korean used by Korean Chinese was influenced more by Chinese than English, the Korean Chinese and South Korean found it difficult to understand each other. Their unfamiliar accents further hampered comprehensions for both groups. Among these three pairs of Korean words—(1) *Sosiji* (sausages) and *Susemi* (dish sponge), (2) *Naepk'in* (napkins) *and Naebok* (underclothes) and (3) *Sok'uri* (colander) and *Sogŭm danji* (salt jar)—the first word in each pair is a loanword used in South Korea and the second a term that sounds similarly but that has totally different meaning.

closely related to the internalized racism and racial hierarchy of South Koreans viewing the West as superior than directly to the "authenticity" of his culture. In this sense, even though the language used and culture practiced by the Korean Chinese and those of South Korean are both hybridized in their own way, the cultural attributes of the Korean Chinese are still viewed as less modern and therefore more unworthy that those of South Koreans. Thus, O Tu-sŏk's sense of superiority towards Korean Chinese demonstrates how internalized racial hierarchy is at play when he portrays the Westernized South Korean hybridized language and culture as more authentic and as superior to that of the Korean Chinese.

The dialogue also underscores that Hong Chi-ha is once again estranged when he is on the fishing boat in Pusan. While his "inferiority" to the South Koreans is highlighted by the embarrassing anecdotes, his pride in being Korean Chinese unexpectedly emerges. This kind of sentiment first appears during Hong Chi-ha's conflict with his boss, Kang. When Kang attacked him because of his inflexible attitude and upbringing in China, Hong Chi-ha found himself defending China by arguing, "In China, the relationship between subordinates and superiors is quite democratic" (147). This may have been an accidental outburst triggered by anger. Now, however, surrounded by only South Koreans, he feels much more self-conscious and tries to be cautious in his behavior. Hong Chi-ha even feels an unusual excitement when another South Korean on the boat, the boatswain, describes China's "national character" as "easygoing and tolerant" (182). This reaction contrasts with his previous views of China and Chinese-ness. Again, he considers himself unable to fit in—this time, not because of his connection with Korea, especially South Korea, but because he is from China.

Though reluctant to admit it, Hong Chi-ha agrees with some of O Tu-sŏk's remarks. He decides to not respond to O Tu-sŏk, who embarrasses him and discriminates against the Korean Chinese. He further opts not to defend the Korean Chinese or to make excuses for their purported

mistakes and ignorance (180). His decision can be interpreted as reflecting two states of mind. To begin with, he began distancing himself from the Korean Chinese from the moment he witnessed the "uncivilized" Korean Chinese mass in the subway, and that sense of separation deepened among the Korean Chinese at his friend's house. Now, on a fishing boat surrounded by South Koreans and listening to a South Korean criticizing the "ignorance" of the Korean Chinese, he still feels offended. Hong Chi-ha is upset because he considers himself different from, and superior to, the "ignorant" Korean Chinese, even though he, too, is Korean Chinese. His annoyance is not simply caused by the discriminatory attitudes of the South Koreans, but also stems from the ignorant and uncultured behaviors of the Korean Chinese, which reinforce negative stereotypes about them.

It becomes apparent that the more discrimination he suffers due to his status as Korean Chinese, the more he internally alienates himself from Korean Chinese. At the same time, his hatred of the Korean Chinese is reinforced. The irony is that Hong Chi-ha had initially attempted to defend the Korean Chinese in China and to improve their poor image. When he had arrived in South Korea, he wrote an essay arguing for equal treatment and calling on South Koreans to support the Korean Chinese people as *Tongjok*, or fellow Koreans (150). The essay was published in a newspaper and becomes quite popular among the mass media and public, and Hong Chi-ha is even interviewed by a South Korean journalist.

During the interview, Hong Chi-ha accused the South Korean government of entrenching the subaltern status of Korean Chinese in law while providing sufficient legal support for Korean Japanese and Korean Americans. He even compared the Korean Chinese with Korean Americans, arguing that "the emigration of Korean Americans to the United States in the 1980s was self-determined, while the emigration of Korean Chinese to China was forced and they were relocated at a time when all Koreans were stateless" (153). Moreover, he emphasized that the Korean

Chinese were “patriots who contributed to the Korean independence movement” to demonstrate that Korean Chinese should never face discrimination in South Korea for supposedly being from an underdeveloped country (153). However, his statement that the Korean Chinese were patriots seemed untenable, since not all the Koreans who remained in China migrated to Manchuria to join the Korean independence movement, and, moreover, many Korean independence fighters returned to the Korean peninsula following the liberation of Korea. His overstatement emphasizing and reifying a positive counter image of the Korean Chinese in South Korea foreshadows his failed attempt to receive equal treatment in South Korea.

Ultimately, Hong Chi-ha feels greatly betrayed by the Korean Chinese and that they are disrespecting the historical legacy of that group. He is disappointed in the Korean Chinese for reinforcing their ignorance and legitimizing their backwardness in South Korea by behaving in a manner he deems uncultured, uncontrollable, and uncivilized.

He is especially infuriated when he learns that a meeting had been organized in a restaurant near the Seoul subway station by a South Korean, Mr. Park (demonstrating that there was genuine concern about the difficult situation of the Korean Chinese), but that no Korean Chinese people had attended the event (180). The meeting was specially organized for the Korean Chinese to give them an opportunity to share their experiences in South Korea, and the goal was to help them solve problems related to employment. The chief of police, a dozen journalists, and an equal number of Korean Chinese had planned to attend the meeting and participate in the public interview. Everyone attended except the Korean Chinese. The meeting was intended to be an opportunity to give them a voice as Korean brethren, not just as migrant workers. However, this chance passed by due to their “ignorance” and their “distrust” and “fear” of the South Koreans and South Korean society. What Hong Chi-ha considers even more shameful and disgraceful is that dozens of Korean Chinese had rushed into the restaurant shortly after the chief

of police and the journalist left. Hong thinks they had arrived, not for the meeting, but for the free food. They had not only lost their opportunity to reclaim their reputation but had also proved their ignorance, untrustworthiness, and impoverishment once again to the South Koreans who had been eager to help them. Furthermore, they had engendered new stereotypes of themselves and other Korean Chinese, including that they were unashamed, voracious, backward, and lazy. This anecdote also strongly contradicts Hong Chi-ha's description of the Korean Chinese as "the patriots and their descendants" and "the victims of a historical tragedy" in his previous dialogue with the journalist. His insistence that the Koran Chinese people were victims and his claims regarding their historical contributions seemed to be misaligned with the actual events in South Korea.

Hong Chi-ha's attempts to differentiate himself from other Korean Chinese reveal that Korean Chinese identity, which is marked by cultural hybridity, is not confined to an abstract and homogenized form of hybridity. Rather, there are complexities and differences within that liminal space. Even more ironically, Hong Chi-ha's description of the Korean Chinese people as eating "voraciously" and lacking self-esteem unconsciously imitates the South Korean's otherizing of the Korean Chinese, because he does whatever he can to remove himself from any connection with them.

In short, the novel offers insight into a Korean Chinese son "returning" to his ancestral homeland in search of his father's family and his identity as a Korean. It illustrates Hong Chi-ha's feelings of alienation in China, his country of birth, due to his Korean status, and his subsequent experiences with exclusion in South Korea, which he had imagined would be an ideal home, due to being from China and "not quite Korean." It reveals how Hong Chi-ha initially views Korean-ness and Chinese-ness as abstract concepts and opposites, and then gradually becomes aware of his hybrid disposition as a Korean Chinese, something in-between South

Korean-ness and Chinese-ness. Moreover, he rejects the abstract and absolute notion of a Korean Chinese ethnicity, because he clearly differentiates himself from other Korean Chinese hybrids.

The novel ends with his decision to return to the place where he was born. On the day he leaves for China, the "gentle breeze warms his cheeks," and he notices that "spring is approaching in this gloomy and foggy winter" (371). This description points to his optimistic attitude regarding his future life in China and his contentment with his decision. However, it would be overly simplistic to conclude that the novel ends by indicating that, when asked to choose between South Korea and China, Hong Chi-ha decides to turn his back on South Korea and select China. First, with the trip back to China ahead of him, he still feels highly confused, and he notices an "inexplicable yearning and attachment" to South Korea stir in him (361). Moreover, he feels he like a "rootless tree" or "windflower" carelessly scattered by the breeze (369), not belonging anywhere. Although he seems quite optimistic about his decision, it remains unclear whether he will truly be able to free himself from the problems regarding his identity and his nostalgic attachment to South Korea.

In this sense, I disagree with the argument that Hong Chi-ha's return to China represents that the Korean Chinese people "stealthily withdrew one foot from the camp of [the] Korean 'nation' (*minjok*) and then reconstructed their identity as 'Chinese.'"[240] As the above analysis has underscored, Korean Chinese hybrid identities are not fixed or even something should be fixed. Furthermore, their identities are changeable and ambivalent; as Stuart Hall puts it, "identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact… we should think…of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete,

[240] Chi-gu Kang, 121.

always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation."[241] Therefore, for Hong Chi-ha, the main question is not about choosing either China or South Korea, but is rather about positioning himself while fluctuating between two imagined communities and within his own communities. Even after he returns to China, his problems will continue, and his identity will still be in process. I argue that the identity crisis of Hong Chi-ha arises from his failure to realize that assuming a single essentialized "Korean" culture is problematic and that reclaiming any single, full and authentic identity is both problematic and naïve. Although he recognizes his hybrid disposition during his experiences in South Korea, he again falls into another dichotomy of hybridity-essentialism. For this reason, he struggles during his journey in South Korea. He struggles to acquire a full sense of belonging and also struggles with self-alienation due to his "inferior" Korean Chinese identity, and in turn merely attempts to conform to the ethnic/racial hierarchies established by the South Koreans, instead of subverting it.

3.4 Disillusionment in Korean Dream: Ch'oe In-gyu, Chi Hye-gyŏng, and Ko Ae-ja

Two of the novel's other Korean Chinese characters, Ch'oe In-gyu and Chi Hye-gyŏng, are especially interesting in terms of the interplay of class, gender, and ethnicity. Unlike Hong Chi-ha, Ch'oe In-gyu and Chi Hye-gyŏng are a couple who came to South Korea simply to earn money to help themselves escape from a wretched life in China, and to repay their debt to Hong Chi-ha.[242] Moreover, while Hong Chi-ha is an educated writer and can represent the Korean Chinese by publishing an essay in a newspaper and arguing in favor of equal rights for Korean Chinese in South Korea, Ch'oe In-gyu and Chi Hye-gyŏng are in a more precarious position.

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[241] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence& Wishart, 1998), 222.

[242] As stated in note 225, Ch'oe In-gyu and his wife Chi Hye-gyŏng had no money because of their ill daughter. Moreover, Ch'oe In-gyu committed a crime, which left him and his family with a more marginalized status in China. The only way he and his wife can repay Hong Chi-ha for the favor of serving the three-year jail term is to go South Korea. See Hŏ (22).

Even their kinship with South Korea is a forged one, which further alienates and excludes them from acquiring authenticity. All three characters represent the situation of most Korean Chinese at that time; these individuals tended to be illegal laborers that could be exploited. They were filled with fear of deportation and exposed to threats, danger, and violence.

The day that Hong Chi-ha arrives in South Korea, Ch'oe In-gyu falls from a great height while at work and is severely injured. What is even worse, he and his wife cannot afford the expensive medical bills, and they are not protected by insurance or company coverage due to their illegal status in South Korea. For Korean Chinese like Ch'oe In-gyu, avoiding deportation to China matters much more than health. In other words, the couple is willing to accept this health risk in exchange for the opportunity to earn money. They are too afraid to even try to ask the company for compensation. Their illegal status justifies their sense of inferiority and leaves them open to exploitation. Instead of demanding certain rights, they blame themselves for being from an underdeveloped country. They develop a hatred and fear of the South Koreans. However, Ch'oe In-gyu's wife, Chi Hye-gyŏng, is exposed to harsher physical and mental abuse. The Korean Chinese female migrant worker is willing to "sacrifice her body to a South Korean boss" to save her husband. However, the husband, Ch'oe In-gyu, does not appreciate her sacrifice, but rather insults her and estranges himself from her. Chi Hye-gyŏng suffers multilayered discrimination with regard to her ethnicity,[243] gender, and class. In other words, she faces pressure from both "colonial"[244] and patriarchal discourses.

The relationships between Chi Hye-gyŏng, Ch'oe In-gyu, and the boss, Kang, reveal how a Korean Chinese female is put in a subaltern position. In order to earn the money to pay for her

[243] "Ethnicity" as *Chaoxian Zu,* Korean Chinese.
[244] I use the word "colonial" here to consider the context of South Korea's reversed orientalism towards Asian migrants from underdeveloped countries. I do not argue that South Korea colonized theses migrants, including the Korean Chinese.

husband's operation, Chi Hye-gyŏng accepts Kang's deal of giving birth to his son in exchange for 4 million won.[245] Kang makes this request of a Korean Chinese woman, not a South Korean woman, because he believes that the "Korean Chinese do not have high requirements. Moreover, if they return to China soon, all the connections will be naturally and easily cut off so that there will be no troublesome conflicts related to the 'biological mother'" (167). Kang is evidently preoccupied with images of Korean Chinese women as bodies for reproduction without any moral dimension. Later, when Chi Hye-gyŏng is diagnosed with tuberculosis during her pregnancy (165), Kang breaks his promise and forces her to abort the potentially unhealthy baby (226). In her relationship with Kang, Chi Hye-gyŏng feels herself split into two contradictory selves, one that is financially dependent on Kang and another that is filled with the desire to use the baby to control Kang and to compel him to pay her the money.

As for her relationship with her husband, when he detects her pregnancy, he insults her by calling her a prostitute and physically abuses her (121). Both China and Korea are patriarchal societies governed by strict Confucian morals. Thus, Chi Hye-gyŏng's role as a wife and her chastity are important. Ch'oe In-gyu's claim that infidelity and loss of chastity are not the shame of women but the shame of men (136) reveals his perception that women are property of men. The grievances of Hong Chi-ha's wife, Ko Ae-ja, regarding her husband's infidelity also illustrate what is expected of Korean Chinese women and wives under a patriarchal society: Women are defined and judged by their chastity and fidelity (326), while a male's affair is always tolerable and exempt from moral accusations by society. Chi Hye-gyŏng thus becomes a "guilty" woman whose body is tainted with money (229). Moreover, she is also guilty because as a mother she cannot kill her baby, but she also cannot give birth to an infant that has been rejected

[245] Around $3,500. Hŏ (81). Kang is a married man, but his wife cannot have children, and having a son is his only wish in the world. His wife does not seem highly opposed to his arrangement with the other woman (167), which suggests a strong patriarchal system prioritizing the male in South Korea.

by the male—in this case both the biological father and her own husband. Chi Hye-gyŏng, who symbolizes Korean Chinese women who are submissive and dependent on both a South Korean boss and a Korean Chinese husband, chooses to commit suicide to emancipate herself from the imposed roles of female, lower-class person, and Korean Chinese.

As for Ko Ae-ja, after divorcing Hong Chi-ha, she seeks to earn money in South Korea via all possible means. She thinks only money can grant her superiority over males in the future and enable her to take revenge on his husband's judgments of women as female bodies and the perception that women are dependent on men. Ironically, however, the only way she can remain in South Korea and avoid deportation is to marry a South Korean man. She still needs to be dependent on a man, especially a South Korean man, to acquire authenticity, and she succeeds in this by marrying O Tu-sŏk, the South Korean man on the fishing boat. This outcome is in sharp contradistinction to the fate of Hong Chi-ha, who tried hard but still finds himself denied authenticity by his South Korean family despite his kinship with them. Moreover, the disparate results of Hong Chi-ha and his wife Ko Ae-ja again call into question what it means to be truly Korean and whether Ko Ae-ja, who becomes a naturalized citizen in South Korea, can be considered an authentic Korean.

The interplay of patriarchy and discrimination against those from an underdeveloped country is revealed in Hong Chi-ha's affair with a South Korean woman, Sŏ Ŭnmi. Sŏ Ŭnmi is a South Korean woman who prostitutes herself to support herself and her younger brother. In contrast to Hong Chi-ha's choice to level moral accusations against his wife and Chi Hye-gyŏng, he is quite merciful to Sŏ Ŭnmi and is even sympathetic about her situation. The fact that Sŏ Ŭnmi is a South Korean and at least speaks and behaves like Hong Chi-ha's ideal Korean is not irrelevant in terms of explaining this gap. In addition, by "possessing" her, he feels he has moved closer to the status of being South Korean. However, his decision to leave South Korea indicates

that while Korean Chinese women can "ascend the social ladder" through marriage to a South Korean man, Korean Chinese men find it difficult to do the same.[246] This difference is attributable to the patriarchal system in which the male symbolically carries the bloodline and family name. Thus, women are in higher demand in South Korea in the context of marriage migration, since female bodies are necessary for the reproduction of South Koreans and they do not threaten the patriarchy and the "pure blood" of the Korean nation. This explains why Ko Ae-ja could marry a South Korean man to improve her status, while her husband had to leave South Korea.

To summarize, Korean Chinese like Ch'oe In-gyu, Chi Hye-gyŏng, and Ko Ae-ja faced much harsher conditions than Hong Chi-ha because of their lower social status. Furthermore, female Korean Chinese find their suffering multiplied. Ch'oe In-gyu, Chi Hye-gyŏng, and Ko Ae-ja were the Korean Chinese others of which one should feel ashamed, while Hong Chi-ha could consolidate his difference (superiority). Compared to Hong Chi-ha, the other Korean Chinese people in the novel seem less sensitive to issues of identity and national belonging. They tend to preserve their connections with China, to rely on those links more heavily, and feel reluctant to assimilate into the dominant South Korean society. However, as Korean Chinese, they do sometimes argue with South Koreans about the issue of equal treatment, highlighting their shared Korean ethnicity (111-112). Nonetheless, this kind of disposition is mostly prompted by their economic opportunities being limited. Hence, the outcome is quite different from Hong Chi-ha's

[246] The old Nationality Law of South Korea, which was in force until 1998, was "patrilineal and gender biased." With respect to international marriages, South Korean women who married foreign men suffered more prejudice than their male counterparts who married foreign women, reflecting a traditional patriarchal belief that "a married daughter is no longer a daughter (Korean)." Moreover, their children were not permitted Korean nationality because they had to adopt that of their "foreign" fathers. That said, the old law discriminated by gender. Female foreigners who married South Korean men could immediately obtain South Korean nationality with their marriage, while male foreigners who married Korean women had to wait two years and meet eligibility requirements to apply for South Korean nationality. This law was revised in 1997, and the changes went into effect in 1998. See Hye-Kyung Lee, "International Marriage and the State in South Korea: Focusing on Governmental Policy," *Citizenship Studies* 12, no.1 (2008): 113.

identity crisis. Therefore, defining Korean Chinese as an abstraction is untenable. Examining Hong Chi-ha's imitation of the South Koreans and his self-imposed alienation from the Korean Chinese confirms the assumption that Korean Chinese cultural hybridity is comprised of multiple hybrids.

Conclusion

Korean Chinese, as colonial-era migrants to the borderland of Northeast China, have a contested history and identity that is linked with multiple national entities. In particular, when the Korean peninsula was under the rule of Japanese colonialists, there was a great exodus of Koreans to Manchuria. The presence of more and more Koreans in Manchuria and their use of the land provided the Japanese colonial government with a reason to penetrate Manchuria and claim control over their new Japanese nationals. The dual identity of Korean Chinese can be traced back to when they were officially granted dual nationality as Japanese and Manchukuoan. Although the Koreans and Han Chinese sometimes clashed over land use and involvement with the Japanese, the Koreans' active participation in the later anti-Japanese and anti-Kuomintang movements, as well as their allegiance to the communist regime of China, earned them Chinese nationality and their own autonomy in Yanbian.

The dual identity of Korean Chinese, however, did not fit with the supposed unity of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu)* and the state nationalism of the CCP, which placed significant importance on territorial integrity and national integration within its domain. China's policies, which aimed to render the Korean Chinese fully loyal to China, were ostensibly successful in ethnicizing their Korean identity in the Chinese nation, because they had previously also been considered implicitly loyal to the Korean nation. The Korean Chinese maintained their status as ethnically Korean and nationally Chinese until their reconnection with their ancestral homeland, which had by then become the South Korean state. Nostalgia and shared memories of the ancestral homeland were stimulated among the Korean Chinese by a state-led South Korean project to reintegrate overseas co-ethnics into the South Korean nation-state. Economic motives and interests were also involved. South Korea's desire for a cheap labor force corresponded with

the desires of the Korean Chinese, who were eager to extricate themselves from poverty. Moreover, Korean Chinese migration to South Korea was imbued with the hope that the "return" would permit them to escape from their disadvantageous status as a minority in China. Their suppressed sense of ethnic affinity with the Korean national state was revived, and this movement conflicted with the fundamental interests of the CCP. However, these enthusiastic and hopeful homecomings gradually turned into disillusionment. The question remains as to whether the rekindled problematic dual identity of the Korean Chinese evolved into an unproblematic and stable one—ethnically Korean and nationally Chinese—with no allegiance to the Korean peninsula and full loyalty to China. In this thesis I have endeavored to answer that question by exploring which factors influenced both the PRC and South Korea to include and exclude Korean Chinese, how these two national states influenced the identity formation of Korean Chinese, and how exactly these processes took place.

As a starting point to address the above questions, I relied on Arif Dirlik's suggestion to examine hybrid identity by considering the specificities of its socio-historical backdrop in order not to rely upon abstract complexities and gloss over the severe difficulties of those marginalized people. Historically, neither the PRC nor South Korea intentionally colonized the Korean Chinese as a Korean ethnic minority. However, several factors resulted in China and South Korea adopting historical and contemporary othering gazes at each other in a sense of adopted orientalism, and, more importantly, at the Korean Chinese. I subsequently applied a postcolonial perspective to explain the Korean Chinese identity issues. Firstly, the Korean migration to Manchuria was in fact deeply linked to the regulations of the Japanese colonial government. Secondly, although not all Korean migration was a direct result of Japanese colonialism, later Japanese colonial rule over Manchuria meant that the Koreans in Manchuria were directly exposed to Japanese colonial rule, as with their counterparts on the Korean peninsula. Thus, I

(re)contextualized the Korean Chinese as post-colonial subjects who later became Chinese nationals and then South Korean co-ethnics. I also explored how the Chinese and South Korean states both included and otherized Korean Chinese, transforming them into doubly otherized hybrids in-between the Chinese and South Korean nation states.

While the former Japanese colonizers had physically left both Manchuria and Korea, I argue that they were replaced by new kind of "ghost colonizer" called nationalism. This granted the dominant leader and groups the authority to adopt an othering gaze towards those who fitted into this national discourse less seamlessly. The interplay of state nationalism and Chinese nationalism granted the communists and the Han ethnic group a dominant status relative to the other ethnic minorities. The historically Confucian civilizing mission was redefined as a project led by the Han, who became the "superior and cultured" ethnic group who would help modernize the "backward" ethnic minorities in the PRC. The communist civilizing mission that targeted the "backward" ethnic minorities again consolidated their otherness. There was no exception for the Korean Chinese, who had previously been designated a model minority, because the new paradigm emphasized that their achievements had been facilitated by the superior Han and the CCP. In that discourse, the Korean Chinese became the other.

South Korea's narrowly defined South Korean-centered nationalism, along with the South Koreans' internalized racial discrimination and whiteness—the legacies of Japanese colonial rule and U.S. military domination that were consolidated by the country's successful modernization—enabled South Koreans to adopt an othering and hegemonic gaze towards non-white, less-developed nations. The Korean Chinese, who were both co-ethnics and nationals from an underdeveloped communist state, were constantly exposed to racial discrimination and categorized as subaltern co-ethnics or even mere foreigner migrant workers. The Korean Chinese "return" migrants to South Korea during the 1990s thus found themselves subjected to these two

othering gazes.

Hŏ Ryŏn-sun's *Windflower* provides a window through which to view the subjective identity negotiation of the Korean Chinese. It depicts the hardships facing Korean Chinese individuals as both members of an ethnic minority in China and subaltern co-ethnics in South Korea. It offers a detailed description of how inclusion within and exclusion from a dominant society have affected this minority group's identity formation and transformation. It reveals that the invisible barriers and arbitrary hierarchies constructed by the dominant group legitimize the psychological and physical abuse facing subaltern Korean Chinese in South Korea. Moreover, it illustrates that the Korean Chinese people, who have typically been the victims of generalizing stereotypes, are by no means homogeneous with respect to identity building. The hierarchies and relationships linking the Korean Chinese with each other and with the dominant group seem much more multilayered and reactionary. They are based on multiple factors, such as kinship with South Koreans, gender, and class differences. Thus, Korean Chinese identity should not be considered from only a collective perspective as an abstract cultural hybridity, because a generalized hybridity might produce another highly homogenous identity that the dominant discourse can readily utilize for its own needs. Moreover, the homogenous, collective, and reified Korean Chinese identity is not powerful at all, because it obscures the substantial complexities and status differences within Korean Chinese.

This researcher has sought to historicize and recontextualize Korean Chinese hybrid identity under the two dominant gazes of nation-states in order to examine the multilayered and ambivalent power structures that influence the experiences and identities of the Korean Chinese, and a postcolonial perspective has also been brought to bear on the issue in order to disentangle those multilayered and conflicting oppressions that kindle the Korean Chinese feeling of being betwixt and between. This thesis thus offers a holistic look at the identity issues that Korean

Chinese "return" migrants in South Korea encountered in the 1990s, emphasizing the specific historical, political, and economic circumstances in play at the time in China and in South Korea. As Korean Chinese migration to South Korea and corresponding identity issues continue, a need still exists to study Korean Chinese identity and the associated power structures in relations between South Korea and China through the lens of postcolonial theory. Furthermore, even though this researcher has tried to include the profound influence of another ancestral country, North Korea, over the Korean Chinese after the Korean War, a lack of information and existing studies have limited that line of inquiry. Thus, future researchers might be able to fill this gap.

Nowadays, North Korean defectors (*t'albukcha*) to South Korea are growing in number (almost 30,000), and they have been embraced somewhat more warmly than the Korean Chinese were in the 1990s. They have been almost automatically offered citizenship and have enjoyed favorable treatment and substantial government assistance in adapting to South Korean society via welfare, employment, and education policies.[247] However, ironically enough, North Koreans, who have been included in South Korean society more fully than the Korean Chinese, have failed to smoothly adapt to South Korean society. Even though North Korean defectors are relatively closer to South Korean nationalism than the Korean Chinese due to their status as "pure" Koreans, many of them have encountered social discrimination and prejudice in South Korea.[248] This difficulty with integration suggests that South Korean ethnic nationalism is extremely narrowly defined. Although the cases of the Korean Chinese and the North Korean defectors in South Korea are not identical, I hope that this paper's new insights regarding the othering and hegemonic gaze of South Korea at co-ethnics will serve as a foundation for future studies

[247] Jiyoon Kim, "Ethnic Brothers or Migrants: North Korean Defectors in South Korea," *Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies* 26 (2015): 102.
[248] *Chosun Ilbo* (*Daily News from Korea*), "Stop Discrimination Against N. Korean Defectors," English Edition, March 12, 2015, accessed July 8, 2017, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2015/03/12/2015031202070.html.

exploring the identity of North Korean defectors.

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