

Korean Migration to the Russian Far East A Transnational Perspective*

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Abstract : The goal of this paper is to analyze Korean migration to the Russian Far East (RFE) from the perspective of transnationalism. The analysis suggests that the Korean migrants could have constructed their transnational identities using the following practices: religious ritual, language uses, collective remittances, ethnic businesses, immigrant newspapers, and immigrant associations. In particular, the Korean migrants could have retained transnational interconnection between the places of origin and destination even without the process of globalization, which is regarded as an inevitable incentive to transnationalism in the literature. The Korean case indicates that the contextual changes in the sending and receiving countries, for instance, the establishment of a Japanese protectorate over Korea and the Russian Revolution, significantly facilitated the formation of transnational relationships among the Korean immigrants.

Key Words : transnationalism, international migration, Russian Far East, Maritime Province

요약 : 본 연구의 목적은 초국적주의적 관점에서 한인의 러시아 극동지역이주를 분석하는 것이다. 분석결과에 따르면 한인들의 종교적 의식, 언어사용, 집단송금, 민족사업, 이주자 신문 및 이주자 협회 등이 한인 이주민들의 초국적주의적 정체성 형성에 큰 역할을 하였다. 특히, 관련문헌에서 초국적주의 형성에 있어서 필수적인 요소로 간주되는 세계화라는 현상이 존재하지 않았음에도 불구하고, 한인들은 이주지와 정착지간의 초국적주의적 연계성을 유지할 수 있었다는 점에서 한인의 러시아 이주는 큰 의의를 가진다. 또한 일본의 식민지 지배 및 러시아 혁명과 같은 이주지와 정착지에서의 상황적인 변화가 한인이주자들의 초국적주의 형성에 중요한 역할을 하였음이 본 연구에서 밝혀지고 있다.

주요어 : 초국적주의, 국제이주, 러시아 극동지역, 연해주

1. Introduction

International migration has become a hot topic across various world areas in the 1990s, when the Cold War came to an end and a lot of migrants from the socialist countries in Eastern Europe rushed to the Western hemisphere. Furthermore, globalization accelerated the flow of international migrants. According to the UN statistics, about 120 million people in 1990 were living outside their nations of origin (Zlotnik, 1999, 23-24).

International migration has often been explained

within a context of movement from one place to another due to political and economic causes, and once people moved to other destinations, they are supposed to stay forever in the receiving states.¹⁾

Globalization, however, shattered the stereotypical views of the international migration. Rather than focusing on such traditional research priorities as origins of migration or the one-sided process of adaptation to receiving nations, a new perspective focuses on an ongoing linkages and interaction between places of origin and destination. This is the so-called transnationalism.

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 1st International Joint Symposium between Institute for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (IREEES), Seoul National University and Slavic Research Center (SRC), Hokkaido University (Hoam Faculty House, Seoul National University, Feb. 21-22, 2008).

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Using the perspective of transnationalism, this paper analyzes Korean migration to the Russian Far East (RFE), which occurred during the years 1863~1937. Research on the Korean diaspora in the RFE is important in that these migrants were the predecessors of Soviet Koreans, who were later relocated to Central Asian countries in the form of forced deportation.

Although there are many studies on the Korean migration to the RFE, most of them focused on historical migratory processes or on every detail of the lives of the ethnic Koreans in the host country. Furthermore, few of them deal with transnational linkages and the practices of the Korean settlers between the places of origin and destination, thus ignoring a crucial aspect of identity construction across national boundaries.

This paper is a tentative work to fill a vacuum in the studies of Korean migration to the RFE. The first section of this paper reviews the theoretical background of international migration and various modes of immigrant incorporation into receiving countries. The second section points out the uniqueness of the Korean migration to the RFE in a transnational perspective, followed by a brief historical survey of Korean emigration in the third section. The fourth section analyzes various aspects of transnational practices and linkages between the host and home countries, along with conclusions and implications of this study in the final section.

2. International Migration and Transnationalism

In this section, theoretical roots of international migration will be reviewed and modes of immigrant incorporation into the receiving states will be critically evaluated. Then how transnationalism is related with the existing modes of immigrant incorporation will be shown.

Various theoretical models have been presented

to unravel the complexity of international migration, but three theoretical strands can be identified: the neo-classical theory, the historical-structural theory, and the migration systems theory (Castles and Miller, 2003).

First, the neo-classical theory holds that the migration of people mainly depends on their interests. Individual expectations for higher wages and better economic advantages serve as “push factors” in the place of origin and “pull factors” in the place of destination. Those factors provide people with incentives to migrate from the place of origin to the place of destination. This theory assumes that migrants make a rational choice, only based on the current or expected economic benefits.²⁾ In this sense, the neo-classical theory is an individualistic, ahistorical, and one-dimensional approach to a complicated maze of international migration.

Second, the historical-structural theory is based on the Marxist approach, regarding migration as a way of linking between the capitalist economies in the core and the underdeveloped economies in the periphery. That is, migration is regarded as a way for the core economies to mobilize cheap labor in the underdeveloped countries. Thus the process of migration is not voluntary, negating the individual decision to migrate for the economic benefits posited in the neo-classical theory. According to the historical-structural approach, the role of large-scale institutions like states is crucial in regulating migration flows, as seen in the labor contract systems of the Gulf states, Singapore and Malaysia (Castles, 2002, 1149). The historical-structural approach, however, is criticized for its emphasis on capital, disregarding other factors like individuals’ motivation, social or cultural capital for migration.

Third, migration systems theory is a multidisciplinary approach in which international migration results from the interaction of various factors: economic, cultural, social, political, and

environmental. Those factors may be identified as both micro- and macro structures. Micro-structures include the international economic factors and interstate political relations, while macro-structures take into consideration the cultural and social capital of migrants. Cultural capital provides knowledge of host societies and the opportunities there, while social capital such as social networks serves as the connection between the sending and receiving states (Castles, 2002, 1150). All in all, migration is the embodiment of a linkage between macro- and micro-structures, according to migration systems theory.

With the brief review above on the causes of international migration, now it is necessary to figure out how and to what extent international migrants settle and incorporate into receiving states. In this regard, two forms of incorporation by migrants into a new territory are well-known: assimilation and pluralism.

In ancient times, international migrants were hardly expected to come back to their countries of origin, after once making a long-distance trip overseas. They were supposed to merge with other ethnic groups and form a new group in the receiving countries. In the process of assimilation, immigrants adopt social and cultural practices of the host country, learning the local language. Robert Park and his associate, for instance, argued that assimilation is inevitable in American society. He based his view on the belief that ethnic and racial differences would perish eventually in the melting pot of the U.S., as modernization, urbanization and industrialization come to maturity in the American society (Park and Burgess, 1924).

In the meanwhile, pluralism is the process in which ethnic groups keep their own identities in a pluralistic society, preserving their cultural and social distinctiveness from other groups. Pluralism as an official policy has been encouraged in several Western societies, including the United

States, Canada, and Australia. The term 'pluralism' has often been used interchangeably with multiculturalism.

Assimilation and pluralism may be sometimes contrary in the meaning, but those modes of incorporation share a crucial common ground: once settlers migrate to other nations, they will reside there forever. They are expected to settle continuously in the receiving nations, whether they are intermingling with other ethnic migrants or keeping their cultural and social distinctiveness. Castles calls this tendency of ethnic migrants "a primary belonging to one society and a loyalty to just one nation-state" (Castles, 2002, 1157).

Globalization, which has been sweeping the whole world since the beginning of the 21st century, however, demands a major change in the previous disposition of international migrants. Using various sophisticated contemporary devices like telephone, facsimile, websites and electronic mail services, international migrants can get involved in a global network. They no longer have to be hooked to the host country exclusively. Even though contemporary international migrants may be stably settled in their host societies, they may still be keeping various means of connection to their places of origin at the same time. In this sense, nationally-based migration and incorporation theories neglect transnational connectedness of international migrants in a political, economic, cultural and social sphere, making room for a new perspective on immigrant incorporation, that is, transnationalism.

Transnationalism has become a popular topic in social sciences, since it has mostly been applied to the studies of international migration from Mexico and the Caribbean nations to the United States in the early 1990s. Linda Basch and her colleagues (1994, 7), anthropologists and primary proponents of the concept, define transnationalism as follows:

the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders.

Thus transnational migrants are those who are interconnected and related to more than one nation-state. They can extend their identities across several countries. That is, the word 'transnational'³⁾, which was originally used to signify the corporate institution with subsidiaries in more than one nation in the 1960s, has recently been employed to diminish the importance of national boundaries in an anthropological and sociological sense.

In this paper, such transnational practices as religious practices, language use and immigrant newspapers of ethnic Koreans in the RFE are examined in the framework of transnationalism as a social process for cultural co-existence. In addition, collective remittances, ethnic businesses and immigrant associations are analyzed from the perspective of transnationalism as a means of interconnection between the sending and the receiving countries.

A transnational approach is useful in that it captures various aspects of immigrant situations beyond the limit of nation-states. In addition to what the neo-classical approach calls rational economic activities, immigrants, not as passive agents, are engaged in a variety of activities including adaptation or identity formation in a social and cultural sphere. Using the new approach, it is necessary to go beyond the traditional stereotype of migration namely that international migration is a single and irreversible movement of residence from the place of origin to that of destination.

Thus far, most studies on transnationalism have been concentrated on the contemporary

movement of individuals from the Caribbean basin to the United States in the second half of the 20th century, disregarding many other transnational practices in the 19th century or earlier.⁴⁾ It may be true that international migration has taken a new shape since the end of the Cold War. But are transnational practices so new?

They may not. Numerous forms of international immigration, for instance, took place in Northeast Asia early in the 19th century. One of them is the Korean migration to the RFE. Even though what is called globalization did not unfold at the time, there were evidently transnational practices used by the Korean migrants, as will be analyzed later in this paper. The purpose of this paper is to point out and analyze those practices of the Korean immigrants to the RFE, broadening a narrow perspective of the literature on current international migration.

3. The Uniqueness of The Korean Case

The Korean migration to the RFE is unique in research on transnationalism in several ways. First, most current studies on transnationalism assume globalization (Portes, 1996). The process of globalization makes the connection between the receiving and the sending states easier by means of contemporary gadgets such as telephone, facsimile, and electronic mail services. Thus, using those devices, transnational migrants were able to easily maintain their links across national boundaries. The structural change in the world capitalist system following the introduction of those tools was regarded as one of the main factors in facilitating the process of transnationalism in most studies (Basch *et al.*, 1999).

The Korean migration to the RFE, which took place during the period 1863~1937, however, does not allow the above-mentioned assumption.

Such modern devices contributing to the transnational phenomena were not available to the Korean migrants, but the Korean case indicates the existence of transnational practices any way. Examining the Korean case, it may be questioned whether transnational practices are so new.

Second, most of current studies deal with transnational practices across the frontiers of 'sovereign' political entities or nation-states, as were presented in such cases as the Dominican migrants in Boston, Massachusetts between 1991 and 1994 (Levitt, 1998), the Haitian transnational family networks in New York (Brown, 1991), the Filipino migrant organizations in the U.S. (Basch *et al.*, 1994), the Turkish immigrants in Germany (Ehrkamp, 2005) and the British Chinese community (Benton, 2003). The Korean case, however, shows that transnational practices could come into existence even after Korea was stripped of its national sovereignty in 1910 by Japan.

Rather, deprivation of national sovereignty produced various new forms of transnational activities, which have not been seriously taken into account in the current transnational studies. The annexation of Korea by the Japanese government, for instance, led to an increase in the mobilization of funds by the immigrant newspapers and associations in the RFE. The fund-raising campaign and its remittance to the nation of origin across the border amounted to a significant means of maintaining or constructing transnational interconnections, as will be shown later in this paper. In this sense, the Korean case is peculiar in that transnational practices came into play within the context of Japanese dominance over Korean economic and political interests.

Third, the Korean migration case shows how transnational practices of the same ethnic group could depend on the contextual changes in both

the sending and the receiving nations. That is, the Korean migration to the RFE was subject to the political and economic changes both in Korea and Russia in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries.

The early Korean migration to Russia was largely triggered by a series of economic causes, while the latter part of the migration resulted from a change in the domestic political situation in the home country, namely, the Japanese annexation of Korea. In turn, a change in the migration cause led to a corresponding change in the transnational practices. The early ethnic Koreans were engaged in such transnational practices as cultural circulation or coexistence in languages and religious practices, while later they focused on such practices as mobilization of funds for the national independence movement and their remittances to their home country. In addition, these practices were shaped to a great extent by a structural change in the receiving nation, that is, the socialist Russian Revolution in 1917.

Therefore, the Korean case, inextricably intertwined with structural changes both in the places of origin and destination, turns out to be very interesting in figuring out the concurrent multi-stranded transnational relationships formed by international immigrants.

4. Brief Histories of Korean Emigration

Korean emigration to the RFE goes back to 1863, when 13 Korean families moved into the Pos'et region for the first time (Kuzin, 1993, 11; Petrov, 2000, 65). At that moment, Russia just established its borders with China, occupying the Amur and the Maritime area by means of the Aigun Treaty (1858) and the Peking Treaty (1860), respectively. After this, the Korean villages in the Pos'et region cropped up one after another in

the late 1860's.

According to Przheval'skii, a Russian explorer who visited the Ussuri krai in the period of 1868 ~1869, about 1,800 Koreans were already living in the three Korean villages in the region, including Tizinkhe, Ianchikhe, and Sidimi (Be, 2001, 19) (Fig 1). The flow of the Korean migrants further intensified after 1869, when floods along with famine swept the northern Korean provinces bordering with Russia. In addition, the Russian authorities also welcomed the Korean migrants as the labor force to be used in cultivating the wild territory, after a failure of the policy to attract Russian peasants from the European part of Russia.

In the 1880s, however, the measures to regulate the massive Korean migration began to take shape. The first control over Korean migration was, in vain, initiated following the signing of the Russo-Korean diplomatic treaty in 1884 and the Regulations on the Border Trade in 1888. In 1891, Baron Korf, the Governor-General of the Maritime Province from 1884 to 1893, suggested the first concrete policy to regulate Korean migration. According to the policy, the Koreans were divided into the following three categories: the first category of Koreans, who migrated to Russia before 1884 and wished to get Russian nationality, were to be provided with Russian citizenship and fifteen *desiatinas* of arable land



Source: Michail Belov, *The Experience of the Russian Orthodox Church among Koreans, 1865-1914* (Master's Thesis, Yonsei University, 1991), p.22.

Fig 1. Map of the Korean Settlements near the Korean Border

per household. The second category, who came to Russia after 1884, were allowed to stay for as long as two years, but they had to leave after that.

The third category is for those Koreans who came to work for a limited period with official Russian documents. The Koreans in this category had to pay taxes (Wada, 1987, 17).

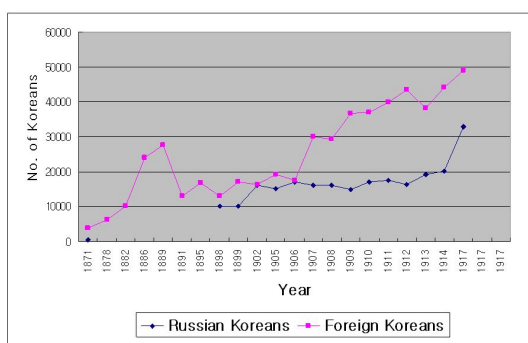
In the 1890s, more favorable measures for the Korean migrants were put forward. Dukhovskoi, the Governor-General in the period 1893~1898, extended the length of sojourn to the second category of the Korean migrants in an attempt to provide more Russian citizenships. Furthermore, another Governor General Godekov, as Dukhovskoi's successor during the years 1898~1902, initiated a new immigration policy to give Russian citizenship to all Koreans who had stayed for five years in the RFE. With a help of these policies, the rate of Koreans obtaining Russian citizenship jumped even up to 50% in 1902, an all-time high during the period 1898~1917 (Fig 2). These immigration policies for ethnic Koreans were enforced by the Russian authorities, satisfied with the surprisingly rapid Russification of those Koreans (Wada, 1987, 27-28). Due to those policies, the number of the Korean settlers rapidly increased from 16,711 in

1895 to 32,400 in 1902. Reacting to this new trend, two conflicting positions of the Russian authorities were put into operation one after another in the 1900s and the 1910s respectively.

First, surprised at a surge in the number of the Koreans, Governor General Unterberger began to suppress the Koreans with a new nationality policy in 1906. The policy of Unterberger was based on the danger of the "Yellow Peril." Thus, the Korean immigrants, who were regarded as inadequate or even dangerous elements in the Russian colonization process, were banned from farming government land. In addition, they were also ordered to leave the fishing workplaces and gold mines where they had been working thus far. After succeeding the post of Governor General in 1911, however, Gondatti took a more liberal position on the Korean question, adding to the relaxed atmosphere of speeding up the naturalization process of the landless Korean settlers.

In the early 1900s, the Korean diaspora in the RFE was diversified in its composition much more following a series of the Japanese dominance in Korea: Japanese establishment of its protectorate over Korea in 1905, the dispersal of the Korean army in 1907 and the annexation of Korea in 1910. In the mid- and late 19th century, most of initial Korean settlers were impoverished, unskilled and poorly educated like farm laborers, only seeking better lives in the host country. But the Japanese dominance in Korea prompted the exodus of other strata of Koreans. They included those soldiers and officers who were dismissed from the Korean army, those who sought a political asylum in Russia for anti-Japanese partisan activities and those Koreans who were rich but tried to acquire Russian citizenship without any national sentiment toward Japan.

Around that time, some of new Korean settlements were established in the RFE. The most famous one is *Sinhanchon* (New Korean



Source: Adapted from various sources by S.G. Nam, *Rossiiskie Koreitsy: Istori i Kul'tura (1860~1925 gg.)* (Moskva: IV RAN, 1998), p.44

Fig 2. Composition of the Koreans in the Maritime Province (1871~1917)

Village) or *Novaia Koreiskaia Slobodka*, which was set up in the mountainous, northwestern outskirts of Vladivostok. Sometimes it was even called a small independent state of the Korean immigrants. Many residents in this village consisted of newcomers and political refugees slipped secretly from Korea under the Japanese rule. So anti-Japanese emotion in the village ran very high, and anti-Japanese political meetings or street demonstrations were often held even in the presence of Japanese agents (Hara, 1987).

There were Korean primary schools, churches, municipal offices, and newspaper publishing offices, social clubs like the Korean Laborers' Theatre Group in the village. Koreans in this area celebrated the traditional Korean Festive days or National Holidays. V. V. Grave, a Commissioner in the Russian Foreign Ministry describes *Sinhanchon* as follows:

The settlement is a center, around which Koreans, dissatisfied by the present regime in Korea, political refugees and all, whose staying in their homeland are threatened by danger to their lives, form groups. Prosperous and well-educated Koreans, accepted into Russian citizenship, also reside here, and, finally, coolie-laborers, engaged in uncountable works in the city and port, huddle here too.⁵⁾

The Russian Revolution in 1917 greatly changed the lives of the Koreans. Generally speaking, the Koreans emigrated before 1917 had been supportive of the partisan activities for the Korean independence. But impoverished and ordinary Korean compatriots, who previously took part in the anti-Japanese activities, now turned their attention to the socialist doctrine unchallenged in the Soviet Union. Thus, the ethnic Koreans organized many socialist associations: *Harin Sahoedang* [Korean Socialist Party], *Koryo Kongsandang* [Korean Communist Party], *Chon-Ro Hanjokhoe* [All-Russian Korean National

Association] and others.

Among the strongest supporters for the Russian Revolution were the more recent immigrants, who had not yet been granted Russian citizenship. Contrary to the old immigrants with Russian nationality, these new Korean immigrants, who desired to obtain Russian citizenship and badly needed farmland, took active part in the military activities, such as the Siberian War of 1918~1922 and the Reds' Civil War against the Whites. Once the Civil War came to an end with the victory of the Reds, however, the Soviet government did not heed the demands of the ethnic Koreans such as the grant of citizenship and farm land.

Rather the Soviet government tried to check the continuous flow of Korean immigrants into the RFE. Furthermore, it had come up with a new idea of relocating, in vain, the Korean settlers in the Maritime Province to the Amur or Zabaikal region in order to solve the problem of farmland shortage.⁶⁾

The number of the Korean immigrants after 1917, especially in the 1920s or later, is variable according to the related sources, although there was a sharp increase in the number of the Korean settlers during the years of a revolutionary upheaval. According to the estimate of Petrov, the number reached the level of 130,000 in 1923, 170,000 in 1927, 190,000 in 1932, and 205,000 in 1936. These projections were based upon an annual increase rate 17% or 30,000 Koreans (5,000 to 6,000 families) during the period 1923~1926. However, his estimate including illegal Korean residents is much higher, approximately 250,000 in the late 1920s.⁷⁾ These figures are similar to ones suggested by Walter Kolarz.⁸⁾ Among those Koreans, 90% were rural residents and 10% urban residents.

5. Transnational Practices

1) Religious Practices and Use of Languages

More often than not, transnationalism is regarded as a social process in which migrants create cross-cultural relations across space, connecting their country of origin and that of resettlement. This process is expressed in multicultural practices, while migrants are engaged in various lives in the host society. This process helps them to construct their identities in relation to their homeland.

In the study of Turkish immigrants in a German city, Ehrkamp shows that Turkish immigrants' involvement in religious practices could be crucial in maintaining strong transnational connections. Religious practices are shown to be related with a creation of local belonging, while sometimes they are connected to the place of origin (Ehrkamp, 2005). Those practices turned out to be a venue for cultural circulation or cultural co-existence.

The cultural circulation of Koreans could also be noticed in their religious lives in the RFE. The Korean migrants were quite assimilated into the Russian way of life while they still kept on performing the traditional Korean shamanistic ritual prevalent in their home country.

The eagerness of the Koreans to be Russified is well-documented, especially in their acceptance of the Russian Orthodox belief. It was known that the Korean mission presented two and half times more baptism than an average other mission. This trend was well indicated in the letter of July 23, 1870 by M. S. Karsakov, the general-governor of Eastern Siberia, as follows:

[...] many of them [Koreans] by accepting the Russian citizenship also understand under this act the acceptance of the dominant Russian belief; and, without any encouragement from the officials, they cut their pig-tails and try to learn Russian language. Such a zeal towards Russification gives great expectations for a rapid conversion into Christianity in a

very short time, provided that the concerned authorities, both ecclesiastic and mundane, will provide full support for their baptism.⁹⁾

The enthusiasm of the Korean migrants with Russification, however, should be interpreted with a caution since those Koreans still continued to show their adherence to traditional Korean shamanism. One of the examples was a shamanistic ritual performed by the Korean settlers. Especially during the early period of migration, the Koreans were known to go to the top of mountain to perform Korean shamanistic practices for several days for the purpose of obtaining rain during a prolonged drought. The Russian priests were acquiescent to those traditional rites, trying to provide the religious ritual with a new meaning unless the Russian cultural norms were violated blatantly (Belov, 1991, 46-48).

Another example of the cultural circulation among immigrants can be found in the use of languages in Blagoslovennoe. The Korean village in Blagoslovennoe in the Amur oblast' was set up in 1871, when Sinel'nikov, the Governor General of East Siberia, relocated 102 Korean families (431 men and women) from the Korean-Russian border area to a remote region on the Amur. Sinel'nikov had been worried about strong attachment of the Korean settlers to the nearby homeland (Pak, 1994, 33-38; Nam, 1998, 34-36). The resettled Koreans in Blagoslovennoe, who were granted Russian citizenship, free farmlands and necessities of life, were expected to serve as model people to attract more Korean settlers. The Korean community in Blagoslovennoe, more than 860 kilometers away from the initial residence of the Korean settlers, is very important in testing the assimilation process of the Russian Koreans.

The Korean settlers in Blagoslovennoe used the Korean dialect along with the Russian language. On his visit to Balgoslovennoe in 1879, Vislenevyi,

Table 1. List of Korean Residents in Blagoslovennoe

No.	Relationship	Names in Cyrillic	Age	Standard Korean equivalent
4	Son	Turtse-Innokentii	2	둘째-이노켄티
6	Wife	Tsessi-Mariia	37	채씨-마리아
8	daughter - in-law	Pansi-Ol'ga	20	방씨(or 반씨)-올가
12	Father	Tsonniuri-Ivan	63	종루이-이반
15	Wife	Paksi-Mariia	30	박씨-마리아
128	Son	Nomi-Aleksei	13	눔이-알렉세이
186	Wife	Tessi-Elena	53	조씨-엘레나
218	Son	Mansiandori-Vasil.	21	만선돌이-바실.
232	Grandson	Paui Matvei	24	바우(or 바위)-마트베이
320	Son	Turbaui-Fedor	28	둘바우(or 둘바위)-표도르
358	Wife	Nimsi-Anna	40	임씨(or 림씨)-안나
469	Cousin	Onzhiui-Mikhail	23	온중이(or 윈중이)-미하일
489	Brother	Shukhagi-Ivan	28	수학이-이반

Resource: Statisticheskie svedeniia o Koreiskom naselenii Amurskoi oblasti, sobrannye chinovnikom Glavnago Upravleniia Vostochnoi Sibiri, Nadvornym Sovetnikom Vislenevym v 1879 godu (1883). *Sbornik glavneishikh ofitsial'nykh dokumentov po upravleniiu Vostochnoi Sibiriu*, tom 4: *Inorodcheskoe naselenie Priamurskogo kraia*, vyp. 1, *Inorodtsy Amurskoi oblasti*, 57-77. Irkutsk: Tipografiia Shtaba Vostochnogo Sibirskogo Voennogo Okruga. Cited in 140-142, Ross King, "Blagoslovennoe: Korean Village on the Amur (1871~1937)," *The Review of Korean Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2001), pp.133-176.

court councilor in the Main Administration of Eastern Siberia, compiled interesting linguistic data that show the Korean dialect used by the Koreans in Blagoslovennoe. All 624 Blagoslovennoe Korean residents were listed by family along with their names and ages. Interestingly, those settlers are given with two names, a Korean name and a baptized Russian name, as seen in the following selected cases (Table 1). Although more Koreans officially tended to have Russian names in the 1930s, most of them still kept both Russian names and Korean names.

Thus, the RFE served as a hotbed for cultural co-existence in which the Korean transnational migrants as cultural brokers adapted themselves to their new society even as they tried to preserve their own practices and values in the home country. That is, on the one hand the Korean community was found to be Russified in its assimilation process, but on the other some

of Korean culture was also kept untouched.

Religious practice or the way of using bi-lingual names shows the new formation of Korean immigrants' identities beyond a dichotomy of ties with the home or the host country. It reveals that the identities of the Russian Koreans were not entirely fixed to national boundaries.

2) Collective Remittances

Transnationalism is also explained by remittances. Remittance sending shows the degree to which immigrants interact both with the host and the home society (Melo, 2006, 10). Most migrants usually lead an underpaid life at the bottom of the host society, while they might be better-off when compared to a situation in the home nation. Thus, remittance sending by migrants can be sometimes essential for the economic survival of many families in their home country. Transnational

ties could be enhanced through remittance sending.

Remittances are not limited to the money or other financial goods. As Levitt argues, social remittances such as social capital, ideas, behaviors, and identities can also play an important role in forging transnational interconnection between the sending and the receiving country (Levitt, 2001)

In this study, collective remittances by the Korean migrants proved to be crucial in maintaining linkages between their new country and their homeland.¹⁰⁾ Interestingly, these remittances were related with the anti-Japanese activities by those Korean compatriots.

The RFE became a political haven for Korean militant nationalists since 1905, when Korea became a protectorate of Japan. As Japan strengthened its grip on Korea, nationalists including social revolutionaries went to the RFE and Manchuria, political sanctuaries inaccessible to the Japanese authorities. In the late 1910s, about 200,000 Koreans settled in such Russian areas as Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Chita, and Khabarovsk. Militant nationalists, who were eager to defeat Japan, were engaged in various anti-Japanese partisan activities, setting up Korean nationalist associations, socialist parties, and Korean subsidiaries of the Communist Parties. These activities were made possible to a great extent by the funds collected in the RFE.

Funds for the Korean independence movement in the RFE were collected from various sources. Some portion of those was donated by rich Korean migrants like Choi Jae Hyong (or Tsoi Petr Semenovich) in the Pos'et region (Pak, 1992, 1099~1100), while others were contributed by lots of ordinary Korean compatriots. For example, 10,000 rubles were collected by the Korean residents in Suchan district in 1907 (Kim, 1965, 69). In addition, a sizable amount of funds was provided to the Korean Provisional Government by the Soviet government.¹¹⁾

These funds were transmitted to Korea for

the purpose of supporting the anti-Japanese activities. Scalpino and Lee (1960, 22) cites several accounts of collective remittances documented by some Japanese sources. One example is that a person named Kim Chol-su penetrated into Korea from Shanghai with propaganda funds in July 1921 and this affair was described as "the first extension of Russian hands into Korea." Another example is that Kim Rip, a well-known Korean anti-Japanese patriot Yi Tong-hwi's advisor, handed over a total of 80,000 yen to Chang Tok-su in Korea, president of the Dong-A Daily and nationalist leader, through Meiji University graduate Yi Pong-su, an intermediary agent.

These collective remittances by Korean nationalists in the RFE helped the consolidation of transnational ties between the home country and the host country, although some of remittances were misallocated and squandered by a few nationalists.

3) Ethnic Businesses

Although most Koreans in the RFE lived on the farming, about 10% of those Koreans were engaged in small ethnic businesses in city areas. Those business activities could promote transnational social relationships by connecting the countries of origin and destination.

Generally speaking, ethnic businesses are mainly based upon enclave economies in the process of their adaptation to receiving societies, breeding their own markets for ethnic foods and products. However, their commercial transactions were not limited to territorially small ethnic districts, but were extended abroad beyond the national borders.

The Korean migrants were pretty active in small grocery businesses.¹²⁾ Those grocery stores were mainly located in such areas as Vladivostok (Number of stores, 20), Nikol'sk (2), Chernigovka

Table 2. Number of Korean Stores in the RFE (cir. 1907)

Areas	No. of Korean Families	No. of Korean Residents	Korean Stores (No.)
Vladivostok	994	10,400	grocery (20), liquor (6),
Nikol'sk	130	1,500	grocery (2), meat & oats (1)
Chernigovka	130	1,000	grocery (10)
Slavianka	30	200	grocery (7), meat(1)
Pos'et	415	2,000	grocery (10)
Brusi	20	650	grocery (5)
Adimi	30	815	grocery (3)
Novokievsk	1,200	4,200	grocery (6)
Ianchikhe	600	3,000	grocery (8)
Blagoveshchensk	14	30,300	grocery (1), noodle & bread (5)
Nikolaevsk	-	1,778	grocery (1)

Source: Toukanbu Gaimubu [The Japanese Foreign Ministry](1907), *Kyokutou roryouni okeru kankokuzinno jiyoutai* [the Korean Situation in the Russian Far East]. Cited in Hyun Kyu Hwan, *Hankook ryuiminsa* [A History of the Displaced Korean Emigrants] (Vol. 1) (Seoul: Eomunkak, 1967), pp. 875-876.

(10), Slavianka (7), Pos'et (10), Brusi (5), Adimi (3), Novokievsk (6), Ianchikhe (8), Blagoveshchensk (1) and Nikolaevsk (1) (Table 2).

There were not many Korean grocery stores for the number of Korean residents, but they played a role in the development of transnationalism. The fact that Korean migrants were concentrated in small grocery stores shows that ethnic businesses served as strong social ties among Korean co-ethnics. The Korean ethnic businesses could have led to immigrant transnationalism by means of a so-called "vertically integrated ethnic economy" (Modell, 1977, 113-120). That is, owners of Korean grocery stores imported sundry Korean goods favored by ethnic Koreans and then in return remitted the payment back to Korea, thus building transnational ties.

In their study of the Salvadoran immigrants of Los Angeles and Washington D.C., Landolt and others identify four types of transnational enterprises of Salvadoran migrants: circuit firms, cultural enterprises, ethnic enterprises and return migrant micro-enterprises.¹³⁾ The Korean grocery stores

in the RFE exemplify what Landolt and others called 'ethnic enterprises'. Those enterprises are small retail firms which are appealing to the ethnic community, with a constant supply of miscellaneous merchandises from Korea, the home country.

The ethnic Koreans were also engaged in a certain kinds of cross-border commercial activities, sending remittances to their relatives or purchasing Russian goods for resale in their home country. They imported livestock and grain from Korea, while they exported fish and marine products, miscellaneous goods, textile, iron, and petroleum to the home country. The trade route was mainly inland in the early period, but maritime routes were increasingly used later. The inland trade volume between the two countries, for instance, remained steady in the period 1895~1897, showing an existence of continuous reciprocal remittances (Table 3). It was an important form of transnational connection, given that the border trade was conducted mostly by the ethnic Koreans.

Table 3. Inland Trade between Korea and Russia

Year	Import to Russia (ruble)	Export from Russia (ruble)
1895	140,260	252,362
1896	113,545	148,451
1897	202,370	132,666

Source: Toukanbu Gaimubu [The Japanese Foreign Ministry](1907), "Kyokutou roryouni okeru kankokuzinno jiyoutai" [the Korean Situation in the Russian Far East]. Cited in Hyun Kyu Hwan, *Hankook ryuiminsa* [A History of the Displaced Korean Emigrants] (Vol. 1) (Seoul: Eomunkak, 1967), pp.874-875.

4) Immigrant Newspapers

Transnational institutions often play a crucial role in linking the sending countries to the receiving countries. Those institutions facilitate the smooth adaptation of newcomers to a new location, preserving cultural practices and ethnic values of migrants in the midst of pressure for assimilation in the host country. One of those institutions is exemplified by immigrant newspapers.

The role of the immigrant press in shaping immigrants' views and their sense of belonging has been one of important subjects for sociologists for a long time. In his monumental works *The Immigrants Press and Its Control*, Park (1992) emphasized the role of the immigrant press on migrants' assimilation into the American society, although he did not pay any attention to the effect of immigrant press on the construction of a transnational sense of belonging. In this sense, Cheng (2005) may be right in the argument that *Ming Pao*, a Cantonese immigrant newspaper in Vancouver, Canada could help construct a transnational sense of belonging among Hong Kong immigrants.

Upon their first arrival, most Korean immigrants were in the very initial stage of exploration of their new lives. They were reluctant to work outside or to have social contacts with their

Russian counterparts, as other ethnic minorities usually do. They took in new ideas and local practices mostly by observing the new world around them. At this time the immigrant newspapers could be crucial means for them to lead new lives. The Korean immigrant newspapers played a similar role, having carried detailed reports in the nation of origin and then having satisfied the nostalgic needs of the Korean immigrants.

There were many Korean immigrant newspapers published in Vladivostok: *Haijo Sinmun* (Vladivostok), *Daidong Kongbo* (Vladivostok), *Gwonup Sinmun* (Vladivostok), *Daehanin Jeonggyobo* (Chita), *Hanin Sinbo* (Vladivostok), *Cheonggu Sinbo* (Nikol'sk). The foci of these newspapers were on 1) distribution of news about the motherland and the host country, 2) enlightenment of the ethnic Koreans in the RFE, and 3) inspiration of anti-Japanese consciousness of Koreans at the home and host countries. Most of these newspapers, however, failed to continue to be published after the October Revolution in 1917.

After the Russian Revolution, many socialist newspapers were launched. For example, *Sonbong* (Vanguard) and a few socialist immigrant newspapers, such as *Yeonhaeju Eubu* (Fishermen in Primor'ye, 1930), *Guangbu* (Miners, 1932), *Dang Kyoyuk* (Instruction of the Party, 1932), *Dongbang Kommuna* (Eastern Commune, 1933), *Gonggyeok Daewon* (Attackers, 1933), *Stalinets* (Stalinists, 1933), and *Lenin Gwangseon* (Leninist Ray, 1936) were published (Park, 1998, 171-226). These socialist newspapers aimed ostensibly at initiating the drive for the spread of communism among the ethnic Koreans. However, these newspapers did not forget to remind the ethnic Koreans of the rigorous political situation under the Japanese rule in the motherland. For example, O Sung-muk, editor-in-chief of *Sonbong*, expressed his nationalistic sympathy with his brethrens held in prison in the home country as follows:

We are your brothers and sisters and your comrades. Defending a part of the territory of the Soviet Republic, Eastern fortress on the Pacific Ocean, we regret our life in exile and are thinking day and night about our brothers and sisters in Korea who endure the oppression of imperialists.¹⁴⁾

The Korean immigrant newspapers published in the RFE were secretly slipped into Korea in spite of Japanese stern measures. Thus, Koreans living in both the home and the host country came to know each other through these immigrant newspapers.¹⁵⁾

Thus, the Korean immigrant newspapers served as what proponents of transnationalism termed the role of “transnational social fields”(Basch et al., 1994) or “transnational communities”(Portes, 1996) between the home and the host country.

5) Immigrant Associations

Immigrant organizations have often been regarded as one of the factors to facilitate the transnational connections. Landolt and her associates show that the Salvadoran immigrant associations in the United States play a very important role in shaping the political course both in the host towns and regions of origin, maintaining transnational relations between El Salvador and its migrants in Los Angeles and Washington D. C. (Landolt, 1999, 308).

In a similar vein, the Korean immigrants in the RFE built their ethnic organizations to reshape the social and political conditions in their motherland, assisting in the adaptation of immigrants to their new society. Various ethnic associations were formed in the RFE, as the number of Korean migrants increased. In particular, those associations proliferated since the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910. Most associations were mainly concerned with the following objectives: 1) to serve as a base to mobilize and transfer the

funds for the anti-Japanese activities in the home country and its neighboring countries; 2) to enlighten the compatriots in the RFE by publishing and propagating newspapers and magazines or by establishing the educational institutions; 3) to accommodate and address various needs or demands of the ethnic Koreans in their lives in the RFE.

Kookminhoe [the Korean National Association, KNA] is typical of the immigrant associations in the RFE. Founded in 1909 in the Maritime Province, the KNA coordinated its activities with the other chapters in the United States and Mexico, publishing its bulletin “*Daehanin Jeonggyobo*” <Table 5> and holding nationalistic rallies to protest against the Japanese annexation of Korea. Its branches were opened in several areas in RFE, including Vladivostok, Nikol’sk, Iman, Khabarovsk, Blagoveshchensk, Irkutsk, Tiumen, Krasnoarsk, Chita and Verkhneudinsk (current Ulan Ude) (Saveliev, 2004, 5-6; Pak, 1992, 1135). The KNA also initiated a fund-raising campaign among the ethnic Koreans to establish military and pedagogical schools, eventually playing a considerable role in changing the political situation in the home country.

Kwonup Hoe [Assoc. for Encouragement of Industry, AEI] is another exemplary immigrant organization. Established in 1911 as a legitimate organization in the RFE, the AEI allegedly aimed at encouraging Korean brethrens to pursue their professions assiduously. However, its implicit goal was to be engaged in various projects to restore independence in the nation of origin.

The AEI carried out various transnational activities. First of all, it tried to address the needs and demands of the still impoverished and disfranchised Korean migrants by emphasizing the importance of securing their jobs in the new land. In order to attain this goal, the AEI established various schools for cultivating men of ability, publishing its organization newspaper

'*Kwonup Sinmun*.' Its reporters were often dispatched to Korea and the *Pukgando* region in China where the ethnic Koreans were concentrated. The newspapers were delivered even to the *Gando* and *Hunchun* area in China and the United States, in addition to the RFE (Lee, 1989, 19).

Thus, serving as transnational brokers reaching out to their home nation, the AEI played a significant role in the connection of the Koreans at home and abroad, inspiring the spirit of patriotism and propagating the news on anti-Japanese nationalistic activities.¹⁷⁾

6. Conclusions and Implications

The goal of this paper is to apply the concept 'transnationalism' to the study of the Korean migration to the RFE. The result from this study suggests that the Korean immigrants constructed their transnational fields by means of various practices: religious practices, language use, collective remittances, ethnic businesses, immigrant newspapers, and immigrant associations. In specific, the Korean diaspora could construct cultural circulation or cultural co-existence by a simultaneous acceptance of both the Russian Orthodox Christianity and traditional Korean shamanism or by bilingual daily lives in the Korean and Russian languages. Furthermore, the Korean migrants could maintain transnational interconnection between the place of origin and destination by such transnational practices as collective remittances, ethnic businesses, immigrant newspapers and associations.

The Korean migrants share various characteristics with other international emigrants. Yet, some factors make the Korean migration unique. First of all, the Korean case has nothing to do with the process of recently unfolded globalization, which is regarded as an inevitable impetus to transnationalism in the related literature. Second, deprivation of national sovereignty led to various kinds of transnational activities, phenomena

which were not taken seriously by the scholars of transnationalism. Finally, the Korean case reveals how the contextual changes in both the sending and receiving states could have different effects on the transnational practices of the immigrants. Those changes resulted in different forms of transnational practices: cultural circulation on the one side, and transnational ties on the other.

Thus, this paper suggests that the concept of transnationalism can be a useful analytical device in the analysis of the Korean migration. The advantage of the concept may be due to its dual orientation towards both the place of origin and resettlement. In fact, the number of the studies on the Korean immigration has greatly increased recently, but few of them deal with transnationalism seriously. As is shown in this paper, transnational practices among the Korean immigrants are not new. Various forms of transnationalism have existed since the 19th century, when Koreans began to migrate abroad for the first time. What is new is how related researchers delve into the phenomena with different theoretical and methodological approaches. In the near future, these studies on transnationalism will surely prove to be useful in such cases as the Korean migration to Japan and the United States as well.

Notes

- 1) Sometimes it is called "zero-sum migration," in contrast to "circular migration" (Agunias, 2006).
- 2) Based on the neo-classical theory, Kapur (2003) argues that the rise in the number of migrants to the developed countries over the past two decades reflects the difficulties in the economic and financial sectors in the less developed countries.
- 3) The term 'transnational' is differentiated from 'multinational' and 'international' as follow: the term 'international' is used to indicate activities or programs pertaining to nation-states, 'multinational' - activities by large-scale institutions such as

- corporations or religious organizations in multiple countries, and 'transnational'-activities by non-institutional actors, such as organized groups or individual networks across borders (Portes, 2001).
- 4) This argument is strongly supported by Mintz (1998, 131) as follows: "The massive movement of people globally is centuries old. The identification of persons with more than one community is similarly ancient. [...] The new theories of transnationalism and globalization are not respectful enough of history, especially of the history of exploration, conquest and the global division of labor."
 - 5) V. V. Grave, *Kitaitsy, koreitsy i iapontsy v Priamur'e: Trudy komandirovannoi po vysochaishemu poveleniyu Amurskoi ekspeditsii* (Chinese, Koreans and Japanese in the Amur Region: Report on the Expedition to the Amur Region sent by Imperial Order), Vol. 11 (St. Petersburg: V.F. Kirshbaum, 1912), pp.181-184, quoted in Saveliev (2004, 7).
 - 6) In 1928, a plan was mapped out to relocate 87,749 Korean settlers from Vladivostok okrug to Khabarovsk okrug, but it ended in the resettlement of only 1,408 due to lack of the funds (Pak, 1995, 209-210).
 - 7) Petrov, "Koreitsy i ikh znachenie v ekonomike Dal'nego Vostoka" *Severnaya Azia*, No. 1(25) (1929), p.45. Cited in pp. 17-18, Songmoo Kho, *Koreans in Soviet Central Asia* (Helsinki: The Finnish Oriental Society, 1987). For the general trend of the Korean migrants, see Lee (2007, 126-129).
 - 8) According to Walter Kolarz, the official population of the Koreans in 1927 was 170,000, but the unofficial one was more than 250,000 (Kolarz, 1954, 35).
 - 9) Veniamin, "Amurskaia dukhovnaia missiia v 1870 g.," 1868-1872 g., p. 435, cited in Belov (1991, 39-40).
 - 10) In the early 1880s the number of Korean guest workers, who had shuttled between the two countries, reached the level of 3,000. Most of them came to the South Ussuri Region from the Hamkyeong Province in Korea, working there as handy men, handicraftsmen, blacksmiths, or casters. They used to return to their hometowns, after making very good money at the jobs offered temporarily by their relatives or fellow villagers (Pak, 1994, 40-41).
 - 11) At the request of Han Hyong-gwon, the member of the Korean Revolutionary Government, who attended the Third All-Russian Congress of Chinese Workmen in Moscow on June 18, 1920, Lenin asked the Commissar of foreign Affairs to grant the two million rubles to the Korean Provisional Government, as Kim Ku wrote in his memoir (Scalping and Lee, 1960, 16-17).
 - 12) For details on the Korean ethnic business in the RFE, refer to Lee (2007, 185-211).
 - 13) 'Circuit firms' are represented by all kinds of transnational firms from informal international couriers to large formal firms; 'cultural enterprises' deal with daily and latest items from home country like newspapers; 'return migrant microenterprises' are firms founded by returned migrants to home country (Landolt, 1999, 290-315).
 - 14) This address was delivered at a protest meeting in *Shinhanchon*, the Korean quarter in Vladivostok, when judgment was passed upon the First Korean Communist Party incident at *Shinuiju*, a city on the border with China, in November 1927. Report of the consul general of Vladivostok to the foreign minister, October 24, 1927, "Nihon kyosanto kankei zakken, Chosen kyosanto kankei," [Miscellaneous materials on the Japanese Communist Party, the Korean Communist Party], vol. 1, *Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives*. Refer to Wada (1987, 38).
 - 15) The secretly smuggled immigrant newspapers were delivered mostly to the people in the northeastern border region of Korea in particular. The deliveries of '*Sinhan minbo*' [The New Korean National Daily], for instance, were often made by the returning Korean guest workers in the RFE (Pak, 1994, 202-203).
 - 16) As a matter of fact, formation of the Korean immigrant association was greatly affected by the political situation in Korea. For instance, the *Hanin minhoe* [Korean People's Association], the first social and political ethnic organization in the RFE, was established in 1905, immediately after the Japanese control over the Korean peninsula following the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904.
 - 17) In addition to the KNA and the AEI, there were many other immigrant associations as follows: *Seongmyung Hoe* [Association of Impeachment & Clearness](1910), *Jeonro Hanjokhoe Chungangchonghoe* [All-Russian Korean National Association] (1917), *Amsaldan* [Assassination Association](1910), *Kisadan* [Association of Knights](1918), *Daehan Kookmin Hoeui* [Korean National Council] (1916), *Hanin Minhoe* [Korean People's Association] (1911), *Hanin Sahoeidang* [Korean Socialist Party] (1920), *Noindan* [Association of the Aged] (1919), *Chungnyon Undong Gurakbu* [Club of Youth Movement] (1919), *Idia Dohoe Kumae Chohap* [Idia Town Co-op.] (1920), *Chungnyon Hoe* [Youth Association] (1918), *Kidokkyo Chungnyon Hoe* [Y.M.C.A.] (1919),

Kukook Moheomdan Poyeom Jibu [Poyeom Branch of the Save-the-nation Association] (1919), *Donglip Dan* [Independence Association], *Hanin Rodonghoe* [Korean Labor Association], *Chungnyon Hoe* [Youth Association] (1919), *Minhoe* [Civil Association] (1919), *Imsi Wisaeng Hoe* [Provisional Hygienic Association] (1919), *Iman Jibang Cheongnyon Hoe* [Association of the Provincial Youth at Iman], *Roindan Jidan* [Branch Association of the Aged] (1919), and *Hanin Cheongnyon Hoe* [Korean Youth Association] (1918). *The Dong-A Daily*, August 24, 1920.

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(집수 : 2008. 2. 14, 채택 : 2008. 4. 10)