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Dilemma of Multicultural Coexistence: Korean Schools in Japanese Society

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In order to overturn the exclusion of Korean schools from the newly implemented free tuition program (2010) as part of sanctions against North Korea, members of Korean schools and Japanese supporters have focused on "students' innocence" and "multicultural coexistence" as viable frameworks to explain why the students are sympathetic and legitimate subjects who deserve equal rights. Examining different political strategies employed by the Korean schools and their supporters through ethnography and media analysis, the article pays close attention to how they claim their eligibility for these rights while they negotiate state surveillance and intervention in the process. I argue that in their efforts to gain recognition as deserving and sympathetic subjects, Korean schools are trapped in what political theorist Patchen Markell calls a "permanent temptation" in pursuing "recognition." Anti-North Korea sentiments in Japan have made the desire for good recognition even more urgent among Korean school community members. The paper will demonstrate that the search for recognition unwittingly reinforces and perpetuates existing relations of subordination and state dominance over their education as it has forced the Korean schools to accept various "conditions" that would radically alter the core principle, mission, and pedagogy of Korean school education that is rooted in decolonizing theory and praxis. This paper will shed lights on dilemma of multicultural coexistence the Korean minority population faces in Japan today.

Keywords: Korean schools, dilemma, innocent students, multicultural coexistence

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1. Introduction

On September 17, 2002, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il held a historic summit with Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro. At the summit, Kim admitted to the abduction of Japanese civilians between 1977 and 1982 by North Korean secret agents. This admission immediately impacted the lives of Koreans in Japan, postcolonial exiles and their descendants known as "Zainichi Koreans" through state sanctions, media (mis)representation and hate crimes. Due to their visibility and connection with Chongryun (the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan), a pro-North Korea organization, Korean schools in Japan have been particularly vulnerable. In 2010, as part of the series of sanctions against North Korea, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereafter MEXT) decided to exclude the Korean schools from the newly implemented tuition support program. "Act on the Free Tuition Fee at Public High Schools and the High School Enrollment Support System" was passed on March 31 and enacted on April 1, 2010 by the-then ruling Democratic Party of Japan, and later amended to "High School Tuition Support Fund System" to "create a society in which all high school students can persevere on their studies by reducing the burden of household educational costs" (MEXT website).

Among the non-Japanese schools that were initially excluded from the tuition support program, more than forty were eventually recognized as eligible, including international schools, South Korean, Chinese, French, German and Brazilian schools. When the Liberal Democratic Party regained political power as the ruling party in 2012, the new Abe administration quickly amended the act in February 2013 to officially exclude the Korean schools. Abe justified this "sanction" by appealing to the unresolved abduction issue and the schools' close relationship with Chongryun (Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, February 19, 2013). Today, ten years later, over 5,000 graduates and students from Korean high schools have been excluded from the tuition support program, and the cumulative damages totaled 1,782,000,000 yen (approximately 17.82 million dollars) as of late 2018 (Park-Kim, 2019, pp. 72-73).

Following the national government, local governments also started to cut the subsidies they had allocated to the Korean schools since the 1970s. For the last several decades, twenty-eight prefectural governments and numerous municipal governments had provided financial support to the Korean schools, hoping to enhance "friendship and goodwill between Japan and North Korea" (Chiba Kenpō, 2011, p.4; Sapporo, 2011, p.6). However, by October 2018, at least fourteen prefectural governments suspended or abolished subsidies, and the list continues to grow (Park-Kim, 2019, p. 73). Behind this series of sanctions, the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea [*Kitachōsen ni Rachi sareta Nihonjin wo Kyūshutu surutameno Zenkoku Kyōgikai*], known as "Sukuukai" has actively lobbied and pressured national and local governments to stop "misusing" citizens' tax money to fund Korean school education (Sukuukai Fukuoka, 2011; Sukuukai Hyogo, 2012). As a result, between 2009 and 2014, financial

support for Korean schools from local governments dropped by 70 percent from a combined total of 766,666,000 yen (approximately 7.66 million dollars) to 256,670,000 yen (approximately 2.56 million dollars) (Sukuukai, 2009).

In addition to the connection with the pro-North Korean organization, Sukuukai members accuse the Korean schools of harming Japan's national interests with their "abnormal" and "anti-Japan" education. In particular, they object to the portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il that are displayed in high school classrooms as well as the history textbooks that detail Japanese colonial occupation and atrocities, including forced labor and sexual slavery during the colonial period. More recently, the history textbooks in the Korean schools criticize the Japanese government and public for using the abduction issue as an excuse to dismiss the issues of violence inflicted upon people in Korea, China and other parts of the Asia-Pacific during World War II. The anti-Korean schools groups and individuals have used these points as evidence of why the Korean schools are illegitimate and unworthy of any sort of government funding.

In fact, Korean schools have always been regarded as a threat to national security because of their affiliation with the pro-North Korean organization, presumed "communist ideology" and "anti-Japan nature" (Ryang, 1997; Kim, 2002). Due to the political climate surrounding the Korean schools, the existing literature primarily focuses on debates over their legitimacy (Ozawa, 1973; Pyun and Chun, 1988; Kim, 2002). Moving away from these merit-based debates, other academic works focus on Korean schools' bilingual education, pedagogy and students' identity formation (Miyawaki, 1993; Yukawa, 2003; Naka and Hashimoto, 2009). Among them, Sonia Ryang's groundbreaking work, *North Koreans in Japan* (1997), reveals the ways in which rigorous language control has played a fundamental role in (re)producing the collective identity as Chongryun community members and overseas nationals of North Korea among Japan-born Koreans.

More recent work demonstrates how multiple identities are managed and performed by Korean students within and outside the school context. Specifically, sociologist Kichan Song (2012) argues that the schools –as linguistically, culturally and socially separate spheres from the rest of Japanese society –function as a "stage" on which students are expected to perform collective Koreanness instead of individual Japaneseness through Korean language usage, class duties and extracurricular activities. However, as Song argues, the practice of identity management remains barely legible to the broader Japanese society. Especially in the context where overwhelming hostility between North Korea and Japan prevails, members of Korean schools are seen as "evil" unworthy of sympathy or protection, no matter how they wish to perceive and represent their identities in multifaceted and flexible ways.

This article intervenes on this particular moment, and departs from previous studies that characterize Korean schools predominantly as a space to reproduce and perform Korean identity, or as targets of violence with impunity. Not simply assuming or celebrating Korean schools and

education as icons of resistance to racism and discrimination, the article explores contradictory strategies and competing discourses that Zainichi Koreans employ to navigate, defy and challenge material, discursive and affective consequences. Specifically, this article pays attention to the ways Korean schools try to gain recognition from the broader Japanese society and dilemma associated with the efforts. In order to explore the question, I have the following guiding questions in this article: 1) What kind of strategies have the Korean schools employed in their resistance against anti-North Korea sentiments and sanctions? and 2) How effective have they been?

2. Theory and Method

Charles Taylor (1994) contends that contemporary politics has been significantly shaped by the demand for recognition made by the marginalized groups and individuals. Taking a view of cultural pluralism, Taylor emphasizes the importance of the politics of difference which recognizes the particular identity and needs of minority population and strives to achieve equity among differently situated groups. While Taylor maintains that such recognition presents a possibility for universal equality in liberal democracy, political theorist Patchen Markell (2003) critiques the politics of recognition. According to Markell, the disenfranchised is trapped in "permanent temptation" in pursuing recognition (p.177) where they must make efforts to win the good recognition from those who do the recognizing. This ends up binding them by recognition. In other words, pursuing good recognition unwittingly reinforces domination of the subordinate by the authority. How then might minority groups achieve equality for their identity and rights without having to relinquish autonomy entirely?

In what follows, I will examine the dilemma concerning the politics of recognition that Korean schools are faced with based on the ethnographic research, surveys and interviews that I conducted at the Kyoto Korean Middle and High School. There, I became an assistant English teacher and co-taught high school classes for a total of twelve months in 2012 and 2013. I would go to the school three to four times a week to teach and observe the lives of students and teachers. The teachers at the Kyoto Korean Middle and High School gave me a spare desk and chair in the teachers' room, where I spent much time preparing for the lessons, discussing class materials and chatting with teachers. I conducted participant-observation in class, various school activities, and charity events organized in and outside the schools where I observed different strategies that the community members employed to make themselves intelligible to the broader Japanese society while attempting to maintain the autonomy of the school operation. I also visited other Korean schools in Kyoto, Osaka and Hyogo prefectures, as well as a *minzoku gakkyu* [ethnic class] that exists in a Japanese public school, where I conducted participant observation and interviews with the teachers, students, parents and the community members. In addition, I employ media analysis, paying close attention to editorials and opinion sections in the major Japanese newspapers.

3. Resisting the Exclusion: Local, National and International Campaigns

In response to the exclusion of the Chongryun Korean schools from the tuition support program, a number of students have transferred to Japanese schools and even South Korean schools, where government support is abundant. At the same time, the members of the Korean schools have carried out different political campaigns to demand that equal rights to education be applied to the Korean schools at both local and national levels. For example, the Korean community members and Japanese supporters together collected more than 500,000 petitions and submitted them to MEXT (Nikkan Io, August 10, 2010), while staging protests in urban cities such as Osaka and Tokyo on a weekly basis. In Osaka, Japanese and Korean local residents have organized "Tuesday Action" in front of the Osaka Prefectural Office every Tuesday for 392 times as of August 4, 2020 (Nyonyo no Hitorigoto, 2020) while in Tokyo, students from Korea University and their supporters gather in front of the MEXT building every Friday and celebrated the 200th gathering on February 21, 2020 (Choson Shinbo, February 26, 2020). In addition, between 2012 and 2013, Korean high schools and their students in five prefectures (Tokyo, Osaka, Aichi, Hiroshima and Fukuoka) challenged the decision by Japanese government in court, claiming that the exclusion is unconstitutional and does not accord with treaties on international human rights that Japan has ratified. On August 29, 2019, the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal by Tokyo and Osaka plaintiffs, while the cases in Aichi, Hiroshima and Fukuoka are still ongoing (Park-Kim, 2019).

At the international level, the Korean schools have successfully mobilized support from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ("Consideration of reports submitted by states parties under article 9 of the Convention: Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/JPN/CO/3- 6)," April 6, 2010; "Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Japan, adopted by the Committee at its fiftieth session (E/C.12/JPN/CO/3)," June 10, 2013). For example, the CERD report published on August 29, 2014 accuses the Japanese government's policies of "hindering the right to the education of children of Korean origin" and makes a strong recommendation that it should "allow Korean schools to benefit, as appropriate, from the High School Tuition Support Fund, as well as to invite local governments to resume or maintain the provision of subsidies to Korean schools" ("Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Japan (CERD /C/ JPN /CO/ 7-9), August 29, 2014"). Such international campaigns directly confront the Japanese state by employing the existing legal frameworks such as the Japanese Constitution and the Basic Act on Education, as well as the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Bill of Human Rights, both of which Japan ratified years before, while successfully mobilizing the U.N. commissions' support in issuing multiple recommendations. These non-apologetic approaches have framed discrimination against the Korean schools as the failure of the Japanese state to fulfill the laws and conventions that they have enacted and ratified.

Simultaneously, the Korean schools have also focused on trying to "clear the misunderstanding" that Japanese people hold against (North) Koreans so that they will eventually come to see the Korean schools as legitimate. Toward this goal, the Korean schools have tried to accommodate every request for school visits, to explain every question that Japanese people may have, and to become as transparent as possible as it is considered necessary and one of the most effective ways to gain recognition as legitimate subjects. The Japanese public has asked for transparency (Asahi Shimbun, February 24, 2010; Tokyo Shimbun, March 3, 2010; Yomiuri Shimbun, September 3, 2010) and Korean schools have been willing to prove to the broader public that they are not providing "anti-Japan" education or brainwashing students to "worship North Korea." As an example, Song Su-hyun, a teacher at the Osaka Korean High School, urges people to visit the Korean schools, where they will find "students who study and participate in extracurricular activities passionately just like Japanese school students" (Asahi Shimbun, February 28, 2010). Similarly, Yoon Suk-hye, an alumna of the Korean school, wants people to know the "true character" [*shin no sugata*] of the Korean schools and their students (Asahi Shimbun, April 5, 2010). The schools organize "open campus" days on a regular basis, where visitors can freely walk around the campus, observe classes and enjoy cultural performances presented by the students – all of which are supposed to prove how normal and non-threatening the Korean schools are.

During my fieldwork at the Kyoto Korean Middle and High School, I observed the annual "open campus" day where nearly one hundred visitors participated (October 26, 2013). They were mostly sympathetic Japanese high school teachers, university professors, students and local residents of Kyoto who are interested in learning about the school and seeing "true character" of the students. As is the case with other Korean schools, two hours of class observation were followed by a student cultural performance. Then, there was the lunch social hour [*kōryū-kai*] in which teachers and parents answered questions posed by visitors, discussed and strategized future collaborative programs, while eating Korean barbecue prepared by the mothers. For this open campus event, the school mobilized the limited time, labor, and resources of the teachers, students, and parents in order to ensure that the visitors would have a good time and leave the school with positive impressions. For example, in music class, the teacher included a few Japanese songs so that Japanese visitors would feel familiar and enjoy. In Japanese class, an award-winning Japanese poet was invited to give a guest lecture and students composed poetry in Japanese. These efforts are intended to demonstrate that the supposedly "abnormal" Korean school provides familiar and quality education to its students. In addition to the annual open campus program, there were several groups that requested a visit to the school. These included university professors and students from the local area, labor union organizers from South Korea and university students from the United States. When these requests were made, the school principal, teachers and administrative staff usually went out of their way to accommodate the visits, and sometimes changed the lesson plans of the day so that the visitors can interact with the students to know their "true character" better.

In English class, instead of having a regular lesson, the students prepared the "welcome message board" to the American university students, sang an English song they had learned in class and had discussions in small groups where they talked about Japanese anime and music in English with the visitors. American university students were grateful for the warm welcome and extremely impressed with students' proactive attitude and capability to speak English.

To a certain extent, these public relations efforts have paid off. Those who have visited the Korean schools generally share positive responses. Uchioka Sadao, a former teacher who had advised Zainichi Korean students enrolled in a Japanese school, participated in a Korean school's open campus program in Fukuoka. He admires the fact that the students are able to use three different languages, Korean, Japanese and English – which he considers a "sign of globalization" – and concludes that what they learn is not so different from what students learn in Japanese schools. Looking at the students' smiles, he cannot help but hope that the Korean schools will be included in the tuition support program (Asahi Shimbun, March 11, 2010). Similarly, Morimoto Takako (2013), a former teacher and a long-term supporter of the Korean school education in Tokyo, admires the "homelike atmosphere [*attohomu*]" (p.7) that nurtures a collaborative learning environment. The similar narratives were also shared by the visitors of the open campus program that I participated at the Kyoto Korean Middle and High School, indicating that the open campus programs are quite successful in having visitors see the "true character" of the students who are "deserving" and "innocent" subjects. Indeed, the "students are innocent" narrative is one of the most popular strategies that the Korean schools and their Japanese supporters employ when protesting national and local governments' exclusionary measures. As I will discuss in the following section, the emphasis on students' innocence is often juxtaposed with the portrayal of the Korean schools as abnormal, backward, and incomprehensible to the broader Japanese public. I argue that the narratives that emphasize students' "innocence" further demonize North Korea and Korean schools as "illegal" and "abnormal," consequently justifying and encouraging Japanese state and public intervention.

4. Construction of Innocent Students and Evil Schools

On March 12, 2010, Hashimoto Tōru, the-then Osaka governor, visited the Korean High School in Osaka, which has the largest population of Koreans in Japan (Japanese Ministry of Justice, 2019). Earlier in the month, Hashimoto had stated that the Osaka prefectural government would not continue the education subsidies to the eleven Korean schools (K-12) in the prefecture. In justifying his decision to freeze education, Hashimoto called North Korea an "illegal state," likening it to "the gangsters," and suggested that Korean schools are equally "guilty" of "deal[ing] with the gangsters." He added, "Is it okay that subsidies go to the schools that deal with the gangsters?" (Asahi Shimbun, March 3, 2010). He emphasized that his intention was not to restrict the Korean school students' educational rights. On the contrary, he showed concerns for the students being educated in an "abnormal" institution. Hashimoto even proposed the idea of accepting these students in Japanese schools, as he feels ethically responsible to "rescue" and

educate them in "normal" institutions (Asahi Shimbun, March 3, 2010). In his narrative, the Korean schools represent "abnormality" and "evilness" as opposed to the Japanese schools that represent freedom, democracy and human rights. Since the early 2000s, North Korea and its associates have been increasingly portrayed as alienated from freedom and democracy, and are therefore seen as incapable of providing the students with a democratic and peaceful education. It is in this context that Hashimoto asserts his and Japanese society's moral superiority over the Korean schools in the name of protecting the educational and human rights of the "innocent" students.

During his visit to the Osaka Korean High School, Hashimoto observed classes and extracurricular activities, and had a meeting with the nationally renowned rugby team. A former high school rugby player, Hashimoto showed respect and gratitude to the Korean high school players who had gone to the national tournament as one of the three Osaka teams in recent years. Later in the day, Hashimoto met with the Osaka Korean Educational Board members and administrators, and presented four conditions that the schools must meet in order to receive financial support from the prefectural government. They were: 1) Korean schools must not receive donations from Chongryun; 2) Korean schools administrators must not attend events organized by Chongryun; 3) portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il must be removed; and 4) expressions that elevate North Korean leaders and the regime must be removed from textbooks. These conditions thus require the schools to cut all ties to Chongryun and the North Korea without considering the historical and political contexts in which the schools had developed a relationship. Noting that the national government has not presented any tangible solutions to the tuition issue, Hashimoto boldly presented these "objective" rules, which would help the Korean schools disassociate from the "illegal" and "gangster-like" regime and focus them on providing the students with an appropriate education. Hashimoto believes that this is the only way that the schools can win the support of and sympathy from local Japanese taxpayers (Asahi Shimbun, March 3, 2010).

It is important to note that the Korean schools are seen as "abnormal" not only in relation to Japanese society, but also to their South Korean counterparts. Mindan, the pro-South Korean organization in Japan, has shown strong concern about the "innocent" students being educated in these "abnormal" institutions. To urge national and local governments to intervene in Korean schools to protect students' rights to education, Mindan submitted two proposals to MEXT, "Opinion on free tuition program for Korean Schools" in September 2010 and "Proposal in Regards to Korean School and the Act on free tuition fee at public high schools and high school enrollment support fund" on February 13, 2012. In both statements, Mindan emphasizes that their opposition to the inclusion of Chongryun-affiliated Korean schools in the tuition support program is not meant to deny the students' right to education, but instead to assure that "these rights are *justly protected*" (emphasis mine). Because Mindan believes that a Chongryun Korean schools' education is "beyond common sense and practice in Japanese society," it strongly suggests that

MEXT intervenes in the schools' internal affairs and educational contents if they were to be included in the program.

Sympathetic Japanese supporters further reinforce the image of "abnormal" Korean schools by overly emphasizing students' "innocence." Editorials and opinions sections of Japan's major newspapers detail what they consider to be "abnormal" practices at the Korean schools such as displaying the portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, teaching Chuch'e ideology in classes, and taking a high school senior trip to North Korea (Asahi Shimbun, March 8, 2010). At the same time, they argue that students' right to education must be protected because the students are "innocent" and separate from the "abnormal" and "savage" regime of North Korea. For instance, an Asahi Shimbun editorial calls for separating the "North Korea's abnormal regime" from the "Korean school students" (Asahi Shimbun, March 8, 2010) while a Tokyo Shimbun editorial of February 3, 2011 sympathizes with the students who are "born and raised, and will continue to live in Japan" and who have nothing to do with the "savage acts" that North Korea has committed against world peace. As these narratives demonstrate, the construction of the students' innocence involves simultaneously separating them from North Korea and domesticating them in the sphere of Japan (as in, "they are born and raised in Japan"), thereby transforming them into deserving and sympathetic subjects. Separating Zainichi Koreans from their homeland(s) and situating them as "local residents" in Japan is in part rooted in "civil rights movement" in the 1970s and 1980s. Zainichi Koreans and other long-term foreign residents have acquired a number of rights through the movement, which has made them de facto citizens, or "*shimin*" ("people of the city") on the basis of their residency and involvement in their local communities without legal state membership. Framing Zainichi Koreans as *shimin*, political scientist Erin Chung (2010) argues that grassroots activism has focused on "the quality of Japanese democracy" instead of encompassing their lives that lie in and around Japan and the two Korean states.

In contrast to Hashimoto, who "forces" reforms onto the schools, the newspaper editorials that are intended to support Korean schools' inclusion in the national and local governments' financial support program use a moralizing language to suggest various changes to the Korean schools. One editorial tells the schools to "voluntarily take this moment as a good opportunity" to self-reflect and become an "open-minded school" that can be accepted in a multicultural society (Mainichi Shimbun, November 6, 2010; December 30, 2012). Disguised as "liberal," the "students are innocent" narratives, vastly accepted among Japanese supporters of the Korean schools, unquestionably label North Korea and Korean schools as "guilty" and "abnormal," and encourage them to welcome criticism and to change for the "better." Highlighting both the "innocence" of the students (and parents) and the "abnormality" and "backwardness" of the Korean schools, these editorials present themselves as the ultimate advocates of human rights and students' right to education. Assigning themselves to the role of "protectors" of the students and "correctors" of the "abnormal" schools, they justify and encourage the Japanese state and public to intervene in the schools' internal affairs, which they believe would help create the "right" learning environment.

5. "Multicultural Coexistence" in Japan

Along with the "students are innocent" narrative, "multicultural coexistence" (*tabunka kyōsei*) is often employed in advocating for equal educational rights for the Korean schools and their students. Korean school community members and Japanese supporters consider the exclusion of the Korean schools from financial support programs as a government's failure to actualize the ideal of "multicultural coexistence." But what is really "multicultural coexistence"? Multicultural coexistence is not simply a series of policy programs, but an ideological apparatus, or "a form of governance" that filters, alters and manages differences that would supposedly enrich Japanese society and culture (Hankins, 2014, p.22). Although the term "multicultural coexistence" (*tabunka kyōsei*) did not enter local vernacular until the mid-1990s owing much to the grassroots activities to support non-Japanese survivors in the aftermath of the 1995 Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, the "coexistence" (*kyōsei*) or "living together" (*tomoni ikiru*) had become a slogan for social movement led by Zainichi Koreans since the 1970s. With new immigrants arriving in from the 1980s, more and more local municipalities and NPOs started to provide various assistance ranging from housing and employment to child rearing and education (Strausz, 2006; Yoshitomi, 2008; Kashiwazaki, 2016; Shiobara 2020). As the number of foreign residents increases, these local efforts finally pushed the national government to incorporate "multicultural coexistence" as an official policy in the 2000s. In 2006, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) issued the "Plan for the promotion of *tabunka kyōsei* in the local community" and encouraged prefectural and municipal governments to help facilitate social integration of the non-Japanese residents.

Significantly, while multiculturalism in such countries as Australia, Canada and the United States focuses on recognizing cultural diversity of indigenous and racial/ethnic minorities within the nation, *tabunka kyōsei* in Japan attempts to create a friendly environment for foreign residents instead of incorporating them as "national subjects." In other words, *tabunka kyōse*i is premised upon and reinforces the logic of the binary opposition of Japanese and foreigners. Without challenging the homogeneity, Japan's multicultural coexistence fails to encompass indigenous Ainu and Okinawans, a growing number of mixed Japanese known as "Hāfu" or naturalized Japanese with diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. It is important to note that the thriving boundary between Japanese and foreigners was mutually constructed when Zainichi Korean social movements demanded a special permanent resident status to be extended to subsequent generations rather than easier access to Japanese nationality because they rejected the "ethnic minority" label and emphasized their status as overseas nationals of the Korean state (Chung, 2010; Kashiwazaki, 2013). In a similar vein, Korean schools have tried to maintain their autonomy by not demanding a recognition as "clause-1 school" or *ichijō-kō* (schools recognized by the first article of Education Law) which would put them directly under the supervision of the MEXT but

merely remaining in current "miscellaneous school" or *kakushu gakkō* status despite various disenfranchisement.

The aforementioned four rules that governor Hashimoto proposed to the Osaka Korean Educational Board are intended to erase the historical and political aspects of their education as well as the material, emotional and ideological ties the schools have developed and maintained with North Korea. This has put the schools in a difficult position, caught between the two forms of freedom – seeking freedom in the form of equal rights to education and resources, which often comes at the expense of losing autonomy, and striving to maintain the "independence of the governed with regard to government" (Foucault, 2008, p.42). At the end of the hour-long meeting with the board members, Hashimoto told the board members "to make a decision to choose either freedom or tax money" (Asahi Shimbun, March 13, 2010). While the Osaka Korean Educational Board and the Osaka Korean High School considered how to respond to the four rules, Hashimoto created a committee of specialists to assess the school. The committee observed humanities classes, including Modern Korean History, Korean Language, and Social Studies, and evaluated the entire curriculum and educational contents on the basis of the MEXT guideline. The suggestions made by the committee urged the schools to "work toward a *more open-minded* school which can coexist with the local community" (emphasis mine). According to the committee, becoming a "more open-minded school" that can "coexist" with the local community requires the schools to teach subjects from a "politically neutral perspective" and make Modern Korean History an extracurricular activity rather than a required class (Asahi Shimbun, September 22, 2010). Citing the ideal of "multicultural coexistence," the committee strongly recommends the school to be "open-minded" and accept changes in their political engagement and Korean-centered historical understanding, which allegedly pose threats to the coexistence of Koreans and Japanese.

Because their response could become an important precedent, the members of the Osaka Korean Educational Board were careful about crafting a response, trying to find a balance between "not compromising to the power" (Asahi Shimbun, March 9, 2011) and securing the needed subsidies for school operation. After a yearlong negotiation with teachers, parents, and community members, the Osaka Korean Educational Board submitted a response on March 8, 2011. According to Asahi Shimbun (March 8, 2011), although the board was unable to fully incorporate the Hashimoto rules and special committee's suggestions, it emphasized that the board members will continue to "work toward creating a *multicultural coexistence* education while also valuing the autonomy of the ethnic [Korean] schools" (emphasis mine). In order to provide a "multicultural coexistence education," the board was able to promise Hashimoto that it would: 1) instruct the Korean School Textbook Editorial Board to revise the history textbooks; 2) eliminate Chongryun's influence on school operations; 3) disclose their budget on the website; and 4) continue discussions with regards to the portraits of the two Kims, and "decide which way to go autonomously." In fact, the issue of the portraits was divisive among the parents, as some supported the removal because they see the portraits as a "source of misunderstanding about the schools," while others still felt indebted to them for having established the foundation of present-day Korean education in Japan.

Still, others believe that such matters should be dealt with independently without Japanese state and public intervention. In the end, the response from the school board was deemed an "insufficient" effort to fit into the multicultural coexistence education ideal that Hashimoto has envisioned. Consequently, no financial support has been provided to the Osaka Korean High School since 2010.

The negotiations between Hashimoto and the Osaka Korean Educational Board reveal a discrepancy between the different stakeholders' ideas on multicultural coexistence and multicultural education. For Hashimoto and his special committee, "coexistence" can only begin when Korean schools remove the political and historical elements from their education. Teaching the younger generation how and why Zainichi Koreans ended up in Japan today – the foundation of Korean education in Japan – is an inconvenient imperial past that Japan wishes to forget and supposedly an obstacle to peaceful coexistence of Japanese and Koreans. This is precisely what scholars have criticized Japan's multicultural coexistence for being superficial and taking no consideration of historical context and socioeconomic inequalities that shape the lived experiences of minority communities (Morris-Suzuki, 2002; Hatano, 2006; Higuchi, 2014). Moreover, multicultural coexistence assumes Japanese superiority over other cultures and employs a paternalistic approach to integrate immigrants and their descendants (Morris-Suzuki, 2002; Shiobara, 2020).

For example, in Saitama, governor Ueda Kiyoshi rebukes Korean school history education because he believes it is harming multicultural coexistence by preventing Zainichi Korean students from blending and coexisting in Japanese society[v] (Saitama prefectural assembly meeting, June 22, 2012, emphasis mine). Similarly, in Kanagawa, governor Kuroiwa Yuji has required the Korean schools to teach the abduction issues in the "right" way, i.e. teaching it from the Japanese perspective, if the schools wanted to benefit from the newly introduced "Project to Support Students in Foreign Schools" [*Gaikokujin Gakkō Seito to Shien Jigyō*]. Although the project aims to "assure equal educational opportunities for all, regardless of international affairs" and was implemented precisely to "advance multicultural coexistence education" through financial support (Kanagawa regular press conference, March 19, 2014), the Kanagawa Korean Middle and High School was not able to receive the funds until the prefectural staff members observed classes on the abduction issue (Kanagawa Shimbun, November 28, 2014). In the eyes of people like Hashimoto, Ueda, and Kuroiwa, who claim to be firm believers of multicultural coexistence, Korean schools are impossible subjects unless they erase and modify the perspectives that contradict and compete with how Japan understands its past and present.

In the process of making Korean schools tolerable, the "advocates" use multicultural coexistence to actively alter and ultimately disempower Korean education in Japan. This disempowerment is manifested in South Korean schools that have become the "clause-1 school"

under direct supervision of MEXT. In exchange for attaining the status and financial support from both national and local governments, these schools now use Japanese as their main language of instruction, textbooks that are approved by MEXT, and teach Korean language and history as extracurricular class activities, making them almost indistinguishable from Japanese schools. Cultural differences that these schools preserve such as extracurricular Korean language class and Korean dance club are considered unthreatening and tolerable within the multicultural coexistence framework. Despite the financial incentives, the Chongryun Korean schools reject this path (at least for now) and are struggling to find a balance between the benefits and costs of the multicultural coexistence ideal and practice.

6. Conclusion

I have observed the ways in which the "politics of recognition" have actually reinforced the Korean schools' subordinate position vis-à-vis state actors and self-identified liberals and advocates of "multicultural coexistence" in the form of surveillance and intervention. Both the "students are innocent" narrative and the "multicultural coexistence" framework are trapped in what political theorist Patchen Markell (2003) calls a "permanent temptation" (p.177) in pursuing recognition. Markell critiques the politics of recognition, which considers injustice a "failure to extend people the good-recognition that they deserve in virtue of who they are" (p.178). Based on this understanding, the disenfranchised must make efforts to win the good recognition from those who do the recognizing, which ends up binding them by recognition. Put differently, they are bound by recognition; what is supposed to emancipate them ironically binds them. They are simultaneously "honored *and* constrained" (p.193, emphasis in original). Likewise, in their efforts to gain recognition as deserving and sympathetic subjects, Korean schools have laid bare their schools – explaining, answering, and defending who they are – mostly in vain.

Anti-North Korea sentiments have made the desire for good recognition even more urgent among Korean school community members. Denial of access to various resources on both national and local levels threatens the very existence of the schools. Under such circumstances, the pursuit of good recognition does not seem optional but essential for their survival. However, as the article has demonstrated, the search for recognition unwittingly reinforces and perpetuates existing relations of subordination and state dominance over their education. In other words, the pursuit of good recognition as a prerequisite to the "right to have rights" has forced the Korean schools to accept various "conditions" under the name of "protecting students' right to education" and "advancing multicultural coexistence ideal" that would radically alter the core principle, mission, and pedagogy of Korean school education that is rooted in decolonial theory and praxis.

While Korean school communities have orchestrated various campaigns to pressure the national and local governments, an anonymous Zainichi Korean man suddenly appeared. On March 1, 2013, a man began a quiet protest in front of the MEXT building in Tokyo. The nameless man calls himself "a man who sits" [*suwaru hito*]. His protests involve no chants, confrontations,

or collaboration with others. He simply sits there with a sign that reads: "I oppose the exclusion of Korean schools from the free tuition program." The man sits there not because he could not think of any better way, but because he thinks he "does not need to do anything else (Nikkan Io, March 6, 2013)." As exhaustion and despair permeated the Korean school communities after three years of struggles that seemed so futile, "a man who sits" quickly caught attention as many saw him as a ray of light in the deep darkness. The news of this man's silent protest quickly spread on Twitter and Facebook. It was also featured in *Shūkan Kinyōbi*, a Japanese independent weekly magazine.

"A man who sits" sits quietly by himself. He explains that this is an individual act, not meant to be incorporated into a more organized political campaign or social movement (Nikkan Io, March 6, 2013). As a different sign he had on a different day demonstrates, he does not see the issue merely as "ethnic discrimination," but Japanese education becoming increasingly imperialistic and further marginalizing not only the Korean school students, but also other youths such as high school dropouts and students at unlicensed schools (Gajetto Tsūshin, March 30, 2013). In his blog, "a man who sits," he has written multiple times that he is not "trying hard" [*gambaru*] (Yanegon, 2013). He also urges others not to "try hard" as he believes that all the efforts the schools have made would not have been made if there had been no discrimination against them. Instead, he turns to MEXT and sends them a message – that they are the ones who need to "try hard" to stop discrimination against Korean schools. Therefore, in his protest, "a man who sits" simply positions himself in front of the entrance to the MEXT building, hoping that his presence would quietly disturb the otherwise "business as usual" everyday life of the people on the street and officials of MEXT.

In more recent years, the City of Kawasaki became the first in Japan to introduce an ordinance that stipulates criminal punishment against hate speech in December 2019 (Asahi Shimbun, December 12, 2019). The Hate Speech Act of 2016 that the national government had enacted sets no penalty for committing it, thereby making it essentially ineffective to ban hate speech. The ordinance was designed based on the recommendation made by the City of Kawasaki Committee on Promoting Human Rights Policy [*Kawasakishi Jinken Sesaku Suishin Kyōgikai*] that multicultural coexistence must be comprehensive to eliminate all forms of discrimination including hate speech (Kawasaki-shi, 2020, p.29; p.104). Having been one of the leading cities implementing various programs for city's foreign residents since the 1970s, Kawasaki established the Assembly for Representatives of Foreign Citizens [*Gaikokujin Shimin Daihyōsha Kaigi*] in 1996 and the Promotion Plan for a Multicultural, Harmonious Society [*Tabunka kyōsei shakai suisin shishin*] in 2005 to help the city develop policies and programs for foreign residents. Significantly, Kawasaki tackles the hate speech targeting the Korean residents within the framework of multicultural coexistence because creating a multicultural society is not just about celebrating different cultures on a superficial level, but also committing to eradicating discrimination based on race, ethnicity and nationality that create social, political and economic

reality of the foreign residents. The Kawasaki case sheds light on a possibility of “multicultural coexistence” and suggests an important shift that is to come in the Japanese society.

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