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The 2013 Translation Transnation symposium provided the opportunity to invite Zhong Zhang, a third generation diasporic Korean poet in Japan along with translator, essayist and poet Kaku Aizawa to Australia. As with most Korean intellectuals in Japan, Zhong Zhang conceives of himself as simply “Korean”, and, in this nonpartisan stance, he has sacrificed a nationality to reaffirm the ongoing relevance of the reunification of the Korean peninsula. Having a stateless Korean poet as our guest provided us with countless insights into the experience and aspirations of Koreans in Japan. Mr. Aizawa’s presence complemented Zhong Zhang’s. A pacifist and ally of all who suffer, his compassionate acumen, manifest in his writings, was equally inspiring.

Translation is generally a solitary affair; however, on this occasion it was a collaborative effort. The working party was not only able to consult with each other, but, more importantly, we were able to consult with the writers themselves. The collaborative process was extremely gratifying as we placed a premium on consensus. Unsurprisingly, our interpretations of the poetry or prose in question differed giving rise to in-depth discussions – we often spent over thirty minutes discussing the suitability of one or another word – and, to our credit, we strategized together, at every turn, until we found consensus. Each contributor brought a different skill set: some had a greater command of Japanese while others had a greater command of English; some were macro-level thinkers, while others were micro-level thinkers. Getting to know the writers and being able to discuss their work with them intensified our commitment to precision and the longer we worked together the closer our connections became.

Needless to say, translating poetry is a particularly challenging mission given the aesthetic, symbolic and rhythmic qualities of the literary art. Zhong Zhang and Kaku Aizawa are both craftsmen of the highest order and we hope the final translations do them justice in summoning the emotive responses their works evoke in the original Japanese.
Redefining *Saram*

ZHONG ZHANG

For some time now I’ve been running a coffee shop in Higashi Osaka. Over the years I’ve been considering the future of my fellow *zainichi* Koreans* and agonizing over how bleak it looks, all the while painstakingly composing poetry.

What are we *zainichi* Koreans to do, as *zainichi* Koreans, in order to survive on this archipelago?

I grapple with these musings behind the counter of my coffee shop, on the outskirts of Eastern Ikaino, as if ensconced in a cave. At long last, like a ray of light, a possible solution emerged.

We *zainichi* Koreans have to create a discrete ‘*saram*’ (person) identity here on this archipelago.

I often call myself *zainichi saram*. I have special permanent residency under the Alien Registration Law of Japan, and my nationality on legal documents is classified as *Chōsenjin* (a national of the previously unified Korea).* Generally speaking, the designated term *zainichi Chōsenjin* can mistakenly imply that one is “North” Korean, whereas, in fact, for many *zainichi* Koreans like me, it should designate that one is simply Korean, neither affiliated with the South or North. Therefore, this term does not accurately represent either my political affiliation or ethnic status.

The term *saram* is the Japanese transliteration of the indigenous Korean word, which generally translates as “person”. I chose this word “*saram*” – the Japanese transliteration of my ethnic Korean language – as a repository for my own identity.

Politically, I do not belong to any nation; I am a stateless “person”.

As a naïve twenty-year-old I fell in love with a Japanese girl. At that time I underwent a crisis of spirit and questioned everything including my stateless designation.
人との恋愛を機に精神の危機に見舞われたがその後、無国籍人としての自覚に至ったのもの、そしてまた、自分が持つ「朝鮮国籍」の「朝鮮」を、一九四八年相次いで成立した南北両政府にあの半島が分断される以前の、一つの「朝鮮」だとする政治的立場がいるということを知り得たのも、ひとえに、あのうら若き精神の危機から脱け出そうとする過程において、私が飲るように読みあった在日同胞文学のおかげであった。

北でも南でもなく、また同時に北でも南でもあると言えるその「朝鮮」籍は、朝鮮籍の父親と韓国籍の母親との間に生まれ、しかも民族的にはあまりにお粗末な生活を送っていたかゆえに南北どちらの政治組織からもまったく疎遠だった私が、あの精神の危機から脱け出し、新たにサラムとしてこの世界を生きてゆきあたって、実際に違和感なく自然に選び得た政治的立場であったのだ。

「在日」とはむろん、この列島における政治的立場を表す語である。だが私たち在日同胞は、しばしば民族的立場の意をも含めて「ザイニチ」と自称する。それはあたかも「在日」の先駆者としての特権的振る舞いであるかのようなだが、実際の「在日」はと言えば在日華人もいれば、在日ブラジル人もいるのであって、「在日」はすべての在日外国人のためにあるべきものであるはずなのだ。

しかしそれは「在日韓国、朝鮮人」という呼称に実によく表されている理由、つまり民族分断の歴史にほかならない。

あの半島の政治的分断が、この列島にまで波及し、私たち在日同胞の政治的立場も分断された。あの半島の分断の苦しみは、同時にこの列島の在日同胞の苦しみでもあり、その意まわしぶ分断を引き起こした政治性に対する忌避や抗の思いが、民族的立場だけではなく政治的立場の意を含んでしまっているその「韓国、朝鮮」の部分をおのずと省略させ、つまりは本来民族的意味を何ら表すはずのない「在日」という

It was zainichi Korean literature, which I devoured throughout this period, that enabled me to extricate myself from my crisis of identity. I realized that the Chōsen status which I was assigned, in fact, refers to the pre-1948 North-South unified Korean peninsula. Indeed Chōsen signified this single political entity, Korea, as distinct from “North Korea” as it is commonly misunderstood in Japan.

Chōsen which does not mean either North or South Korea but simultaneously means both North and South Korea, was a natural and fitting choice of political affiliation for me. Born to a father with Chōsen status and a mother with South Korean nationality, I was raised with little connection to my Korean ethnicity and was not affiliated with either pro-North or pro-South political organizations. Thus I was free from an emotional attachment to one or other ‘side’ of the divide. I lived in the world as a new Saram. This Saram identity was an inevitable and wholly natural self determined political mode of being for me.

The term zainichi (literally Japan-resident) undeniably refers to our political status on this archipelago. However, we zainichi Koreans use the term “ZAINICHI” to refer to our ethnic status. It would seem that we have exclusively appropriated the term zainichi but, in actual fact, zainichi refers not only to Korean residents in Japan but also to zainichi Chinese, zainichi Brazilians and all foreign residents in Japan.

Nevertheless, there is a reason why we zainichi Koreans have had to refer to ourselves just as ZAINICHI because use of the official labels “Zainichi Kankoku/Chōsenjin” embodies the historically imposed ethnic division.

The political division of the peninsula spread across to the archipelago, manifesting itself on zainichi Koreans. The pain that partition brought to the peninsula was shared by us on the archipelago. Our need to evade and fight the political designations generated by this abhorrent division, naturally led to the dropping, by some, of “Kankoku/Chōsenjin” from the term zainichi due to the explicit ethnic and political connotations inherent in the terms. In other words, we came to refer to ourselves as
部分に民族的立場の意と、さらには「統一」への願いまでを強く含めて、「ザイニチ」自称してきたのである。

ただ、その「ザイニチ」も、半世紀に亘る時代と世代を経過するうちに、あらゆる面において風化が進んではまったことを否めない。特に半世紀以上にも亘る「日・韓・朝」の三つともえの忌まわしき関係の上まで、われわれ在日同胞が、善しにつけ悪しきにつ
け、それら三方いずれかに無応な何も従属させられ、いかに振り回されているのかを、在日三世であれの私ですらも重い実感として厳しく思い知られてくれる今でもある。

例えば、二〇〇〇年、あの半島での南北首脳会談、そして二〇〇二年の韓日W杯により、われわれ在日同胞のいか
に多くの者が諸手を上げて歓喜したこともあった。そしてまた、平壌での朝
日首脳会談とその後の朝米の対話の中で明らかになった北共和国の核武装
や核開発の事実により、われわれ在日同胞がいかに大きなダメージを被うかれることになってしまったか。

そのようにこの列島においてこれまで幾度となく繰り返され、今なお繰り広
げられる「日・韓・朝」のこの虚しく
茶番劇の舞台からわれわれ在日同胞が
一刻も早く脱け出すためには、あの半
島の対立政治やこの列島の政治と一
線を画した「ザイニチ」としての自立
した立場を新たに確立するために方法
は無いのではないだろうか。北共和国で
も南韓国でも日本国でもない「ザイニ
チ」のその自立した立場こそが、われ
われの「ザイニチとしての誇り」を保
ちつつ、われわれが半島の統一に寄与し
得る唯一の手段であり、またの列島
「ザイニチの絶望」をわれわれが乗り
越えてゆくその未来への、唯一の在
方ではないのだろうか。私は昨今、そ
のような想いにとりつかれてやまな
い。

ただ私は決して政治家でも、組織の者でもない。まわりなにもひとりの詩
人である。

ZAINICHI, taking the neutral Japanese term zainichi, devoid of ethnic implications, appropri-
ating it to signify not only our ethnic status, but also our desire for unification.

Unfortunately, however, one cannot deny that our term ZAINICHI has become wa-
tered down in various ways over the last half century and through the passing of generations. Caught between the antagonistic relationship of Japan, the ROK and the DPRK for over half a century, for better or for worse, we zainichi have been forced to align ourselves with one of the three states. Even I, a third generation zainichi, am acutely and painfully aware of the way in which we have been manipulated.

For example, so many of us in the zainichi Korean community were overjoyed by the Inter-Korean Summit of 2000 and the Korea-Japan World Cup of 2002. Then news of North Korean nuclear development and crimes of abduction came to light in the North Korean-Japan Summit in Pyongyang and subsequent North Korean-US talks; the latter have had devastating consequences for the zainichi community.

This senseless farce has been repeated countless times and continues to be played out between Japan and the two Koreas. Surely, there is no other means for us to escape this farce here on this archipelago, than to re-
establish an independent position as ZAIN-
ICHI divorced from the political divide of the peninsula and politicking on the archipelago.

It is precisely this independent stance as ZAINICHI, which is not affiliated with the Japanese state, the DPRK or the ROK that enables us to contribute to the unification of the peninsula, while maintaining our pride as ZAINICHI. It is also the only expression of our identity that allows us to move forward and overcome the feelings of hopelessness amongst ZAINICHI on this archipelago. These are the thoughts that continually plague me.

However, I am not a political man, nor am I affiliated with any political organization. I am merely a solitary poet.

Now, when current political institutions have lost their role as anchors of the ZAINICHI community, one could argue that we writers have the duty to step up and do
whatever it takes to create cultural foundations for a ZAINICHI identity. And I, being neither a politician nor a member of any political organization, can only continue to write my poems, even though they are only tiny drops in the ocean.

In short, this is my purpose – to build an entirely new saram identity.

Notes:

1 The term zainichi Koreans refers to Koreans, whose presence in Japan is a result of Japan’s colonisation of the Korean peninsula (1910-1945) as opposed to new-comer Koreans.

2 In effect, this does not constitute a nationality as the nation state Chōsen or Korea no longer exists. Thus, the status renders Zhong Zhang and other zainichi Koreans in Japan who have not adopted either Japanese or South Korean nationality stateless.

3 The author purposefully manipulates the rendering of the word “zainichi” in his text. He uses Japanese (Chinese) ideograms 「在日」to designate its common meaning “Japan-resident” but uses a different phonetic script 「ザイニチ」to suggest another meaning, which he elaborates on in the text. The translators decided to render the terms zainichi and ZAINICHI respectively.

4 Zainichi Kankokujin refers to those who have adopted South Korean nationality and Zainichi Chōsenjin refers to those who have either aligned themselves with North Korea and/or those who have refused to align themselves with either North or South Korea, for whom the word Chōsen signifies the formerly unified Korea. Most Japanese mistakenly assume it only refers to pro-North zainichi Koreans, who aspire to be nationals of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.
在日サラムマル Zainichi Saram Mal*

ZHONG ZHANG

*Saram meaning ‘person’ in Korean

在日サラムの言葉 それは
けっして帰りようのない 日本語と
どこまでも到達しない ウリマルで
つむぎだされる
新しい言葉

日本語でも日本語でなく
日本語からはみだしていて
日本語で捉えようとも
捉えきれない
サラムの日本語

ウリマルでもウリマルでない
サラムのウリマルは
ウリマルを高く見上げ
はるか遠くに望んでいるぶん
低くと近い
足元の根深いところから
芽生え育ちゆく
新しい変異種
たとえ醜くとも拙くなくて
根強いウリマル

日本語の
	鬼子
のウリマル

それこそ
サラムマルだ

The words of the zainichi Saram

No return to Japanese
No advance to Korean
Out of these
A new language is crafted

Japanese yet not Japanese
Breaking away from Japanese
Unable to be captured in Japanese
The Japanese of the Saram

Korean yet not Korean
The Korean of the Saram
Lowly yet familiar
Setting sights on the pinnacle, Korean
Aspirations from a distance
A new hybrid
evolved from a seedling
with roots from afar
However unattractive and clumsy
Our Korean is nevertheless ingrained
黙っててはいけない

The bastard child

黙っているうちにも

of Japanese

この日本語の列島や

of Korean

あのウリマルの半島やらから

This is Saram mal, our voice

得体の知れない強大な力どもの手

Silence is not an option

サラムにすばやく伸びてきて

For in silence,

ぐしゃり

gushari

the powerful, inscrutable hands of

握りつぶされるか

the languages of Japan and Korea

彼らのふところまで

would descend to crush our Saram

まんまと

or sweep it away

引きずり込まれてしまう

smothering it in its entirety

サラムらしく生きるため

To live as Saram

対峙し抗うことができる

We can resist and confront

サラムマルこそ

Our voice, Saram mal

力だ

is our power

つむぎだせ

Awaken
地震の国から南の島の子どもたちへ

To the Children of the South Pacific Islands from the Land of Earthquakes

AIZAWA KAKU

Children weaving through backstreets on their way home from school
don down maze-like lanes
unfazed by the cows, pigs and chickens.
You children, jostling and playing,
I was just like you
half a century ago, a child in Japan,
dashing through the streets with friends
under the liberating afternoon sunlight.
At the time I didn’t know
that our fathers and grandfathers, then soldiers,
invaded your islands.
As in Momotaro’s legendary tale
they were meant to defeat evil villains in distant lands,
but instead killed your grandfathers and grandmothers
throughout your homelands
Neither the Japanese state nor its army
has ever considered the number,
let alone the names, of the people they killed.
No apologies, no recognition.
For seventy years, just complacency.
Refusal to see, hear, or speak
the unsettling truth.
We must deliver this shameful nation
that failed to prevent the recent nuclear disaster
its last rites and redeem ourselves.
Children, whose grandmothers and grandfathers somehow escaped and survived the massacres, take care of them. We too must teach our children that every living being – by the ocean, in the mountains or the villages including the cow, the pig and the chicken – is to be cherished.

きみたちのおじいさんやおばあさんを大事にしてくれ ぼくらの子たちにも海や山や里に生きる人びとを 牛や豚や鶏をもふくめ 大事にせよと教えなければ