

The Global Community of Overseas Koreans

The Chinese Koreans and the Korean Americans

A Vision for the Future

Chong-Wook Chung
Ajou University

I feel deeply honored to be invited to this annual meeting of the International Council on Korean Studies and to deliver a keynote speech on overseas Koreans. I would like to express my profound gratitude to Professor Ilpyong Kim, President of the Council, and others who worked so hard to make this timely and important annual meeting a success. Before I start, let me make some preliminary remarks. First, I do not believe I can speak on behalf of the government of Korea. I left the government two years ago to return to the academic community. Second, I do not consider myself, either as a scholar or as a former government official, an expert on the subject of overseas Koreans. The best claim I can make in this connection is the fact that while I was serving as the senior secretary for national security and foreign policy for the President for two years in 1993 and 1994, my responsibilities included the affairs of overseas Koreans.

During the presidential campaign in 1992 one of the campaign commitments was to set up an independent office for overseas Koreans. Once the new administration was inaugurated, however, the efforts to create an independent office for overseas Koreans confronted several problems, including the criticism that the creation of a new office was against the proclaimed goal of a small government. As a result, instead of a new ministry, an office was set up within the presidential secretariat (the Blue House) to deal with the affairs of overseas Koreans. So the Office of Overseas Koreans was formed as one of the five offices under my supervision, the others being the offices of foreign affairs, national defense, international security, and unification. I still very much regret that a separate and independent office at a ministerial or sub-cabinet level was not created at that time.

Finally, I will approach the subject of overseas Koreans from the vantage point of the overseas Koreans in China, the Chinese Koreans.

I do this for two reasons. First, the Chinese Koreans are one of the largest overseas Korean groups, and the place they have in the global networks of overseas Koreans has been, and will be, increasingly important. Second, it is a subject I am familiar with. While I was serving as Korean ambassador to China, I came to better understand, and sympathize with the numerous predicaments that confronted the Chinese Koreans. Most of their predicaments are quite unique, reflecting their history as well as their special circumstances. It will certainly be presumptuous to attempt a generalization from the case of the Chinese Koreans. But I do hope that there are lessons to be drawn from the Chinese experiences to the benefit of the Korean Americans, and more broadly of the overseas Koreans in general. At least, I believe that your understanding of, and sympathy with, their predicaments will be essential in the making of the global community of overseas Koreans. I will first try to draw a general picture of the overseas Koreans and their origins, the history of the Korean emigration to China and to the United States, in particular. Then, I will discuss the Chinese Koreans, the Korean community they built in China, the impacts the open door and the modernization policy of China and the normalization of relations between China and Korea had on it, the problems they face both in China and Korea, and what needs to be done to resolve these problems. Finally, I will conclude by presenting a vision for overseas Koreans, a vision for the global community of overseas Koreans, a community of culture, shared values and heritage.

A General Picture of Overseas Koreans and Their Origins

First, let me clarify what is meant by “overseas Koreans.” Overseas Koreans have two meanings. One refers to those Koreans who live in foreign countries on a more or less permanent basis and at the same time retain Korean citizenship. Legally, they are the Koreans, the citizens of the Republic of Korea, and are subject to legal rights as well as obligations that the constitution provides to each and every one of its subjects. The other refers to those Koreans who, regardless of their citizenship, reside in foreign countries on a permanent basis. It is the ethnicity, not the citizenship, that qualifies one to be an overseas Korean. It is in this second meaning of ethnic Koreans that I have in mind when I talk about overseas Koreans here.

According to a Korean government report published early this year, the number of overseas Koreans by the end of 1999 was about 5.6 million.¹ This means that Korea has the fourth largest number of overseas expatriates after China, Israel, and Italy. They are all over the world in 142 different countries ranging from the tropics to the frozen tundra. But the absolute majority of 97% of them reside in four

countries: the United States, China, Japan, and the CIS. The United States accounts for 36.45% (2.06 million), China, 36.2% (2.04 million), Japan, 11.7% (660,000), and the CIS, 8.63% (490,000). Furthermore, about 73% of them are concentrated in the United States and China. That is, at least seven out of every ten overseas Koreans now reside in either the United States or China. This high concentration of the overseas Koreans in China and the United States reflects in their own unique way two different chapters in the history of Korean emigration. The first chapter of the history of Korean emigration was written by the Chinese Koreans. It was as early as in the mid-19th century that Koreans began to move into, and settle in, the northeastern part of China, what is now known as Yanbian. Two forces drove them to cross the border along the Yalu and Tumen rivers: one was economic and the other was political. In the 1860s, severe drought of unprecedented magnitude hit Korea for almost 10 years. The northern part of Korea suffered the most.

TABLE 1. Distributions of Overseas Koreans

| Year | Ethnic Koreans | Annual Increase |
|------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1910 | 202,070 | |
| 1911 | 205,517 | 3,447 |
| 1912 | 238,403 | 32,886 |
| 1913 | 252,517 | 14,114 |
| 1914 | 271,388 | 18,871 |
| 1915 | 282,151 | 10,727 |
| 1916 | 328,288 | 46,173 |
| 1917 | 337,461 | 9,173 |
| 1918 | 361,772 | 24,311 |
| 1919 | 431,198 | 69,426 |

To most of these early overseas Koreans, the emigration was not totally voluntary. In a way, they were helpless victims of the rivalry among the big powers. First, in the late 19th century, they were

encouraged, if not forced, to settle in Manchuria by the Qing government, which, fearing Russian domination, lifted the 200-year long ban on entering the region the Manchus long regarded a sanctuary. Then, in the early 20th century, Koreans were once again urged to emigrate to Manchuria in the hope that it would avert the Japanese intrusion there. Also, the fear and suspicion of Japanese intrigue in the mid-1930s led Stalin to order hundreds of thousands of Koreans in the Far East to be suddenly put aboard on trains bound for no-man's land in Central Asia.

By the time Japan surrendered, there were 1.8 million Koreans living in China, of whom 800,000 returned to Korea. During the civil war in the late 40s, many of them fought for the communists against the nationalists. Their contributions were not insignificant. With the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, they became the Chinese citizens, the Chosun minority, one of 56 ethnic groups that made up China. The Korean War saw many of them being forced to fight in the fratricidal war.² Then followed a long period of isolation as the cold war deepened the division in Korea and between the east and the west. It was only in 1992 with the normalization of relations that the Chinese Koreans became part of Korea's global community of overseas compatriots. In short, the first chapter of the history of overseas Koreans, having been pioneered by the Chinese Koreans, was a sad story of forced exodus, humiliation and exploitation, and of victims of the cold war and the division of Korea.

In contrast, the second chapter of the history was dominated by the Korean Americans. Although there were early Korean emigrants who came to Hawaii before 1945, and their number not insignificant,³ it was only after the end of World War II, since the 1960s in particular, that the majority of the Korean Americans began to settle in the United States. The new immigration law of the United States in 1965, the Hart-Celler Act, opened the door widely for Korean immigrants. A massive influx of Korean immigrants into the

United States followed. During the two decades of the 70s and 80s, well over 600,000 Koreans entered the US as immigrants, averaging 30,000 a year. Between 1962 and 1995 the total number of Korean immigrants overseas was 800,000. This means that more than 3 out of every 4 overseas emigrants settled in the United States.⁴

Now, with more than 2 million in number, the Korean Americans are highly respected, both in the United States and in Korea, for what they have achieved in the land of immigrants. In terms of average income, they do much better than the other immigrants like the Chinese Americans and the Greek Americans. In 1987, for instance, the average annual income per family for all national groups of immigrants was \$15,224, whereas for Koreans it was \$18,342. Also, many of them have

made important contributions in America either as businessmen, professionals or public servants. Their contributions toward the economic development and democratization of Korea, as well as the easing of tension of the division of Korea, are not to be underestimated, either.

Certainly, most of the Korean Americans came to America well prepared, much better than the Chinese Koreans, both in terms of the level of educational achievements and professional qualifications. The discriminations might have been less, and the living conditions better, than those met by the Chinese Koreans. Yet, they did it with little help from Korea, the Korean government in particular. With sheer determination, ingenuity, and hard work, they made the second chapter of the history of Korean emigration a success story.

Government Policies for Overseas Koreans

The government of Korea did not have either a vision or a good policy for its overseas compatriots for a long time. It was only in the late 80s that the government began to recognize, and pay serious attention to, the importance of the overseas Koreans. In the 50s it was too impoverished and too preoccupied with the rehabilitation from the destruction of the war to even think of a policy for overseas Koreans. The decade of the 60s saw the enactment of the overseas emigration law and the first group of Korean emigrants going abroad in any significant number. Yet the government was mainly concerned with sending labor forces to work either on agricultural farms in Latin America or in coal mines in Germany. There was no governmental office to look after the overseas Koreans except for a semi-governmental company whose business was to select and send emigrant-workers abroad.

In the 70s and 80s, the government did try to set up strong ties with overseas Koreans, but its policy was flawed on many accounts. Above all, its policy was politically motivated. The primary purpose of the government policy was to win the competition for legitimacy against the North. It was only with the hosting of the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988 that the government began to formulate a serious policy. It was a time when the socialist systems began to disintegrate and, with the diplomatic initiatives called the northern diplomacy, the relations with the socialist countries, including the People's Republic of China, were being normalized. Also, the inter-Korean relationship improved noticeably as a comprehensive agreement governing non-aggression, reconciliation, and cooperation was signed in 1991. The government policy for overseas Koreans finally seemed to have become less burdened with, if not largely free from, ideological and political

considerations.

The coming to power of a civilian government in 1993 provided another turning point. A new vision for overseas Koreans was declared. It called for the overseas Koreans to be better integrated into the political and social system of which they were a part while maintaining a strong sense of identity as ethnic Koreans. Also, it was recognized that the overseas Koreans could be an important and integral part of the global network of the Korean community and could make contributions to the prosperity of their motherland. The efforts to draw up a comprehensive policy governing the affairs of overseas Koreans led in 1996 to the creation of a high-level policy-making body with the Prime Minister chairing and the relevant cabinet members serving on it. Then, in 1997 the Overseas Koreans Foundation was set up.

At the present time, the Foundation is the only effective means the government has to implement its policy for overseas Koreans. It is also the only organization that can render effective services for overseas Koreans. Yet, so far, it has suffered from both insufficient funding and staffing. Presently it is staffed with only 35 personnel, and its operating budget for this year is less than 14 million dollars. Out of 7.9 million dollars designated for supporting various activities of overseas Korean communities, more than 7 million goes to Japan; the rest, including the Korean communities in the United States, gets a little over 830,000 dollars, or a mere 10.5%. The government was more generous in supporting the Korean studies programs in various universities in the United States, with some better-named institutions getting three million dollars to create a single chair of Korean studies. It is not only a matter of budgetary priorities; it is more a matter of philosophy and vision. But before I deal with what the government should do for overseas Koreans, let me go back to the case of the Chinese Koreans.⁵

The Chinese Koreans: Their Hope and Predicaments

Traditionally, the Korean communities in China were highly homogeneous and self-contained. This was attributable to the fact that each community was mostly inhabited by people who were either related to each other or who had come from the same towns in Korea. It was natural that as the immigrants got settled in a foreign and isolated land, people of the same bondage, either by virtue of lineage or geographic proximity, gathered in the same village. Most of the Korean communities were self-sufficient in rural and agricultural villages, and few efforts were made to interact with other ethnic groups. Even contacts with other Koreans were infrequent. Trust was not easily granted to strangers. Remote and poor, yet they were content among themselves, living in the same old way as they did back in Korea before

they had left it. They lived at home away from home. For a long time, they lived in the islands of traditional culture, keeping the same customs and values they had brought from Korea. And they were proud of their culture and heritage.

But now, with the opening and modernization of China, and later with the arrival of Koreans, all these began to change rapidly. The changes came in many different forms. One is demographic. Many Chinese Koreans, searching for better jobs and new careers, left their homes in the villages for cities in China, and further for those to Korea. Just as their grandparents and parents did in the past when they first came to China, at first, one or two members, mostly the younger ones, left home; and as they got settled in the cities, their families followed them. The Chinese call it *xiahai*. It means plunging into the sea, entering the unknown world of wilderness. And they did it in no small way. In Heilungjiang province alone, for instance, more than 30% of the Chinese Koreans have now left their homes in the countryside. In the case of a Korean village called the Five-Star community in the same province, the number of the Korean families shrank from 170 in 1990 to 60 in 1996. It is estimated that altogether about 200,000 Koreans had left their villages between 1990-96. This means that roughly 10% of the total ethnic Korean population have deserted their homes in the first half of the 90s. To this one has to add the 100,000 Chinese Koreans who are now believed to live in Korea. This represents another 10% of their adult population. Without doubt, the demographic change was speedy and massive.⁶

This change was extremely painful and destructive, too. For those who live in the cities in China, life is extremely difficult and unstable. They are vagrants, living under extremely poor conditions. Many people share a small room in the outskirts of Beijing and commute for long hours to work mostly for their fellow countrymen from Korea. Many of them, mostly female, work in the service sector. They entertain the visitors from Korea whose number last year was over 820,000. Also, their lives are precarious, as their legal status is insecure. In Beijing, for instance, more than half of the 60,000 ethnic Koreans living there in 1997 were presumably illegal residents. If arrested, they could be sent back where they are legally registered in Yanbian and other areas in Manchuria. Also, for those lucky ones who made it to Korea and still remain there, life is not much different. It is estimated that more than half of them are illegal residents. Their living conditions may be better and they may make more money than in China, but they also live under the constant fear of being sent back to China if arrested. For those who still remain in the villages in China, life is equally difficult and unstable. It is particularly the case with the young people.

Many of them suffer from the separation from their families. The divorce rate among their parents is increasing. Crime and violence involving gangs and drugs are on the rise. Schools get closed down for the lack of students and money.⁷

The case of a school in Shenyang, the capital of Liaoning Province where many ethnic Koreans live, may illustrate the situation. This school is mainly for ethnic Koreans with the total student size of a little over 1,200. At this school, a local Korean newspaper, *Chosun Munbo*, conducted a survey in 1997. The survey was designed to find out the impacts of modernization on the family situations of the students in particular. The students were asked if they lived with their parents, and if not, why. The result was astonishing. 177 students (15%) lived in homes of divorced parents. The parents of 212 students (18.3%) lived in Korea. 120 students (10%) were not living with their parents for some unknown reasons. Also, 26 students (2.2%) were orphans. In short, almost half of the students at this school suffered from some types of broken families. The remark by the school principal is sarcastic: the open winds hit us hard at the beginning; then, the Korea winds came and almost wiped out the school.⁸ This school may represent an extreme case. But there is no denial that the modernization of China and the normalization of relations with Korea had profoundly destructive impacts on the Chinese Koreans, and the youngsters had to suffer most. With the young population suffering, the traditional Korean communities suffer too. Their values, customs, ways of life, and their culture, so well preserved for so long in China, are in crisis.

This crisis may not be confined to the socio-cultural realm. Its destructiveness may be more serious in the political realm. As an ethnic minority, the Chinese Koreans used to enjoy political autonomy. In Yanbian, they have formed a sub-provincial-level local government, practicing self-rule in many areas of their political and economic lives. Heads of administration in the region are Koreans, and the Korean language has long been the official language, along with Mandarin. The Korean language has been taught in school, and the preservation of the Korean heritage, its culture and customs, has been encouraged. But this autonomy presumes the majority of the population being ethnic Koreans, a presumption that is already in serious doubt. In 1990 when the last population census was conducted, for instance, the proportion of the ethnic Koreans was only 39%, down from 64.4% in 1949. For the Han ethnic group, in contrast, its proportion in the Korean communities increased from 32.4% to 57.56% during the same period. It is predicted that by the year 2020 the rate might fall down to less than 20%.

Three factors may have caused this decrease in the proportion of

the ethnic Koreans in the Korean communities. One is the migration to the cities and to Korea, as already pointed out. The other is the low birth rate among the ethnic Koreans. During the period of 1953-90, the population growth among the ethnic Koreans was 1.49% per year, much lower than the national average of 1.83%. In 1996, the ethnic Koreans in the Yanbian area experienced a negative growth of -1.07%. Yet another is the policy of the Chinese government, which, out of political considerations, has tried to reduce the ratio of the ethnic Koreans by encouraging the Han and other ethnic minorities to move into the Korean communities. The Chinese government has always been extremely concerned about the demand for separation and independence by the minorities, such as the Tibetans and the Uighurs in Xingjiang. It considers the ethnic Koreans another minority group whose political ties with Korea might present a serious challenge to its national integration. The Chinese concern is understandable. Korea has long been recognized for its strategic importance. The division of Korea further aggravates this concern China has for the ethnic Koreans. The autonomous region of the Korean minorities may not disappear in the near future. But there exists a profound concern that the Korean communities in China face a crisis of serious magnitude and that unless proper measures are taken the political, as well as the socio-cultural foundation of the Korean communities, may rapidly disintegrate.

What Should the Korean Government Do?

For the Korean government, this crisis is largely a crisis of faith. The Chinese Koreans have profound feelings of resentment toward the Korean government and toward the Koreans in general. It is so serious that immediate attention and actions are badly required. Their resentment arises partly from the way they are treated. They do not quite understand why they should be treated as if they were foreigners. They resent it most when they are treated as second-class citizens by their fellow Koreans. They resent it just as their parents and grandparents did when they were treated as inferior second-class citizens by the Chinese or the Japanese. For them, Korea is their hope for making the escape from poverty and for a better and a brighter future. It is a new land of opportunities. Going to Korea means striking it big, making a dragon dream come true. It is more than natural that they grab the opportunities at all cost. They do whatever they can to come to Korea, legally or illegally, by ship or air, and on their own money or on money borrowed from relatives and friends. Often marriage is used as an excuse for them to enter Korea. In a way they are not unlike the early immigrants of the overseas Koreans who left their homes in Korea to go abroad either across the continental border or the oceanic divide for something big

and special they did not have at home. For a long time they had lived in China as a minority often under suspicious and watchful eyes for political reasons they did not understand fully. Now, in Korea, in their own motherland, they have to live as members of an inferior class and as second-class citizens under the same suspicious and watchful eyes of their fellow Koreans. Many of them feel frustrated and even rejected.

Of course, the Korean government cannot, and should not, be blamed for all the problems confronted by the Chinese Koreans. Many of them are beyond the control of the Korean government. The Chinese Koreans are the subjects of China. Many of the problems they face have domestic origins which only the Chinese government can tackle. The Chinese Koreans do understand that, too. But even then there are still many problems that the Korean government can and should resolve. Take the case of the law passed by the National Assembly of Korea in August of 1999. This law, defining the legal status of overseas Koreans, stipulates that overseas Koreans are those who once maintained the citizenship of Korea in the post-1948 period. So, the Chinese Koreans, and many others like those in the CIS, are not legal members of the overseas Korean community. They left Korea before 1949 and did not have the opportunities to reclaim their citizenships for reasons well beyond their control. They never gave up their Korean nationality. Certainly, the Korean government, out of political considerations, had to exclude the Chinese Koreans and others whom I called the first generation of the overseas Koreans. Yet, the resentment is real; they feel they are deserted by their mother country, their hope and trust betrayed.⁹

The Korean government should act fast to remedy the damages done by this law. It should restore to the Chinese Koreans the benefits that had been forfeited by their exclusion from this law. These benefits include the increase in the quota for their job trainees, the extension of the length of the period of their stay in Korea for training, for education, and for other purposes, and the relaxation of other regulations governing their entry into Korea. The government should provide financial and other assistance to the Chinese Koreans who are already in Korea but stay illegally so that they can have a decent living in Korea. It should regard these illegal residents of the Chinese Koreans not as criminals but more as its subjects just like other overseas compatriots. Many of them have their families in big cities in China like Beijing who, because they are there illegally, are treated as criminals and live with the fear of being sent back to the villages they came from. They do not want this to happen to them in Korea. Many of them deplore the fact that the Korean government has been pursuing a sunshine policy toward north Korea and that they have been excluded

both from this policy of engagement and from the benefits promised under the law for overseas Koreans. They feel as if they have been doubly discriminated against.

There are many other things that the government can do for the Chinese Koreans both in Korea and in China. Specific measures include more financial help for the Korean schools and cultural centers in China, more investment in manufacturing sectors there so that jobs can be created for the Chinese Koreans, and the building of more technical institutions for the Korean youth. But the most important of all is to make the Chinese Koreans feel that they are indeed members of the global Korean community. This has to be the very starting point of the Korean government policy toward them. The Chinese Koreans constitute well over one third of the total number of overseas Koreans. Excluding them will make no policies of the government for overseas Koreans meaningful, much less successful. Certainly, no visions for overseas Koreans can be complete without allowing a proper place for the Chinese Koreans. A vision for overseas Koreans has to be future-oriented. It must be based on the future of Korea, its place and role in Asia in the coming decades of the 21st century.

A Vision for Overseas Koreans

There are many scenarios about the future of Asia. Different people come up with different scenarios. But many agree that the regional order emerging in the post-cold war Asia may have at least the following two characteristics. The first is that China is emerging as a regional power strong enough to pose as a serious countervailing force of the United States. Despite the different assessments concerning the growth potential of China as an economic superpower, there seems to be a consensus that sometime in the early 21st century it will become an economic giant with enough political and military influence to challenge the hegemonic order dictated by the United States in the region. Too many factors will interact in a complex and uncertain way to predict the exact shape of the order. But, with China excluded from the order, Asia and the world will be extremely unstable.¹⁰ The second is that Korea will very likely be unified in one way or another. The unification may take the form of a single government or some kind of power-sharing similar to a federal government. Whatever form of government it may take, many believe that the division will disappear and unification in a functional term will indeed be achieved. They foresee a greater role for Korea in the region.

What implications do these have for overseas Koreans? I believe one implication is that overseas Koreans will have roles much larger than the ones they so far have played in Korea, domestically and

externally. In the process of unification, for instance, overseas Koreans may have political and economic roles, just as the overseas Chinese have had in the modernization of China and in the interactions across the Taiwan straits. The unification may be extremely costly in terms of the huge investment necessary to rebuild a better and integrated economy. Also, the process of unification may prove quite uneven and sometimes even rough going. Overseas Koreans, the American Koreans and the Chinese Koreans in particular, will have to make essential contributions to make this process less painful, financially and politically, by investing in north Korea and persuading their host countries to be more positive about unification. With unification, Korea will have a larger place in the region and in the world. With a bigger Korea, overseas Koreans will also have a bigger role-- and a proud role.

The other, perhaps more important, implication is that there is a very strong need for a global community of overseas Koreans. I agree only halfway with Huntington when he argues that the clash of civilizations is inevitable and that it will be the major determinant shaping future international relations just as the clash of ideologies was during the cold-war days. I do not believe in the inevitability of the clash of civilization, but I do believe in the importance of culture and to a lesser extent of civilization. I do believe that culture, more than civilization, will have significant influence. Cultural values and norms up to a certain degree may replace the place ideologies had during the cold war days. Nationalism, as the term was used in the 19th century, is irrelevant. But nationalism in its cultural and economic manifestations may gain in importance in the coming years and decades.

It is in this context that I emphasize the importance of the global community of overseas Koreans. It is not a political community in that it does not assume the same political values and ideologies. The global community of overseas Koreans is a community of shared values, common culture and heritage. Koreans are unique in that they are a single ethnic group, sharing the same ethnic origin and the same ancestors, speaking the same language and observing the same customs. This makes all of the Koreans in Korea and overseas members of a single community, regardless of the place of their residence and the political system under which they live. In short, the vision I present to you today for the global community of overseas Koreans is one of culture, the global cultural community of overseas Koreans.

In this respect, I have a profound concern about the future of the Korean community in the United States. In the case of the Chinese Koreans, I pointed out the danger of disintegration of their traditional communities in China as a result of modernization and of the newly

developing interactions with Korea. Now, in the United States, I see a similar danger approaching from a different direction and for different reasons. The Korean community in the United States, as I see it, is experiencing a transition from the first and 1.5 generation to the second and third generations. The first group consists of the original immigrants who were born and lived in Korea for some time before they left for the United States. They brought with them the Korean culture, and in the United States they well preserved it, perhaps a little too well.

The second group, by contrast, were born and brought up in the United States. They are Americans not only in legal terms but more significantly in terms of their values, norms, perspectives, world outlooks, ways of thinking and patterns of behavior. A few may speak Korean, but only as a second language, just as their parents' English was a second language. Language is not only the cultural phenomenon par excellence, as Levy Strauss characterized it; I believe it is the cultural identity par excellence. The second and third generations of the Korean Americans have been successful largely because they did have an American cultural identity. They are the victims of their own success.

The question I raise, then, becomes whether or not the global Korean cultural identity can be reconciled with the American cultural identity. I have no answer for this. I only believe that some reconciliation is possible. At least, such a possibility should not be ruled out, for on it depends the future of the global community of overseas Koreans. The second and third generations of the Korean Americans should be successful both in the American society and in the overseas Korean community. I may sound contradictory. But it is a contradiction that lies at the heart of the future vision for overseas Koreans. Unless this contradiction is resolved successfully, there can be no successful community of overseas Koreans. So far, the Korean Americans have little interaction with other overseas Koreans, including the Chinese Koreans. In the future, they will have to. But what will the basis of these interactions be other than the common cultural heritage all Koreans share? As I said earlier, it is not inevitable that cultures clash; they may coexist. They should, for this is the only way for the global community of overseas Koreans to survive and prosper.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that the overseas Koreans, whether in China or in the United States, are now at a crossroad. On the one hand, they are confronted with a serious identity crisis. On the other hand, they are confronted with the challenge of building a global community for overseas Koreans. Ideology no longer divides the world between the east and the west. Why should the overseas Koreans remain divided, between the Korean Americans and the Chinese

Koreans, between the pro-North Koreans and the pro-South Koreans in Japan? Any form of unification of Korea will be incomplete as long as overseas Koreans remain divided. It is imperative that the Korean Americans take the initiative in weaving the global network of overseas Koreans united by shared values, a common language and cultural heritage. I hope the International Council on Korean Studies will serve as a center of gravity in constructing a global network of overseas Koreans.



Notes

1. "Policy for Overseas Koreans," Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, March 2000; *Saegyoyoi hanminchok* (Koreans in the World), Kwangkyu Lee, Unification Ministry, 1996.
2. Chong-Sik Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria: Chinese Communism and Soviet Interest, -1945*, Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1983; Chae-Jin Lee, *China's Korean Minority: The Politics of Ethnic Education*, Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986; Kwangkyu Lee, *Chaejoong hanin* (Koreans in America), Seoul, Ilchokak, 1994; You-fu Huang, *The History of Migration of Koreans into China*, in *Studies of Koreans Abroad*, vol. 3, 1993, 175 – 198.
3. It was in early 1903 that the first group of 100 Koreans arrived in Hawaii to work in the sugar plantations. The number reached 7,300 in 1905. Some of these Koreans went further to California and even to Mexico. After this time until well after the end of World War II, the number of Koreans who went to the United States was extremely limited. Korea had become a Japanese colony and the belligerent of the United States.
4. *Korean Community in America*, edited by the Korean Association of New York, New York, 1980; *Korean Immigrants in America*, The Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America, Montclair, N.J., 1980; Seong Hyong Lee and Tae-Hwan Kwak, eds., *Koreans in North America: New Perspectives*, Kyungnam University Press, 1988; Eui Hang Shin, ed., *Korea in the Global Community: Past, Present, and Future*, University of South Carolina, 1996; Kwangkyu Lee, *Chaemi hankukin* (Koreans in America), Seoul: Ilchokak, 1989.
5. *Chaeyoi dongpo chungchaek*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, March 2000.
6. About the impacts of the open policy and normalization on the Korean communities in China, *Isipilseogiro maejinhanen choongkuk chosenchok balchonbanghyang yonggu*, (In Search of Strategies of Development for the Chinese Koreans Marching toward the 21st Century), Liaoning Minority Publishing House, Shenyang, 1997, 1352 ff.
7. Woogill Choe, *Choongkuk chosenchokoi chungchoesungbyunhwaeo gwanhan sogo*, (A Study on the Changing Identity of the Chinese Koreans), *Studies of Koreans Abroad*, vol. 8, 1998.
8. *Chosun Munbo* (Korean Literary Review), April, 5, 1997, Shenyang, Liaoning.
9. This law, which has a long title, "Law Governing the Entrance and Departure of the Koreans Abroad and Their Legal Status," was initiated by the government and passed by the National Assembly in August, 1999. It became effective in September of the same year. It defined the Overseas Koreans in two ways: one refers to the Koreans abroad who are the Korean citizens living overseas on a more or less permanent basis;

the other refers to those who once did have the citizenships of the Republic of Korea and now have acquired foreign citizenship. The word, the “citizenship[s]” of the Republic of Korea, which came into existence in 1948, excluded those Koreans who left Korea before 1948, such as the Chinese Koreans, the Korcans in Japan and those Koreans now residing in the CIS.

10. There are numerous works regarding the future order of Asia and the role China and the US will have in it. Only a few examples will be cited here. Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1997; Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Living with China*, Norton: New York, 1997; Ilpyong J. Kim, series ed., *Chinese Defense and Foreign Policy*, Paragon House: New York, 1989; *Korea-Japan Security Relations: Prescriptive Studies*, Sang-woo Rhee and Tae-Hyo Kim, eds. New Asia Research Institute: Seoul, 2000.

