

## **Divided by Fate: The Integration of Overseas Koreans in Japan**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

**N**o one would deny that reunification is the long-cherished hope of Koreans. For more than half a century, there have consistent efforts toward reunification. For five decades, policy development and implementation, studies and debates, and active movements associated with this long-sought-after dream have been a part of daily life in Korea.

Nonetheless, until the inter-Korean summit last June 15, relations between South and North Korea had been in a stalemate. Since the Summit, however, relations between the two Koreas have become more positive, but doubts remain as to the Korea viewpoint and response to these changes. Such conflicts can be traced back to distorted perceptions and inaccurate information about inter-Korean relations. Moreover, the numerous studies, often duplicating previous ones and based on such limited information, have restricted, rather than helped us to understand inter-Korean issues.

In particular, one area that has been either overlooked or excluded is that of overseas Koreans. Furthermore, studies that

involve overseas Koreans have been conducted by only a small number of pioneering researchers, and even those studies, rarely deal with reunification.

In the process of reunification on the Korean peninsula, however, overseas Koreans are expected to play a significant role. This is even more plausible given that among the total 5.6 million overseas Koreans, 93 percent or 5.2 million, live in one of the four neighboring countries of Korea.<sup>1)</sup> They are especially well positioned to act as a link between the two Koreas during the reunification process. Therefore, reviewing their potential role and effectively utilizing it could be a natural, and perhaps, very necessary step in the journey toward reunification.

Since the June 15th Joint Declaration, overseas Koreans have shown a growing interest in their homeland, especially those living in Japan. Who have long been divided into two ideological groups: *Mindan* (the Federation of Korean Residents in Japan), a pro-Seoul Korean residents group in Japan, and *Chongryun* (pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan).<sup>2)</sup> No doubt, the landmark inter-Korean summit brought about these changes, but at the same time it must be understood that the change was a result of a long, and deeply-felt desire for reconciliation.

Based on this observation, the article reviews the formation of the Korean community in Japan, focusing on the relationship between North Korea and the *Chongryun*, in order to understand the

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1) Ministry Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Status of Overseas Koreans* (Seoul, 1999), p.15.

2) The June 15th inter-Korean summit last year served as critical momentum for the pro-Seoul and pro-Pyongyang organizations to lead the efforts for greater reconciliation. The focus of their efforts was *Hana Matori*, a joint festival for *Mindan* and *Chongryun* as well as Japanese citizens, held at the Osaka Dome on March 25, 2001. The festival was followed by Hanami (Cherry Blossom Viewing) co-hosted by *Mindan* and *Chongryun* on April 1 on Korea Road in Ikunoku, Osaka. In particular, the Osaka branches of *Mindan* and *Chongryun* are leading the movement to reconcile Koreans under the belief that issues should be resolved by all Korean compatriots.

significance of the course of events that led to the change. It further seeks identify means of future reconciliation of overseas Koreans by reviewing the recent reconciliation efforts by the two Korean residents group in Japan.

### **FORMATION AND DIVISION OF THE KOREAN COMMUNITY IN JAPAN**

Koreans in Japan number approximately 660,000, or 12 percent of all overseas Koreans, yet they are divided along ideological lines-- *Mindan* and *Chongryun*. Of course, a significant portion of Koreans in Japan maintain a “neutral” attitude toward reunification, but this neutralism also stems from the split in the Korean community. Therefore, concern and interest in Koreans in Japan will provide a important model in resolving confrontation on the Korean peninsula and uniting all Koreans.

#### *Formation of the Korean Community in Japan after Korea's Liberation*

In 1909, shortly before the Japanese annexation of Korea, only 790 Koreans were living in Japan. But by the time Korea was liberated in 1945, this number is estimated to have ballooned to 2.4 million. And between liberation and the Korea War in 1950, a total of 1.8 million returned to Korea, while some 600,000 remained.

A search into why these 600,000 remained in Japan raises many issues. The people who remained can be divided into two distinct groups—those who had already built a life in Japan with families and did not wish to leave, and those who could not return even if they wished. More specifically, a critical reason behind their decision to stay could be the fact that the U.S. Forces Headquarters only allowed Koreans to bring into Korea a maximum 1,000 yen and goods weighing 250 pounds (113.4 kilograms).<sup>3)</sup> Since they could not to begin to make a decent living in Korean with only 1,000 yen,

Koreans who had lived in Japan for a significant period of time and who had no means of survival back in Korea, chose to stay. Moreover, inflation shrank that paltry amount ever further.<sup>4)</sup> Later restrictions on currency and goods were eased, but not until after those wishing to return had done so.

Second, Koreans who were involved in the independence movement in Japan could not return home because of their connections to the Japanese Communist Party. Ironically, many had joined simply to participate in the anti-Japanese movement through the Japanese Communist Party.

Third, because of Korea's dire economic situation at the time and the scarcity of jobs, some Koreans who had returned to their homeland again went back to Japan.

The most fundamental cause was Japanese colonialization until the end of second World War. All economic and war mobilization policies were directed toward benefiting the war efforts of the Japanese Empire during the period. Consequently, those mobilization and "assimilation" policies led to the dispersal of countless Korean workers all over East Asia, including the Japanese mainland.

A closer view of these Koreans reveals some very interesting facts. According to March 1953 statistics, among the 600,000 Koreans in Japan, about 95 percent were from South Korea; 61 percent from Kyungsang Province, 12 percent Cheju Island, 11 percent Cholla Province, with less than 1.5 percent from North Korea.<sup>5)</sup> These

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3) An October 15, 1945 SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) memorandum on repatriation camps stipulated that non-Japanese repatriates were only allowed to possess currency up to 1000 yen. Kim Tae-ki, *Origin of Issues Facing Koreans Residing in Japan After the War: SCAP's Policy on Koreans in Japan through 1945-1952*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Hitotsubashi University, 1996, p.117.

4) Examples of market prices in Japan at the time: nonglutinous rice-5 yen for 10kg and beef-30 yen per 1 kg.

5) Chun Jun, *A Study on Chongryun* (Seoul: Asia Center, Korea University, 1972), pp.388-389.

statistics are crucial in identifying not only the hometowns of the first generation, but also the links to the second, third and fourth generations.

However, statistics on their nationalities are totally different from what they claim are their hometowns. March 1950 statistics by Japan's Ministry of Justice, show that while only 40,000 (7.4 percent) Koreans in Japan held Republic of Korea citizenship, a whopping 92.6 percent identified themselves as "*Chosun-in*," North Korea citizen.<sup>6)</sup>

The reason was that North Korea has used the term "*Chosun*" in its name since it was established. Because of their long-held perceptions, residents in Japan strongly preferred the name of their old homeland, and the Japanese justice ministry has unofficially classified "*Chosun*" as North Korea.

One other very likely reason could be the South Korean government's indifference and prejudice. Immediately after it was established, the Lee Seung-man government recognized *Mindan*—at the time a very small organization of Koreans in Japan—as the “only democratic organization.”<sup>7)</sup> This drastic decision totally closed the door to those who were still debating about which nationality to choose. As the first generation of Koreans in Japan still very much thought of themselves simply as the people of "*Chosun*," it was extremely difficult for them to choose between two divided nations. So, presumably most of them simply chose "*Chosun*" thinking that it wouldn't be too late to choose after a unified government was established.

As a result of these combined causes, Koreans in Japan were left on the sidelines, ignored by both South and North Korea. To make matters worse, the Japanese ministry classified them arbitrarily,

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6) Min Kwan-sik, *Koreans Residing in Japan* (Seoul: The Asian Policy Research Institute, 1990), p.315.

7) Kim Sang-hyun, *Koreans Residing in Japan: Korean Compatriots in Japan* (Seoul: Hanminjok, 1988), pp.92-93.

based on convenience. Thus, Koreans living in Japan unknowingly positioned themselves to be labeled pro-North Korea simply because they wanted to remain “people of Chosun.”

### *Division of the Korean Community in Japan*

The dissolution of the Korean community in Japan was a combined result of both internal and external factors. One internal cause originates from the establishment of *Choryun* (Federation of Korean Residents in Japan) on October 15, 1945. Due to the support from the Japanese Communist Party, *Choryun* inclined to communism and soon became a far-reaching organization. Their development inevitably brought about the ideological division of the Korean community in Japan after separate governments were established in South and North Korea in 1948. Initially, *Choryun* was involved in helping Koreans in Japan to return to Korea, manage their assets, make a living and study Korean, among others, but with the influence of Kim Chun-hae, head of the *Chosun* division in the Japanese Communist Party, *Choryun* gradually developed into a political faction.

In an extreme measure, after separate governments were set up in the two Koreas in 1948, the Lee Seung-man government tried to differentiate itself from *Choryun* by recognizing *Mindan* as the “only democratic organization.”<sup>8)</sup> Judging from 1950s statistics showing that only 7.4 percent of the Koreans in Japan were classified as citizens of the Republic of Korea, one can easily guess the size of *Mindan* between 1948 and 1949.

Third, to erase all past association with the earlier league of Koreans (*Choryun*) and its successor *Minjeon* (the Democratic Front of Koreans) led by the Japanese Communist Party, *Chongryun* (the

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8) *ibid.*, pp.92-93; Kazimura Hidiki, *Movement of Koreans Residing in Japan: 1945-1965*, (Korean version) (Seoul: Hyuneunsa, 1994), pp.30-31.

General Association of Korean Residents in Japan) was established. Since the foundation of *Chongryun* in May 1955, its loyalty to the North Korean regime and its philosophy have solidified the ideological divide of the Korean community.

Fourth, while acknowledging its necessity, the establishment of diplomatic ties between South Korea and Japan in 1965 served to institutionalize the split between Koreans based in Japan. With formal ties between South Korea and Japan in place, the nationality of the Republic of Korea was formally recognized, while that of *Chosun* remained only a “regional symbol.” A Korean with a South Korean nationality was then entitled to protection under Japanese law, but since there were no formal diplomatic ties between the North and Japan, a *Chongryun* Korean did not have the same protection. This disparity eventually intensified conflicts between the two group of Koreans. Even today, with no formal ties between North Korea and Japan, the cleavage in the Korean community still exists.

### **RECONCILIATION MOVEMENTS AND CHANGES IN CHONGRYUN**

#### *Reconciliation movements in Japan's Korean community*

Reconciliation efforts transcending nationality and ideology have become more evident throughout the Korean community in Japan in recent years. The most noticeable change, a result of the dissolution of the socialist bloc, is that the relationship is moving away from ideological confrontations and becoming more oriented toward everyday existence. A critical momentum was the resumption of high-level talks and improved North Korea-Japan relations in the 1990s. In particular, the two Koreas' decision to compete in the 1991 World Table Tennis Championships in Chiba, Japan as one team, created a sensation in the Korean community. Apparent was the fact

that during the championships, *Mindan* and *Chongryun* Koreans became one and cheered for the single “Korean” team.

Around this period, events co-hosted by the two groups became frequent, and friendly games between the two sides become more common. The highly publicized joint events between *Mindan* and *Chongryun* are: the One Korea Festival held annually since 1985; the Hankyoreh Concert held ten times since 1989; and the Friendly Baduk (Go) Tournament between the two groups which began in 1994.<sup>9)</sup> The two sides have also joined forces in protecting their common interests, visiting local government bodies to demand tax cuts.

The concept of One Korea signifies efforts to break down walls between *Mindan* and *Chongryun*. In the course of their shared battle against discrimination in Japan and their desire to stand tall and strong, the pro-Seoul and pro-Pyongyang associations have both realized the need to demolish the virtual boundaries that existed between them. The most symbolic event is the “One Korea” Baduk (Go) Tournament, co-hosted by the two sides, which was held in Osaka in August 1994. At the time, tensions caused by the *Chongryun* delegation sent to Pyongyang upon the death of Kim Il-sung, made relations extremely intense, but the tournament held in Osaka was a success, with more than 250 enthusiastic players from both *Mindan* and *Chongryun* participating in the games. In addition to the Baduk games, a “One Korea” parade was also held, in which Koreans, regardless of affiliation, marched side-by-side. Other activities included *Samulnori* and dance performances aimed at encouraging all Koreans to overcome their ideological differences. When the “One Korea” event first began in 1985, Koreans were reportedly indifferent, but since the 1990s, Korean residents have actively

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9) The possible suspension of the baduk tournament was considered by *Mindan* and *Chongryun* but it was decided that reconciliation was even more important when inter-Korean relations were intense, and the first baduk tournament was held. *JoongAng Ilbo*, August 15, 1995.

participated in these programs.

New movements toward further reconciliation between *Mindan* and *Chongryun* have been under way since last year's inter-Korean summit. Last June 15th, Kim Jae-sook, head of *Mindan*, sent a message to Han Duk-su, chairman of *Chongryun*, proposing unconditional dialogues and exchanges for peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula and lasting reconciliation in the Korean community in Japan, based on the South-North Korea Joint Declaration. In response, *Chongryun* visited to Kim Jae-sook on August 24th to deliver a message from Han Duk-su.

During the visit, *Chongryun* made four proposals: formation of a joint organization for cultural and sports activities; joint efforts and cooperation to improve the lives of Korean compatriots and to protect their rights; discussions on projects to maintain ethnic pride; and formation of a committee led by the vice chairmen of *Chongryun* and *Mindan* to facilitate cooperation and exchanges between the two organizations.

*Mindan* and *Chongryun* are not the only groups hosting joint events. On December 31, 2000, the Young Men's Association of *Mindan* and *Chongryun* in Tokyo held the "One Korea Countdown." Also, in March this year, a grand "Hanamatori" was co-hosted in Osaka. The event held at the Osaka Dome attracted more than 40,000 Korean compatriots who came together regardless of nationality or affiliation to enjoy the festivities. Earlier, in February, the head of *Mindan's* Osaka branch, Kim Chang-sik, attended funeral services for Han Duk-su, chairman of *Chongryun*. And in April, *Mindan's* regional branch in Ikunoku, Osaka, an area densely populated with Koreans, co-hosted a Hanami (Cherry Blossom Viewing) with *Chongryun* happily participated by more than 5,000 Koreans. Additionally, there are continuous efforts to bring together Koreans in Japan, in areas including Hyogo and Nagoya through regional branches and youth organizations.

*The 18th Congress of Chongryun*

While the June 15th inter-Korean summit a change in relations between *Mindan* and *Chongryun*, change had long been smoldering within *Chongryun*, and these shifts were in effect allowing the opportunity for the two associations to improve their relations.

The initial point of significant shift in *Chongryun* can be traced back to the 18th Congress of *Chongryun* in May 1998, and a definite change was manifested at the extraordinary “enlarged session” of the Third Plenary Meeting of the 18th Central Standing Committee (CSC) of *Chongryun*. At the 18th Triennial Congress, while Huh Jong-man (who had actually been running *Chongryun*) was re-elected as the chief vice chairman, vice chairman Suh Man-sul, in a highly exceptional decision, was named as the first chairman of the CSC, a previously vacant position. Suh’s appointment to the position of first vice chairman is viewed as the critical decision that transformed the ideology-oriented group into a pragmatic one.

These changes were made official at the extraordinary session of the Third Plenary Meeting of the 18th CSC held on September 21, 1999. Suh Man-sul delivered a lengthy 120-page opening address that dealt with fundamentally moving toward a role as a popular organization supporting the real needs of all Korean compatriots.<sup>10)</sup> He began by stressing the desperate need for change with a quote from Kim Jong-il. “*Chongryun* cannot survive unless it changes its role,” and added that in particular, while more than half of the Koreans residing in Japan are third- and fourth-generations, “*Chongryun* had over-emphasized political ideology.” Through his message, Suh emphasized the need for *Chongryun* to rebuild itself into a “citizen-oriented” organization that respects the opinions of its Korean compatriots.

*Chongryun’s* change can be interpreted as an intention to uphold

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10) See <http://www.Korea-np.co.jp>.

and carry out activities based not only on orders from Pyongyang, but also the opinions of Korean residents.

These changes reflect *Chongryun's* perception of crisis in its solidarity as well as North Korea's need for a strategy of change. The North, while taking into account the generational shift, more seriously and desperately recognized the challenges posed to *Chongryun's* main-force group--people in commerce and industry--due to Asia's economic crisis since 1998 and Japan's economic difficulties. As reported, since 1998, *Chongryun* credit unions are being merged or shut down and Donghae Trading, a leading firm in North Korea-Japan trade, has been on the verge of bankruptcy. Under these circumstances, Pyongyang probably had no choice but to come up with a new way to unite *Chongryun* Koreans. During the deputy minister-level talks between the two Koreas, this intent likely prompted Pyongyang to ask Seoul to guarantee home visits. As of March 2001, three delegations have been allowed to visit their homelands.

Changes in *Chongryun* can be seen in various areas. First, the *Chongryun* newspaper *the Chosun Shinbo* has been revamped. Beginning its October 14, 1999 edition, the paper adopted a Gothic type print, added its title in English, and included Chinese characters with Korean (before only Korean was used). In other words, it scrapped the old image modeled after North Korea's *Rodong Shinmun*, and is transforming it into a modern-day newspaper. Moreover, the modifiers preceding the name Kim Jong-il have been simplified. And in its October 11, 1999 edition, an article and photo of Lee Seung-yup, well-known South Korean baseball player playing on a Japanese team, appeared. Likewise, the October 6th edition praised the fine efforts of South Korean Sun Dong-ryul in leading the Dragons Team to its final victory in the 1999 season. In the paper's first revised edition on October 4 1999, *the Chosun Shinbo* president commented, "To respond to the needs of the ethnic Koreans in Japan . . . we have modernize our publication into a popular newspaper that provides information useful to the lives of the new

generation, as well as all Koreans.” In response, *Mindan*’s propaganda bureau chief says that he “never expected such a change,” adding that he hopes that it “helps *Mindan* and *Chongryun* overcome their differences.”

Other changes have also been witnessed. *Chongryun* now allows Korean female students to wear their school uniforms (traditional Korean garb) only at school. It has also established a law school at Chosun University, a landmark decision that overturned its long-held policy not to recognize Japan’s legal system.

The first home-visit delegation, consisting of 63 peoples visited South Korea last September. So far three delegations, a total of 230 *Chongryun* Koreans, have visited their homeland. These visits were agreed upon at the first ministerial level talks between the two Koreas, and what is noteworthy, Pyongyang first proposed it. These changes could enable *Chongryun* to be more flexible in Japanese society and could also drive relations with *Mindan* in a very positive direction. Furthermore, they indicate that efforts should be made to overcome deeply engrained differences between South and North Korea, using *Chongryun* Koreans as mediators.

## UNITING THE KOREAN COMMUNITY IN JAPAN

### *Uniting the Korean Community in Japan*

The Korean government’s engagement policy toward North Korea is aimed at improving relations based on security and reconciliation. Nonetheless, its position toward *Chongryun* is still mired in Cold War ideas. Working to strengthen reconciliation, cooperation and exchange with *Chongryun* Koreans is perhaps a prerequisite to uniting all ethnic Koreans and bringing lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

President Kim Dae-jung in his inaugural address delivered on February 25, 1998, stressed that “the new government will work

to strengthen ties with overseas Koreans and pursue aggressive efforts to protect their rights. We will help overseas Korean to be dutiful citizens in their countries of residence while they remain proud and confident of their native roots.” This announcement was then formalized through actual support and an introduction of a new law on overseas Koreans.<sup>11)</sup>

As mentioned above, *Chongryun* has reinventing itself to better adapt to Japanese society and to seek further reconciliation and cooperation with *Mindan*. Then, perhaps now is the time to discuss redefining the status of *Chongryun* Koreans and ways to build a cooperative relationship along with such developments. In other words, various circumstances call for the engagement policy to be expanded and put into actual practice.

First is the need for reconciliation and cooperation among ethnic Koreans. Reconciliation and cooperation will enable them to override ideological differences and join forces to maximize their collective power. Since the breakdown of the socialist bloc, interactions with ethnic Koreans residing in China and Russia are increasing, but relations with *Chongryun* Koreans have more or less remained the same, since they are classified as North Koreans and the leadership of *Chongryun* is closely tied with Pyongyang.

However, the two Korean groups have contributed to the success of the Joint Declaration. Seoul continues to engage in various cooperation with Pyongyang, as well as to provide humanitarian support to the North. Such efforts are affecting *Chongryun* Koreans as well, as evidenced by a series of visits by *Chongryun* Koreans including Chun Soo-ryul, executive director of the Sakura Group, and famous dancer Baik Hyang-ju.

Second is the need to dismantle the remaining Cold War structure and realize reunification. Considering that the current goal

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11) ROK established “Act on the Immigration Control and Status of Overseas Korean” in August 2000.

of Korea's policy toward North Korea is to ultimately enter the process of reunification by engaging the North to improve relations and to end old Cold War tensions, engagement of *Chongryun* may be an essential step. Moreover, *Chongryun* is in an ideal position to assume the roles and responsibilities of mediator in improving relations between the two Koreas. Currently, due to various restrictions, it cannot assume that role, but through an engagement policy, it will be able to act as a link, like ethnic Koreans residing in China, connecting South and North Korea. For this, efforts must be made to improve relations with *Chongryun* Koreans.

Third is the need to heal old wounds. As mentioned earlier, the divide between *Mindan* and *Chongryun* really developed by chance. In other words, a significant number of Koreans in Japan currently classified and treated as *Chongryun* Koreans never had a say in that classification. But the Korean government has treated all of them with hostility, viewing them collectively as *Chongryun*. Furthermore, the South has never made an effort to understand, or accept their situations or historical backgrounds. We must recall that Korean compatriots residing in Japan were drafted against their will to Japan, and they, as well as their descendants, continue to suffer the effects. To unite the sad, tangled web, we need to adapt on a more open attitude toward them.

Fourth is the need to unite the forces of all Koreans in Japan in order to protect their rights. By sending out a collective message, Koreans in Japanese society, can establish firm foundation on which to protect our interests. To accomplish this, strong cooperation between *Mindan* and *Chongryun* is needed and the hostile Cold War treatment of *Chongryun* with must be abandoned. Many positive outcomes in the Korean community in Japan can be gained by expanding our engagement policy to include *Chongryun*.

Fifth is the need to lessen ideological confrontation and make life easier for overseas Korean by strengthening cooperation with *Mindan*. In the Korean community in Japan, numerous families and neighbors are divided according to their allegiances to *Mindan* and

*Chongryun*, and thus remain hostile to one another. Confrontations between the two Koreas inevitably influence the Korean community in Japan. Conversely, improved relations between the South and North will free the Korean community to facilitate reconciliation and cooperation. So, in a sense, Korea's engagement of *Chongryun* is crucial as it could end the division.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOUTH KOREA'S CHONGRYUN POLICY

Most important when applying the engagement policy to *Chongryun* Koreans is that the targeted group is very different from that of North Korea. The engagement policy toward the North does not target one specific class or group of people, but is aimed at all of North Korean society. On the other hand, Pyongyang regards *Chongryun* in terms of function, as an overseas quasi-diplomatic organization. Therefore, South Korea needs to be extremely careful in engaging *Chongryun*, for if it initiates any engagement policies without considering North Korea's position, that would immediately be interpreted as an attempt to win over *Chongryun*, and Pyongyang will vehemently protest.

In September 1998, the ruling Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) in the South proposed a plan to grant South Korean citizenship and issue passports to *Chongryun* Koreans.<sup>12)</sup> Such an approach, however, ignores the current situation of Korean residents in Japan, and it actually would force Koreans take clear sides. Furthermore, behind the proposed plan was the misguided belief that the Korean community could be united through *Chongryun*'s decline and, as a result, *Mindan*'s expansion.

The next issue involves economic ties between North Korea and

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12) *JoongAng Ilbo*, September 30, 1998.

*Chongryun*. As mentioned, North Korea has been extremely dependent on *Chongryun* for economic support since the 1970s. And especially, since 1990, *Chongryun* businessmen have been the lifeline to North Korea. In an address, Kim Jong-il called them the “main force of patriotic activities.”<sup>13)</sup> In fact, the economic support and business cooperation provided by the *Chongryun* business community have been a critical source in easing North Korea’s economic strain. So, we must consider how Pyongyang will react if their support to the North decreases.

The close ties between North Korea and *Chongryun* are economic as well as political, and *Chongryun* functions as a quasi-diplomatic organ. The relationship between North Korea and *Chongryun* is totally different from that of South Korea and *Mindan*. Hence, we must carefully consider whether our policy toward *Chongryun* in any way harms inter-Korean relations.

## CONCLUSION

Various strategies can be adopted to promote reconciliation and cooperation with *Chongryun* Koreans. First, all overseas Koreans need to override ideologies and political identities and come together as one. In the new millennium, competition between nations will only become more fierce and economic blocs stronger. Now, more than ever, is the time to work toward building the consensus of all ethnic Koreans. Therefore, it must be recognized that the collective interests of all ethnic Koreans can be maximized through inter-cooperation.

Second, efforts should be made to promote ethnic Korean investment into South Korea and to build an economic community between them. Like the earlier example of Sakura Group, *Chongryun*

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13) *Chosun Shinbo*, May 25, 1995.

businessmen are making a considerable amount of investment, but their efforts are hindered by various obstacles in financing and property. The Overseas Koreans Emigration, Immigration and Status Act passed by the South Korean National Assembly on August 12, 1999, defines overseas Koreans as “individuals who had Korean citizenship and Korean lineal descendants.” Under the current circumstances, Koreans who went to Japan before the ROK government was established, and their descendents (*Chongryun*), cannot enjoy protection of their investments in the South. Therefore, to attract investment from *Chongryun* Koreans and develop economic ties based on mutual cooperation, regulations and enforcement ordinances that can complement the current regulation must be immediately introduced.

For instance, if it is difficult to totally open all investments by *Chongryun* Koreans, a compromise could be made to allow limited investment in their hometowns. This would first attract investment in regions that are home to many Korean residents in Japan, such as Kyungsang Province (61 percent), Cholla Province (14 percent), Cheju island (12 percent), thus greatly stimulating the local economies. Such a change is also the hope of local businessmen of these regions.

Third, when South Korean businesses invest in the North, they should seek *Chongryun*'s cooperation and support since it has lengthy business experience and insight into the North. Various types of businesses can be established: joint ventures between South Korean and *Chongryun*; building *Chongryun*'s companies in North Korea funded by South Korean companies. In these joint businesses *Mindan* could also be involved. With such developments, an overall plan could be devised for economic cooperation between South and North Korea, as well as *Mindan* and *Chongryun*.

Fourth, joint events hosted by *Chongryun* and *Mindan* must be encouraged and provided full support. Joint events between the two organizations, especially the One Korea Festival, are good opportunities to overcome their differences and unite as one ethnic

group. In particular, we must provide our utmost support so that this year's *Hana Matori* is not just a one-time event. The support of the South Korean government will facilitate further exchange between *Mindan* and *Chongryun* and furthermore, greatly contribute to resolving the Cold War mentality that exists in the Korean community in Japan.