FROM THE LAND OF MORNING CALM TO HAWAIʻI NEI: KOREAN AMERICAN LIFE WRITING IN HAWAIʻI

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ABSTRACT

"From the Land of Morning Calm to Hawai'i Nei: Korean and Korean American Life Writing in Hawai'i" examines how Korean immigrants and Korean Americans in Hawai'i, from the early twentieth century to the present day, have represented themselves. Looking into their individual and collective identities in lyric poems, oral history, autobiography, and memoirs recalls how the earliest arrivals, their children, and their grandchildren have come to terms with their national, ethnic, and local selves, and how their sense of identity changes over the course of time, both within and beyond the initial generation.

In the lyric poems found in Korean-language periodicals of the native-born generation we can trace the significance of the motherland and Hawai'i for these writers' sense of identity, and also how this identity shifts from the "I" or "me" to "we" or "us." These changes create a self associated with the place of settlement, yet still undeniably a Korean self, whose ultimate return to the homeland may or may not be possible. The oral histories of first-generation women, most of whom arrived as picture brides, also represent another "us": often vulnerable Koreans who define themselves in relation to both the present culture and to Korean men.

The self developed by the second-, third-, and in-between-generation Koreans diversifies because their identity is not even defined exclusively by their ancestral land, but extends to Hawai'i and to America. Their representations of themselves and their immigrant parents and grandparents show the continuities and discontinuities of their ethnic and local heritage, thereby revealing an inherited diasporic self that mirrors, yet diverges, from that of the pioneers. Some children choose to assume an American identity,

while others prioritize a self connected with Korea and its people, and still others feel a strong sense of rootedness in Hawai‘i. The “I”s in works of third-generation diasporic Korean writers often take a journey away from their Korean family, local home, and community, yet ultimately return to those they left behind. This homecoming affirms their claims to both the Korean and local legacies that make them who they are.

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INTRODUCTION

"From the Land of Morning Calm to Hawai‘i Nei" examines such self-representing genres as lyric poems, oral history, autobiography, and memoirs written by Koreans and Korean Americans from the early twentieth century to the present, in order to explore how these people have shaped their individual or collective identities. Their representations, produced in different periods by successive generations, reveal how Koreans in their diasporas to Hawai‘i came to terms with their ethnic and local selves, and also how the sense of who and what they are changed over the years, both within and beyond the initial generation.

This study has three main areas of emphasis: Hawai‘i; Korean language and culture; and life writing. The year 2013 will mark the one hundred and tenth anniversary of Koreans' immigration to the Islands and the United States, and of all the settlement centers in the United States, including Los Angeles, Washington DC, and New York, whose populations of Korean immigrants rose dramatically since the amendment of immigration laws in 1965, Hawai‘i has been arguably the most meaningful location for early immigrants and their descendents, including those who later migrated elsewhere. Hawai‘i was the primary destination for most of the early arrivals, and comparatively dense populations of Koreans, including post-1965 immigrants, still live there. Furthermore, Hawai‘i's unique cultural, geographical, and historical environment is very different from the U.S. mainland, and this difference is reflected in the literature produced by Koreans and Korean Americans who have resided in the Islands. Looking at their works, regardless of the language chosen, and in response to the various critical traditions that have overlooked or excluded these works, will expand and enhance our

understanding of how Korean American representations of the self were initiated and have developed since the first Koreans left the motherland and arrived in America.

Although Hawai‘i has been the site for many writings about these Korean arrivals, many studies on Korean American literature do not deal with Hawai‘i Korean diasporic literature. In addition, while many early Korean-language works strongly assert notions of immigrant identity, and are therefore crucial in looking at formations of the diasporic Korean self and community, such works have been overlooked. John Kyhan Lee's dissertation, "The Notion of 'Self' in Korean-American Literature: A Sociohistorical Perspective" (1990) looks into the diasporic identity of Koreans by different periods and generations largely through such works as Youngil Kang's *The Grass Roof* (1931) and *East Goes West* (1937), Richard E. Kim's *The Martyred* (1964) and *The Innocent* (1968), and Cathy Song's *Picture Bride* (1983). Lee's study mostly neglects Korean-language writing of the early immigrants, and does not address Hawai‘i Koreans specifically even when exploring the local poet Song's works. Finally, Lee's dissertation obviously does not cover works published after 1990.

Brenda L. Kwon's 1997 excellent dissertation, "Beyond Ke‘eaumoku: Koreans, Nationalism, and Local Culture in Hawai‘i," was the first critical work that focuses on literary representations of such local Korean writers as Margaret K. Pai, Ty Pak, and Gary Pak, but it does not include Korean-language writing, partly due, as Kwon explains, to "my inability to read, write, or speak Korean" (27). The 2003 anthology, *Yobo: Korean American Writing in Hawai‘i*, has a collection of diverse fictional and non-fictional works, including poems and memoirs written primarily by Koreans and Korean Americans in the Islands, but contains English texts only. I would argue that the linguistic

preference given to English publications by Koreans and Korean Americans creates an unbalanced and inaccurate representation of this literature in general, and the writers' diasporic identities in particular. Hyeran Seo's 2007 MA project, "Colonialism, Plantation and Korean Nationalism: The Poetry of Lee Hong Kee," translates Lee's original poems into English and examines them in the historical and colonial contexts of Korea and Hawai‘i, making it a notable exception in critical work on Hawai‘i Korean diasporic literature. And finally, the general emphasis on the study of fiction in literature departments has led to a relative neglect of Korean autobiography, memoirs, poetry, and other life writing genres, regardless of geographic origin.

This study therefore pays close attention to three marginalized areas in Korean American literary studies: Hawai‘i, Korean-language texts, and life writing. Over the years, developments in Korean American literary criticism and theory indicate a growing interest in a wider range of topics, locations, and language issues. Elaine H. Kim's 1982 ground-breaking book, *Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context*, took a socio-cultural and historical approach to reading the works of Asian American writers, including Korean Americans, that other studies of Korean American literature have followed. Sandra Si Yun Oh's "Martyrdom in Korean American Literature: Resistance and Paradox in *East Goes West*, *Quiet Odyssey*, *Comfort Woman* and *Dictee*" (2001) shows how each of her selected writers uses the trope of martyrdom to reject or accept aspects of identity embedded in Korea's colonial history. In "Younghill Kang and the Genesis of Korean-American Literature" (1991) and "Korean-American Literature: The Next Generation" (1994), John Kyhan Lee sets representations of self in Younghill Kang's *East Goes West*, Richard Kim's *The Martyred*, *The Innocent*, and Cathy

Song's *Picture Bride* within Korea's history and culture to illustrate how Korean American writers have constructed their identities in relation to, or apart from, Korea. And Jae-Nam Han's "Korean-American Literature" (1996) proposes that the dominant theme of Korean American writings is the pleasant and/or painful experience of living in the adopted land, where Koreans have made an alternative home away from the motherland.

Elaine H. Kim's '"These Bearers of a Homeland': An Overview of Korean American Literature, 1934-2001" (2001) surveys Korean American literature by setting works within designated generations, genders, and regions. One of her most significant claims is that "The early Korean American literary voice is largely autobiographical and speaks primarily from the perspectives of members of an elite class of educated and non-laboring immigrants" (152). This remark foregrounds Younghill Kang's *East Goes West* (1937), and most scholars of Korean American literature agree with Kim that this novel is an important autobiographical account of the writer's immigrant experience. Kang and his main character, the non-laboring immigrant/scholar Chung-pa Han, have come to represent the earliest Korean immigrants, and therefore foregrounded ambivalent feelings about the suffering ethnic self because of the loss of homeland and racial discrimination in white America. But other Korean immigrant intellectuals in Hawai'i, such as Soon Hyun and Henry Cu Kim,[1] present a different Korean self in their autobiographical works. Whereas in *East Goes West*, Chung-pa becomes alienated from the Korean community, in Hyun's "My Autobiography"[2] and Kim's *The Writings of Henry Cu Kim*

[1] Hyun served as a minister of Korean Methodist Church in Honolulu and participated in independence movements. Kim was a political activist and editor of such mainland Korean newspapers as *Korean Herald*. He also led the Hawai'i Kook Min Hur as its president.

[2] Its exact completion date is not available, but I assume it to be a little before 1963, when it was modified

(1987), a collection of personal and biographical writings that records his life experience as well as information about other Korean politicians, the authors both represent themselves as deeply engaged in their local ethnic community. Here immigrant identity is closely related to group religious and political activities. Given the demographics of the early Korean expatriates, who predominantly came as laborers, and who stayed within their own community, sharing the same cultural, ethnic, historical, and linguistic roots, continuing to consider the fictional character Chung-pa as representative of the earliest pioneers does not seem profitable. It is my contention that those initial Koreans who settled in Hawai‘i will shift our understanding of the origins of Korean American literature.

A similar shift results from reconsidering the issue of language. Scholars of Korean American literature often comment on the scarcity of writings by first-generation Koreans. In ‘“These Bearers of a Homeland,’” for instance, Elaine Kim observes that “Korean immigrant intellectuals have produced relatively few literary works in English” (160). It is true that the amount of writing by Koreans in general is comparatively small in relation to Chinese and Japanese first-generation immigrants, and certainly to second- and third-generation Korean Americans. But Kim speaks of literary writing *in English*. Since the initial immigrants’ native language was Korean, and therefore the most predictable and comfortable means of communication for them, some critics have asked why the Korean-language works by these immigrants have not been incorporated into Korean American literature studies. Kŭn Jong Lee’s “Korean-Language American

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and typed by a typist named Lenore. See “Bill from Lenore for typing the autobiography” and “Invoice from Studio Blue Print Company for $36.82 for 12 Copies of ‘Hyun Story’ [The Autobiography], to Hyun & Whitney Arch. Assoc.” in *The Reverend Soon Hyun Collected Works*, v. 18, “Autobiography and Other Writings.” <http://www.usc.edu/libraries/archives/arc/findingaids/soonhyun/index.html#volume18>

Literary Studies: An Overview" (2008) and Kim Kichung's "Affliction and Opportunity: Korean Literature in Diaspora, A Brief Overview" (2001) point out this current tendency to neglect Korean-language writings of Korean diasporas, both in the United States and Japan. Kim pays particular attention to such works published in Japan and contends that "The works of Korean writers in Japan . . . made important contributions to both Korean and Japanese literature by expanding their boundaries" (268). Lee focuses upon the States, arguing that restricting Korean American literature to English works creates an unbalanced perspective, because all Korean Americans did not write in English and "Korean-language American literature has rarely been recognized by American literary scholars" (15). My aim is to answer to Kim's and Lee's call for expanding the linguistic boundaries for Korean diaspora writings to unsettle the preference given to English texts when defining and examining Korean American literature.

Some editors have already begun this process with mainland America Korean writing. The six volumes of Cho Kyu-ik's *Haebang chŏn chaemi hanin munhak* (Pre-Independence Korean Immigrant Literature in the U.S.) (1999) contain all the creative works in *Sinhan Minbo* (The New Korea), one of the major newspapers produced in California since 1909, and document the early literary creativity in Korean of the immigrants. Cho's focus is on work published before 1945. Tong-ha Yi and Hyo-gu Chŏng's *Chaemi Hanin munhak yŏn'gu* (Studies on Korean Immigrant Literature in the U.S.) (2003) covers before and after Korea's liberation in 1945. It also includes English texts by Korean immigrants, such as Younghill Kang and Richard E. Kim, and discusses different thematic matters and developments in writings of Korean Americans. Cho's and Yi's and Chŏng's publications answer Kim's and Lee's call for a more balanced linguistic

exploration of Korean American literature. But even then, the writings of Koreans or Korean Americans in Hawai‘i, in Korean or in English, are still missing. This dissertation deals with Korean and Korean American life writing in Hawai‘i, in Korean and in English, on the assumption that these resources will give us more insight into the development of the Korean American state of mind than the existing English resources may be able to provide.

By devoting itself to autobiographical writings of the Korean diasporas to the Hawaiian Islands, this dissertation also makes a contribution to life writing studies. According to Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson in *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2nd ed., 2010), the term autobiography refers to many different literary modes, including autobiography, oral history, memoir, and poetry, whose subject is a life that has been lived and felt by the person who speaks (3). This definition expands the traditional generic boundaries of autobiography, which confine the term to works by literary writers who narrate their own life in prose. Previous studies of Korean American literature have not paid close attention to Korean American life writing, preferring to concentrate on fictional works. The notable exceptions are Rocío G. Davis's books, *Begin Here: Reading Asian North American Autobiographies of Childhood* (2007) and *Relative Histories: Mediating History in Asian American Family Memoirs* (2011). Both pay comprehensive and critical attention to Asian American and Asian Canadian life writing, and both discuss Korean American life writing, but neither specifically addresses the Korean-language works or works by Hawai‘i Koreans. If however we seek to understand the establishment and development of Korean diasporic identities in the Hawaiian Islands and elsewhere, exploring the life writing texts is essential. Expanding

generic, geographical, and linguistic perimeters, this study looks at lyric poems, oral histories, memoirs, and other types of Korean American life writing, in Korean or English, produced by and about Hawai‘i Koreans.

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Sau-ling Cynthia Wong's "Immigrant Autobiography: Some Questions of Definition of Approach" (1991) provides a useful starting point for approaching Korean diasporic life writing because it departs from the western-centered framework that William Boelhower's highly influential *Immigrant Autobiography in the United States: Four Versions of the Italian American Self* (1982) had previously established. Boelhower's study focuses on how ethnic migrants have produced autobiography as the result and a part of Americanization. He identifies such general characteristics as anticipation of the New World prior to arrival, and specific stages of assimilation to American culture through direct exposure. While Wong recognizes the importance of Boelhower's close attention to "the peripheries of American autobiographical scholarship" (142), she also notes that his work obviously relies heavily on Italian American narratives, which differ sharply from, and therefore are not representative of other ethnicities, including Korean and other Asian Americans. Boelhower's assimilationist definition of ethnic American autobiography excludes non-western, specifically Chinese and Japanese American texts, restricting a genre that is actually wide-ranging. Wong further critiques Boelhower's blending of different diasporic generations, the native-born and American-born, and his lack of attention to the specific histories of various ethnic immigrant groups, who moved to the U.S. for diverse reasons—political, economic, and educational.

Wong's argument for more inclusive and more specific approaches to reading ethnic immigrant autobiography goes beyond Boelhower's "all-encompassing" viewpoint, and this study will follow her example by considering carefully the historical, generational, and gender dimensions when looking at how Korean Americans have represented and defined themselves (146).

"From the Land of Morning Calm to Hawai'i Nei" consists of this introduction, three chapters, and an epilogue. Each chapter, for the most part, represents a different generation of literary production: Chapter One, the first-generation Korean Americans; Chapter Two, the second-generation; and Chapter Three, the third-generation. The epilogue offers some predictions and recommendations for how Korean diasporic identity and Korean American life writing will likely develop in the coming years. However, the second chapter includes writings of 1.5-generation, and the third chapter, those of 2.5-generation and post-1965 immigrant generation who came to Hawai'i when little, because all the Korean diasporas do not neatly fall into the generational categories and their works should not be excluded from this study just because of their in-between characteristics. The 1.5 generation here refers to the Korean-born migrants who arrived in the United States at a young age and the American-born who spent their formative years in Korea; The 2.5 generation indicates those born between second-generation Korean Americans and Korean-born immigrants.

The selection of primary texts from each generation maps out the initial linguistic movement from Korean to English, and the emergence of America-born Korean writers whose mother tongue is English. The generational divisions respond to Sau-Ling Wong's call in "Immigrant Autobiography" to recognize the existing gaps—cultural, educational,

historical, and linguistic—between Korean diasporic peoples. Wong maintains that "first- and second-generation ethnics cannot be said to experience and perceive 'Americanization' in the same way" (148), and the cultural conflicts between different generations dramatized in other Asian American immigrant narratives such as Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1950) and Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of Girlhood among Ghosts* (1977) remind us of the different experiences and changing identities of the ethnic immigrants and their American-born children—in this case, as Chinese, Chinese American, or American. Describing the division among different generations of Korean diasporas will similarly enable us not only to learn more about their respective experiences, but to recognize their identity transformations from Korean to Korean American, American, and in the case of Hawai'i, local.

After outlining these chapters, this introduction offers a very brief history of Korean immigration to Hawai'i. Sau-Ling Wong stresses the need to restore immigrants' histories prior to arrival because prioritizing the immigrants' American experience and neglecting their history in the homeland have led to misunderstandings of their self-representations. Shirley Geok-lin Lim's "Immigration and Diaspora" (1997) critiques "the reductive notions of the immigrant as someone without history prior to entry into the Western state" (296). For Korean American diasporas to Hawai'i, this history provides an important socio-cultural and political context for Korean self-representations and identity construction. Korea's extreme circumstances for all the waves of immigrants not only help identify their major motivations for the trans-geographical movement, but also suggest how importantly and specifically their homeland experiences affect their lives in

the new living environment. Hawai‘i’s own history also supplies important contextual information for understanding Korean immigrant and Korean American identity formation. In “Beyond Ke‘eaumoku” Brenda Kwon points out how ignorance of Hawai‘i’s past undermines readings of local writers’ works. For example, Kwon notes that in Milton Murayama’s *All I Asking for is My Body*, the main character Kiyo’s material ambition is often only interpreted as a Japanese Nisei’s “desire to become ‘American’ or ‘white.’” Within Hawai‘i’s historical context, however, his ambition also reflects the growth of Japanese economic power in the Islands (3). My own brief overview of Korean history in the Islands will offer a better grasp of Korean self-representations and identity developments.

This study necessarily also includes works of Korean immigrants who have arrived in Hawai‘i since 1965. Wong’s “Denationalization Reconsidered: Asian American Cultural Criticism at a Theoretical Crossroads” (1995) distinguishes between the early immigrants, and those of contemporary times, when considering Asian diasporas. According to Wong, the latter migrants, and especially those from such developed Asian countries as Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, often have some degree of privilege in terms of education, professional status, capital, and other factors that make the U.S. government often welcome them as potential citizens, whereas the former immigrants not only experienced ethnic marginalization and discrimination, but were also excluded from naturalization until the Immigration Reform Act of 1965.[3] And yet, this study heeds

[3] See David Palumbo-Liu’s *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (1999) for a discussion of the economic, ideological, and socio-political frameworks of the U.S immigration laws and their shifts since the late nineteeth century, and David Leiwei Li’s *Imagining the Nation: Asian American Literature and Its Consent* for Asian Americans’ conflicting position in the United States since 1965. Palumbo-Liu explains how the government’s immigration policies as well as the history of marginalization and racism are closely tied to the nation’s colonial and economic expansion into East Asia and the

Wong's caution against disembodying Asian American experience. The life writing of later arrivals is therefore less central to a project primarily concerned with describing the continuities and discontinuities of self-representations and identity construction in the succeeding generations of early Korean immigrants and their heirs in Hawai'i.

Parameters and Objectives

Chapter One primarily examines lyric poems in the Hawai'i Korean-language newspapers *Sin Han'guk Po* (The United Korean News), *Kook Min Bo* (The Korean National Herald), and *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi/chubo* (The Korean Pacific Magazine/Weekly). According to Duk Hee Lee Murabayashi in "The Korean Press in Hawai'i: 1904-1970" (2002) immigrants published twenty or more Korean-language periodicals during this time. Among them, *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*/*chubo* were major ethnic newspapers, running from August 1913 to December 1968, and from September 1913 to February 1970 respectively. *Sin Han'guk Po* (1908-1913) and *Kook Min Bo* were the official organ of the Hawai'i Kook Min Hur,[4] a political party of Koreans residing in the Islands. The association changed the title *Sin Han'guk Po* to *Kook Min Bo* in 1913. *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* was a private enterprise initiated by Syngman Rhee. Its title was changed to *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* in December 1930, when it became the official publication of Dong Ji Hoe, another influential political organization in the Islands headed by Rhee. While featuring news about Korea, Koreans,

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simultaneous influx of Asians whose images have changed from inassimilable aliens to preferable model minority according to the U.S. projected relations with the immigrants and their original countries. Though also viewing as "a two-way street" (1) the U.S. expansion over Asia-Pacific and Asians' immigration as Palumbo-Liu does, Li points to the contradictions of the American (imagined) nation that legally grants citizenship to Asians and yet differentiates, if no longer attempts to alienate or discriminate, "them" Asians and Asian Americans from "us" white Americans.

[4] This is the official romanization of the party's name.

and social and political issues pertinent to the Hawai‘i Korean community, these newspapers also included significant amounts of literary writings, notably poetry, as well as serialized novels, though randomly rather than on a regular basis.

The Korean selves represented in these newspapers support Rhacel S. Parreñas's and Lok C. D. Siu's claim, "Being diasporic is not a static, monolithic identity, nor does it denote an unchanging past or some kind of preserved ethnicity or primordial essence that needs to be rediscovered or untapped" (12). These critics emphasize the transformative nature of diasporic identity, thanks to the effects of the foreign environment that became familiar to the migrants. As the years passed, the significance of the Korean homeland and the place of settlement for the immigrants' identity changes. In the lyric poems we can trace these alternatives in relation to Korea's and/or Hawai‘i's historical and political circumstances, most notably when the individual poet makes claims for the community, as the "I" or "me" shifts to "we" or "us." These pronouns shed further light on the stages of developing a self affiliated with the adopted land, but also a distinct Korean self that may or may not wish to return to the motherland.

The final section of the first chapter looks at oral histories of early Korean immigrant women, such as Sonia Shinn Sunoo's *Korean Picture Brides: 1903-1920: A Collection of Oral Histories* (2002), Alice Chai's "A Picture Bride from Korea: The Life History of a Korean American Woman in Hawaii" (1978), and Hwa Ja Kim Park's "The Oral Life History of Mrs. Nam Soo Young" (1987). The emphasis on gender is important. The poems in *Sin Han'guk Po*, *Kook Min Bo*, and *T'aepyongyang chapchi/chubo* were written by Korean men, creating an under-representation in the newspapers of early Korean women's writing about their own immigrant experience. Ronyoung Kim's novel,

Clay Walls (1990) and Mary Paik Lee's *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (1990) are among the books that most fully depict the immigrant experience of early Korean women. Both texts present such stories, although Kim's text provides accounts of first-generation immigrant Haesu and her American-born daughter Faye, who live in California, and includes other fictional characters as well. As for Lee, since she belongs to the 1.5 generation, the narrator's experience is different from that of her mother's generation.

In "'These Bearers of a Homeland,'" Elaine Kim notes the presence of Confucian gender hierarchy in Lee's autobiographical accounts: "Although *Quiet Odyssey* is a book by a woman, the writer focuses only on men: her father, her brothers, her husband, and her sons" (166). According to traditional customs, Korean women's social standing, relations with others, and personal identity are largely defined by those of their husbands and/or sons. (This is of course also the case in other male-dominant cultures.) So even when self-representations of early immigrant women break away from the customary dictates that oblige them to the other sex, they maintain the obligation to some extent. Moreover, because oral histories are the cooperative cultural products of the speakers *and* the interviewers, the represented selves often incorporate such suggested models as American frontierism and the model minority, providing more evidence for transformed identity as well as for the discursive dimensions of life writing.

Laura Hyun Yi Kang's *Compositional Subjects: Engulfing Asian/American Women* (2002), which studies such different disciplinary areas as literature, films, history, and anthropology, argues that understanding Asian and Asian American women's mis/representationin in literary, visual, historiographical, and ethnographic texts can

reveal the construction of their identities and cultural knowledge. Particularly, Korean/American women's changing location across national borderlines, Kang notes, "complicates any fixed, homogenous notion of both individual and collective identity as rooted in a single place, state, or culture" (216). The oral histories that this study examines are therefore significant, because they not only record immigrant women's experiences in both their native and adopted country that would not have been presented otherwise, but also allow us to look at female identity construction alongside and/or apart from male counterparts. Most of the early immigrant women came as picture brides. By departing from their native country, they crossed cultural and geographical boundaries. Going to the foreign land to marry a man whom they had never seen was a risk that they were willing to take for opportunities that the recently colonized and male-centered Korea could not provide for them. Examining these women's self-representations reveals how these Korean women continued and/or discontinued their customary gender roles in a different cultural setting—another part of the early Korean diasporas that has been under-represented—and how females neared and distanced themselves from "our" Korean men.

Chapter Two explores the writings of 1.5- and second-generation Koreans: Peter Hyun's *Man Sei!: The Making of a Korean American* (1986) and its sequel *In the New World: The Making of a Korean American* (1995); Margaret K Pai's *The Dreams of Two Yi-min* (1989); Daisy Chun Rhodes's compiled and translated oral history, *Passages to Paradise: Early Korean Immigrant Narratives from Hawai'i* (1998); Gary Pak's oral histories with second-generation Koreans in Hawai'i; and poems and other works of the same generation found in *Yobo: Korean American Writing in Hawai'i*, such as David

Hyun's "Shoot Marbles," Lunch Time," and "I Work Sugarcane Field"; Victoria Sung Hye Chai Cintrón's "Glass Wall"; and Daisy Chun Rhodes' "A Place of Noise," "A Celestial Kitchen," and "Forever Long, Never End." Seon-mo Lyu's "Characteristics of Korean-American Literature and Related Issues" (2001) concludes that "second generation writers give testimony to the sufferings of Korean immigrants caused by the prejudice and racial discrimination of white Americans" (120). The cause of this tendency is reflected rather well in Ronyoung Kim's explanation of why she wrote *Clay Walls*: "A whole generation of Korean immigrants and their American born children could have lived and died in the United States without knowing they had been here. I could not let it happen" (qtd in Solberg, 23). Pai's *The Dreams of Two Yi-min*, Cintrón's "Glass Wall," Rhodes' "A Place of Noise," and "A Celestial Kitchen," as well as Rhodes' and Pak's collection of oral histories of second-generation Korean Americans, also echo Kim's statement, for they tell the stories of that former generation which did not record theirs. The results confirm Koreans' existence on an American or Hawaiian soil that tends to forget Korean history.

In "'In the Valley Beautiful Beyond': Imagination, History and the Korean American Writer in Hawai'i" (2006), Gary Pak argues that the common theme running through the works of second-generation Korean writers, including Hyun's two memoirs, Pai's *The Dreams*, and Rhodes's *Passages to Paradise*, is "the negotiation between acculturating to American society and staying firm to traditional Korean values and considerations" (4). These and other writers make connections with their Korean parents, who retained Korean culture and language, but second-generation writers also associate themselves with America and/or Americans. These works of ethnic descendants

furthermore evaluate how their place of residence, Hawai‘i, has formed their local identity, and how they have come to terms with their inherited diasporic self that resembles, yet differs, from that of the immigrant pioneers.

Chapter Three deals with Glenda Chung Hinchey's series of memoirs, *Like a Joyful Bird* (2003), *Love, Life, and Publishing: a Second Memoir* (2005), and *Look for Me in Hawaii: a Third Memoir* (2005); Cathy Song's collections of poetry *Picture Bride* (1983), *Frameless Windows, Squares of Light* (1988), *School Figures* (1994), and *Land of Bliss* (2001); and Brenda Kwon's poems "(Dis)integration" (1993) and "Century's Lullaby" (2007), and her other writings in "Beyond Ke‘eaumoku" and *Yobo*. Gary Pak's *A Ricepaper Airplane* (1998) and Nora Okja Keller's *Comfort Woman* (1997), "South Korea" (1998), and additional works published in *Bamboo Ridge: Journal of Hawai‘i Literature and Arts* and *The Honolulu Star-Bulletin* are also examined.

This chapter studies how third-generation Koreans in Hawai‘i associate the self with the inherited culture of their immigrant ancestors, yet seek to establish their own sense of who they are. Such critics as Kyhan Lee and Nora Okja Keller evaluate the relations between the Korean immigrant generation and later generations. Lee's "Korean-American Literature: The Next Generation" (1994) observes that "the next generation writers exhibit an obsessive interest with the story of their parents and grandparents, the first pioneer immigrants" (23). Lee argues that subsequent generations search for these roots to deal with their hybrid identity as Korean, as Korean American, and as Americans. On the other hand, Keller's "Artistic and Cultural Mothering in the Poetics of Cathy Song" (1994) asserts that Song's *Picture Bride* portrays those tensions between association and disconnection through the mother-daughter relationship.

The ways Korean American writers revisit and retell (hi)stories of people of Korean ancestry, moreover, follow what Rocío G. Davis calls a "'relational model' of life writing" (*Relative Histories*, 2). Drawing on Paul John Eakin's description in *How Our Lives Become Stories* (1999) of relational identity for women and men alike, through their family, community, or significant other(s), Davis maintains that Asian American autobiography "centers on an introspective psychological journey—often accompanied by a physical journey to the forebears' homeland" (2). The works of Hinchey, Song, Kwon, Pak, and Keller all involve imaginary or actual voyages to Korea by offspring who wish to embrace their Korean cultural and ethnic heritage. With the exception of Keller, they also trace their ancestors' past in Hawai'i in relation to themselves. How these ethnic writers connect to and/or disconnect themselves from their real and imagined Korean (immigrant) ancestors, culture, and/or history will initiate further developments in the nature of the local Korean diasporic self.

The epilogue of this dissertation touches upon continuities and discontinuities in Korean diasporic selves within additional and emerging generations. Here I will briefly comment on the collection *Century of the Tiger: One Hundred Years of Korean Culture in America 1903–2003* (2003), and the four recent volumes of the Korean-language literary magazine published by the Korean Literature Association of Hawai'i—*Si wa hawai* (Poetry and Hawai'i) (2001), *Munhak kwa Hawai* (Literature and Hawai'i) (2003), *Hawai sisim 100-yŏn* (100 Years of Korean Poetry in Hawai'i) (2005), and *2008 hawai hanin munin hyŏphoe hoewŏn sijip* (2008 Poetry Collection of the Korean Literature Association of Hawai'i) (2008). I will also look at Sandra Park's *If You Live in a Small House: A Story of 1950s Hawai'i* (2010) and "Halmoni, I Wish You a Pendant" (2005), a

poem by Nora Keller's daughter, Tae Keller. To greater and lesser degrees, all of these works of Korean immigrants and their descendents, whether autobiographical or somewhat fictional, explore ties to Korean culture, history, language, and people in ways that suggest how Korean writers continue to define themselves in America.

A History of the Hawai'i Korean Diaspora

Koreans' massive migration to Hawai'i began in 1903.[5] Korea gave up its long-standing closed-door policy in 1876 when it opened its ports to Japan, and to the other western powers, including the United States, Russia, and England, in the next decade.[6] Politically, Korea suffered divisions between radicals, moderates, and conservatives regarding the national reformation towards modernization. The 1880s and 1890s, for instance, saw such significant events as the Gapsin coup (1884), Tonghak peasant movements (1894), and the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). The Gapsin coup was led by radicals in support of Japan. The Tonghak movements were organized by peasantry to demand the expulsion of foreign powers, which the people believed were disturbing the nation. And the one-year war from June 1894 to April 1895 between China and Japan was caused by these nations' imperial ambitions to hold the reins of Korea. The Japanese won.

Korea's political instability in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century led to worsening living conditions of the people. Social unrest and epidemics

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[5] According to Kim Wŏn-yong's *Chaemi Hanin osimnyŏnsa* (1959), Ambassador Min, Yŏnn-hwan and his group of four are the first Koreans who came to the United States. It was in July, 1883, two months after the ratification of the Korea-US treaty. A small number of political exiles and students started coming from then on.

[6] Korea maintained its close "brotherhood" relationship with China for a long time, and continued to do so, even without an official treaty between them.

such as cholera resulted from small and large rebellious demonstrations against the already weakened government, and from the 1894 international war (Patterson's *The Korean Frontier*, 103-113). Given this socio-economic and political instability, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association (HSPA) recruitment activities attracted Koreans to the Hawaiian Islands, and initiated their transnational movement. The association was looking for low-paid Asian laborers, as opposed to higher-paid Europeans. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the frequent strikes of the Japanese workers had made them impossible or less attractive as cost-effective Asian labor, substantially threatening the plantation business. The American foreign minister Horace Allen persuaded Emperor Kojong to let recruitment start in 1902, leading to approximately one hundred Koreans' arrival in the Islands on January 13, 1903.

But Korean immigration to anywhere, including the Islands, was abruptly stopped by the government in mid-1905, due to reports that about one thousand Korean workers were suffering from "slave-like conditions" on hemp plantations in Mexico (Patterson's *The Ilse*, 4), and to Japan's strong recommendation, arising from its anticipated wish for the soon-to-be colonized Korea.[7] By this point, Japan already had substantial power in Korea, whose people were developing a strong animosity towards Japan. From 1903 to 1905, more than seven thousand Koreans came to Hawai'i. Approximately fifty five hundred remained; the rest moved to the mainland or returned to Korea (Ch'oe, 17-18). The historians Yŏng-ho Ch'oe and Wayne Patterson differ on the makeup of this immigrant constituency. Ch'oe believes that most of these Koreans were farmers, while Patterson believes that they were factory workers and urban residents. In

[7] Late in 1905, Korea and Japan signed the Ŭlsa treaty, which ended all of Korea's diplomatic relations with other countries.

any case, these migrants saw little chance of bettering their life in Korea and went abroad temporarily or permanently.

Though men could no longer go abroad after 1905, Korean women were arriving in the Islands and on the mainland between 1910 to 1924. The 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan barred Japanese workers from immigrating but allowed entry to families of those—mostly men—already in the country to lessen problems within highly concentrated Asian bachelor immigrant communities (Patterson's *The Ilse*, 80). The system also applied to Koreans because the country was fully colonized by Japan in 1910. The exact number of Korean women who came during that period has been estimated at somewhere from six hundred to nine hundred (Ch'oe, 28). Korean brides' immigration ended in 1924, thanks to the Immigration Act that prohibited all Asians' arrival in the United States. Although a handful of Korean students and political exiles continued to come,[8] it was not until 1965 that Koreans started entering the US in substantial numbers, after the lifting of immigrant restrictions on Asians through that year's amendment of Immigration Act. Although the ethnic immigrants and the picture brides are often referred to as the first-wave and second-wave of immigrants, and those after 1965, the third-wave, in this study both the first-wave and second-wave migrants are called first-generation Korean immigrants or *Ilse*, whose birthplace and native land is Korea.

Arriving in Hawai'i as laborers, most of the initial Koreans worked on sugar plantations from the early morning till later afternoon. Unlike the Chinese and Japanese laborers who came fifty and twenty years earlier, Koreans rather quickly adjusted to the

[8] The 1955 Immigration Act permitted Asians to enter the States but still imposed many restrictions.

foreign environment because of their far fewer numbers than other ethnic groups (Patterson's *The Ilse*, 35). Many converted to Christianity as a result of Methodist missionaries partly sponsored by the planters, and the Korean Christian churches turned into major locations for social and political gatherings.[9] The Koreans also organized the political parties Kook Min Hur and Dong Ji Hoe,[10] which were dedicated to Korean independence. Although between 1910 and 1920 the Korean community split into groups under different leaderships, and stayed divided until Korea's liberation in 1945, events such as the 1919 nationwide anti-colonial demonstrations in Korea, and Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, which drew the US to the Second World War, united Korean immigrants in a shared hope for Korea's decolonization.

[9] David K. Yoo's *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903-1945*.
[10] The nature and work of these parties will be indicated in the first chapter.

CHAPTER ONE: DIASPORIC SELVES OF THE FIRST-GENERATION KOREAN IMMIGRANTS IN HAWAIʻI

The first half of this chapter examines early Korean immigrants' poems and songs to suggest how they reflect the formation and development of Korean diasporic identities in such Korean-language periodicals as *Sin Han'guk Po* (The United Korean News), *Kook Min Bo* (The Korean National Herald), *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* (The Korean Pacific Magazine), and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* (The Korean Pacific Weekly), all published in Hawaiʻi between 1910 and the late 1960s. What this study first demonstrates is the existence of literature produced by the first-generation Koreans. Second, exploring how these immigrants represented themselves in their mother tongue reveals how the early pioneers not only preserved their ethnic identity, but also acknowledged their growing sense of affinity to their adopted place. Third, this study challenges the general notion that poetry should not be considered as autobiographical, and therefore expands and modifies the formal boundaries of the genre.

The latter half of this chapter looks at oral histories of the first-generation immigrant women largely because they are insufficiently represented in the Korean-language periodicals. The poems and songs in the local newspapers and magazines were published at the time Koreans were exploring personal and community identity. Oral histories depend on memory and retrospection, and the represented selves and events are also necessarily mediated by the interviewers and writers. Examining the accounts of first-generation female Koreans will reveal to what degree their immigrant life and identity formation coincides with or differs from that of their male counterparts. Furthermore, these recovered accounts of first-generation Korean women will also show

how their diasporic "I" has over the years crossed multiple boundaries while adjusting to the foreign surroundings.

Autobiography, Poetry, and Korean Immigrants' Siga[11]

In an effort to establish it as a literary genre, autobiography has been defined as "Retrospective prose narrative by a real person" (4),[12] by Philip Lejeune, and this position has been commonly accepted in autobiography studies as a yardstick to determine its generic boundaries ever since. Despite this definition's significant contributions to developing the field of autobiography studies, several critics, including Paul de Man, James Olney, Jo Gill and Melaine Waters, and Leigh Gilmore, have found it rather confining, and thus modified Lejeune's definition.[13] Paul de Man's "Autobiography as De-Facement" challenges the concept on formal grounds by asking "Can autobiography be written in verse?" (920). He ultimately argues that it is "not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree, in all texts" (921). From this perspective, autobiography is not restricted to any prescribed form or genre. Nor should it be confused with "the author *of* the text and the author *in* the text that bears his name" (923), for autobiography mainly relies on "the resources of its medium" (920) that enable it to imitate or represent the supposed real life of the person who writes. If this is so, then verse is certainly among the various forms of self-expression determined and produced by the poet/writer, even though the intrinsic

[11] Siga, which comes from the relevant Chinese characters, means poetry and song.
[12] Philippe Lejeune's "Autobiographical Pact" in *On Autobiography*. This article originally came out in 1975 in French, and it was later translated into English and published in 1989 in the United States.
[13] For further readings that question the general definition of autobiography, see Candace Ling's "Autobiography in the Aftermath of Romanticism," Linda Anderson's *Autobiography*, and Sidonie Smith's *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation*.

instability of this understanding of autobiography rejects any traditional, modal boundaries, and neither confirms nor denies the "I" in question.

James Olney and Jo Gill and Melaine Waters also consider autobiography as something outside its established borderlines, and accept its intersection with poetry. In *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography* (1972), Olney notes that it is more "poetic in its significance than merely personal" (viii), and further contends, "Poetry, like psychology and philosophy, is about life, not about part of it but potentially about all of it. The truth that poetry embodies, large or small as it may be, is a whole truth . . . ." (260-61). According to Olney, just as autobiography represents the experience, feelings, observations, and vision of the autobiographer, so too does poetry, since there often seems to be hardly any distinction between life and metaphor, or between the "I" and the one who represents it. What poetry and autobiography paradoxically share, then, is the virtual impossibility of verifying the extent of their imagination and truth value—the link supposedly binding them together.

Like Olney, Gill and Waters in "Poetry and Autobiography" (2009) emphasize the similarities, observing that the language of lyric poetry "is typically read as referential and as expressive of the poet's own intimate—if veiled—experience or emotion" (3). Drawing on yet problematizing the commonplace that autobiography represents the knowable self through translucent language and recorded experience, Gill and Waters argue that the poetry's lyric "I" is "a construction, a convention" and "autobiographically referential while simultaneously insisting that it need not be" (3). Echoing de Man's argument that the autobiographer mimics life through the available medium, Gill and Waters claim that in either autobiography or poetry, the self is not definable or as definite

as it has been long conceived, but only seen through representations that bear a resemblance to the operations of a life.

Leigh Gilmore's "The Mark of Autobiography: Postmodernism, Autobiography, and Genre," her introduction to the edited collection *Autobiography and Postmodernism* (1994), also offers a reading of life writing in the light of postmodernism. Gilmore maintains that autobiography, generally excluded from both fiction and history because of its lack of imagination and objectivity respectively, actually resists the idea of genre itself, and "can be looked to as a site where clues for new social theory can be found, clues that exceed the limits of autobiography or social theory as they are traditionally understood" (9). Drawing on Michael Fischer, who contrasts the insider's viewpoint in autobiography with the limited perspective of the outsider/researcher in ethnography,[14] and quoting Betty A. Bergland, Gilmore points to the discursive characteristics and multicultural identities of the "I," "'a dynamic subject that changes over time, is situated historically in the world and positioned in multiple discourses'" (10).[15]

The Korean immigrants' siga, which in part derive from their traditional poetry called sijo,[16] anticipate postmodernistic understandings of autobiography as something that goes beyond traditional generic borderlines. Siga furthermore illuminate the ethnic self, rather than the privileged, mostly white, heterosexual men of western culture, and transform, blur, or freely move the actually fluid line assumed to lie between the individual and the community that the "I" belongs to.

Originated and developed during the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392), sijo was a

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[14] "Autobiographical Voices (1, 2, 3) and Mosaic Memory: Experimental Sondages in the (Post)modern World" in *Autobiography and Postmodernism*.

[15] Gilmore quotes from Betty A. Bergland's "Postmodernism and the Autobiographical Subject: Reconstructing the 'Other,' included in *Postmodernism and Autobiography*. See p. 134 for the quotation.

[16] Also transcribed as Shijo.

dominant literary genre during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), and especially among the upper-class, or *yangban*. A sijo consists of three long lines with a formulaic metric system and rhythmic pattern. As for content, according to Korean literary scholar Kevin O'Rourke, "the *shijo* poet gives a firsthand account of his own personal experience of life and emotion" (11), in response to the rise and fall of dynasties, loyalty to the king, parting, the beauty and transience of human existence, and so on. O'Rourke therefore agrees with Olney or Gill and Waters in his observation that emotion can be contained in poetry as well as autobiography. He also notes that the poems originated in music, due to their rhythms when recited or sung, and that they can be conversational as well as personal. This then is the foundation and practice of the siga, which Korean expatriates in the Hawaiian Islands and elsewhere in the United States used to express and represent themselves as individuals and as communal selves in conversation with one another.

Siga,[17] meaning poetry and song in Sino-Korean,[18] served as an umbrella term for all the versified forms, including sijo, contemporary free poems, and ch'angga (verse sung to western tunes) that appear in *Sin Han'guk Po*, *Kook Min Bo*, *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo*. In *Haebang chŏn chaemi hanin munhak* siga (1999), Cho Kyu-ik has collected novels, plays, and criticism printed in *Sinhan Minbo* (The New Korea) before Korea's independence in 1945. Founded in San Francisco in February of 1909, the Korean-language periodical was the organ of the mainland political party, Kook Min Hur.[19] According to Cho, siga was the most common mode of expression for Koreans, and certainly for those from the upper class who had learned and were therefore

[17] Cho Kyu-ik adopts this term in his compilation, *Haebang chŏn chaemi hanin munhak*, and so does this study.
[18] Koreans traditionally borrowed Chinese characters for written scripts; therefore, siga relies on Korean for its sound and Chinese for its meaning.
[19] Hawai'i had its branch.

familiar with classical poetry forms. But the Korean diasporic writers, he further observes, did not compose poems and songs primarily for the sake of artistic, literary creation, but to fulfill the immigrants' current desire for Korea's independence, or as a way to articulate their experienced emotions as a people without their own country (61). Looking into the works found in the Hawai'i Korean periodicals will reveal how the early Korean migrants to Hawai'i represented themselves and communicated among themselves through siga as a familiar instrumental medium for individual or collective expression.

Ethnic Periodicals in the Korean Community in Hawai'i

Korean-language publications began with *Sinjo Sinmun* and *Powa Hanin Kyobo* in March and September of 1904 (Murabayashi, 6-7). Thereafter, until the 1970s, about twenty church and association affiliated weekly or monthly newspapers and magazines appeared. Some periodicals, like *Chonhung Hoyphoebo*, lasted less than a year. Others, like *Sin Han'guk Po* and its follow-up, *Kook Min Bo*, and *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* and its sequel *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo*, continued publishing for more than fifty years. These longstanding publications were the major outlets for first-generation immigrants whose native language was Korean. *Sin Han'guk Po*'s first issue appeared in October 1908, and *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, in September 1913. Their sequels, *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo*, ended publication in December 1968 and February 1970. The numbers of subscribers were at certain points significant. *Kook Min Bo* had more than 1,000 subscribers in the early 1910s, and almost 2,000 when it and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* published jointly from January 1942 to February 1944 (Murabayashi, 22 and Ch'oe, 26). *T'aepy'ŏngyang chapchi* printed about seven hundred copies in early 1924,

and many were distributed to overseas Koreans residing in Cuba, Mexico, China, England, and Germany, in addition to those in Hawai‘i and on the mainland (Murabayashi, 24). Considering that the total number of Koreans in Hawai‘i was between five and seven thousand from the 1910s to the 1940s (Murabayashi, 22), these publishing numbers are substantial. Such publications generally carried news about Korea, Koreans, and social and political issues pertinent to the Hawai‘i Korean community, thus reflecting the interest of their readership in the motherland, their own people, and the new place they were adapting to.

The most prominent Korean-language periodicals were also the organs of the major political parties in the local ethnic community. *Kook Min Bo* was managed by the Kook Min Hur, the Hawai‘i branch of the Korean National Association (KNA). Formerly established in February of 1909, it consisted of overseas Koreans, including those in the United States, Mexico, and Manchuria. *T’aep’yŏngyang chapchi* was founded by Syngman Rhee, an influential political leader in the Korean communities of Hawai‘i and the mainland, and later the first president of the Republic of Korea. This paper later became the organ of Dong Ji Hoe, which Rhee himself established in 1921. These two political papers advocated the main principles of the Kook Min Hur (Kuk Min Hur or Kungminhoe in other references) and Dong Ji Hoe, respectively.

The former party’s doctrine was to support Korea’s independence movements inside and outside the nation, and to work to secure the wellbeing of overseas Koreans by organizing among themselves for betterment.[20] The latter advocated nonviolence and sacrifice, deference to the leadership, and moderating of individualism, in order to

[20] “*Sin Han’guk Po*, *Kook Min Bo* haejae” (Interpretation of *Sin Han’guk Po* and *Kook Min Bo*) in *Kungminbo* (The Korean National Herald).

accomplish Koreans' collective missions and self-sustenance.[21]

Aside from the parties' common yet distinct nationalistic creeds, the Hawai'i Korean community also suffered from its split leaderships, by Park Yong-man and Rhee, from about 1915. The division was mainly caused by Rhee, who arrived in Hawai'i in early 1913. According to Ch'oe, the later comer was dissatisified with the Kook Min Hur's overall administration, as managed by Park's followers, and more specifically, how they handled its financial affairs. Rhee also wished for a handsome amount of steady funding for his enterprises, and had different strategies as to how to achieve Korea's independence (74-82). Although Rhee and his group came to take control of the Hawai'i Kook Min Hur from the mid-1910s to the late 1920s, during which they and Pak's associates went through many disputes involving physical violence and court fights at times, Rhee eventually took it over. Despite this long-standing feud and their differences in political principles, the Kook Min Hur and Dong Ji Hoe shared the ultimate goal of Korea's independence.

Lubomyr R. Wynar and Anna T. Wynar's *Encyclopedic Directory of Ethnic Newspapers and Periodicals in the United States* identifies the dual roles of such ethnic publications as *Sin Han'guk Po*, *Kook Min Bo*, *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo*. These papers serve as advocates for *and* obstacles to assimilation by their intended audience, because they inform readers about the new and different culture and society of the adopted place while also functioning as "the principal agent by which the identity, cohesiveness, and structure of an ethnic community are preserved and perpetuated" (18). Furthermore, the political press promotes ideological principles and

[21] "Foreword" to *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi/chubo*, reprint version that was published in 1999.

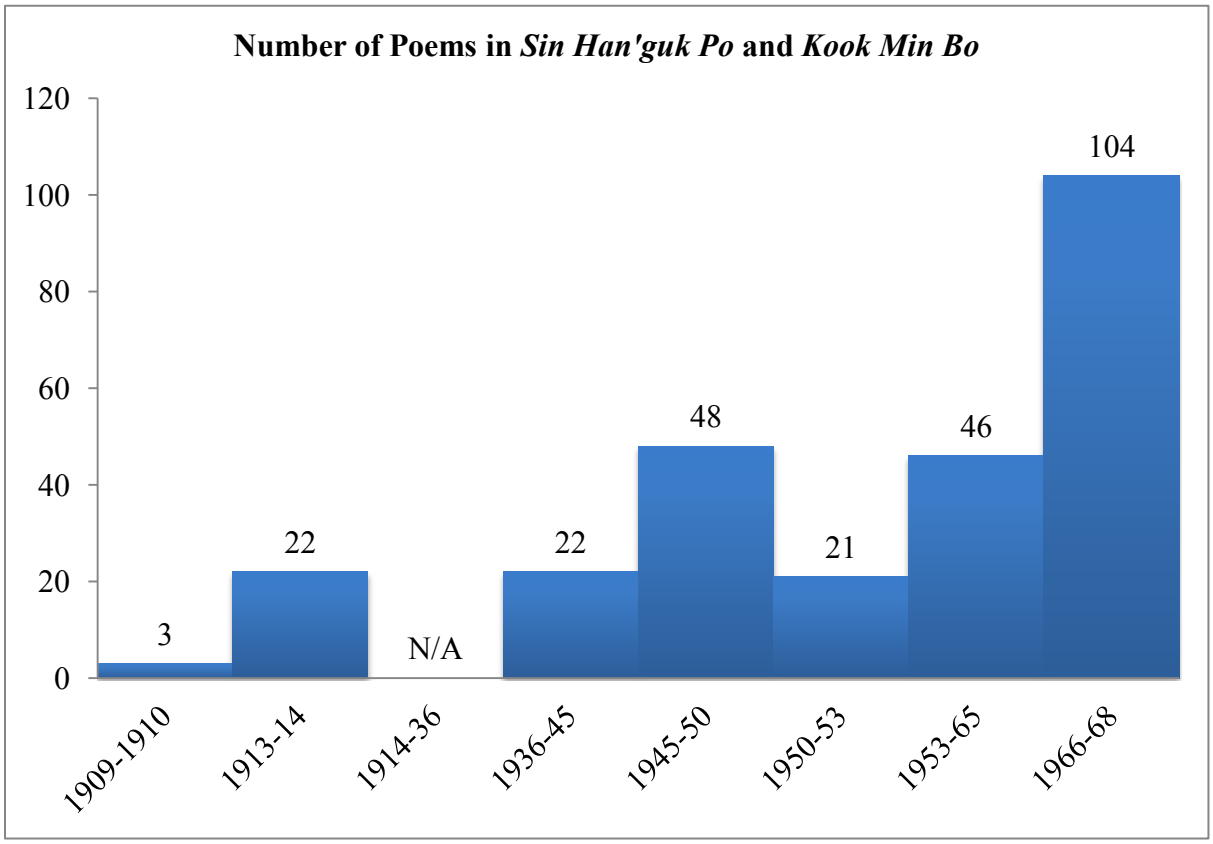
agendas through its contents. The siga found in *Sin Han'guk Po*, *Kook Min Bo*, *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* as well as *Sinhan Minbo* therefore serve the needs of the Kook Min Hur and Dong Ji Hoe, but also represent the experience, feelings, and views of the ethnic poets/singers who speak both for themselves, and/or for their own community. The selves represented in such writing therefore have that same fluid boundary between the "I" and "us" or "our" found in autobiography and poetry.

The self of siga also concurs with Rhacel S. Parreñas and Lok C. D. Siu's notion of the diasporic identity, and with the postmodernist perspective on the dynamic "I" of autobiography that Gilmore describes. "Being diasporic is not a static, monolithic identity, nor does it denote an unchanging past or some kind of preserved ethnicity or primordial essence that needs to be rediscovered or untapped" (12), Parreñas and Siu explain, recognizes that diasporic identity changes gradually because of the circumstances experienced by those no longer living in their native country. Such people necessarily occupy a diasporic condition "produced by the partial belonging of subjects to both their place of residence and the homeland (13)," and from which they see themselves and speak accordingly. And certainly, the Korean immigrants to the Hawaiian Islands experienced the transformative "I," one placed historically and geographically, shifting yet rooted to the places they felt they belong.

The Facts and Figures of Siga in the Ethnic Periodicals

Despite the significance of *Sin Han'guk Po*, *Kook Min Bo*, *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* in Hawai'i's Korean community, and for this study, regrettably their entire press runs have not survived. *Sin Han'guk Po* has missing issues

from November 1909 to February 1910 and from January 1911 to August 1913. The *Kook Min Bo* issues from September 1914 to December 1936 have not survived, and *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* has only five extant issues from between September 1913 and December 1930. Luckily, most issues of *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* have survived.[22] The following chart records the number of poems and songs presented in *Sin Han'guk Po* and *Kook Min Bo* in different periods. The total is over two hundred sixty or so. About ninety of the poems from between June 1965 to May 1966 are reproductions of classical Korean poetry.

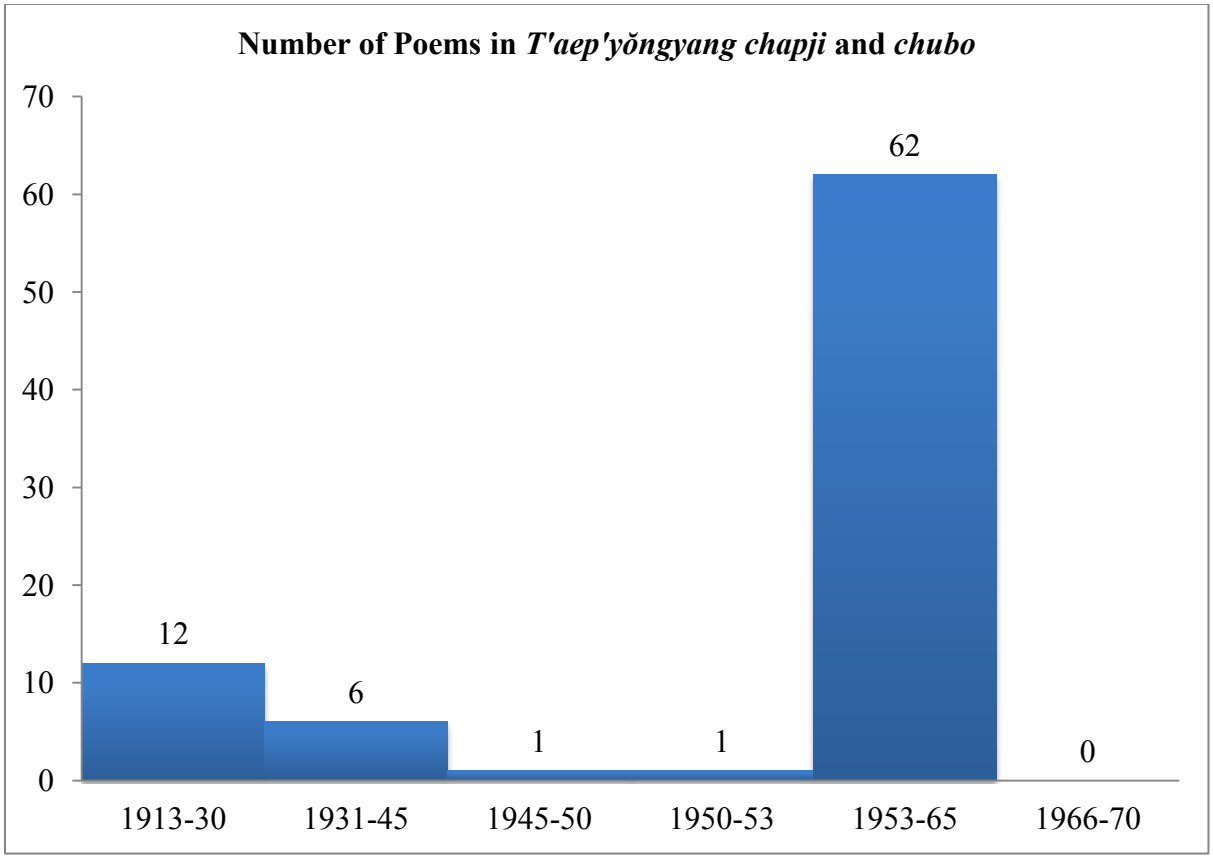


The period divisions correspond to important historical events in Korea or Hawai'i that

[22] See Murabayashi for more detailed information. I have exhausted all the resources to find available issues of these periodicals.

are deemed important for all Koreans and for the local Korean community. 1910 was the year of the Japanese colonization of Korea, and August 1945 was the time of its liberation. In 1950 the Korean War broke out, lasting until late July of 1953, when the U.N. armistice agreement was signed. In the United States, December 1952 saw the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act, which enabled a limited number of Asians to immigrate to the country, and 1965 was the year that finally lifted the immigration restrictions on Asians, including Koreans.

T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo*, published far fewer poems. Here are the results for 1913 to 1970.



The total is eighty two, more or less, which does not include those poems published between December 1941 and January 1944, when *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* temporarily joined *Kook Min Bo*, due to the restrictions on foreign-language periodicals under the marshal law in the United States imposed at the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941.[23] In the mid-1960, the weekly periodical contains several representations of *sijo*, as did *Kook Min Bo*. The rest of the poems were written by Rhee, the periodical's founder and the then president of the Republic of Korea.

Early Korean Immigrant Selves

John Kyhan Lee's "The Notion of 'Self' in Korean-American Literature: A Sociohistorical Perspective" examines the concept of self as formed by the Korean diaspora, and developed from the early twentieth century to the 1990s in the writings of first-, second-, and the third-generation Korean Americans. When discussing the identity construction of early immigrants in the Hawaiian Islands, he relies on such private writing as Lee Hong Kee's diary.[24] Lee argues that many immigrants had a "demoralizing image of 'self'" (40), and even went through an identity crisis because of the loss of Korea's sovereignty in 1910.[25] They were also dissatisfied and despairing

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[23] See Yi Kil-sang's "Foreward" to the *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi/chubo* [Korean Pacific Magazine/Weekly] reprint edition that came out in 1999. Murabayashi, however, sees the joint publication as part of the Korean immigrants' effort to unite their divided local community for Korea's independence. Since 1941 they as a group strived to repeal their status as enemy aliens because they were considered subjects of Japan for having lost their sovereignty. Their cooperative endeavor continued until 1944, when the United States government eventually acknowledged them as "friendly aliens" given their colonial history. See *From the Land of Hibiscus*, p. 195-213.

[24] Yi Hong-ki would be the appropriate Romanization according to the McCune Reischauer system. Yet, the writer spelled his name as Lee Hong Kee during his lifetime. Lee has left a few poems and other kinds of autobiographical writings, including a diary. See Hyeran Seo's MA project, "Colonialism, Plantation and Korean Nationalism: The Poetry of Lee Hong Kee" for more information about him and his works.

[25] See p. 40-41. The critic quotes Lee Hong Kee's story from Bong-youn Choy's "Koreans in Hawaii" in *Koreans in America*. For further readings of Lee's biographical information and poetry, see Seo.

because of the wide gap between their American dream and the difficult economic and political reality in the new settlement. According to Lee, the Koreans felt the need to establish their self-identity in order to overcome these individual and communal predicaments. Their promotion of nationalistic movements through Korean-language schools and local newspapers not only contributed to decolonizing their nation but also helped them repair in a foreign country that dejected self without a homeland to return to.

The poems and songs of *Sin Han'guk Po*, *Kook Min Bo*, and *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* in the 1910s show how Korean pioneers established identities for individuals and for the ethnic community in response to their felt needs. Most of these poems address the cause of national independence, and encourage the reader to participate in it. The following song, "Chŏnjin'ga" (Song of Forward Movement),[26] is the very first poem that appears in *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, and possesses the typical tone of the Korean poet/singer.

I

뒤에일은생각말고압만향하야

젼진젼진나아갈때에활발시럽다

청년들은용감력을더욱분발해

젼진젼진나아가세문명부강케

Looking forward without thinking of other things that will happen in the future

Look active when moving onward, onward.

Young men should work harder to be brave

Onward, onward to a rich and powerful civilization.

[26] It came out in January 1914.

후렴

Refrain

청년의가는압길이태산과갓치험하다

고생함을생각말고나아갈때에

청년들은용감력을더욱분발해

젼진젼진나아가세문명부강케

The roads before the youths are rough like huge mountains

When moving forward without thinking of hardships

Young men should work harder to be brave

Onward, onward to a rich and powerful civilization

II

오고가는바람형셰맹렬한것은

무형무색공기들이화합함이오

오리의젼진하는문명기샹은

노심초사힘써함이이것안인가

The reason why the state of winds coming and going is violent

is because formless and colorless air unites

Our civilized spirit moves forward

because of the fact that we toil and take great pains

후렴

Refrain

. . .

III

태평양과대셔양에무한한물은

산곡간에젹은물이회합함이오

우리들의모든사업셩취되기는

千신만고불고함이이것안인가

The infinite waters of the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean

exist because of the gathering of a little water between mountain valleys

The reason all of our enterprises will be achieved

is because we will not mind going through a great struggle (1-16)[27]

후렴

Refrain

. . .

The magazine editor substitutes "Chŏnjin'ga" for the new year's congratulatory message in hopes of drawing "our Koreans' joint advance" (6) toward an entirely different and better future. According to him, this song was composed by an anonymous writer in Korea and frequently sung by Korean students in the country. Because of its nationalistic tendency, it has been prohibited by the Japanese government. Publishing it will spread it to overseas Koreans, and its appearance in this Hawai'i publication indicates the close connections between native Koreans, regardless of where they are, engendered by the song.

But "Chŏnjin'ga" also articulates an envisioned identity for the diasporic Korean community. The authoritative speaker calls on "Ch'ŏngnyŏn" (young men) to use their

[27] All the translated works in this study is mine, unless noted otherwise.

bravery and perseverance to build a "rich and powerful civilization"—a sharp contrast to "the demoralizing image of 'self'" that Lee identifies among the first-generation Koreans in Hawai'i. This imagined strong nation differs greatly from not only the current disappointing circumstances in the colonized motherland, but from the Koreans' experience in their adopted country. The song offers a vision for their future. "Chŏnjin'ga" addresses the listeners as energetic youths. It further advocates a collective identity by highlighting and demanding "our" solidarity to accomplish the shared nationalistic objective, just as "the infinite waters of the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean" come from "the gathering of a little water between mountain valleys." Just as the work banned in Korea connects Korean nationals and the immigrants in Hawai'i, so too does the fluid movement between the speaker and the audience breaks the boundaries separating "us"—an ethnic community spread over huge geographical spaces.

The voice of "Chŏnjin'ga" resonates in several poems by Park Yong-man (Pak Yong-man in other references), member of the Kook Min Hur in Hawai'i and an influential political leader in the local Korean community around the 1910s (Hyun, 26-31). Editor of *Kook Min Bo* from August 1913 to August 1914, Park presumably composed jointly or by himself the anonymous ten poems of "Kungmin p'ung a" (People's Wind). Most express explicitly or implicitly the writer's wish for Korea's liberation. A poem Park also published in *Kook Min Bo* on August 13, 1913 echoes the theme of the "Kungmin p'ung a" poems, illuminating the resentment and sorrows of a patriot over the loss of the motherland:

천지가 적다 말라

나의 한을 능히 용납

천지가 크다 말라

나의 몸을 둘곳이되

그러면 천지만물을

나 홀로 용납

Do not say the earth and the sky are small

They are big enough to deal with my han[28] [without difficulty]

Do not say the earth and the sky are big

They are places where I will put my body

Then all their creatures

I will deal with by myself

This poem not only speaks for the poet himself but also records the *han* of the Korean immigrants against the Japanese colonizers who now keep them apart from their native country. Park belonged to the commoner's class and participated in nationalistic activities while in Korea. With the military encroachment of the Japanese, however, he fled to the mainland USA in 1904, where he served as an editor of *Sinhan Minbo* (Murabayashi, 20).[29] In 1912 Park moved to the Islands and joined the local community. "My han" therefore derives from his personal, nationalistic experience with the Japanese. The juxtaposition of this emotion with "the earth and the sky" emphasizes the in/extensive degree of animosity he has towards those who have displaced him from the family and home, a *han* which the seemingly limitless "earth and the sky" cannot contain. But the

[28] Han could mean either limitedness or Koreans' deep-seated grudge that imbued with sorrows, stays within them for a long time, if not eternally. In either case it points to the embittered and sad feelings of Koreans, including the writer Pak, himself, in and outside the colonized motherland because of their current, limited circumstance.

[29] For more biographical information, see Hyun's *A Condensed History of the Kungminhoe* (26-31), and Henry Cu Kim's *Writings of Henry Cu Kim*.

speaker's entrenched bitterness and sense of dislocation also reflect the similar situation of his political associates and of the ethnic group as people without a country. The determination and mental strength of the represented self are not only those of the writer himself but of the implied "us" as well.

The cry of "Chŏnjin'ga" and the *han* and resolution of the self in Park's poem reveal the sort of identity that *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* and *Kook Min Bo* both imagined for Koreans as a people without a country of their own. And yet, for all the similarities between the two periodicals in how they approach their nationalistic goals, and represent the diasporic "I," *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* links the ethnic community far more strongly with Christianity. David Yoo's *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903-1945* (2010) explains how the ethnic communities in the Hawaiian Islands and on the U.S. mainland maintained their Korean identity. He contends that Christianity played a very important role in promoting the nationalistic movements of the early expatriates through its church services and social gatherings, and by advocating for "independence through the message found in the Bible about liberation and freedom" (12). As individuals and as a nation, they take inspiration from the biblical verses that exhort to endure and fight for the ultimate deliverance in the name of Christ. According to Yoo, the Koreans in Hawai'i started their religious activities as early as 1903. While many of them were already Christians before leaving Korea, thanks to American missionary work, others converted after their arrival. Most members of the Kook Min Hur and Dong Ji Hoe were therefore also active in the Korean Methodist Church in the Islands, until Rhee, the founder of *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, established the Christian Church in 1918.

The siga of *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi* forge much stronger relations between the

Koreans' patriotic movements and Christianity. In April 1914, English hymns were published in translation, including "Onward, Christian Soldiers," which suggests that the Korean community saw itself as both religious and political army. Though the poem has four stanzas and a chorus, only the first is presented here.[30] The English version after the Korean relies on its original:

그리스도군사

앞셔나가세

십자긔압세고

젼댱에가듯

예수거나리샤

젹병치시니

긧발가난대로

싸홈나가세

후렴

그리스도군사

압셔나가세

십자가압세고

젼댱에가듯

Onward, Christian soldiers!

Marching as to war,

[30] See the appendix 1 for the rest. The Korean verses changes the arrangement of the original. For instance, the translated fourth line, "젼댱에 가듯" is equivalent to the original's second line: "Marching as to war."

With the cross of Jesus

Going on before.

Christ, the royal Master,

Leads against the foe;

Forward into battle,

See his banners go!

Chorus

Onward, Christian soldiers!

Marching as to war,

With the cross of Jesus

Going on before.

This famous hymn is similar to "Chŏnjin'ga," thanks to its vigorous voice, and strong encouragement to move forward for the cause. "Chŏnjin'ga" urges young fighters formed in a political cause, but the tone is righteous. "Onward, Christian Soldiers" exhorts the spiritual warriors against their enemy, but the introduction notes that the hymn books that contained "Onward Christian soldiers" were confiscated by the Japanese colonial government and barred from being sold in Korea—a parallel to the barring of "Chŏnjin'ga." This information reflects the religious and political oppression that native Koreans were experiencing, and confirms that the colonized, including expatriates, linked their situation to the persecuted in the Bible. Since Koreans' independence movements and Christianity went hand in hand, printing "Onward, Christ Soldiers" encouraged members of the ethnic community to equate their individual and group identity with "Christian soldiers."

Since the archives of the *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo*, the subsequent title of *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, are missing a great many issues from 1914 and 1936, it is difficult to trace how first-generation Korean immigrants represented themselves during the period, and even more difficult to track changes, if any, in their identity formation. The year of 1919, however, was pivotal for Koreans in and outside the country. In response to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of 1918, which advocated the establishment of a nation's government by its own people, Korean nationalists and their followers initiated the 1919 March First Movement, or Samil undong. Following the proclamation of a Declaration of Independence, millions of Koreans participated in non-violent and national demonstrations against the Japanese colonial government (Kim Do-Hyung and Ch'oe Yŏng-ho, 123). After a brutal military suppression, in April, the nationalists organized the Provisional Government of Korea in April in China, and promoted the independence movements until 1945, when Korea finally became liberated with the help of Allied Forces.

The March First Movement stimulated the patriotism of the early Korean migrants in the Islands. To that point, Koreans had been split into two groups under the leadership of Park Yong-man and Syngman Rhee, the then leader of the Hawai'i Kook Min Hur. News of the Movement brought the divided community together, instilling optimism into the nation-less people, but this unity lasted only for about six months, because of the leaders' ultimate failure to overcome their divergent ideas of how to achieve Korea's independence. While Park, leading the Hawai'i Branch of the Korean National Independence League (Tae Chosŏn Tongnipdan Hawai'i Chibu) established on March 3, 1919, called for enhancing the immigrants' military power to wage a war

against the Japanese colonizers, Rhee and his followers advocated improving political and diplomatic relations with the U.S. government, which could help free the colonized homeland. Ultimately, Park and Rhee could not overcome their different approaches to achieving Korean independence, dividing the ethnic group again.[31] And as the Japanese occupation in Korea wore on, the expatriates gradually lost hope for the nation's freedom, and in their own return.

Although the disappearance of copies of *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* in the late 1910s prevents us from examining representations of first-generation Koreans in Hawai'i in response to the March First Movement, the corresponding mainland newspaper, *Sinhan Minbo*, has a full run of issues, and its siga offer a glimpse of immigrants' response. For example, "Toknip kyŏngch'uk" (Celebration of Independence) (Cho, 166), an anonymous poem that appeared on March 22, 1919, illustrates the impact of the national demonstrations on overseas Koreans:

우리 독립 신고한 날

어룬 아이 동력일심.

더 원슈의 총알 한 알

혈젼분투 우리 책임.

악독하다 원슈의 칼

살피소셔 뎌 하나님!

독립션셔 쥐인 그 팔

. . .

[31] For more information on the split leadership and its political context, and on the impact of the March First Movement on Koreans in the local community, see Kim and Ch'oe.

동포들아 어셔 분발

쉬지말고 무거운 짐

힘들 쓰라 국가 부활

생명재산 모다 밧침

독립셩공 하난 그날

자유복락 갓치 누림

On the day of declaring our independence

Adults and children are united in one heart and power.

Then a single bullet came from the enemy

Desperate struggle is our responsibility.

The enemy's sword is cruel.

Please, God, look over us!

We who hold the Declaration of Independence

. . .

Comrades, let's try harder promtly

without resting even with this heavy burden

And do our best to revive our nation

Life and property will be offered to all

On the day of our successful independence.

Let's enjoy together freedom, fortune, and joy!

This poem depicts the galvanizing atmosphere of the recent Movement. The representation of Korean unity in the face of victimization emphasizes "our" solidarity and intensifies the animosity towards the common adversary. With its energetic spirit and

the impassioned voice of the speaker, "Toknip kyŏngch'uk," inspires *tongp'o*, or fellow Koreans, to seek "our" collective, patriotic goal: to "enjoy together freedom, fortune, and joy!" The call for God's protection against "the enemy's sword" also points to the intimate connection between Korean nationalism and Christianity, as the followers see themselves as God's soldiers. The nationalistic and religious aspects of this siga echo previous works in *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*, illuminating how the local Korean pioneers were defining themselves through their reaction to the nation-wide, anti-colonial protest.

The earliest extant poem that depicts the milestone revolt's impact on the Korean immigrants in the Islands, however, is "3/1-chŏl kongdong myoji esŏ" (At the Public Graveyard on Independence Movement Day), which appears in the March 1923 issue of *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchi*. This anonymous work portrays a grieving visitor to a graveyard where the patriotic martyrs of the Movement are buried:

오난것피ㅅ비냐 부난것은비린바람

뎌창백한발근달이 북망산에빗칠제

어이한우름소리 이곳뎌곳들닌다

원수칼에흐르는피 황쳔까지흘너들어

반도에자든영웅의혼 한가지로슬퍼한다

울대로울어라 갈때어이잇더뇨

죽어도한반도에 살어도한반도에

Is blood rain coming? A fishy wind is blowing.[32]

[32] A fishy wind, unusually formed in combination with blood, indicates a cruel incident where many people get hurt or die. In this poem, it indicates the March First Movement.

When that pale moon shines on Pukmang Mountain[33]

Sounds of cries are heard here and there.

Blood flowing on the enemy's sword runs into the next world.

A soul of the martyr sleeping in the peninsula is sad for one thing:

You should cry to your heart's content because there is no place to go

Die in the peninsula, live in the peninsula

The mourner's presence in the cemetery for the national heroes reminds us of the March First Movement—its sacrifices, and the victimization of the people devoted to it. The heartfelt cries reverberating on Pukmang Mountain express the unfulfilled wishes of Koreans and their unresolved *han*. More importantly for my purpose, the absence of a resting place for the dead is comparable to the present circumstance of displaced immigrants with "no place to go." The subsequent exhortation to "Die in the peninsula, Live in the peninsula" is thus directed towards all Koreans, across life and death, and geographical boundaries. The implicit tribute paid to the departed in "3/1-chŏl kongdong myoji esŏ" therefore sheds light on the influence of nationalistic demonstrations on diasporic Koreans, or "us," as well as on the enduring wish for "our" emancipation and return.

If the poetry and songs formed in expatriate periodicals through the 1920s speak to the patriotism and perseverance of the early immigrants despite the loss of their homeland and disappointment at their economic and political circumstances in the adopted place, in the 1930s and the early 1940s, literary pieces represent discouraged, homeless Korean expatriates. Earlier siga express high hopes of liberating the nation

[33] Euphemism for a graveyard.

sometime soon. The later siga no longer have this optimistic attitude, instead articulating a sense of dejection and longing for home, reflecting the overall mood of the ethnic community in Hawai‘i, whose members are gradually abandoning their patriotic dreams of homecoming. The initial goal of the local publications to represent strong-willed, hopeful Koreans has faded due to feelings of displacement or loss, as Korea's colonization and the expatriates' own overseas living have become prolonged against their wishes.

Such poems as Yi Chŏng-am's "Manghyangga" (Song of Homesickness) in *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* and "Chesŏk handŭng esŏ (Under a Lonely Lamp on New Year's Eve) in *Kook Min Bo* represent the displaced and dejected selves yearning for the ever faraway homeland and family. Published in July 1930, Yi's "Manghyangga" has three verses that present a Korean immigrant wishing for his return even in his dreams:

I

어졔ㅅ밤 꿈자리 내신흔 두루단니셔

아세아 동반도 내공향 심방하고 왓고나

산고슈려한 금슈산하 말근물가에

어이한 송셕이 발기난모양참졍슉한곳이라

넷날 화려하던강산 이때당하야[34]

찬바람젹셜에 ㅅ세와셔 적막한빗이라

In my dream last night my shoes went all around and

visited my hometown in the east peninsula in Asia, and returned

[34] The literal meaning of this phrase is not certain. Its translation thus relies on the context as well as the closest inference drawn from the words themselves.

Close to the clear water in nature, with high and beautiful mountains and birds and beasts.

It is a very quiet place, as if a songsŏk[35] is cracked open.

At this moment the used-to-be splendid rivers and mountains of a long time ago look dreary, because cold winds and deep snow came early.

II

사랑의졍줄노 맛매운 나의 혈쪽들

이졔나 뎌졔나 도라오기만기다리고잇고나

픔안에안기워 날자리시던 나의 어머님

문허지고 쓰러진 집안에 뗠고안져

가난셰월 한해두해 언제됴흔때

츈풍화긔즁에 활무대 반가히 맛나볼고나

My blood relatives, tied together by the rope of love and affection,

have been expecting (someone who left) every minute

My mother who used to hold and place me in her bosom

sat in despair in the collapsed and tumbled-down house.

Time passes by, one year and another year. At a favorable opportunity,

will we living gladly meet in balmy spring weather?[36]

III

사쳔년 혁혁한력사를가진 우리들

오날날 죠국의운명을 맹셩할지라

[35] The meaning could not be determined. Perhaps, the poet refers to a sort of rock since sŏk means a rock.
[36] The personal pronouns in parentheses are contextually embedded.

선죠의긔업을 직혀감은 우리사명이니

강강한졍력을 다뭉쳐 일해나가봅시다

쳔만악마져해해도 백졀불굴코

대쥬재하나님 우리의능력이시로다

We who have a brilliant history of four thousand years

pledge today the destiny of the homeland

Because it is our mission to uphold the enterprise of the forefathers

Let us unite our energy and grind at our duty

Even if ten million demons hinder (us), we will be indefatigable

The Almighty presiding over all our ability

The first two stanzas illustrate the speaker's strong wish to return home and to his family, waiting earnestly for his homecoming. The "cold winds and deep snow" in the first verse, and "the collapsed and tumbled-down house" in the second reflect the current, colonized situation of Korea or his hometown, where the people have become impoverished and disheartened. The anxiously awaited departed person not only indicates those Korean selves outside the country, but also the nation's independence, for with its return, overseas Koreans could come home to the motherland and unite with their own families. The question in the last two lines of the second stanza, about whether the speaker will ever go back to the hometown and reunite with relatives, conveys skepticism and shows low expectations for homecoming.

Despite the pessimism in the first two stanzas of "Manghyangga," in the third stanza the speaker becomes a patriotic activist, a voice often appearing in the siga of the 1910s and the 1920s published in Korean-language periodicals from the Islands. The

sharply altered tone and mood seek to subordinate the depressed feelings of the poet and the ethnic community to words of encouragement, with the help of God—a strategy for overcoming homesickness, longing for the family, and the other hardships resulting from the continuing failure to achieve national sovereignty, and from immigrant life in a foreign land. This poem still tells a personal story of the Korean immigrant, but also turns to remind "us" of "our" collective, gradually-being-forgotten mission that must be fulfilled one day. The juxtaposition of "my" personal, sad story with the statement of "our" determination in "Manghyangga" demonstrates the conversation and movement between the "I" and fellow Korean readers, whose overseas experience and nostalgia for home communicate among themselves.

The atmosphere of "Chesŏk handŭng esŏ," which appeared on December 30, 1936 in *Kook Min Bo*, resembles that of "Manghyangga." The poems both record a sense of displacement and sorrows felt by an anonymous immigrant who has to spend another year away from his family and home country:

단양산금음밤에
잠못일운두견새를
죽마고우아니라기
발명할곳막연한몸
태평양물소리야
또한해를 보내면서
새해온다깃버함은
할슈업는고즛이다

인간의모든서름

제아무리설다한들이역한창져문해에

나라업는한일거나

On a moonless night in Tanyang mountain

a sleepless tugyŏn[37]

might be my childhood friend

I am an aimless existence that has not found a place

by the sound of the Pacific Ocean

spending another year again.

Saying that you are feeling glad to greet a New Year

is an unavoidable lie

Of all sadness of humans

the saddest of all, around the already late time of the year in a foreign country,

is not having a country

The migrant's recollection of the Tanyang Mountain in Korea invokes a longing for the faraway homeland that has not been reachable since his departure. Recognizing the legendary bird, tugyŏn, as an old friend closely associates the two because of their similar situation—"an aimless existence that has not found a place" to return to and the resulting cry for home. The homeless one manages his intense grief at first, but it finally bursts out, pitying himself and others in comparable circumstances: "Of all sadness of all humans / the saddest . . . is not having a country." While the heartbreaking and distressing atmosphere of "Chesŏk handŭng esŏ" is similar to that found in "Manghyangga," both

[37] Tugyŏn is a legendary bird that cries to death in a foreign land, missing its homeland.

poems present a sharp contrast to the picture of energetic, optimistic, and united Koreans in the previous siga. Moreover, the integration of "my" feelings into those of others living outside the homeland, without their own country, makes the poem speak for the ethnic communities in Hawai'i and elsewhere outside Korea. Finally, the uprooted, despairing voice in "Manghyangga," and "Chesŏk handŭng esŏ" not only speaks for the writers and for the shared sentiment of the diasporic community, but also asserts a continuing association with "our" people still in Korea, whose home and ownership have been taken away.

The gloomy air of the siga of the 1930s and the early 1940s begins to dissipate with the eventual liberation of Korea in August 1945 at the end of World War II. Displacement and dejection are replaced by the immigrants' high expectation of imminent homecoming. A poem such as Chŏng Wun-sŏ's "Hwan'guk ga" (Song of Returning to One's Country),[38] which appeared on November 21, 1945 in *Kook Min Bo*, shows how diasporic Koreans felt vigorous and dignified as citizens of a sovereign country. Here are the first, third and forth stanzas, and the refrain—there are seven stanzas:

I

칠쳔여명 부여족이

미포령디 이민온것

후일광복 위하여셔

죠물쥬의 셩리로다

That seven thousand odd Puyŏ tribe,

[38] See Appendix 2 for the entire work.

immigrating to Mip'o territory[39]

is for the nation's liberation at a later time

the victory of the Creator

후렴

어서가쟈 형뎨자매

희생봉사 결심하고

견설공쟉 협죠하세

본향으로 환국하쟈

Refrain

Let's go promptly, our brothers and sisters

Resolve to sacrifice and serve

Let's cooperate in building and maneuvering

Let's return to our original hometown

. . .

III

륙십만명 모셰동족

해방월강 한것갓치

형뎨쟈매 손을잡고

태평양을 건너가쟈

Six hundred thousand people of Moses

As they cross the river when liberated

[39] Mip'o means America's harbor, indicating the Hawaiian Islands.

Holding hands with brothers and sisters

Let's cross the Pacific Ocean

IV

호항션챵 화륜션에

우리동포 승션하고

부산항에 도착할때

거국일치 환호한다

On the steamship at the wharf

Our people board

When arriving at Pusan Harbor

The whole nation in a body hails us with acclamations

This siga delightedly calls for the long-awaited homecoming of diasporic Koreans across the Pacific Ocean in response to Korea's recent decolonization, and anticipates a warm welcome for their forthcoming return. The poem defines "us" as the "Tribe of Puyŏ," a community that existed from 2 to 494 B.C. in northern Manchuria. Koreans believed themselves to be their descendents, as well as of Ko Chosŏn (Old Chosŏn). In this way the poem insists that the origins of the expatriates are rooted in the peninsula, and also pinpoints the collective identity of "our brothers and sisters." Likening us to the Israelites in the third stanza also asserts the now long-established connection between Korean nationalism and Christianity. The Land of Promise that Moses and his followers wished to reach by crossing the Red Sea is compared to the now decolonized motherland that has been off-limits to the overseas diasporas. And these peoples' patriotic devotion, though in a foreign land, will now be recognized, as "The whole nation in a body hails us with

acclamations." The calling for "our" return to build and contribute to the restored nation in "Hwan'guk ga" therefore reconfirms the ethnic and national identity of united Koreans, in and outside the nation.

Korea's 1945 liberation affected subsequent self-representation in *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* through the 1950s until the late 1960s. While some siga deal with nationalism, the intensity of proclaiming "our" patriotism lessens.[40] Fewer anonymous poems appear, and the subject matter tends to reflect the interests of an individual, rather than shared concerns of the ethnic community. Sŏ Sang-sun's "Naŭi sajŏng" (My Circumstances), which appeared on December 28, 1949, exemplifies change. While little information about Sŏ can be found, he served as an editor of *Kook Min Bo* from February 1949 to January 1950, and then until January 1951 (Murabayashi, 20-21). Here is his poem:

금년 일년 또 보내니

백발에 또 백발이다

빨니가는 이 세월을

꿈인가도 의심하네

적막공산허다 한대

내갈곳은 어디댄가

옛날일을 생각하면

아니 슬퍼할수 없다

Spending another year here

[40] The assassination of the nationalist fighter and second president of Korea's provisional government, Kim Ku, on June 29, 1949, generated a considerable number of eulogies by immigrants.

Gray hair becomes grayer

The time that goes by fast

I doubt if it is a dream

Among a lot of quiet and lonely places

Where can I go?

When thinking of the past

I cannot but feel sad

The displacement and distress felt by the alienated self here resembles prior works that portray the uprooted immigrant in a foreign land. But in addition to recalling the plight of overseas Koreans banned from the motherland and longing for home, Sŏ's poem also represents his own political situation at a different time. According to Patterson, the editors of *Kook Min Bo* in 1949 "criticized Rhee's South Korean government as 'the filthiest and most wicked dictatorship one can find today throughout the world'" (210). As a result, they were denied entry into Korea until later in the 1950s. If so, "Naŭi sajŏng" reflects the specific and the personal situation of the editor and writer as well as the shared emotion of fellow migrants who remain outside their country.

While most siga in the Hawai'i Korean-language publications between the 1910s and the 1950s stress the close relations of the immigrants to their distant home country and to Christianity, several illuminate a developing attraction to the adopted, local place. As early as 1913, Korean nationalist expatriate Mun Yang-mok shows that the ethnic expatriate could be drawn to the foreign environment:

풍경도 다정하고

물소리도 다정하다

반기는듯 저강산은

어이그리 다정한고

알게라 이강산중

벗님 차져

The landscape is friendly

The sound of water, too, is friendly

That river and mountain seem to welcome me

Why are they so friendly?

You should know that in this land

I look for a friend[41]

Although published at the same time as Park's earlier poem and "Chŏnjin'ga," this poem, which came out on August, 30, 1913, does not foreground the nationalistic voice of Korean immigrants in the Islands. Instead of focusing on "our" political and collective mission for the nation, he depicts himself being amused and comforted by the welcoming and friendly natural surroundings of the foreign land. Moreover, the concluding search for friendship in the new place certainly suggests that something is lacking, but there is at least some sense that the "I" is seeking a companion to share the attractive surroundings with.

The speaker's fondness for the Islands can however also be credited to similarities with his own hometown in Korea. According to An Hyŏng-ju,[42] Mun was born in 1869 and brought up in Mongsanri in Ch'ungch'ŏng province, a place no more

[41] August 30, 1914. "You" and "I" have been added: they are often embedded in Korean speech and writing.

[42] An Hyŏng-Ju's "Mun Yang-mok sŏnsaeng ŭi minjok undong kwa saengae" (Teacher Mun Yang-mok's National Movement and Life) <http://www.taeannews.co.kr/data/data_news.asp?titleid=3181>

than two kilometers from the sea. He migrated as a plantation laborer to Hawai‘i in 1905, but went to San Francisco the next year. In 1907 Mun was participating in national independence movements, and in early 1913 he returned to the Islands as an anti-Japanese activist. Although he stayed less than two years, he worked with Park, a political associate and editor of *Kook Min Bo*, and published several poems in the newspaper. While his other verses display his patriotic sentiments, a few, including the poem above, speak of an attraction that he felt during his short residence in the Islands, whose friendly landscape and sound of waves likely reminded him of his birthplace, Mongsanri.

The attraction to Hawai‘i in Mun’s poetry corresponds to “Hanin ŭi Hawai” (Korea Hawai‘i), a letter published on June 6, 1914 in *Kook Min Bo*. Sent by an anonymous person about to leave the Islands, as autobiographical writing it describes the development of the Korean self affiliated with this foreign residence. Here is the opening[43]:

> 가경가애 너를 떠나; 무졍무미 나는 간다
>
> 셰상텬디 못할일은 두고가는리별이라. 너를두고가는 나는 오늘 다시 샹심이라. 사시쟝츈의 긔화요초만발하니 별유텬디—요
>
> 영화로온락원이라. 동셔만리에 호호망망한 태평양 한 복판에 일야로 떼잇는 하와이아 너를 참아닛고 갈길 업구나. 오색인죵이 복잡한 가온대 신셩한 부여민죡의 십년성취한 “한인의 하와이”아 너 부디 평안히 잇거라 나는간다.
>
> I’m leaving you, the beautiful and beloved; Heartless and dry, I’m going.

[43] See Appendix 3 for the entire letter.

> The hardest thing to do in the whole wide world is parting. I, who am leaving you, *again* have a broken heart. All year round precious flowers and wonderful plants and trees come into full bloom, so you are another world and glorious paradise. Hawai‘i!, floating day and night at the center of the Pacific Ocean in the long distance from East and West, I can’t really forget and leave you. “Korea Hawai‘i,” where this sacred Puyŏ people[44] have achieved for ten years among five crowded races,[45] please stay in peace. I am leaving. (emphasis mine)

The immigrant sadly considers his upcoming departure from the Islands; he bids them farewell, and wishes for their wellbeing. The personification of the place in the reference “you” suggests that it has become a living being for him, testifying to his emotional involvement. His renaming of the adopted place as “Korea Hawai‘i” also reflects his closeness, and even a sense of ownership, when he speaks of what “the sacred Puyŏ people have achieved for ten years.” In this case, then, the letter’s “you” and “I” point to a Korean self connected to the Hawaiian Islands.

The passage revealing how the immigrant feels about leaving Hawai‘i,’ that “Heartless and dry, I’m going” does not mean his detachment from it, instead pointing to his wishful thinking to overcome his heart-felt sadness. Such ironic expressions are not uncommon in Korean literature. The well-known Korean poem by Kim So-wŏl, “Chindalle kkot (Azaleas),” for example, shows a similar kind of emotional control managed by the speaker letting go of his or her lover:

> When you leave,
>
> weary of me,

---

[44] The same people as those in“Hwan’guk ga.”

[45] Five crowded races do not indicate specific racial origins but various races—probably Hawaiian, Haole, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

without a word I shall gently let you go.

From Mount Yak

In Yŏngbyŏn,

I shall gather armfuls of azaleas

And scatter them on your way.

Step by step

On the flowers placed before you

Tread lightly, softly as you go.

When you leave,

Weary of me,

Though I die, I'll not let one tear fall. (*Modern Korean Literature*, 28)

That "Though I die, I'll not let one tear fall" sharply contrasts the speaker's pain to the expressed passive reaction to the parting. Similarly, the departing Korean immigrant uses the aesthetic mode of restrained sorrows when describing his "broken heart." Later in this letter he even confesses that "말쟈하되 한이요 금할수 업난 회포라 [But if I do not express my feelings, it would leave regrets and nostalgic sentiments]," indicating how he comes to decide on delivering his wrench of parting grief to "you."

His attachment to the Islands, furthermore, is almost as strong as to the homeland, because "I, who am leaving you, *again* have a broken heart" as he did when leaving Korea years ago, and "나라도 업고 집도 업시 동셔로*리하난 나는 너를

떠나가난 오날의 깁히싸인 회포와 한이 뎌건너 화산구멍의 불꽃갇히 닐어나 마음을 진뎡할수 업스니 오날날 다시 나라를 일코 집을일흠 사람갇구나 [I, who without a country and home have drifted from east to west, cannot calm myself down because deep thoughts and resentment arise like a flame from a hole of a volcano, and I thus look like a person who *again* has lost a country and home." "Again" certainly crystallizes how his leaving from Hawai'i makes him feel *again* homeless and country-less, and reveals his developed consideration of the place as a possible alternative home in a foreign country.

How the Korean immigrant finds a new Hawai'i home derives from the symbiotic relationship between Koreans and the Islands he believes in. According to him, "우리는 너를 인하야 가히 도모할 긔회를 지으며 너는 우리를 인하여 발휘할 영광을싸흐니 우리를 위하야 네가 업셧던덜 이 시대에 불행이라 하겟스며 너를 대하야 우리가 업셧던덜 이 세계에 무색이라하겟도다. [We [Koreans] had an opportunity to actually plan ahead, and you have attained an honor to demonstrate yourself because of us. Thus it would have been unfortunate for us if you had not existed, and you could have remained unknown without us.] Considering that Hawai'i has provided a shelter for many Koreans, including political exiles and working-class laborers for nationalistic activities and economic stability, his belief in their profound mutual connection is not surprising. Although the following statement that "You could have remained unknown without us" suggests his lack of knowing Hawai'i's own history and significance in itself and for the United States as well as other countries, it nonetheless arises from his emphasis on "our" closeness and to Koreans' contributing to Hawai'i's diversity by adding Korean culture, ethnicity, and language.

Upon departing Hawai‘i, the immigrant, who likely heads to San Francisco, “금문만 언덕 우헤 신대륙 넓은 텬디[the wide earth and the sky of the New World over Kŭmmuman (Golden Gate bay) hill],” is reminded that the new destination “역시 나의 고국이 안히요 나의 집이 업거니 [is also not my homeland, and I do not have a home].” Not only did his leaving Korea cause “깁흔 한과 깁흔회포 [deep resentments and deep nostalgic sentiments],” but his parting from “Korea Hawai‘i” will also lead to his “쳐량한 노래와 감개한 눈물 [plaintive songs and strongly-felt tears].” Despite his current grief, he looks towards “our” better future, when “너 ‘한인의 하와이’가 참으로 영광슬어온 복디가 될지며 우리 ‘하와이의 한인’ 이 또한 가치를 들어 내난 국민이 될진뎌. [You, “Korea Hawai‘i” will truly become an honored, blessed land, and our “Hawai‘i’s Koreans” also will become a people displaying their worth.]” His wishes enable him to lessen his emotional pain, replacing it with his optimistic attitude. Although the immigrant’s vision of Hawai‘i from such various aspects as “죵교샹 도덕 [religious ethics],” “실업계 사업 [industrial business],” and “교육변텽도 [educational standards],” parallels that of other newcomers, mostly Americans, revealing again his shaky understanding of the place, it nonetheless indicates a companionship that he hopes will last as long as it can, for Koreans will enhance Hawai‘i by realizing their potential and success. “Hanin ŭi Hawai,” or Hawai‘i’s Koreans, therefore shows an attached Korean self to the designated listener’s “beloved.”

On June 29, 1950, a Korean immigrant to Hawai‘i also articulates in *T’aep’yŏngyang chubo* his acceptance of the new place, and his anticipation of connections that he will develop in the coming years. Such pieces are rare, largely

because it was the nature of these papers as political organs to focus upon Korean nationalistic agendas. Representations of selves becoming attracted to the foreign land therefore don't fit with the paper's mission, for such writings could encourage individuals, or the whole community, to settle down and devote themselves to their current residence, rather than taking part in overseas independence movements. Unfortunately, the fact that so many years of the periodicals are missing makes drawing firm conclusions difficult, since we lack those texts that might have shown the identity formation of Koreans in relation to or apart from the Islands, and a growing bond to the new home, if any. Mun's poetry and the letter are therefore among the few representations in *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chapchii/chubo* surviving from the 1910s to the late 1940s that illustrate the first-generation Koreans' association with the adopted place.

The three stanzas of Y M C's "Sewŏla" (Time) portray figuratively a Korean expatriate's arrival in Hawai'i, and describe the gloomy reality he sees in the Islands due to his rootless situation. The first stanza blames Y's designated listener, Sewŏl, for his harsh and drifting life.[46] But the second stanza shows a change of attitude, and describes how he has tried to overcome his despondency:

세월이여 그러나
한마디 말이 있다
남쪽나라 밤하늘 위엔
별하나 없고
한자옥 발길조차
밟을곳 없다면

[46] See Appendix 4 for the entire poem.

차라리 오색 불꽃속에

아름다운 풍속을 배우련다

세월이여

너는 나의

희망이더냐?

무덤이더냐?

But time,

I have a word to tell.

In the night sky in the southern country

no stars exist

If I cannot tread even one step

on anywhere

I'd rather in the five-colored flames[47]

learn beautiful customs

Time

Are you my

hope?

my grave? (12-23)

Despite his initial feelings of displacement and dejection, for "no stars exist" and there is no place for him to go, the speaker does not remain in a skeptical mood but changes his

[47] The five-colored flames could mean the diversity of Hawai'i or its volcanic Islands.

mind-set. Part of the transformation results from his fully realizing his constrained situation, but he also declares his readiness to accommodate himself to the "beautiful customs" offered by the new environment. Like Mun's poem and the letter of the nameless sender, Y's poem acknowledges an attraction to Hawai'i. Though traces of doubt in the face of an uncertain future remain, "Sewŏla" expresses the immigrant's openness to the place and even anticipates his gradual adjustment to it. The reference to "beautiful customs" suggests he will develop a sense of belonging in the Hawaiian Islands over time.

While a handful of works in *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* describe the immigrants' adaptations and attachment to the adopted place, "Kwiguk han twi e" (Upon Returning to the Country) and Sŏttal kŭmŭm pam e" (On the Night of New Year's Eve), poems of Syngman Rhee,[48] the founder of *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* and the first president of Korea, describe how living forty years in a foreign country has transformed his self, and also what his homecoming means for him. Born in 1875 during the last Chosŏn dynasty, he grew up to be a political and social reformer influenced by Western education and ideas. He came to the United States in 1904 as a student, though taking the role of national diplomat when called for, and earned his master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard University and Princeton University respectively. After completing his academic programs, he returned to the motherland in 1910, but left there again as an exile in 1912. Rhee moved to Hawai'i in February of 1913 to work with his associate, Park Yong-man, for Korea's independence. Their different political views, however, separated the political leaders and contributed to dividing the Korean community. In 1945 he

[48] This paper does not go into details about his political career since the subsequent discussion has little relevance to it.

finally returned to Korea, serving as the first president of the provisional government, and also travelling to the mainland and Hawai‘i to seek support for nationalistic movements.

“Kwiguk han twi e” appeared in *T’aepyŏngyang chubo* both in the June 11 and July 23 issues of 1965; Sŏttal kŭmŭm pam e” was published in the same periodical on July 16. The presentation of Rhee’s several poems by Kim In-sŏ (Kim Rin Suh), partly resulted from Kim’s “Defense of Syng Man Rhee.” Believing Rhee to be “the nation’s father” for becoming the first president of Korea, Kim “would not have cried if Dr. Rhee as the second president had become the main culprit in Korea” (5). Following Rhee’s death on July 19, 1965, Kim presents the poems again to commemorate the dead whose remains were about to be delivered to Korea. Around this time such Hawai‘i’s local newspapers as the *Honolulu Advertiser* and *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* featured Rhee’s death and his lifetime patriotism for Korea. They especially stressed his link to the Islands. The *Honolulu Advertiser*, for example, points to “his various stays in Hawaii between 1913 and World War II” (B2), and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* recalls Rhee as “a nice old man in Kalihi Valley” (B2) in the late 1930s.

Composed in 1945 and 1955, according to Kim, both poems, despite this ten-year gap, express the dislocation of the returned Korean in the home country. Here is “Kwiguk han twi e”:

설흔에 고향을 떠나
일흔에 돌아 오니
바다 밖에 떠 돌던 일
꿈 속에 서렸구나
제집에 온 오늘이연만

도리어 손 같으이

곳곳이 마중하는데

옛날 알던 인 몇이 없네

I left my hometown at thirty and

came back at seventy

Wandering the sea outside

fades in my dream

Today is the day I come home

I rather seem like a guest

Although every place greets me

there are few people that I knew in former days

Forty years of absence from the motherland leads him to feel out of place. Greetings do not excite him, and he seems dismayed rather than delighted by his long-awaited return, seeing few of his old acquaintance. His search for familiar faces testifies to the discomfort of the alienated returnee, and suggests how he is hoping to find someone or something that could help him feel at home, at last.

The sense of displacement in "Kwiguk han twi e" also appears in Sŏttal kŭmŭm pam e." On the last day of the year the returned migrant recalls his previous drifting life, when he used to long for home:

반 평생 섣달 그믐

나그네로 보내더니

해마다 이밤이 오면

집 그리던 게 버릇이 되어

집으로 돌아 와서도

집을 도로 그리네

For a half of my lifetime, New Year's Eve

I spent as a wanderer

Every year when this night came

missing home became my habit

Even after coming back home

I miss home again

The homesickness that the "I" goes through every year even after his return speaks to his partial integration back into the native land. That he still longs for home only suggests his ongoing, involuntary hunt for a place that provides him a true sense of at-home-ness continues. It is therefore rather ironic that when forced to resign as president in 1960, he went into exile in the Islands, where he passed away on July 19, 1965. Leaving aside the political circumstances that pushed him out of Korea again, "Kwiguk han twi e" focuses upon the diasporic nature of the once departed and then returned ethnic wanderer who constantly seeks for, but does not find, home, whether in the motherland or the adopted place.

It is quite evident from the siga in the newspapers that Korea's restoration of its sovereignty impacted members of the local ethnic community and their representations. But the actual numbers of first-language Koreans were shrinking. By 1960, both *Kook Min Bo* and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* had a circulation of less than three hundred. The political voice was also quieting, as periodicals printed fewer poems of the immigrants, publishing instead many classical Korean poems. *Kook Min Bo*, for example, prints about

ninety such sijo from 1965 through 1966, and *T'aep'yŏngyang chubo* includes thirteen in 1960. These sijo may suggest that the remaining Korean residents especially want to remember and preserve their native literary heritage, even though they have chosen to live in Hawai‘i, and even if they have no intention of going back to their decolonized homeland. When Korea was finally liberated, many first-generation immigrants chose not to return for various reasons—old age, American-born children, and financial security obtained over the years (Patterson's *The Ilse*, 207-208)—even though they were not granted American citizenship until 1952, when the immigration laws finally offered them the opportunity to be legally part of their adopted country. The decision to stay in Hawai‘i, after long years of living abroad, speaks to their sense of connection to the alternative new home they have found for themselves and their descendents. But the reproduction of traditional poetry in the newspapers suggests an ongoing sense of attachment to the homeland.

Ethnic and Female Selves of the Korean Women Pioneers

Poems, songs, and other forms of life writing in Hawai‘i Korean-language periodicals offer insights into how first-generation Korean immigrant identity was established, preserved, and transformed in the adopted place. This section turns to oral histories of first-generation Korean women. Such publications as Alice Chai's "A Picture Bride from Korea: The Life History of a Korea American Woman in Hawaii" (1978), Hwa Ja Kim Park's "The Oral Life History of Mrs. Nam Soo Young" (1986), and Sonia Shinn Sunoo's *Korean Picture Brides: 1903-1920 A Collection of Oral Histories* (2002) are particularly important because almost all of the autobiographical works in the

periodicals were written by Korean men.[49] Only through these oral histories can we determine much on how much the women's self-identity coincides with or differs from the men's. Accordingly, these histories will reveal how telling others about their homeland and American experience illuminates the "I" of these women who often remained under-represented within the ethnic community and the adopted land.

Betty A. Bergland's "Postmodernism and the Autobiographical Subject: Reconstructing the 'Other'" can help us understand the identity formation of Korean female speakers in their self-representations. Drawing on her studies of postmodernism, feminism, and ethnic autobiography, Bergland argues that "the autobiographical self must be understood as socially and historically constructed and multiply positioned in complex worlds and discourses" (131). She rejects the traditional notion of "an essential individual, imagined to be coherent and unified, the originator of her own meaning" (134), seeing instead multiple subjectivities and identities. Bergland, however, also contends that as cultural others in Anglo society, ethnic or non-American women are already negatively constructed. Furthermore, to represent themselves, they must employ "the dominant symbolic order or remain silent" (132).

This postmodern and feminist understanding of ethnic autobiography helps greatly when reading the collaborative representations of first-generation Korean women. First, oral history is a cooperative product, involving multiple participants: the speakers certainly, but also the interviewers, writers, and editors. In *Reading Autobiography* (2nd ed., 2010), Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson describe the complex processes of collaborative life writing. They also point out the increased difficulty when the original

[49] Among identified works roughly five poems were composed by women, most of whom were the representatives of their female associations.

language of the speakers is turned into another language, and into a "culturally familiar story form, such as traditional autobiography or the ethnographic 'life'" (67). Smith and Watson stress the importance of considering the often invisible contributors, because oral history is a "mediated form of personal narrative that depends on an interviewer who intervenes to collect and assemble a version of stories" (275-76). Or put another way, "In oral history the one who speaks is not the one who writes, and the one who writes is often an absent presence in the text who nonetheless controls its narrative" (275). If so, we must remember, then, that the selves in the oral histories of Korean immigrant women are also the product of interventions which assemble the representable. Their native tongue has been translated into the metropolitan language, and the dialogues often have been turned into recognizable narratives.

Even after these difficulties are taken into account, however, the informants' self-representations are significant, because they are the ones doing the work of remembering and telling their experience in response to questions, and therefore still serve as the necessary and major actors in their storytelling. Sometimes, they themselves call attention to this. One of the interviewees in *Korean Picture Brides*, for instance, refuses to provide detailed accounts, telling the inquirer that "There's nothing special; all the same. You don't need each detail as it happened. It's not too interesting that way" (118). The told stories of the Korean women not only participate in representing the cultural other, and the marginalized self in the homeland and the adopted country, but also suggest how they view themselves and their own stories. Their experiences in colonial Korea and with racial prejudice in the United States link the women's stories to those of male Koreans. But the depiction of gender bias in Confucian culture and in the United States

differentiates their experience, and their accounts of reluctant or voluntary submission to the male shed light on the female self as tied to the native tradition. Finally, these narratives show how the Korean female self has transformed herself within herself.

The comparatively recent publication of oral histories of first-generation Korean women, mostly picture brides, also reveals how the succeeding generations have engaged with telling the stories of their ancestors. *Korean Picture Brides*, which contains stories of several Korean female immigrants who initially landed in the Hawaiian Islands, but moved to the mainland after some years, was the result of second-generation Korean American Sunoo's oral project, conducted between 1975 and 1977, although the collection finally came out in 2002, in time to celebrate the Centennial of Koreans' immigration to the United States. Sunoo interviewed about twenty eight people living on the mainland, then translated the transcripts into English. The published narratives include Sunoo's comments and her questions during the conversations. "A Picture Bride" is Korean American professor Chai's expanded and revised version of a paper presented at an Ethnic and Minority Studies conference in 1978. "The Oral Life History," with an introduction to the interviewee, was written by her grandniece, Park, who herself immigrated to the Islands in the mid-1960s. Both of Chai's and Park's interviews were conducted in English, and neither contains the questions.

Oral history in general gives voice to those who for some reason cannot or will not write for themselves, or who have little access to the means of representing themselves. Unlike traditional autobiographers or other writers, the speakers usually come from marginalized backgrounds, due to class, ethnicity, gender, language, and nationality. The lack of conventional self-representations by Korean female pioneers

suggests they had fewer privileges than the men. Their absence from the ethnic periodicals, for example, points to the gender marginalization common within the patriarchal culture preserved both in Korea and in the immigrant community. Moreover, in addition to the language barrier between these women and those outside the ethnic group, which prevented them from speaking about individual or collective identities, their otherness as Koreans, as opposed to the Japanese colonizers in their homeland, and even to non-Americans and non-whites in their adopted country, also contributed to their under-representation. Oral histories such as *Korean Picture Brides*, "A Picture Bride," and "The Oral Life History" therefore not only testify to how "we" suffered because of the colonizers and racial prejudice, but also reveal the women's susceptibilities to the patriarchal customs maintained in both places.

The experience of the Korean women in the native country clarifies the specific cultural, geographical, historical, and political locations from which they come. They speak about Japanese oppression. For instance, Chai's subject, Mrs. Kim in "A Picture Bride," recalls, "People can't talk, can't walk around. Under the Japanese, no freedom. Not even free talking. A very hard time" (37). Park Soon-ha and her narrator in *Korean Picture Brides* also point to the colonizers' domineering presence, which "*was so unbearable that she* [Park] *asked her mother and father to arrange a marriage for her in Hawaii*," because "*at 16, she felt she must leave Korea*" and "*she could not bear the life in Korea*" (126). These accounts echo many similar experiences of subjugated Koreans during the colonial period, and suggest why they came to identify themselves as "us." Fleeing or departure from the motherland is therefore an example of the people's individual and collective resistance, albeit passive, to the colonizers.

The women's nationalistic dedication despite the change of geographical location attests to their preservation of a national and political identity as Koreans. Mary Lee in *Korean Picture Brides*, for instance, describes her own contributions to the national activities of the Korean community in the Islands:

> I did many things in Hawaii for the Korean Independence Movement…. I was in Kauai, a rural area. Patriotic clubs were organized by the women: *Buin-hoi* (Wivies' Club), *Cheung-nyon hoi* (Youth Club). I went all over to collect funds outside of Kauai, then to Honolulu in Oahu. There was a great rise of patriotism all over Hawaii, and everyone participated. (198)

Lee's attention to patriotic involvement indicates how she aligns herself with her fellow immigrants. The picture bride Kim and Nam Soo Young, Park's subject, also highlight their personal dedication to Korea's liberation. Kim's "whole life I work for the Korean Independence" (40) by raising funds for anti-Japanese movements and by joining the American Red Cross and the YWCA to help liberate Korea when America entered the Second World War in 1941. Young also says that Koreans in Hawai‘i "supported each other faithfully during Independent Movement, World War II, and Korean War time" (18) through affiliations with the Kook Min Hur and other women's associations. These recollections provide historical and political background on these once colonized individuals who have become displaced outside the country. At the same time, these members offer information about the collective and national identity of the entire early Korean community in the Hawaiian Islands.

What additionally binds together the members, men and women alike, of the ethnic community, on the other hand, is a common recognition of racial boundaries that

they experience in their new locations. The speakers often describe their own experience or those of marginalized others. Kang Sung-hak in *Korean Picture Bride*, for instance, speaks of the immigrants' vulnerability in Hawai'i:

> On the plantation, we witnessed a lot of racial prejudice. There were times when the men got ill. If they were more than 20 days off, they would be fired. The German foreman would crack whips at those who were slow or at those who were unable to work. They'd gallop around on horseback. I could hear the awful cracking of whips, and they'd shout and threaten those who weren't working up to their liking. (301)

Kang's sharing of the hardships that she and other immigrants went through makes her a spokesperson for others she has worked with under the color division between "us" and "them."

These racial borderlines were also experienced on the mainland. Kim Hei-Won and Kang Won-Shin remember the mistreatment that their families often encountered. Kim recalls that "the racial prejudices added to our woes. At first, we had difficulty because of racial prejudice in Los Angeles—getting housing, getting haircuts, and some restaurants would simply not serve us" (165). Kim's story points to the daily, common discrimination that Koreans felt. Kang addresses the systematic inequity. She recalls how her husband failed to become a lawyer after ten years of studying:

> What a disappointment it was that the law degree was of no value in his days of intense racial prejudice when the Anglo society saw it unfit that an Asian qualify for the bar examinations under any circumstance. They denied him the right to become an American citizen, which would have qualified him to be a candidate.

(176)

Restricted to "low paying, menial housework and odd service oriented jobs" (177), the husband even attempted to work at a hotel to make a living. The racial mistreatment that Kang and Kim describe therefore exposes the vulnerability of all other Koreans in the United States.

These stories of people's marginalization due to racial discrimination in the adopted country serve the political intent of the second-generation Korean American, Sunoo, whose book *Korean Picture Bride* aims to record the history of ethnic minorities "often neglected in the telling of the American story" (19). Smith and Watson explain the important implications for oral history and group storytelling in contemporary society:

> Such projects of collective storytelling, whether published as books, film documents, recordings, or in digital media, situate the individual story in the larger metanarrative of a nation's social history, as "history from below," binding both tellers and listeners to the nation as an imagined community. (189)

By recording the predecessors' immigrant experience in this collection, the bilingual interviewer and mediator represents the cultural other by translating the stories into English and speaking for the subjects at times. Because of this, the interviews are not entirely their own, but include input from the American-born daughter, who "fully appreciated the political and social context of her [mother's] experience" (15). Sunoo interjects herself every now and then into the interviews. Here for example is her response to the accounts of the Kang family: "*It was painful to listen and tape him while reminiscing about those humiliating days. They suffered so much with their little children growing in such cramped quarters*" (177). Her expressed feelings of pain display her

sympathy as a member of the following generation for the speakers.

Yet another community, real or imagined, within the ethnic group includes the first-generation Korean women and Sunoo—the female Korean immigrant community. In the introduction, she distinguishes America's settler founders from "us": "How did they [Korean picture brides] come to be American pioneers? In contrast to the American pioneer women who traveled across the continent in covered wagons, these young adventurous Korean picture brides arrived by themselves in 1910" (17). Not only does the interviewer/writer invoke the American foundation myth to link yet distinguish the Korean women, but she also raises the issues of feminism as well:

> They had grown increasingly more resentful of the patriarchal society in which men initiated moral codes to subdue them. Men would not let the women have an education because it was said that, "A girl without ability is virtuous." (17)

Sunoo's references to American pioneers and feminism in relation to her subjects arise from her belief in the social construction of one's experience. As Joan W. Scott explains, "It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (69). While Scott's observation corresponds with the identity construction of the ethnic women in the collaborative narratives, the descendent narrator also draws her subjects into a relationship with "the dominant symbolic order" (Bergland, 132) of western cultures, thus integrating these ethnic women into the female community that both represents and critiques American society.

In comparison to the announced interest of Sunoo's collection, "The Oral Life History" and "A Korean Picture Bride" are less explicit. The former does not include an interviewer's introduction, and the latter's introduction is very short. Nonetheless,

frameworks of model minority status and feminism underlie the "culturally familiar story form" (Smith and Watson, 67). In "The Oral Life History" Park introduces her subject, Young, as "a millionaire and a success story come to life" (1). As for "A Picture Bride," one of its subtitles, "The American Dream Come True," suggests the archetype that Chai adopts. Because of its tendency to homogenize different Asian communities as "the most successfully assimilated minority group" (Lowe, 68), the model minority concept has been heavily critiqued, provoking negative reactions in recent years.[50] But Chai's and Park's interviews were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s respectively, when the notion was received less skeptically. And in the case of "A Korean Picture Bride," which was presented at a conference, the positive stereotype actually enables the Korean women to express themselves proudly in collaboration with the interviewers and writers.

And yet, the feminist approach taken in *Korean Picture Brides*, "A Picture Bride," and "The Oral Life History" corresponds to some extent with the female identities that the immigrant women developed prior to leaving Korea, or after arriving in the adopted land. In *Women Struggling for a New Life* (1996), Ai Ra Kim, when discussing how Korean immigrant women adapted to their new surroundings, notes that while a traditional Korean woman did not tend to "separate her own identity from those of their husbands and children," the female pioneers often diverged from "the self-in-the-family" (16). In "Korean Women of America: From Subordination to Partnership, 1903-1930" (1984), Eun Sik Yang also argues that the women's sense of their status and self-esteem derived from their substantial contributions, through work or other activities, to the family, and to the ethnic, nationalistic community. Early examples of women's

[50] See Sau-ling Cynthia Wong's *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance*, 37-38.

participation in Korea's independence movements outside the homeland show their developing a female self distinct from the patriarchy. According to Kim and Yang, these women were crossing over the established gender boundaries that defined their domestic roles and confined them to the household.

The experiences of Kang Won-Shin and Kang Sun-Hak in Korea show what challenges these women faced in shaping an identity. Won-Shin's accounts expose the extent of gender hierarchy existing in the traditional culture. As Sunoo explains, "*her-mother-in-law, in defiance of her husband's continued pleasure of having concubines in their home, decided she had had enough of it and determined in no uncertain terms to leave for America with their two sons, and a daughter*" (172). The family's departure from Korea therefore was spurred by patriarchal practices condoned by long-standing, male-dominant traditions. Kang Sung-Hak reveals that she migrated to Hawai'i to escape from her old-fashioned father who refused to let her travel or study as she wished. Speaking on behalf of her first-generation subject, the writer declares that Kang "*could not bear to live under the yoke of the existing feudalistic society in Korea*" because her father was "*a traditional conservative feudalist and told her that once she left, she would never set foot in his home again*" (297). Parental authoritarianism restricts the daughter's educational and physical freedom, and this confinement is ascribed to male-dominant Korean customs that constrain women, for had she been a man, Kang could have pursued her desires. Accounts of the restricted lives in Korea of the immigrant pioneers demonstrate how the women "were well aware of the conditions they would be subjected to under Confucianism" (16). Their leaving is therefore a confrontation with the patriarchy and also a breaking of cultural and gender boundaries.

Geographical movement to the adopted country does not however mean that the women immediately, or even ultimately, achieved gender freedom, because native patriarchal traditions still bound them in the new land. These women who came as picture brides recall their sense of disappointment and betrayal when seeing their prospective spouses, who had often misinformed them about their age or economic circumstances. In "A Picture Bride" Kim remembers that moment when she first saw her husband-to-be:

> I came to Hawaii and was so surprised and very disappointed, because my husband sent his 25 year old handsome looking picture . . . . He came to the pier, but I see he's really old, old looking. He was 45 years old, 25 years more old than I am. My heart stuck. I was so disappointed, I don't look at him again. (38)

Although she considered going back to her family, the thought that "My parents would be very shame" (38) stopped her from doing so, and eventually she decided to stay with him in the foreign country. The stories of Park Soon-Ha and Young in *Korean Picture Brides* and "The Oral Life History" parallel Kim's. Park remembers that despite her discontent with her old spouse, "My parents said that I must marry the man and not disgrace the family by being unfaithful" (127). Young's situation resembles that of many other picture brides:

> I want to go home but I couldn't go home too. Because if I go home, I only get big shame. People would say that the girl went for marry such for to Hawaii, but she come back. She sent back. The [sic] would be most shameful abuse for a girl. (7)

The involuntary matrimony these young women describe obviously continues a pattern of gender suppression over the cultural borderline they have crossed, and their decision to

stay suggests their forced acceptance of it. Though very conscious of the limitations involved, the women tend to obey the traditional rules preserved and practiced within the immigrant family.

Other women who migrated earlier with their families between 1903 and 1905, including Kim Hei-Won and Kang Won-Shin, also acknowledge gender hierarchy in the new land, but submit to it, though reluctantly. Seventeen-year-old Kim arrives in Hawai‘i with her mother, who left her husband for living with a concubine. And yet, even though her parent succeeded in breaking free from gender constraints by leaving the homeland, Kim does not escape, instead becoming forced to marry a man in California chosen by male figures around her. When Kim reaches marriageable age, a family acquaintance, Mr. Kang Yong-so, arranged for a husband without her knowledge or consent. According to Kim, he had earlier promised Mr. Kim that he would find a suitable wife for him. When the prospective bride rejects Mr. Kim's proposal not only because of his old age—eleven years older than her—but also because he is a widower, Mr. Kang blames her for the refusal. Her mother initially opposes the marriage, but contributes little to the decision, and because "My brother and Mr. Kang both felt convinced I should marry him, so I married in 1913, December 9th" (160). Clearly, both gender hierarchy and male-dominant customs prevail, even in the new community.

Kang Won-Shin was already married in Korea, and came to America with her husband and mother-in-law. Shortly after their arrival in the Islands, he went to the mainland to study, while the rest—the mother, Kang, and her sister-in-law—stayed behind and worked to make a living and support his education. When their financial situation improved after a few years, the sister-in-law left Hawai‘i to study on the

continent. Wishing herself to learn, Kang also planned to go to school. But her husband, still pursuing his education on the mainland, sent a rejection of this plan, and had it read in front of the family:

> The sharing was extremely one-sided. Mother-in-law listened in icy silence. I had to make the decision alone to quit school. I dared not defy tradition though my mother-in-law had consented to my going to school. It would only mean disruption of family harmony, leading to a divorce. And so, I followed the traditional feudalistic dictates and gave up my endeavor to get an education. (175)

Kang's abandonment of her education because of her spouse's opposition points to her restricted position as a wife and daughter-in-law in a culturally-bounded household still resembling the one in Korea that she and the mother-in-law left some years ago.

What is especially interesting about Kang's oral history is that her husband, Kang Yong-sung, was present for the entire conversation, according to Sunoo. When the interviewer then asks, "Were you satisfied to support your husband?," his presence just possibly might have influenced her answer:

> I was energized and vicariously excited by my husband's enthusiasm in each progressive step he achieved until he earned the highest academic achievement and finally earned a doctorate degree in law. A degree earned by the sweat and sacrifices of his mother, wife and sister for 10 long years. (175)

The woman's answer shows no bitterness, if she had any, in response to his denial of her education. She appears to accept her sacrifice as a wife, for "I had expected to suffer" (175). Then her husband Kang explains that "*I went to Chicago to study and needed*

tuition fees that I couldn't possibly earn. Won-shin had to work and earn it so I could complete my studies. We couldn't afford spending the meager earning on fare, so it was ten years later that we finally got together" (175). Kang never questions why it was his wife, instead of him, who had to abandon a desire for learning, suggesting cultural and gender expectations about a wife's submissive and sacrificial role. Clearly, the family maintained Korean patriarchal cultural traditions in the adopted place after their arrival in the 1910s.

Clashes between feminism and women's participation in male-centered practices also appear in the stories told in "A Picture Bride" and "The Oral Life History." The model minority paradigm and the celebration of women's achievements are offered as explanations for changes that occurred within Korean women themselves, and also suggest how the ethnic pioneers become incorporated into the larger community as "the most successfully assimilated minority group" (Lowe, 68). Kim describes how she became an accomplished woman in the adopted country. Although starting out very poor in her married immigrant life in the Islands, she helped run the laundry shop, made investments in properties with the accumulated resources, and eventually became a successful business woman. Her accomplishments not only demonstrate her ability to adapt to the foreign environment, but also led to her permanent settlement where she feels more comfortable. According to Kim,

> Before I visited Korea, I like going back to Korea to live, so I never buy anything nice. I don't buy expensive things. I save money because we were going to live in Korea at my parents' place. Then I went to Korea after 10 years and I change my mind. Then I came back home to Hawaii. I buy so many things. I made up

my mind to make my life here. In May, 1955 I became an American citizen. (42)

Having become accustomed to the adopted place, with its better living conditions, this immigrant woman no longer wishes to return to reside in the home country—although she does not mind visiting sometimes. Kim's achievements thus fit the model minority pattern: the successful integration of an Asian woman into the adopted place which she has made home.

The first-generation oral history subjects were in fact often ambivalent about their status as women. Kim for example declares, "That time in Hawaii, Korean women were very important, more than men because men were drinking so much. My husband was drinking lots" (38). But she also admits, and even accepts disparities in payment due to gender when she was working at a laundry:

> I worked hard. My husband got $70 a month washing clothes, I $30 a month ironing, together $100 a month, with both of us working so hard. Hard work but only less than one-half pay to women. But we women weren't mad, because men were working more hard hand washing clothes. That time no washing machine, only hand washing. Women only ironed. (38)

Rather than questioning the systemic wage discrimination, she agrees with it. Despite her awareness of gender disparities, like many of the women in *Korean Picture Brides*, she is conflicted in her representation of an ethnic female self that bears a resemblance to the traditional foremothers.

The autobiographical and collaborative representation of Young in "The Oral Life History" concurs with "A Picture Bride." Her story presents her gradual transformation in the foreign country, but it also contains incongruities between the

established social frameworks and the representing/represented self. As a huge success story, Young's immigrant life does not coincide with most other Korean women's stories. She not only divorces her Korean husband, but marries an American man, and becomes a wealthy, accomplished career woman. After living with her spouse over two decades, she separates from him because of his love affair with another woman. Young's consent to the split, however, points to conformity with the patriarchy, rather than defiance of the Confucian tradition, for "I didn't want to divorce but he urged . . . . I agreed to divorce, then he married her" (11). This even, however, provides her with the opportunity to succeed. She runs a laundry alone and also works as a seamstress, which "made money like harvesting season of sesame seeds from the trees" (14). Her hard work and ability eventually help her realize her dream that "I wanted to live a wealthy life like others" (15).

"The Oral Life History," however, displays Young's transforming of her self primarily through her second, interracial marriage to an American soldier, John. One of the helpers in the laundry sent by an army officer who knows about her difficult situation in managing it alone, the assistant gradually develops feelings for the divorced woman. When John first proposes to her a while after her divorce, Young has no intention of marrying another man, and certainly not a white American: "I didn't have any idea for marrying him . . . . My resolution was not to marry with other races" (15). An interracial marriage is unthinkable for her, so she declines his proposal and stays single for another ten years while working with him. Ultimately, she changes her mind and marries John: "Of course I loved him. If I didn't love him, I wasn't marry to him. That is the way I live now" (16). This voluntary decision to wed a white bridegroom out of love indicates her

transformation, since this is so different from the arranged first marriage that she was compelled to enter. Not only does she no longer wish to remain single, as the traditional Korean women would be expected to, given her situation, but after ten years, the racial difference between the white American spouse and herself does not seem to matter.

Despite this departure from Korean cultural and gender borders after years of living successfully in a foreign environment, her apparent feminism actually works together with traditional values, even when she is emphasizing the equal rights of men and women:

> I keep my name on my business not my husband's [.] Women should keep their name and own her business themselves. Now the time for most terms of equality between men and women . . . . Dong Dung Kyun Li! (Equality of Sexes!) That's why I keep my name Young, Nam Soo because the name Young came from my father. Now my father don't have his seed . . . . that's why no one continuing his name. I'm a girl but holding for his name. (16)

If Young's business seems to deny her allegiance to the domestic, traditional roles of women, her willingness to continue the father's name privileges her paternal lineage rather than her maternal. Regardless of how long she has lived in the adopted land, Young's commitment to preserving her native culture leads her to maintain her hereditary Korean name.

In her introduction, Sunoo quotes the Korean proverb, "When the hen crows, the house will collapse" (17) to foreground the issue of gender hierarchy in the ancestral land. The hen refers to women, and the proverb advocates women's submission and muteness in Confucian culture. Through the representations of the Korean speakers, however,

Sunoo shows that "the hen crows" in the adopted country, and also describes how those Korean women actually established homes for themselves and their descendants, instead of destroying the house. Even though they sometimes challenge patriarchal tradition, these oral histories have recovered accounts of the under-represented within and beyond the ethnic group by telling the stories of the colonized Koreans—the immigrants, and the women in particular, including themselves. These stories also explain how Korean women in Hawai'i crossed the cultural, geographical, historical, linguistic, and political divides. But the transformed Korean women did not however completely cross over the borderlines, for they relied on their daughters to communicate with those outside their own community, and also complied with many of the cultural mandates of the motherland that required them to place others' wishes ahead of their own, despite their awareness of the gender inequality involved. Their newly established home in America, where they lived in between two or more cultures, resembled their previous native home but differed from it strongly as well. The tensions between the diasporic and native heritage of these Korean women pioneers were passed on to those of the following generation, male and female.

* * *

The self-representations of early Koreans in Hawai'i show their continuing association with their homeland as well as their developing connection to their adopted place. Part of the "my" and "our" they created maintained ethnic and national identity even though Korea's colonization had often forced them to leave, and then prevented them from returning to their native family and home. As their diasporic identity became

merged with Christianity, however, their wish to "Die in the peninsula, live in the peninsula" faded. Furthermore, as their living elsewhere became prolonged, their attachment grew to the new surroundings, where many eventually settled permanently. They certainly however preferred thinking of themselves as "us" Koreans. The selves of first-generation women developed further nuances. Though they identify with the "us," the susceptible, in the face of Korea's recent colonial history and America's racial injustice, they often distinguish themselves from Korean men when describing, often critically, their family's continuing cultural practice of patriarchal hierarchy in Korea and the States.

But the following generations, including the 1.5-generation and the Hawai‘i-born children, faced a different challenge. Would they preserve their predecessors' cultural and linguistic heritage, and if so, to what extent? And how would they identify themselves in relation to, or apart from, the Korea-born, Korea itself, and Hawai‘i?

Appendix to Chapter One

1. “Onward, Christian Soldiers”

1
그리스도군사
앞셔나가세
십자긔압세고
젼댱에가듯
예수거나리샤
젹병치시니
긧발가난대로
싸홈나가세

후렴
그리스도군사
압셔나가세
십자가압세고
젼댱에가듯

Onward, Christian soldiers!

Marching as to war,

With the cross of Jesus

Going on before.

Christ, the royal Master,

Leads against the foe;

Forward into battle,

See his banners go!

Chorus

Onward, Christian soldiers!

Marching as to war,

With the cross of Jesus

Going on before.

2
대군이동하듯
교회나가니
셩도단니던길
우리도가네
밋난형대들아
한몸과한마암
한바람한도리
한사랑일세

At the sign of triumph

Satan’s host doth flee;

On, then, Christian soldiers,

On to victory.

Hell’s foundations quiver

At the shout of praise;

Brothers, lift your voices,

Loud your anthems raise.

3
면류관룡샹은
잇다업스며
나라와권셰난
일코샤하나
예수에교회는
하나님도으샤
영원불변함을
허락하셧네

Like a mighty army

Moves the Church of God;

Brothers, we are treading

Where the Saints have trod.

We are not divided;

All one body we:

One in hope and doctrine,

One in charity.

4
십자긔가난대
마귀패하네
예수군사들아
나가익이세
찬숑하난소래
텬디울니니
우리한소래로
승젼가하세

Onward, then, ye people;

Join our happy throng.

Blend with ours your voices

In the triumph song:

Glory, laud, and honor

Unto Christ, the King.

This through countless ages

Men and angels sing.

2. 환국가 “Hwan’guk ga” (Song of Returning to One’s Country)

I
칠쳔여명 부여족이
미포령디 이민온것
후일광복 위하여셔
죠물쥬의 셩리로다

후렴

어셔가쟈 형뎨자매
희생봉사 결심하고
견설공쟉 협죠하세
본향으로 환국하쟈

That seven thousand odd Puyŏ tribe,

Immigrating to Mip'o territory

is for the nation's liberation at a later time

the victory of the Creator

Refrain

Let's go promptly, our brothers and sisters

Resolve to sacrifice and serve

Let's cooperate in building and maneuvering

Let's return to our original hometown of the home country

II
젹슈공권 우리지셩
민죡해방 완셩한것
셩도신앙 대샹으로
죠물쥬의 은사로다

Our devotion with empty hands and naked fists

has brought the completion of national liberation

Those who have Christian faith,

this spiritual gift from the Creator is intended for you

III
륙십만명 모셰동죡
해방월강 한것갓치
형뎨자매 손을잡고
태평양을 건너가쟈

Six hundred thousand people of Moses

As they cross the river when liberated

Holding hands with brothers and sisters

Let's cross the Pacific Ocean

IV
호항션챵 화륜션에
우리동포 승션하고
부산항에 도착할때
거국일치 환호한다

On the steamship at the wharf

Our people board

When arriving at Pusan Harbor

The whole nation in a body hails us with acclamations

V
인쳔항에 어부션은
악마무리 령솔하고
동경만에 하륙할때
삼도야만 비통한다

Ships of fishermen at Inch'ŏn Harbor

lead away the group of evildoers[51]

When they land at Tokyo Bay

Barbarians of three islands grieve

VI
우리행션 고동소래
무샤도난 경동하고
반도강산 무궁화난
환희로셔 춤을츈다

Because of the whistle sound of our ship

[51] This refers to the Japanese.

Warriors act excitedly

The hibiscus[52] of the rivers and mountains of the peninsula

dances with joy

VII
광복후원 하든미포
지샹락원 소유하게
배별츅사 하옵니다
쥬여보호 하옵소서

Mip'o, that supported independence,

Let it possess heaven on earth

(I) say farewell and give a congratulatory speech

Lord, please protect this place.

3. 한인의 하와이 "Hanin ŭi Hawai" (Korea Hawai'i),

가경가애 너를 떠나; 무졍무미 나는 간다
세상텬디 못할일은 두고가는리별이라. 너를두고가는 나는 오늘 다시 샹심이라. 사시쟝츈의 긔화요초만발하니 별유텬디—요 영화로온 락원이라. 동셔만리에 호호망망한 태평양 한 복판에 일야로 떠잇는 하와이아 너를 참아닛고 갈길 업구나. 오색인죵이 복잡한 가온대 신셩한 부여민족의 십년성취한 "한인의 하와이"아 너 부디 평안히 잇거라 나는간다.

I'm leaving you, the beautiful and beloved; heartless and dry, I'm going. The hardest thing to do in the whole wide world is parting. I, who am leaving you, again have a broken heart. All year round precious flowers and wonderful plants and trees come into full bloom, so you are another world and glorious paradise. Hawai'i!, floating day and night at the center of the Pacific Ocean in the long distance from East and West, I can't really forget and leave you.

[52] Korea's national flower, called mugunghwa in Korean.

"Korea Hawai'i," where this sacred Puyŏ people[53] have achieved for ten years among five crowded races,[54] please stay in peace. I am leaving.

나라도 업고 집도 업시 동셔로*리하난 나는 너를 떠나가난 오날의
깁히싸인 회포와 한이 뎌건너 화산구멍의 불꽃갇히 닐어나 마음을
진뎡할수 업스니 오날날 다시 나라를 일코 집을일흠 사람갇구나. 이
태평양우헤 둥실떠가난 배 뎌배에 우두커니 실려가게된 사람이
사람의 샹한마음 그 마음가온대 깁흔 회포와 깁흔 한을아난야 너
한인의하와이아

I, who without a country and home have drifted from East to West, cannot calm myself down because deep thoughts and resentment arise like a flame from a hole of a volcano, and today I thus look like a person who again has lost a country and home. Do you, Korea Hawai'i, know the deep nostalgic sentiments and deep resentment of a broken-hearted person absent-mindedly being carried away by the ship buoyantly floating away in the Pacific Ocean?

너는 태평양 파도즁에 숨엇다가 이셰상에 너의 일흠을 젼하고
나온지 얼마 셰월이 되디 몯하엿거니와 그러한즁에도 너의 디볕이[55]
핑쟝티 몯하며 너의 디위가 귀즁티 몯한즉 이 셰상사람마다 너를
경애하난 마음이 잇슬중을 믿디 안난바-로다. 그러나 나는 너를
경애하난 마음이 이샹하니 이는 별유텬디라하야 사랑하난바도
안히며 영화로온 락원이라하야 공경하난바도 안히라. 내가 너를
알던날로 붙허 오날까지와 오날로 붇허 후일까지 우리됴션민죽으로
더불어 깁흔 언약이 잇난듯이 즁한 맹셔가 잇난듯이 셔로 배반티
몯할 관계가 잇스며 셔로 떠나디몯할 인연이잇스니 우리는 너를
인하야 가히 도모할 긔회를 지으며 너는 우리를 인하여 발휘할
영광을싸흐니 우리를 위하야 네가 업셧던덜 이 시대에 불행이라
하겟스며 너를 대하야 우리가 업셧던덜 이 세계에
무색이라하겟도다.

[53] The same people as those in"Hwan'guk ga."
[54] Five crowded races indicate various races.
[55] The noun, 디볕 is incomprehensible and thus believed to be a typo. From the context, it could be 디변, which means territorial boundary.

You hid in the waves of the Pacific Ocean, so it has not been very long since you came out and let this world know your name. In the meantime, everyone in this world does not love or respect you, because your territorial boundary is not great or your status is not valuable. But my love and respect for you do not come from the fact that you are very beautiful and are a glorious paradise. From the day I knew you until today, and from today until the future, as if you and our Chosŏn people have a profound promise and important pledge with each other, either of us can't betray or leave the other. We [Koreans] had an opportunity to actually plan ahead, and you have attained an honor to demonstrate yourself because of us. Thus it would have been unfortunate for us if you had not existed, and you could have remained unknown without us.

이와갇흔 관계와 인연이 잇난바에 나는 홀로 무미하야 왓다가
무졍하게 가니 말쟈하되 한이요 금할수 업난 회포라 진쥬만의
흘으난 물과 금강봉의 부난 바람은 방향업시 가난 배를 슌하게
보내디마난 금문만 언덕 우헤 신대륙 넓은 텬디가 역시 나의
고국이 안히요 나의 집이 업거니 어나곳을 간들 깁흔 한과
깁흔회포가 위로를 얻으며 봄ㅅ꽃과 가을ㅅ달 사시풍경이 됴티마난
어나 때를 당한들 쳐량한 노래와 감개한 눈물을 금하리요

Even with such a relationship and connection between us, I came alone unintentionally and go heartless. But if I do not express my feelings, it would leave regrets and nostalgic sentiments. The waters of Pearl Harbor and the winds blowing at Kŭmgang mountaintop (Korea) gently let an aimless ship go. However, the wide earth and the sky of the New World over Kŭmmuman (Golden Gate bay) hill is also not my homeland, and I do not have a home. So wherever I go, I could not be comforted because of deep resentments and deep nostalgic sentiments. Although spring flowers, autumn moon, and the scenery of

four seasons are good, I cannot stop plaintive songs and strongly-felt tears, whenever parting occurs.

아무렴 가기는 간다마는 큰 희망을 두고가니 “한인의 하와이”
너에게 위탁하노라 “하와이의 한인” 정치쳑 단테가 발뎐하며
죵교샹 도덕이 풍죡하며 실업계 사업이 진취하며 교육변뎡도가
고샹하야 날로 변쳔하고 때로 젼진하며 내가 오늘날 두고 가난
희망이 확실히 셩취될 기회가 불원간의 잇슬줄을 믿노니 그 날에는
너 “한인의 하와이”가 참으로 영광슬어온 복디가 될지며 우리
“하와이의 한인” 이 또한 가치를 들어 내난 국민이 될진뎌.

Although I go, I leave a big hope. “Korea Hawai‘i,” to you I trust with “Hawai‘i’s Koreans.” You will undergo changes and move onward by developing political parties, becoming abundant with religious ethics, progressing industrial business, and by uplifting educational standards. I believe that you will soon have the opportunity to achieve the hope I leave with you today. On that day, you, “Korea Hawai‘i” will truly become an honorary, blessed land, and our “Hawaii’s Koreans” also will become a people displaying their worth.

4. 세월아 “Sewŏla”

세월아
얼마나 크고
얼마나 무서운 너이기에
세월이여 너는
나를 이곳으로 데려왔느냐?
때리고 밀치고 또 박차고
급기야 너는
나를 남쪽나라 쪽박섬
최후의 항구로
이것이 내가 너에게 대한
소원이였더냐?

Time,

How big and

How scary you are

Time, you

brought me to this place?

You beat, pushed, and kicked

at last you

brought me to tchokpak sŏm,[56] the country in the south

to the last harbor

Is this the wish

I had from you?

세월이여 그러나
한마디 말이 있다
남쪽나라 밤하늘 위엔
별하나 없고
한자옥 발길조차
밟을곳 없다면
차라리 오색 불꽃속에
아름다운 풍속을 배우련다

But time,

I have a word to tell.

In the night sky in the southern country

no stars exist

If I cannot tread even one step

anywhere

I'd rather in the five-colored flames

[56] An isolated, forlorn island, referring to Hawai'i.

learn beautiful customs

세월이여
너는 나의
희망이드냐?
무덤이드냐?

Time,

Are you my

hope?

my grave?

CHAPTER TWO: WHERE HAVE I COME FROM?: ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND PLACE

The shift in this chapter from the writings of the early Korean immigrants in the Hawaiian Islands to those of their descendants crosses a moving and tentative boundary. Sometimes, the birthplace can be unexpected. Though most such writers are American-born, David Hyun belongs to the Korea-born community. Other writers, including Peter Hyun, Margaret Pai, and Francis Chin Chan Pak, spent their early years in Korea, from as short a time as three years (Pai) to more than ten years (Hyun). This geographical flexibility results from the diversity of the diasporic constituents. The "second generation" is often cross-cultural and cross-national, displaying a widely dissimilar range of ways in which these writers identify and represent themselves.

The most significant partition, therefore, is not generational, or geographical, but linguistic. Most first-generation immigrants wrote or conversed in their native tongue, as we have seen in the Korean-language periodicals and Sunoo's *Korean Picture Brides*. But Peter Hyun's serial memoirs, *Man Sei!* (1986) and *In the New World* (1995); Margaret Pai's *The Dreams of Two Yi-min* (1996); the second-generation Korean American subjects in Daisy Chun Rhodes' *Passages to Paradise: Early Korean Immigrant Narratives from Hawai'i* (1998), Gary Pak's video oral histories; and the multi-generational writers of *Yobo: Korean American Writing in Hawai'i* (2003), all employ English for their representations. The linguistic transfer from Korean to English is therefore the most important marker between generations.

In *Begin Here: Reading Asian North American Autobiographies of Childhood* (2007), Roćio G. Davis' explains how such autobiographies modify traditional

representations of their supposed identity and position in America. According to Davis, these writings explore "increasingly complex ways of understanding and articulating migrant and ethnic identity by choosing a transnational position, one that is neither assimilationist nor oppositional" (16). Life writing by the 1.5-generation—the Korean- or American-born whose childhood is spent in Korea—and second-generation Korean Americans from the Hawaiian Islands often moves between or incorporates different components within their identities to reveal the shifting ground of the diasporic self that identifies with America, Korea, or Hawai'i at different times or under given circumstances. For example, Hyun's and Pai's autobiographical writings proclaim their sense of affiliation with the ethnic pioneers even as they show how their selves are disconnected from them. The oral histories of Rhodes and Pak also record the changing identities of speakers who travel across ethnic and physical boundaries. And yet, the represented selves in such stories in *Yobo* as David Hyun's "Shoot Marbles," Lunch Time," and "I Work Sugarcane Field," Victoria Sung Hye Chai Cintrón's "Glass Wall," and Daisy Chun Rhodes' "A Place of Noise," "A Celestial Kitchen," and "Forever Long, Never End" function as a swinging bridge that connects the early expatriates to their descendents.

Michael M. J. Fischer's observation on ethnicity in the postmodern context suggests ways for us to approach how the transitional Korean American writers and speakers identify and represent themselves. Fischer notes:

> That ethnicity is something reinvented and reinterpreted in each generation by each individual and that it is often something quite puzzling to the individual, something over which he or she lacks control. Ethnicity is not something that

> is simply passed on from generation to generation, taught and learned; it is something dynamic, often unsuccessfully repressed or avoided. (195)

This understanding challenges familiar notions of inherited or shared ethnicity among people with the same genetic ancestry, and clearly articulates the impermanent nature of diasporic identity. This viewpoint parallels Len Ang's argument that deconstructs assumed identity among the various diasporas regardless of such differences as culture, geographical location, and language. Examining the autobiographical representations of the in-between generations, whose culture and language embrace Korea, America, and the Hawaiian Islands, reveals departures from and a reaching out to Korean ethnicity, often occurring simultaneously with attempts at coming to terms with America or Hawai‘i. The result is often a second-generation temporal and fluid self that surges between rapid alternatives in the subjects' affiliating Korean, American, and local identity.

Peter Hyun's *Man Sei!* and *In the New World*

Peter Hyun was born on Kaua‘i in 1906 when his father, the Reverend Hyun Soon, was doing missionary work among Korean immigrants. The family moved to Korea in 1907, where they lived until 1920, when they fled to Shanghai from Japanese surveillance caused by the father's active participation in the March First Movement in 1919. After staying in China for four years, Peter Hyun immigrated to Hawai'i in 1924, the year following his father's return there after being appointed as a minister of the Korean Methodist Church in Honolulu. Hyun attended his junior high and high school in the Islands, then in 1929 went to Indiana for college. Although initially planning to become a minister like his father, he changed his mind and instead pursued a theater

career. But he left the stage, and returned to Hawai‘i in the late 1930s. After joining the U.S. Army in the mid-1940s, Hyun was sent to Korea in 1945 as a US military officer, but was called back within two months because of suspected involvement with the communists. After his return, he started a business in Los Angeles, and the rest of his family left Hawai‘i to join him.

Though of the American-born generation, Hyun's accounts in *Man Sei!* and *In the New World* explain the disjunction between his birthplace and the kinds of subject positions he occupied in his life, which together create a fluid, diasporic identity. *Man Sei!* highlights Hyun's colonial experience in Korea and China, where he spent his formative years. Since he shares the cultural and historical background of the first generation, it is not surprising that the young narrator identifies himself in this text with the colonized. The sequel, *In the New World*, however, describes his gradual adaptation to America in terms of its culture, language, and society, which parallels the lives of the first-generation ethnic immigrants whose native tongue is Korean, and who arrive with the American Dream in the foreign land. Hyun's return to Korea, however, also suggests that he no longer sees himself as sharing that generation's hope. In short, the autobiographical representations in *Man Sei!* and *In the New World* show us the moving self of a descendant whose diasporic identity fluctuates between Korean, Korean immigrant, American, and even something else.

Roćio G. Davis describes how Asian American writers confirm their Asian subjectivity, privilege their native culture, and consider North Americanization as a play of action rather than the assumption of an unchanging character. According to Davis, Asian American autobiographers distinguish their childhoods from those of mainstream

Western culture by stressing their earlier experience outside the continent, and concluding their narratives with an exit from their original place of entry into North America. As a result, Hyun's emphasis on life in the colonized Korea, or in the Korean community in China in *Man Sei!*, departs from the stereotypes of ethnic or immigrant autobiographies in North America by stressing his continued identification with Koreans whose cultural, historical, and linguistic backgrounds match his own.

The impetus of *Man Sei!* was Hyun's ethnic affiliation as a Korean, and he assumes a subject position best suited to telling the story of colonized Koreans in the 1910s. According to Hyun,

> I felt personally responsible to tell the story of my father and my mother and their undying struggle for the freedom of their people. I had to tell the story as I had lived and witnessed it. Out of this conviction and inspiration *Man Sei!* was born. (x)

Return after a recent visit to the ancestral land, Hyun bemoans how little the current generation of Koreans knows about the independence movements that he and his parents were part of in the early twentieth century. This ignorance prods him to record the individual and collective stories of the former generation who wished to "preserve the proud identity of Korea as an independent nation" (x). This responsibility connects him both to the ancestors and their offspring. It also confirms that he writes as a Korean, suggested by the title, *Man Sei!*, which means "Long Live Korea!" in the Korean language.

His account of a pivotal moment in Korea's colonial history displays Hyun's affiliated shared experience with Koreans. The opening cries of Koreans in *Man Sei!*

emerge from the powerful and collective voice of a suppressed people in the motherland, a voice reminiscent of the poems and songs published in the Hawai‘i Korean-language periodicals in the 1910s and 1920s:

> *Man Sei! Man Sei! Man Sei!*
>
> Long Live Korea! Long Live Korea! Long Live Korea!
>
> *Dai-Han Dok Yip Man Sei!* Long Live Korean independence!
>
> THE AWESOME CHANTS of the surging crowd still ring in my years. It was Seoul, Korea, March 1, 1919; I was twelve years old. (1)

By positioning his younger self as an eye witness to the national demonstrations in Korea, Hyun speaks for the earlier generation. Reproducing the massive chant in Korean as well as English conveys the people's strong resistance to the colonizers' attempts to erase the cultural and national identity of the people whom the speaker represents. Hyun then records the brutal suppression by the Japanese, who "were chopping down the people like they were overgrown weeds. Screams of the falling and the felled pierced the air. Then, suddenly, the marines reared their horses and charged in another direction, cutting yet another swath through the human mass" (9). By depicting himself at the center of the Movement, Hyun not only represents Koreans' struggle to restore their nation's sovereignty, but also establishes his foundation as a Korean self active in nationalistic and historical events.

When the Japanese military police suppress the massive demonstrations, Hyun tries to destroy the decree of the Emperor, which forbids Koreans' freedom of speech by prohibiting any public assemblies and by banning any criticism of the colonizers. Hyun's spontaneous, self-destructive reaction seeks to challenge publicly imperial power in his

ancestral land, but he gets caught by a Japanese passerby and taken to the Japanese principal at school:

> "Come here," he commanded and shut the door behind me.
>
> "What were you doing in front of the school gate?" he asked.
>
> "When, sir?" I asked innocently.
>
> "Just now!" he jumped up. "Just a little while ago!"
>
> . . .
>
> "You meant to destroy the emperor's proclamation!" I had no further explanation and remained silent. (68)

During the entire interrogation, Hyun refuses to answer, and his determined muteness signifies his resistance to the other. Whether he admits or denies his guilt, answering would mean submitting to the colonial interrogator and acknowledging the Japanese illegitimate presence in the country.

Hyun's individual resistance corresponds to the collective defiance of the Koreans. But he, however, portrays his effort as victories. Because he will not answer, the school master loses his temper and becomes violent:

> With the bundle of reeds, he whipped me with all his strength . . . . The more he whipped, the more I gritted my teeth and remained silent. The principal then lost all control. He kept whipping without stop, and not satisfied, he began hitting me all over my body. I covered my head and he whipped my hands. He was a madman . . . . Finally he threw down the shredded reeds and began slapping me with his hands. (69)

The physical abuse of Hyun by the "madman" mirrors the cruel actions of the military

police against the freedom fighters: “the mad dogs galloped blindly into the mass of people, swinging their long sabers right and left, right and left” (9). The principal’s uncontrollable rage against the resistant youngster, who stays calm throughout, also testifies to Hyun’s stronger mental strength, suggesting that the Japanese principal has been defeated psychologically. In this way, the student’s triumph offsets somewhat the failure of the Movement, and revises for the better a history in which he has participated.

Hyun’s self is not only shaped by his colonial experience, but by other historical and cultural forces experienced while living in Korea and China prior to arriving in the United States. Hyun for example provides information about the earlier history of Korea to explain the proud and united identity of its people, including himself. According to him, in the 660s Silla unified the neighboring kingdoms for the first time on the Korean peninsula. Subsequently, the Koryŏ and Yi dynasties established and maintained the people’s national pride by protecting their sovereignty against foreign invasions. The recording of Korea’s history in *Man Sei!* proclaims Hyun’s geographical and historical backgrounds, and therefore his affiliated Korean self. Critics have taken issue with this strategy. Rob Wilson claims about Hyun that “too much of his commentary does read like a pocket history of the world—simplistic, readymade, bland” (100). Wilson’s critique is a response to Hyun’s integration of the nation’s past into his personal accounts, which at times goes beyond the traditional boundaries of autobiographical writing. But Wilson overlooks the influential role of Korea’s pre-modern periods on shaping Hyun’s Korean identity.

Andrew C. Nahm points to Hyun’s misinformation about Korean history, and tries to correct the supposedly mistaken facts:

> Certain erroneous historical and geographical remarks could easily have been avoided had the author checked with more care. For example, in the spring of 1919 more than just his father and seven other persons were involved in planning the March First demonstration; the last king of Koryu did not "embark upon an ambitious adventure: the invasion of China" (p. 15) . . . . [T]he U.S.-Korean treaty of 1882 did not contain a "mutual pledge of aid in the event of attack by a foreign power" (p.126). (386)

And yet, Nahm's own version of Korea's history can be questioned. Historian Bruce Cummings notes that Koryŏ's last ruler, King Kongyang, *did* try to invade China, although the founder of Yi dynasty, General Yi Sŏng-gye, had a change of heart, returned his troops to the palace, and dethroned the king (44). Cummings also notes that there were different viewpoints concerning the 1882 treaty between Korea and the United States (107). What is important to recognize, however, is that Hyun's version corresponds to the understanding of his Korean contemporaries—an insider's position, as opposed to that of the outsiders, who take issue with him.

The Korean cultural legacies include the oral tradition represented. Because he is the Changson, the eldest son of the eldest son of the family and therefore expected to continue the lineage, and take care of the ancestral rights and the family's numerous businesses, Hyun is treated specially by his great grandmother, who tells him many folktales whenever he visits her. Memories of their close relationship and her stories are an important part of his Korean self, and he readily reenacts her storytelling. When passing on his favorite folk tales, such as "The Gentleman Farmer and the Tiger" and "Three Suffering Men," Hyun displays a Korean sense of humor. For the great grandson,

the original storyteller stands as his cultural matriarch, and reproducing her stories is one way that he meets his obligation to preserve his inherited tradition, including its comic aspects.

Hyun's cultural education, which helps develop his Korean identity, is not confined by the national borders, but expands over into China. Japanese surveillance of the Hyun family due to the father's involvement in Korea's independence protests became unbearable. The mother finally took all the children out of the colonized homeland in 1920, and joined her exiled husband in China. Despite expectations of better life without Japanese harassment, the family's troubles continued, as the Hyuns, as well as other patriots and exiles, had to bear the taunting of the Chinese people, who called them *Wang Guo Loo*, or "a slave of a lost country" (120). All of their humiliating experiences as a colonized people, however, led the Korean youngsters, including Hyun, to form the Young Revolutionary Society, whose major goal was to "'contribute to the Korean independence movement'" (123). They pledged to "be ready to sacrifice our lives, if necessary, for Korean independence, to be fearless, and never to betray anyone" (123). Furthermore, Hyun's education at the Korean school "reshaped me as a true Korean: patriotic and proud, no longer ashamed of the kind of life I had lived in Korea under the Japanese rulers" (125). Hyun's foreign, somewhat degrading life outside Korea therefore maintains, and even strengthens, his ethnic identity.

This diasporic community preserves its cultural ties to the homeland. Despite the harsh realities of China, the expatriates do not forget their literary and oral traditions, finding much comfort in composing poems and singing together native folksongs. Longing for Korea, on a picnic this community exchanges such verses spontaneously:

> [Hyun's father] cleared his throat, and fixing his eyes in distant space, he began to chant his poem . . . . The listeners burst into applause. Teacher Chai was next to compose and recite his poem followed by a few other elders . . . . Each poem was greeted with enthusiastic applause. Caught up in the mood, a young man broke out with the Korean people's favorite folk song . . . . And everyone including women and children joined in singing the chorus. (109)

Despite their physical distance due to colonial domination, these individuals maintain their inherited legacies, do not cease to identify themselves as Koreans, and even fortify the sense of who they are.

Hyun's preference for depicting the earlier experience in Korea and China in *Man Sei!* certainly provides information about how his ethnic identity has been formed and developed within and outside the ancestral land. But Nahm observes that "The subtitle, *The Making of a Korean American*, is misleading since Peter Hyun tells us only about his personal experiences in Korea and China" (385), and Rob Wilson agrees that "Hyun does not really give a portrait of a 'Korean-American' as his sub-title suggests" (102). These comments, however, reflect what Davis describes as "hegemonic notions of the location of the childhood experience of the (Asian) American/Canadian subject." Hyun's representation of the self crying "Man Sei!" therefore rewrites "the official scripts of the American or Canadian experience of childhood" by portraying his earlier time before landing in America (17).

The sequel, *In the New World*, shifts the geographical location to the United States, recording Hyun's adaptations to the place he was born in, but returned to much later. His American experience resembles that of the first-generation Korean immigrants

more closely than that of the American-born generation, since he spent most of his formative years in Korea and China. “Would I find the New World where all the promises and dreams would be fulfilled?” Hyun asks himself when arriving in Hawai‘i (186). For the teenager, America is not his homeland, but “the New World,” where he hopes to accomplish his dreams in the future. The American culture is virtually unknown to him. The language that the Americans speak is a foreign tongue that he needs to learn, as any other immigrant to this country would. Hyun’s adjustments to the new cultural, linguistic, and social environment are another example of the process of Americanization that diasproric first-generation Koreans endured. While this experience will include racial bias that leaves him feeling marginalized and dislocated, his later return to Korea will also make him realize that he no longer belongs there either—leaving him an unsettled, trans-cultural self who moves across many borders.

Of all the adjustments the new-comer Hyun must make to American culture, language is the most problematic. The Korean youngster soon becomes acclimatized to his western environment by “eating new foods in new places, meeting new friends and visiting their American-style homes” (27). He also learns about American capitalism. While “in Korea, I was taught to be disdainful not only of money, but of all material possessions,” after emigrating he soon found that “inexorably, I was drawn into the American way of life. I felt the need to find money, and quickly!” (17) Rather than clinging to his childhood Confucian education, Hyun chooses his way of living by working to buy things that he wants. For example, after three months of laboring in the Dole pineapple cannery, he buys a violin because “from my earliest childhood I had always dreamed of playing a violin” (19). Ownership of the musical instrument not only

fulfills his “dearest childhood dream!” (20), but also his partial integration into American economic culture.

Language, however, is the most crucial indication of his Americanization. That his mother tongue is Korean, while that of his peers in Hawai‘i is English, distinguishes him sharply from the second generation:

> They were all American-born Koreans. They looked Korean, but they could neither speak nor understand Korean. They circled around me and stared as if I were a new member of the zoo. They bombarded me with questions, in English, of course, of which I could understand very little, and I kept talking to them in Korean, which only provoked their laughter. (11)

This linguistic boundary not only divides individuals with a common ethnicity, but also alienates the recently arrived. Furthermore, the comment “they looked Korean” indicates that the boy differentiates himself from others by denying their ethnic identity. How can someone be Korean who can’t speak Korean?

Hyun’s account of how he struggles to learn English points to his desire to become Americanized. He strongly insists that his cultural adaptation to western surroundings does not alter who he is:

> All the changes I had experienced so far had to do with things outside of me—with the objective world. They do not reach my inside world: my thoughts, feelings, and beliefs—my identity. (27)

And yet, Hyun’s endeavor to master the language forces him to violate “all the proper speaking manners I had learned in Korea: keep your face expressionless, don’t reveal your emotions when you speak . . . until one could cultivate the perfectly immobile face

of a cultured person" (17). In spite of his initial embarrassment, he continuously works to overcome the language barrier, and after several years of effort he can "speak English in my dreams—not Korean or Chinese, but English! I knew then that English had indeed become my language" (58). This acquisition of linguistic proficiency, which partly stems from his resolution "to reshape my thoughts and feelings and try to become a part of this new land and its way of life" (15) signifies for him a rite of passage to become Americanized—or sound like an American, at least.

Hyun's efforts to integrate himself fully into the New World are fueled by his wish to belong in his place of birth and to participate in American society. This desire, however, is repeatedly thwarted by the racial discrimination of white Americans, which forces him to realize what Davis calls "the gap" that all Koreans experience "between their perceptions of themselves and their encounter with the gaze of the mainstream/White observer" (18). After finishing high school in Hawai'i, Hyun goes to DePauw University. He went planning on becoming a minister, but instead finds himself attracted to the stage. He joins the Civic Repertory Theatre as a regular member, and even directs the Studio Players. In spite of his passion and the success that confirms his talent in the field, Hyun cannot help but notice how other white participants disapprove of him because of his racial background:

> I encountered invisible but powerful roadblocks; I was never allowed to feel completely at home in America. Time and time again I was reminded that I was not just a foreigner, but an "Oriental." For me to rise from the accorded level of servitude, such as a "houseboy" or "laundryman," to the unheard of level of theatre director was inconceivable and unacceptable to most

Americans. (124)

That he is not accepted as one of "us" confirms that those of the Asian diaspora feel alienated and underprivileged, regardless of cultural and linguistic adaptations, in this racially-restrictive land.

Racial prejudice not only results eventually in Hyun's complete withdrawal from the stage, but speaks to the impossibility of total Americanization. The initial rejection from the white Americans leads Hyun to dissolve the Studio Players, and to leave the theater briefly. But his undying aspirations bring him back to join the New York Federal Theatre, where he directs *The Revolt of the Beaver*. Because the rehearsals are well-received, he and the performing team are invited to Broadway. Despite their initial thrill at the exciting news, the actors and actresses soon reject Hyun as their director, demanding an alternative, presumably white substitute, because of the fear that associating with Hyun could possibly ruin their careers. Once again, he learns that Americans are "totally blind and insensitive to racial discrimination and prejudice" (156), and he finally discards this portion of his American Dream.

The indeterminate status of the American-born Korean generation in the United States ultimately leads him to return to the ancestral land he left more than twenty years before. After his complete departure from the stage in the late 1930s, he moves back in with his family in Hawai‘i. He joins the army in 1944, and is stationed in Korea as a field grade officer. The homecoming, however, forces him to recognize that much has changed since his departure in the early 1920s:

> The people on the streets didn't look the same as I remembered. Instead of baggy pantaloons and long, white frocks, most of the men wore smart

> Western suits, and the swagger in their walks was also new. I searched in vain to see a man wearing the traditional tall, black hat, a common sight when I was growing up in Seoul. (208)

While he was adapting himself to American culture and the English language, Korea and its people were changing as well. His futile search for what does not exist anymore leads to disappointment at the unfamiliar sights and a sense of dislocation in the land where he used to belong.

Hyun's interactions with native Koreans, including his relatives, further increase the distance between them. He looks up his relations and visits them one day. When he arrives in the small town, the villagers gather around him:

> "Is he American or Korean?"
>
> "Can't you see? He's an American officer."
>
> "Yeah, but he looks like a Korean!"
>
> I spoke to them politely. *"Nyee, na nun Hangukin im ni da."* [Yes, I am Korean.]
>
> This aroused even greater surprise.
>
> "Did you hear that?"
>
> "Did you hear that?"
>
> "He spoke Korean!"
>
> "He spoke Korean!"
>
> Some people in the crowd were clapping and jumping. (212-13)

The scene reveals the unfixed self of the diasporic visitor. The people's confusion over his identity results from the U.S. Army uniform. Clearly, he is an American officer, but

Hyun's response in the Korean language, which contradicts what Americans represent for the native Koreans, demonstrates that he identifies with them. And yet, the people's response is "he spoke Korean." They do not say "he is Korean."

Hyun's indeterminate identity somewhere between Korean and American becomes even clearer when he turns down the relatives' offer of inheriting the ancestral property. As the eldest son of the eldest son in the lineage, he is entitled and required to take it over and carry out his cultural duty. Instead, he refuses:

> I left Korea at age thirteen and for twenty-six years, I lived abroad. I went to school in China for four years, and have spent the rest of the years in America . . . . Here in Korea, I am an ignorant person . . . . Besides, I'll have to move and live here. It will mean leaving all my family, including my mother and father, and terminating all my work in America. (215)

This denial proclaims a self disconnected from the place and people that the teenager once identified with. He does not wish to settle down permanently, nor does he envision his future there. Fulfilling the familial responsibilities is less important to him than his life in the United States, despite the racial boundaries he has encountered. Although Hyun leaves Korea abruptly and by force, due to the US government's order based on his alleged association with communists, he would have departed for the States sooner or later.

In the "Afterword" to *In The New World*, Hyun concludes that "The making of a Korean American is essentially a story of a cultural marriage. Such a marriage is consummated only after a prolonged period of engagement—ten years, twenty, or even longer" (277). His trans-cultural stance resembles the "transnational position, one that is

neither assimilationist nor oppositional" that Davis locates in the self-representations of Asian North American writers. While Hyun's experience with the American Dream may suggest a failed Korean diaspora from the birthplace where he "was never allowed to feel completely at home" (124), his refusal to live in the ancestral place also shows he has partially departed from there. Ultimately, he settles in America, where he opens a new business in Los Angeles and marries. The self-representations in "The Making of a Korean American," therefore, presents us with a migrant who is never settled: a self forever moving, always disappointed between Korean, American, and Korean American identities.

Margaret K. Pai's *The Dreams of Two Yi-min*

Margaret K. Pai was born in 1914 to Korean immigrant parents Do In Kwon and Hee Kyung Lee, and spent most of her life in Hawai'i. She did however live for three years in Korea from July, 1918 to mid-1921, and for less than two years in San Francisco in the late 1940s, helping run an upholstery store for her father. Until Do In passed away in the early 1960s, Pai also assisted him with his business in the Islands. Subsequently, she taught English at a local high school, and published the story "Growing Up in a Factory," which is included in *The Dreams of Two Yi-min*.

Pai's narrative recovers stories of the ethnic pioneers in the Islands by describing how two Korean immigrants, or *Yi-min*, achieved their American Dream. In particular, it highlights the significance of her mother in establishing the family in the adopted place. *The Dreams* provides accounts of the American-born generation who crossed not only the cultural, geographical, and linguistic borderlines between the United States and Korea,

but those between the mainland and Hawai‘i as well. While the trans-national and trans-cultural journey of the descendent daughter shows how she understands her Korean parents, and identifies with them to some degree, her different juvenile environment, local and western, in Hawai‘i separates her from them, and also shapes her local identity. Looking closely at Pai's representations of a Korean local family, including Do In, Hee Kyung, and herself, reveals how her experience and identity resemble and diverge from the Korean-born generation, and follows the transforming self crisscrossing different boundaries of cultures and languages.

In "Beyond Ke‘eaumoku," Brenda Kwon defines local identity in the Islands. It has racial connotations—Asian, Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander—and also historical characteristics. Locals are people with a plantation history who have been here for more than one generation, and who share a common language—pidgin English—and some behavior codes. When Elaine H. Kim notes the distinctive characteristics of Korean American writers from Hawai‘i, she does not register this local identity:

> Korean American writers in Hawaii are distinct from their 'mainland' counterparts, undoubtedly because in Hawaii as nowhere else in America, it has been possible for Asian Americans to claim to be both Asian and American. (168-69)

Kim recognizes the Asian and American identities of the locals, but she does not acknowledge those group associations that relate local Koreans to their birthplace or Hawaiian living environment.

The Dreams can only be understood as the story of the formation of Pai's *local* identity, shaped by her interactions with Hawai‘i's culture, language, and peoples.

According to the historian Duk Hee Lee Murabayashi, *The Dreams* is a fictional memoir derived loosely from the stories that Pai heard from her Korean mother, Hee Kyung, when little.[57] While the full extent of its fictionality can never be determined, the result displays the fluid characteristics of autobiographical writing that slides back and forth over the generic boundaries between fiction and non-fiction. Integrating historical elements from Korea's colonial past is one way that the American-born Korean shares the experience of her ancestors and sheds light on the Korean self. As Davis explains, "collective memory is our passport to membership in a group and . . . personal memories may be harnessed to represent community stories" (29). Pai's recalling of Korea's traditional customs, including national holidays and food, that she encountered during her short childhood stay in the country, ties her to the common cultural memory of all Koreans.

The recorded account of Pai's picture-bride mother, however, invokes those intersecting issues of race, gender, and culture that Betty A. Bergland's "Representing Ethnicity" raises. Bergland argues that the under-representation of ethnic women in literature is because "ethnic cultures and ethnic autobiographies have assumed the male as universal subject" (83). A work like Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior* therefore explicitly challenges the universalized male who has customarily represented his ethnicity on behalf of both genders. In fact, *The Dreams* is one of very few works by second-generation Korean Americans that pay close attention to the immigrant lives of Korean women and preserves Korean matriarchs' legacies passed down to their children.

The representations of the different backgrounds of Pai's Korean parents, Do In

[57] Murabayashi informed me of the fictionalization of *The Dreams* during a conversation in 2011. She went to Taegu, Hee Kyung's hometown, to verify the story's authenticity, but found that many of the details are fictional.

and Hee Kyung, suggest how the daughter distinguishes *her* (mother's) story from *his* (father's) story by describing their personal American Dreams for themselves and the following generations. Born to a poor family in a small town of Korea called Andong, when he failed to go to college, the father was expected to become a farmer as the successor of his ancestors. To increase his chances of success in finding a life, Do In immigrates to Hawai‘i in 1905 at the age of seventeen as a laborer. The mother, Hee Kyung, was the second daughter of a wealthy, upper-class family in Taegu. When a go-between visits her house one day, she decides to immigrate to Hawai‘i as a picture bride to pursue higher education, which was limited to women in Korea. She leaves at the age of eighteen, meeting her bridegroom in 1912.

The initial American Dream of Hee Kyung, however, is never fulfilled because when she arrives in the Islands, "She became aware of her husband's meager wages. She knew she had to abandon her dream of attending college in Hawaii" (3). That Pai's mother must discard her wishes clashes with the many success stories of ethnic immigrants, men and women alike, and shows the other side that has been less recognized. Her passion for education, however, does not end with her own disappointment. Instead, she instills it in her children:

> "Study hard! Study hard!" were daily admonitions. An education was the most important reason for living, it seemed. I attended school all day. In the afternoon my Korean friends and I walked to the Methodist church on Fort Street to learn Hangul, the Korean alphabet . . . . I studied so hard that I anticipated the questions the teacher would ask. (46)

Hee Kyung's high esteem for learning reflects the Confucian doctrine of traditional

Korean culture, and Pai confirms that the children inherited their educational values from the mother. When the children are old enough for higher education, Pai notes about her mother that "The dream of a college education for herself was replaced by a vow to see that all four of her children earned college degrees" (150). These academic achievements confirm that the American-born Koreans preserved the values of their first-generation mother. Her dream is fulfilled, though in the following generation.

The father Do In's ultimate achievement of the American Dream is a result of his efforts, and Hee Kyung's as well. Although he starts immigrant life as a laborer and a yardboy, he eventually finds a job working with furniture, and in time becomes "known in the trade as a first-rate upholsterer" (57). Roughly twenty years after his arrival, he owns his own shop in Honolulu. Do In also invents devices that supplement his family resources. His first patent, a heat reflector designed to prevent the stove from getting soiled by boiling over liquid from the pot, sells well and is in high demand among the neighbors. His bamboo curtains called Poinciana Draperies, which he invents during the Depression, also improve his upholstery business. The upward movement of a Korean immigrant from farmer's son to owner of a furniture store in Hawai‘i traces the path to his dream, and he certainly contributes to achieving it.

But behind Do In's accomplishments lies Hee Kyung's hard work and sacrifice for the family. When the husband moves the upholstery shop to a bigger place on Beretania Street to increase production and sales, his wife volunteers to assist him:

> Poor Mother. Living on the premises of the business, she was unable to escape his misery and curses. She regretted the day she had generously offered to "give a hand," because she was trapped into working full time, doing everything

> except the carpentering and the painting. She was the seamstress. She operated the awesome power sewing machine that roared like many misaligned wheels rotating . . . . Mother also learned to take phone messages in her broken English, and she was the overseer of the employees when Father went out on calls. (78)

Hee Kyung's uncompensated hard work makes her an essential part of the furniture business. But the significance of this work is different. Pai's farmboy immigrant father climbs to achieve his dream. Her mother, however, "progresses" from the daughter of the wealthy family in the native country to the job of a seamstress in the foreign land. When Pai declares that "if it weren't for Mother, my father would never have become a success" (84), then, she is insisting on the woman's crucial role in fulfilling *his* life.

As Do In's business improves, the mother also works to provide a better home for the children. Even with success, Hee Kyung feels their living conditions are poor. The family lives in a small apartment on the second floor behind the upholstery factory, and although the husband objects to moving because of expense, she responds that "'it's about time we got out of this prison we call home. We can't even hear a visitor knocking on our front door—our front door is the front door of the store!'" (85) The mother joins the Korean loan system, or kye, and assembles enough money to buy a property, and builds a decent house in Makiki. That "Mother stayed home with our baby sister and they spent most of the day outside" (92) confirms that the quality of life for the family has improved in the adopted country.

Pai's preservation of Hee Kyung's story confirms that she recognizes the crucial contributions of the first-generation women to the success story of Korean immigrants to Hawai‘i. At the same time, she asserts a continuity between the first-generation and the

American-born descendents. For Pai, this bond with her Korean parents is strengthened by the several years she stays in the ancestral land, where she experiences colonialism and becomes familiar with her native culture and language. Hee Kyung was a member of the Youngnam Puin Hoe, an association of women from the southeastern part of Korea, and in the summer of 1918 she takes Pai with her to the country to participate in the upcoming independence movements. The 1919 March First Movement takes place during the visit, and the child observes it closely:

> The declaration was read to the cheering crowd in the park. Thousands of Korean flags appeared. Shouts of *Man sei! Man sei!* went up, and then the people burst out into the streets in a huge parade. No one carried arms. It was intended to be a peaceful demonstration to show we Koreans have the mind and the spirit of a free nation. (23)

This eyewitness account of the massive demonstrations recalls the twelve-year-old Korean boy's experience in Hyun's *Man Sei!*, making Pai a fellow advocate for colonized people who also identifies with "we Koreans."

As a consequence of this anti-Japanese Movement, native Koreans, including Hee Kyung, her grandparents, and Pai herself, suffer. The mother gets arrested by the Japanese police. During her prison time of almost a year, the family waits anxiously, without knowing whether she will come back or if she is even alive:

> My grandparents continued to worry about my mother. "What can she be eating in prison?" Grandma mumbled to herself. "I know Hee Kyung never liked Japanese food." "I hope they're at least feeding the prisoners," Grandpa grunted . . . . "How many did they say were captured? I believe all of those that

weren't slain." (23)

The grandparents' concern over their independence fighter daughter exposes the ill-treatment of the colonial government, whether or not its victims were actively involved in the Movement. The mother's imprisonment also means she is separated from Pai, and the latter recalls her own suffering and pains: "Day after day, month after month, we waited and prayed and hoped for Mother's eventual release from prison" (23).

Pai's time in Korea, however, also integrates her into the native culture of her ancestral land. Her experience of the traditional Thanksgiving, Ch'usŏk, and introduction to Koreans' national dish, kim chee, develops her understanding of cultural customs. When she and her mother visit Andong, Do In's hometown, it is a paternal uncle who explains to Pai what the Thanksgiving holiday means for Koreans:

> "[It is a] celebration of the farmers for their rich harvest. We begin a holiday season every year on August 15, by the lunar calendar. We honor our ancestors, visit each other's homes, eat, and rejoice in our good fortune. It is a happy time for several weeks." (16)

During this festive season, she learns of the sea-saw jump called *nul-dwi-gi*, "a favorite pastime for young unmarried women," and also watches how the people enjoy themselves: "After eating heartily, everybody started singing songs about working and harvesting in the fields" (17). Pai's depiction of Ch'usŏk explains how her cultural understanding comes to encompass all Koreans—natives and immigrants.

Her effortless acceptance of Korean food eases her assimilation into the culture. Among the many dishes to which she learns to eat, kim chee, the essence of Korean cuisine, becomes her favorite:

> No meal in Korea was complete without kim chee. These spicy, colorful dishes with pieces of red chili pepper floating in the sauce made all the other dishes at the table taste wonderful. I learned to enjoy the very sharp, hot flavor—the hotter the tastier, I thought. I didn't mind if I bit into a garlic bud or slices of ginger or torn pieces of red pepper. I didn't mind the burning sensation on my tongue or in my throat. (27)

This development of the child's taste buds follows the path all Koreans travel. Pai's representation of her three-year visit to Korea, where she experiences Japanese colonization and is incorporated into her ancestral home, develops in Pai a hybrid historical and cultural experience as both a second-generation diasporic Korean and a first-generation Korean.

If Pai's self is shaped by her earlier experience in Korea, her crossing of geographical and cultural boundaries to return to the Islands, and her gradual re-adaptation to its surroundings, add further developing to her local identity. After arriving home after her three-year stay in Korea, she is sent to school. On the first day as an incoming student, however, she realizes the cultural and linguistic differences between herself and the peers:

> I knew I looked like a foreigner to the class. I had on a wool dress and shiny black shoes. All the other children were barefoot. They eyed me continually. How I longed to swing my legs freely as they did and be able to jump up noiselessly. I admired the way they trooped out of the room chatting easily with one another when the time came for recess.
>
> The teacher put strange marks on the blackboard and the children recited

the most unrecognizable sounds. (44)

Pai realizes that she is nothing but a Korean girl to the local youngsters, because her thick clothing does not match the climate, and she does not understand English, speaking Korean only. Her discomfort and embarrassment make her aware of the difference of her foreign self to those Hawai‘i-born, and intensify her alienation from the group.

The new-comer, however, adjusts to the local environment. On the next day she takes off the clothes from Korea: “I shed my shoes and socks and wore a cooler dress” (44). Although overcoming the language barrier takes a little longer, with her mother’s tutoring and her own efforts, she learns to communicate in English, and school becomes more pleasant: “As soon as I could speak their language, my classmates invited me to join them in games of hopscotch and tag” (45). Although she still at times “broke into a babble of rapid Korean” (45), she begins to be accepted as one of “us,” signaling her integration into the local culture, language, and community.

Pai’s success at changing into a local youngster becomes clear in seventh grade, when she meets Mary and Julie, Korean American students from Los Angeles. Hee Kyung and their mother came from the same province, and Pai often visits their home. When making friends with them, Pai realizes the difference between her pidgin and their English. She also notices that:

> For a long while they smiled with amusement at my bare feet, sunbrowned face, and casual dress and manners, whereas they felt uncomfortable going without shoes and socks even when they were at home. (47)

Since her return to Hawai‘i she has so adjusted to the local environment that for the mainlanders she now represents people from the Islands. Despite similar ethnic

backgrounds, the local Korean American girl differs from her mainland acquaintances because of her distinctive dress, conduct codes, and language, connecting her identity to Hawai‘i.

And yet, Pai's early exposure to Korean culture and colonial history, which links her to her parents' generation, challenges the common descriptions of cultural and generational distance between Korean and American-born. Bong Youn Choy's *Koreans in America* focuses on the gap between immigrants and their children, claiming that the breach is caused by their different cultural backgrounds as well as the language barrier. The parents retain the ethics of their homeland, while their offspring adopt western values (245). Despite her understandable familiarity with Korean culture, even Pai does confess to her lack of understanding for the parents' traditional culture, and describes how she grows apart from them. In the early 1940s, Do In and Hee Kyung prepare for the upcoming wedding of Pai's older brother, Young Mahn. The children do not understand why the parents plan such an excessive, communal feast for a huge crowd of local Koreans:

> My brothers and sister and I were disturbed, for the event appeared to us like a mammoth enterprise beyond sense or reason. "Mama, why do you have to put on such a big, elaborate wedding? Why is tradition so important?" (152)

Having grown up in the west, Pai and her siblings believe that the marriage event should be for the bride, the bridegroom, and the families involved. Do In and Hee Kyung understand things differently. A marriage is for the community that they belong to. Thus the parents do not question the legitimacy of their traditional customs, but the American-born children do.

Pai's sense of disconnection from her immigrant parents also appears when she writes about the sustaining nationalism of her mother. In 1937 the Korean nationalist Kim Soo Han visited Hawai'i's Korean community to collect funds for native Koreans under Japanese colonial rule. Kim's arrival attracted many of the early immigrants, including Pai's mother, and she often invited him to her house to hear about the people's afflictions in the homeland. Pai notices how the somewhat faded, nationalistic zeal of her mother, who took part in the 1919 March First Movement in Korea, revives:

> I listened with rapt attention, not so much because I felt sorry for the suffering in Korea but because this was the first time my mother openly revealed her feelings about the plight of her people. Heretofore she was like most of the older people I knew, who did not say much to us of the younger generation about their frustration and their desire for independence. (119-120)

Hee Kyung's emotional involvement with the miseries of the colonized Koreans contrasts with Pai's detached stance. She neither identifies with, nor shows sympathy for her mother, the local community, or the Korean people. The immigrant generation still "felt apologetic and ashamed of the status of their people, of themselves who were 'a people without a country,'" suggesting that their Korean identity was still connected to the homeland. On the other hand, Pai "personally had never said I was proud to be a Korean because the feeling had not been instilled in me" (121). Though her familial lineage in some ways defines her ethnicity, she nonetheless differentiates herself from "the older people" and the "people without a country."

The major conflict between the two generations occurs when Do In not only asks the children to follow an American Dream that does not coincide with their own but also

demands their fulfillment of filial piety. For the Korean father, the upholstery business stands for the achievement of his dreams for himself and the family. He therefore plans to expand the business to the mainland, and to hand it over to his descendants. Since his wife Hee Kyung suddenly dies in a car accident in the late 1940s, he alone manages the store. Committed to launching a branch in San Francisco, Do In demands a considerable amount of money from Pai, and also asks her to move with her family to the Bay Area, where they will open and run the new shop. The daughter is quite troubled, and protests:

> Then followed a speech on filial piety, the first of many on the subject I was to hear. "How can you say that? This is *our* family business, a business for all of us. We should all work together. You mother helped build it. Now it is your duty and your brothers' and sister's." (171-72)

The father believes her submission is not a choice or a subject for discussion but essential. Pai, however, finds his idea unreasonable and burdensome:

> I had always respected and honored my parents' wishes and expectations in the past. But I thought we should have held a family discussion before such major decisions were made. Never before had I felt obligated to do something that appeared so difficult and demanding. (172)

Pai's sense of injustice shows her different cultural and educational assumptions from those of Do In. In Confucian culture, children follow the wishes of the parents. Her reaction therefore does not follow principles of filial piety and violates the cultural code of her ancestors. And yet, her feelings of obligation to her father show that she feels the pull of pressing customs. Though her conflicted emotions represent a generational breach, her eventual decision to give Do In the financial support and to relocate to San Francisco

proves her reluctant conformity with the traditions of the ancestral land.

Pai's experience on the mainland with its different environment from Hawai'i, and especially when it comes to race, provokes a response that shows how Hawai'i-born Korean Americans distinguish themselves from other Koreans on the continent. Not long after her arrival, Pai goes to a department store to buy some warm clothes for the approaching winter. While walking around the area, she is shocked by the predominant presence of white Americans, and troubled by the racial discrimination to which she is vulnerable:

> All of a sudden I was aware of the sea of *white* faces all around me. I could pick out only one or two women with yellow skin. And for the first time in my life I experienced prejudice. A sharp pain accompanied this strange feeling. With my Oriental face I found it difficult to flag a salesgirl. I was passed over time and time again. When there were three or four of us at a counter with articles to purchase, it was as if I were invisible. When I did finally get the attention of one salesperson, her voice seemed needlessly curt. (175)

Pai's reaction to "the sea of *white* faces" and racial prejudice contrasts with the indifferent attitude of such other shoppers as "Indian women in graceful saris leisurely strolling about, and richly gowned Chinese matrons, bejeweled with jade, being waited on" (176). Whether white or ethnic Americans, mainlanders seem unaffected by racial demographics or racial bias, taking them for granted. But the new resident from Hawai'i, where the Asian population is numerically dominant, has seldom if ever experienced racial mistreatment, so she is fairly disturbed by it.

Her awareness of those facts, however, eventually enables the local family to

improve sales at the recently opened shop. Although she and her husband Philip attract potential customers by putting advertisement in newspapers, they seldom make a sale. Pai then realizes that,

> as soon as they [customers] opened the door and saw *me* they seemed apologetic and wanted to back out and leave. Once inside, they quickly viewed the displays, asked a few questions, then left.
>
> I said to my husband, "I believe we need a *haole* front. Anyone who responds to our ad just seems to freeze and lose interest when they see an Oriental in this showroom" (178).

When Pai hires "an attractive young girl with golden hair framing her face, a peaches-and-cream complexion, and a pretty smile" (178), the store sales increase quickly. And yet, though becoming the Korean American couple who "remained in the background" (178) is good for business, their invisibility in San Francisco, where they are often mistaken for a hired worker or a bookkeeper in their own upholstery store, contrasts with Do In's status as a well-known carpenter in Hawai‘i, where success relies on his professional skills, regardless of his ethnic background.

The Pais' eventual departure from the mainland America confirms where the couple actually feel they belong. As the business steadily improves and becomes more stable, Do In asks them to return to Hawai‘i, intending to hand the new store over to the son, Young Mahn, whose name sounds much like the name of the Hawai‘i Korean community's political leader Park Yŏng-man, whom the immigrant parents supported. Although surprised by this unexpected news, Pai happily agrees to the request:

> Our children could go barefoot again, swim, and picnic in the Hawaiian sun . . . .

> I wanted to much to leave the cold, big city for home . . . . I know, too, that he [the husband] looked forward to wearing casual clothes again instead of the coat and the constricting necktie. (179)

Though Philip is somewhat reluctant, she succeeds in persuading him to leave the Bay Area. The "cold, big city" discriminates against many ethnic Americans, including her family, rendering them invisible. And Pai also longs for home, showing her profound connection to Hawai‘i. This return of the Korean descendants therefore indicates where their ultimate home lies, and also confirms their local identity.

While Pai understands the American Dream of her father, and has tried to live up to Do In's expectations, she and the other siblings grow apart from him. Though the father continues to hope that the children will take on the upholstery business, they gradually lose their interest in managing it for themselves. When the San Francisco branch closes due to its poor sales after Young Mahn's takeover, the son decides not to return to assisting Do In in Hawai‘i, but remains in the Bay Area to search for another job. Pai's younger sister finishes college in Colorado and settles down there. Pai is therefore the only sibling who helps Do In, but she finds the job taxing, and especially because she has no interest in managing the store. When she finally tells him this, Do In "broke down and cried, 'How can you leave this business? I built this business for you and your brothers and sister'" (189). Knowing how desperately the aged father needs assistance, and because of her feeling of obligation, Pai stays on as she has done all along. But she also secretly goes back to school to earn a teaching certificate, hoping to become a teacher at the appropriate time. When Do In passes away in the early 1960s, he leaves the shop to his descendants. Even though they have no interest in the family business, the

children nevertheless have difficulties deciding whether to take it over or to sell it, for they all know too well what filial piety means for the dead. But a big fire burns down almost the entire factory, saving them from the dilemma.

Their relief, despite their sadness over the mishap, reveals how the children's plans differ from the American Dream of the immigrant generation. The upholstery business stood for the parents' success, and embodied their hope for their children. But the store has become a burden for the children, and so have the father's demands of filial piety:

> Their adherence to the hallowed Old World custom of filial piety drove my father into conflict in achieving the good life for his children . . . . Ironically, my father thought he was offering the blueprint for success to his children by requesting, then demanding, their devotion to his wishes by carrying on his Poinciana business. (196)

The father's "blueprint for success" for himself and for the American-born generation does not correspond to theirs, and the filial duty from "the hallowed Old World custom" is obsolete, although Pai at least observed it grudgingly when he was alive. Her narrative therefore presents a second-generation Korean self that has sometimes painfully separated itself from its Korean ancestors, whose American Dream has been accomplished, but not shared or inherited by the American-born.

Oral Histories of Hawai‘i Second-generation Korean Americans

Daisy Chun Rhodes' 1998 compilation, *Passages to Paradise: Early Korean Immigrant Narratives from Hawai‘i*, contains twenty eight narratives of second-

generation Korean Americans. It also includes a previously published poem, a biography of a contributor's father, and two of Rhodes' own stories about her Korean immigrant parents and the ethnic community. From May through August, 1994, Rhodes interviewed her subjects, apparently in English, and transcribed the oral histories. For the collection, however, she has turned the materials into narratives that provide "a smooth readability for a general English-speaking audience" (v) while maintaining the speaking voice of the participants. Similarly, a third-generation Korean American from Hawai‘i, the writer Gary Pak interviewed nineteen subjects from the second generation from the late 1995 to early 1996. Ten of the interviews were broadcast under the title of *Plantation Children: 2nd-generation Koreans in Hawai‘i*, as part of the ‘Ōlelo Community TV series.

In the "Introduction: Between Asia and the West (In Complicated Entanglement)" to *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West* (2001), Len Ang explains that as a diasporic Chinese who migrated from Indonesia through Europe to Australia, she does not identify with, and feels alienated from, other Chinese diasporas. Part of her estrangement from the Chinese ethnic community derives from her lack of knowledge about the ancestral language, culture, and history. Such disconnection and dis-identification challenges the notion of the homogeneous, inherited ethnic self that a title like *Passages to Paradise*, *Early Korean Immigrant Narratives from Hawai‘i* might suggest. While the accounts are from American-born children mostly raised in the Islands, the title blurs the borderline between the different generations, assuming a consistent identity for diasporic Koreans that survives cultural, generational, and linguistic change.

Like Hyun and Pai, the interviewed second-generation Koreans in America represent the former generation and themselves in *Passages to Paradise* and Pak's oral

histories as selves that move between and intersect among Korean, Korean American, American, and local identities. Their exposure to the Korean language, the preservation of the Korean name, and some of the other cultural legacies passed down by their immigrant parents lead them to associate themselves with the first generation. Others, however, are inclined to depart from this identity by rejecting their inheritance or referring to themselves as American. This denial often arises in part from a visit to the ancestral land, where they feel both estranged from and bound to native Koreans. Aside from accepting or rejecting their ancestors' ethnicity, the oral history subjects also explain how self is linked to Hawai‘i, their home place, where as locals they cross many cultural and linguistic boundaries. These oral histories therefore showcase how local second-generation Korean Americans classify and define the self in relation to such elements as culture, gender, language, and place.

Roćio G. Davis stresses the significance of language and names in the identity formation of Asian Americans. Exposed to two languages, the heritage tongue and English, during childhood, for the second generation "the loss of the heritage language is a requisite to the process of North Americanization" (113). Davis also notes that "in a diverse society names become signifiers of more than merely individual or familial identity and gesture toward membership in a particular racial, ethnic, and/or cultural group" (18). Maintaining the heritage language indicates something about how the diasporic children see themselves connected to Korean culture. Moreover, whether they understand or preserve their Korean names also reveals something about the affiliated self, and especially for those who have given up their cultural and linguistic legacies.

The linguistic background that second-generation Koreans in Hawai‘i recognize

affects how they relate to those sharing the heritage language, Han'gŭl. In *Passages to Paradise*, Eun-Ai Cho, for example, states that her father, who "had me to carry on his mind" (31), taught her Korean language and customs even before going to school: "I attended Korean school, but had been tutored by my father since I was very young. I remember first being taught Korean when I was three years old" (19-20). Her father also "taught me language etiquette for Koreans, how to say proper greetings and cultural mores" (19). Margaret Ok-Hee Lee, who is "proud to be Korean and more so that I am Korean American" (129), recalls her experience at the ethnic institute where she "learned fundamentals that are still with me today," and adds that "I'm glad to have that" (121). The attention these speakers give to how they learned the Korean language stresses the importance of acquiring the heritage tongue, and also explains the speakers' continuing close connections with other Koreans.

Korean names also signify the second generation's inherited ties to their ethnic origins. Given names are a continuing legacy from the parents, and the children's understanding and retention of their names confirms their acceptance of who they are. Nodi Kim explains why her father gave her the name Nodi. While it meant Princess for him, she also learns that it means "persistence, effort, endeavor, willingness, faithful, and precious jade" (164). But it was during her visit to Korea that "I found why I am called Princess by my father. When you are in Korea you really know you are Korean. I am proud to be Korean" (165). Nam-Young Chung also elaborates on the meaning of his and his siblings' names:

> About my name, South Dragon: there was a saying in history that when it became time for Korea to be liberated, there would come from the south a

> young dragon to liberate the country. My father took this poem out of context. In the poem, the first son was called Nam-Young. The characters read South Dragon. My brother below me was named Nam-Jo. Nam means south and Jo is the first character of *Choson*. My next brother was named Man-Sun, the second character of *Choson*. (39)

As Chung explains, his father's selection was prophetic: "During World War II I entered the U.S. Army, and I was a captain during the United States occupation of Korea at the end of World War II" (37). His involvement in the liberation of the ancestral homeland fulfilled his patriotic parent's expectation. The descendant is worthy of his Korean name, not only preserving it, but granting the wishes of the previous generation.

The narratives of Rachel Sung-Sil Kim and "Sung-Il"[58] in *Passages to Paradise*, however, suggest that language and identity do not always coincide. Kim's father immigrated to Hawai'i as a laborer partly because of Japanese colonization, and her mother came as a picture bride who wanted more educational opportunity. When Kim was growing up, her nationalistic father

> taught us to be proud of Korea. He'd sit down and teach us the Korean language when we were not able to attend Korean school. He'd read Bible verses in Korean and teach us to sing hymns in Korean. (101)

And yet, even though she acquired the heritage tongue, Kim foregrounds her birthplace: "I've decided that when I die I'll just have my name Rachel on my tombstone without the name Sung-Sill, that's how Americanized I have become" (105). This decision to remove her Korean name corresponds to what Davis describes as a second-generation inclination

[58] Sung-Il does not provide her full Korean or American name and prefers remaining anonymous.

to deny "membership in a particular racial, ethnic, and/or cultural group" (18). In her narrative, Kim focuses on her career as a teacher and her work on educational programs. Through these, she has found "the greatest satisfaction in life" (105). If part of Kim's disassociation from her Korean self has to do with her pride in her achievements in American society, even so, she has rejected her Korean name and has a different sense of identity than others more tied to their Korean heritage.

Sung-Il's story is somewhat similar. Her parents came to Hawai‘i in 1903 as a married couple, and lived as farmers in the countryside. Although "I learned Korean and went to Korean school where I learned *Hanmun* (classical Sino-Korean)," Sung-Il declares that "I am a hundred percent American" (246). Even though she learned the mother tongue of her immigrant parents who "remained Korean" (246), Sung-Il appears to have maintained little contact with the traditional culture of the Korean ethnic community. She left home early, staying with a white family as a housemaid while attending high school. She then left Hawai‘i for Guam with her German husband. Her long separation from her family and other Koreans is so complete that she chooses her Korean name, Sung Il, as her pseudonym, since it is the surest way to remain anonymous, suggesting where she believes her true identity comes from.

Gender also plays an important part for second-generation Koreans in developing their ethnic identity. The accounts of Margaret Ok-Hee Lee and of Nodi Kim in *Passages to Paradise*, and Bessie Kwong Hee Kim in Gary Pak's oral histories, describe the daughters' connections to their mothers. While Lee is instructed in a patriarchal legacy by her traditional and submissive mother, the other women acquire their independent spirit from their mothers. Lee's picture-bride parent, Hannah Park, immigrated to Hawai‘i at

around the age of fourteen, and passed away when Lee was only eleven years old. She recalls her mother as "a very giving woman and an outstanding cook" (120), and describes how her mother maintained the male-dominant Korean traditions in her own household:

> The men folks were always looked up to. When my mother was alive, my brother just ate and left the plate on the table. I would have to take the dishes to the sink. The men were always treated like kings. I accepted that. I shall always remember my mother serving the top of the rice from the rice pot to my father. He was always served first. Even today, when Harry and I are at the table, even with the children, the first plate of rice always goes to Harry . . . . My mother had that in her background which was passed down to me. It shows respect or love in your own way. (128)

Lee also indicates that she continues to practice her mother's teaching: "She always said, "'nonamoko'" which means to share food. Even now, I catch myself saying those words to my friends when I serve them" (128). For Lee, "Koreans always share things. That's part of our heritage" (129). Preserving her mother's legacies links Lee to her Korean ancestors who have shared "our heritage."

The mothers of Nodi Kim and Bessie Kwong Hee Kim, however, differed from Hanna Park by departing from the obedient roles of Korean women. Due to the family's extreme poverty, Nodi Kim's mother, Bong-Yuen Son, immigrated as a picture bride to the Islands in the early 1910s. In her late thirties, her sick husband dies, and she raises her seven children on her own. Instead of showing despair or weakness to the children, "she was strong. When her mind was made up to do something, it was going to get done. It

didn't matter what she had to go through but she got it done" (159). The daughter therefore credits her own achievements to the example of her survivor mother:

> I always said that part of what I am and what I was able to achieve, my mother could have done without any problems at all. Just having seen what she went through in her life helped me realize that if she did what she did under those circumstances in her life, there was no reason why I could not do anything I wanted to do in my life. (163)

Kim served as a bank vice president and later become an officer of the National Bank Women's Association. And yet, though she is "the first Korean woman to break the glass ceiling from Hawai'i" (163), she acknowledges her mother's determining influence on her life. Kim's accomplishments in America therefore sustain the connection between herself and her Korean role model.

Bessie Kwong Hee Kim's picture bride parent also played an important role in shaping her daughter's Korean self. Elizabeth Park immigrated to Hawai'i partly because her religious father wished to send her to a Christian country. Upon becoming a widow with six children, Park also brings them up on her own. She works in the pineapple cannery to take care of the family, and also teaches the children proper cultural manners and the Korean language. This perseverance had its intended effect on her American-born offspring:

> I really am just really proud to be American-Korean and I'm really grateful and thankful to my mother. Really, truly, I've, you know, she always worked so hard . . . . And without her, I don't know what kind of person I would be today because I got my start with her, you know, the home teaching and all that. I am

who I am because of her. (69)

Kim's own life mirrors that of her Korean mother. While raising her own children, she worked part-time, becoming a counselor in the Labor Department of the United States. The work ethic and cultural pride Kim learned and retained from her mother are responsible for those achievements.

Despite the connection with their ethnic roots that some American-born Korean descendants have sustained, visits to the ancestral land almost inevitably arouse a sense of estrangement in native Koreans. Kyung-Sook Boo's terms Han'guk saram and gyop'o, or resident Koreans and diasporic Koreans respectively, can help us understand why second-generation Koreans feel alienated or separate themselves from the Koreans they encounter in the homeland of their parents. According to Boo, the terms Han'guk saram and gyop'o have legal and political connotations related to Korean citizenship. While the first, or immigrant generation, Koreans easily cross the boundary between Han'guk saram and gyop'o because of their prior residence in Korea, their diasporic children do not, because they were born and raised outside Korea. The representations of the second-generation Korean Americans confirm their difficulty in navigating the cultural, linguistic, and political borderlines separating them from the native Koreans, which create a self alienated or disassociated from "them."

The stories of such descendants as Johan Lee, Albert Kwong-Ho Kim, and Inez Pak-Soon Kong in *Passages to Paradise*, and of Francis Chin Chan Pak in Pak's oral histories, illustrate connections between gyop'o and Han'guk saram. Lee recollects his first visit to Korea. During World War II he was drafted into the US military, and met POWs detained at the Korean Military Camps in Honolulu, where "we managed to

communicate with each other even with my limited knowledge of the Korean language" (133). He got to know the Koreans, who were "courteous and very good workers" as well as being "big rice eaters" (134), and listened when "they told tales and stories" (135). To help the POWs return home, Lee accompanied them to the de-colonized Korea after the war. Once there, "the first thing I did was look up my grandmother" (136):

> Not knowing where she was located, I found this young Korean lad who spoke a little English. I showed him the address and he took me toward my grandmother's house. As we were walking down the street, a group of women were walking toward me and one woman looked at me and I returned the gaze. She looked exactly like my uncle. There we were on a street in Korea and I am asking this woman if she is my father's sister. I had never seen her before in my life. She turned around and took me to my grandmother's house where I met the reason why my mother went home. (136)

The moment when the diasporic Korean Lee and his aunt meet each other confirms the intangible ties between them. Intuitively, they recognize each other, and their lifetime separation does not make them strangers, but a family that has finally become united.

The account of Albert Kwong-Ho Kim in *Passages to Paradise* is similar to Lee's but differs because he disassociates himself from Han'guk saram. As a small child, Kim learned his heritage:

> In the old days, my parents would say how great Korea was. My mother said the Koreans invented the submarine to which they attached explosives. I was told by my father how much more tasty the fruits of Korea were. (181)

He also knows about his genealogy: "Being the only son, my father sat me on his lap and

told me many things and that he told me to never forget that I am an unknown Kim. In other words he said I am from the unknown clan of Kims" (183). With Korea's liberation after World War II, Kim visits the hometown of his Korean relatives. The old address his father gave him is obsolete because of great change in the area he had left four decades before. The son is about to give up his search, when his uncle, having been informed that somebody was looking for him, recognized his diasporic cousin and "called me by my Korean name" (183). This family resemblance, which recalls Lee's account, suggests the profound connection among its members.

And yet, while Kim's reunion with his Korean relatives makes the American-born feel tied to them, as the gyop'o, he does not overcome entirely his cultural difference from the Han'guk saram. His relatives "treated me like a king" so that "I didn't have to lift a finger" (183). But Kim soon learns that as the eldest son of the eldest son in the lineage, he is expected to take care of his uncle's family in accordance with Korea's traditional customs. Startled by these responsibilities, the foreign-born cousin reacts, "'Nuts! I don't want to stay in Korea. It's too hot here!'" (183-84). This spontaneous response rejects those traditions beyond his understanding; nevertheless, Kim confesses that "I still feel attracted to being Korean. I don't deny the fact that I am Korean, and when asked I say I am a Korean" (185). Rejecting Korean ethnic culture and obligations does not erase his self-identity as Korean. Once again, the cultural and political boundaries that distinguish him from "them" are crossed and blurred.

Kong's story in *Passages to Paradise*, which explains her movement away from her ethnic identity, also arises from her experience in Korea. Lee and Kim visited the ancestral homeland in their twenties. Kong's encounter with native Koreans is relatively

early, because she visits in the mid-1930s at the age of sixteen. The trip is her mother's idea: She wanted to show her homeland to her American-born children. During the visit, Kong notices she is differentiated from "us," the native Koreans, because of her physical appearance:

> "What kind of person is that with curly hair and so dark in skin tone?" In those days, I think I was the only Korean person in Seoul wearing a permanent wave in my hair. I was a curiosity and heard another remark: "She's not a Korean person." Well, John [her brother] was like any other Korean fellow. (62)

While recognizing the difference between herself and Han'guk saram, she implicitly denies their assumptions about her ethnicity by describing herself as "the only Korean person in Seoul wearing a permanent wave in my hair." Her identification with the native became even stronger when she "became inflamed for Korean independence. It was in Korea that I saw injustice, specific incidents that happened in Seoul or when I went to the country and saw my starving cousins. I became addicted to the Korean cause" (63). After returning to the United States, "I wanted to tell people about the condition in Korea" and "made speeches and fought for Korean Independence" (64). Kong's earnest participation in the independence movements therefore represents her active attempt to identify herself with the subjugated Korean people.

Kong's first visit to Korea strengthened her ethnic ties with Koreans, and led to her nationalistic political activities in the United States. Her second trip in the late 1940s, however, separates "her" from "them." When Korea finally restores its sovereignty in 1945, she and her husband Ed, whom she met while organizing for Korea's nationalistic movements on the mainland, go to the country to help build the nation. Despite their

good intentions and endeavors to assist people, Ed becomes falsely accused of being a communist by the current Korean government:

> Toward the end of our stay in Korea I could feel the coldness of our friends. At night, outside our locked gates, I heard marching and shouting. I didn't know what they were shouting but you hear the Communists. In February of 1949 we left Korea. (71)

Although she had "traveled all over Korea and became involved in international affairs" (71) on behalf of many individual Koreans and political parties trying to communicate with the US government and who needed someone bilingual like Kong, the sudden hostility of Koreans towards her and her husband alienated her. After their return to Hawai'i, "my interest in Korea slowly waned," and she denies her ties to Han'guk saram: "I am more American culturally than I am Korean . . . . I am not active in Korean affairs anymore" (73). Her disappointing experience in Korea ultimately distanced her from the Koreans who "loved all the Americans and we were Americans" (71).

The accounts of Francis Chin Chan Pak illustrate how his identity as an ethnic diasporic Korean breaks down the cultural, linguistic, and political boundaries between himself and resident Koreans. At the age of seven Pak arrives in a city called Kim Hae in the late 1920s. Born and raised in Hawai'i, he could not speak Korean, leaving him an outsider among his peers, who even call him "Mi-Guk-noem" (2), or "American bastard." Pak gradually adjusts to the cultural and linguistic environment, and in two years "I became a regular Korean youth. People of Korea, kids, all like me" (3). The American-born Korean youngster lives five years as one of "us," but at fourteen he returns to Hawai'i due to family events that push him out of Korea. Though he readapted to his

birthplace in the 1930s, he still identifies himself as "a little Korean, you know, spirit, you know, I'm Korean" (12). Pak's integration into the cultural and linguistic surroundings of Korea diverges from Kim's rejection of Korean customs, as does his preservation of his Korean identity from Kong's gradual detachment. Pak's story therefore presents a diasporic self that crosses the borderlines that often estrange gyop'o from Han'guk saram.

These moving boundaries and selves of second-generation Korean Americans also figure in their sense of belonging in Hawai‘i. While many, including Velma Gom-Soo Pyun, who was interviewed by Rhodes, and David Hyung Kuk Young and Seung Kun Kim, who were interviewed by Gary Pak, are implicitly connected to the Islands, the accounts of James Sung Kuk Young, who was also interviewed by Pak, speaks strongly about his local identity. According to Pyun, her picture-bride mother left Korea because of Japanese encroachment that led to her family's poverty. While understanding the parents' hatred of Japanese in Hawai‘i, the daughter confesses that "The people were very nice and I soon realized that I could not hate them because of what their country did" (81). Like many Hawai‘i-born Korean descendants growing up in the Islands, she "got along well with the local Japanese and did attempt to learn their language and customs. There are similarities in their customs with ours" (81). Pyun's association with Japanese peers despite her awareness of colonial history is a product of Hawai‘i local community, rather than her Korean ethnicity. David Hyung Kuk Young also feels that he belongs in Hawai‘i. Young was born in Kunia, where only a few Koreans lived, then moved with his family to Kāhala, Makiki, and Waimanalo. As a result, he had little contact with Koreans, mingling instead with other local children:

> In those days when I was growing up, we never had any animosity against each other with all the different ethnic groups. I never played with Koreans, I only played with Hawaiians, Japanese and so forth. (12)

In 1950, Young joined the Air Force and was stationed in Texas until he was discharged in the late 1950s. He then immediately returned and settled in Hawai‘i. When asked to define his identity, he responds,

> I consider myself more American because I live in America. If you gonna live in America or whatever country you live in, you gotta think that you are that. So I consider myself American first and Korean second. If I were to live in Korea, you would say that I am Korean first and another nationality later. (19)

Young's notion of self is more closely tied to the specific place where he was born, has lived for many years, and will probably live in the future: "Hawai'i will be my home until I die, even these Hawaiians cannot kick me out. You're gonna have to really fight me to get out" (21). The sense of an ultimate home where he was born, brought up, and will likely reside thus sheds light on his local identity.

James Sung Kuk Young explicitly identifies himself as local as well. Like Pyun, Young's family moved frequently to different areas in Hawai‘i, where he seldom associated with other Koreans but with local Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Japanese instead. Young's self-identity, however, is multiply constructed. "I feel myself Korean, but I'm full American" (15), he says, but "I'm a Local" (17). Though his ethnic ancestry is Korean, "I born in Hawaii and I love Hawaii, I want to be a citizen in America anyway to begin with" (17). While this moving self is common among second-generation Korean Americans in Hawai‘i, Young ultimately leans towards the local, as his story of a fight

between locals and mainland white Americans during his military service in the early 1940s bears out. Approximately a dozen of white paratroopers had gathered around a local Korean drinking alone in the PX and started insulting him. Young and his friends were playing pool when they heard someone shout "'Hey, Local guy!.'" "'Local guy's getting buss up with the paratroopers.' 'Huh?!' They all come out, all of the Local guys came out'" (21-22). Young's instant reaction coincided with the Korean, Hawaiian, Japanese, and Portuguese men with him, revealing a profound sense of identity as local that fuels their confrontation with the white Americans from the continent. "I am a Local," Young concludes:

> Them days, hard to think being Korean because we associate all kind nationality yeah? The ethnic groups they all different yeah. You learn the ethnic style of life yeah, then I swear that Korean in me kinna vanishing away you know, because we different ethnics, play with, go fishing with everything yeah. (17)

This second-generation Korean considers the local cultures and people of Hawai'i as his own. Young's self is affiliated with "us" locals, more than either the Korean community or American culture. Though different from the former generation whose motherland is Korea, he is not stereotypically American. The foundations of his identity lie in his home place.

The clash or union of Korean, local, and the American identities defines the second-generation Koreans in Hawai'i in various and distinctive ways. All necessarily move across rigid borderlines that separate "us" from "them" on the grounds of culture, ethnicity, or language. While for some the legacies they have inherited tie them to their

ethnicity to some degree, the mix of Korean, local, and American tends to create fluid and switching selves, not bound to one ethnic identity or another. And certainly, many agree with Elaine Kim that they indeed "are distinct from their 'mainland' counterparts, undoubtedly because in Hawaii as nowhere else in America, it has been possible for Asian Americans to claim to be both Asian and American" (169). And local. This sense of belonging in their own Hawai'i community profoundly influences the self-perception and self-representations of second-generation diasporic Koreans, whose *home* is nowhere else but the Hawaiian Islands.

Yobo: Korean American Writing in Hawai'i

2003 was significant for local Koreans in Hawai'i and elsewhere in the United States, because it was the one-hundredth anniversary of immigration to this country. Published in the same year, *Yobo* marked the occasion by publishing fictional and non-fictional narratives and poems of second, third, and forth-generation Korean Americans, and of recent immigrants as well. Edited by Korean descendants from Hawai'i from the 1.5-generation (Nora Okja Keller and Sun Namkung) and the third-generation (Brenda Kwon, Gary Pak, and Cathy Song), in addition to publishing their own work, these board members recovered stories by and about previous generations. The result is a book of local Hawai'i Korean literature, primarily written in English, that spans multiple generations.

The works and represented lives in *Yobo* display Koreans in Hawai'i since the early twentieth century, and also explore their undeniable ties to the local community. In "Beyond Ke'eaumoku" Brenda Kwon observes that because local history has often

promoted Hawai‘i as Paradise where people from different ethnic backgrounds live in harmony, the voices of Koreans are overlooked, rendering then almost invisible in the local community. This marginalization occurred because the number of first-generation immigrants was relatively small, and because Korea's colonial history led these Koreans to stand apart from other ethnic groups, especially the Japanese. The high rate of interracial marriage of the second-generation Koreans blurred these sharp lines, and the massive immigration of the post-1965 generation overwhelmed the visibility of earlier immigrants.

Yobo asserts the geographical and historical ties of the Korean community to Hawai‘i:

> Yobo, reclaimed, allows us to appreciate the laborers and picture brides who have come to represent the sacrifices and accomplishments of a small group of hard-working people, our grandparents who settled in Hawai‘i at the turn of the century and helped economically, politically, socially, and culturally to create this unique Local community in which all of ka po‘e o Hawai‘i live today. (16-17)

The published stories acknowledge the long years of Koreans' involvement in the local community and history, connecting them to the Hawai‘i that became, and will probably always be, a diasporic Korean home.

The contents of *Yobo* examined in this section will include second-generation Korean American works such as Victoria Sung Hye Chai Cintrón's "Glass Wall"; David Hyun's "Shooting Marbles," "I Work Sugarcane Field," and "Lunch Time"; and Daisy Chun Rhodes' "A Celestial Kitchen," "A Place of Noise," and "Forever Long, Never End."

Cintrón's "The Glass Wall" takes place in California; the rest take place in Hawai‘i. Cintrón's story of a nameless, 1.5-generation Korean woman born in Korea and raised on the mainland shows her increasing detachment from American society, other Koreans, and her American-born children. Hyun and Rhodes depict their own lives in Hawai‘i, and display how Koreans have been contributing to creating the local community since their arrival. These represented selves in *Yobo* demonstrate the profound connection to Hawai‘i itself as a local identity.

Victoria Sung Hye Chai Cintrón

Victoria Sung Hye Chai Cintrón was born to immigrant parents who first met in Hawai‘i and formed a family while working in a plantation town. In her early twenties, Cintrón married a second-generation Korean American from California, who died in World War II as a fighter pilot. Marrying again in the mid 1950s, Cintrón lived in Mānoa with her four children. The manuscript of "The Glass Wall" was buried for over forty years, and it could not be verified whether it was an autobiographical account of her experience with her first mother-in-law, because Cintrón had been stricken with Alzheimer's and aphasia when the story was discovered. Certain fictional elements are present. The narrator claims that "my" husband's death was caused by a car accident. Nevertheless, the account of the 1.5-generation mother-in-law resembles other narratives of tensions between Korean-born and American-born women. This study treats the story as partially autobiographical, drawn either from Cintrón's own experience, or perhaps from her encounter with the life of some other Korean American woman.

"The Glass Wall" focuses on the isolated life of the mother-in-law and the course

of the narrator's relationship with her after marrying into this Korean family. The anonymity of the 1.5 Korean American mother-in-law partly reflects the customary Korean practice of identifying people, once married and with children, by their position in the family, such as mother or father of the first child. In this case, the mother-in-law has not only felt alienated from American society due to racial prejudice, but also felt overlooked by or detached from her own family, including her Korean parents and American descendants. The story of this estranged and nameless mother therefore represents many marginalized and isolated ethnic Korean women on the mainland, and in the process, restores the specific person to a kind of prominence.

The mother-in-law's secluded life in Sacramento has made her an outsider to her white neighbors, and a stranger to the family. Although she had lived in the Sacramento valley for over fifty years since arriving from Korea, and even though she speaks English, "she had not been accepted by the people of her adopted country. She was always a 'foreigner'" (38). This rejection by the neighborhood white community foregrounds racial discrimination by the privileged other, and her own segregation from them. But the Korean-born woman is also disconnected from her own family—her immigrant predecessors, and her own children. Because the Korean parents maintained male-dominant traditions in the foreign land, they prevented their daughter from being educated in America, who therefore "had been raised in the ways of the old folk." But her American-born brother received a formal education from elementary school through college; subsequently, he "lived his own kind of life and she had no part in it" (38). In her late teens, the young woman marries an older bridegroom from Korea. The couple lived rather humbly as tenant farmers with their six children.

By the time the new daughter-in-law in her early twenties comes to meet her mother-in-law, the woman had been emotionally severed from her American-born offspring for a long time. An episode relating to her unidentifiable shoes confirms the distance. According to her children, she has been wearing this "'out of this world'" model for over twenty years (37), and their only guess was that "she probably got them at some Salvation Army secondhand shop" (37). The "second-generation Korean girl from rural O'ahu" quickly recognizes how the mother's "children were no longer a part of her life and she pushed them away," leading the daughter-in-law to wonder "if she didn't miss them, long for them sometimes. How could she live a life which seemed so sterile of family emotions?" (38) The lack of understanding by the Hawai'i bride from the Islands arises from her cultural and educational background, which differed from this mother-in-law from an earlier generation primarily exposed to "the ways of the old folk," and to a hostile mainland environment that has isolated her.

As the new family member lives with the Korean-born parent and becomes acquainted with her, she gradually develops a better understanding of her secluded life. Part of her disassociation from her family was intentional. She had "given up her children to this new world so that they might know the love and freedom she had never known," but had further "built a glass wall around herself through which she thought she could look out and not be touched" (38). This glass wall is a sacrifice by the woman for her family and for herself. The children do not feel confined in "the old world," as she did, and she will be protected from the inevitable pain when they eventually depart for the "new world."

In spite of the gap between the two different generations, the mother shows signs

of breaking the glass wall through gestures of affection towards the daughter-in-law. She leaves small packages or some fruit every now and then, and the daughter senses the mother-in-law's warmth and care hidden inside. The daughter's pregnancy draws them closer, as the soon-to-be grandmother starts sharing her life stories she has kept inside the glass wall. This relationship, however, is only temporary. One day the young couple goes out on a test drive for a racing car the husband, Butch, has just built. While speeding on an unpaved road, they have an accident that kills Butch and the unborn baby. The bereft mother then blames the daughter-in-law, saying "You have brought me nothing but pain and sorrow" (40). But the daughter-in-law takes the harsh words as a command to depart for a new and better life, with no feeling of ties or guilt. Although "I was to be a spark of hope where there was none, or that I would awaken emotions she had long ago buried" (38), the accident broke the intimate ties formed by the distant mother and the sympathetic daughter-in-law.

Fifteen years later, the daughter-in-law returns to Sacramento, hoping to meet the mother-in-law again. She had in the past tried to correspond with her, but received no reply. On the train, the daughter-in-law recalls what the mother had looked like:

> She had iron-gray, coarse, wavy hair, carelessly piled on top of her head, held loosely together by three combs and some pins . . . . Her broad face was lined across her forehead and the creases at the sides of her mouth made her look perpetually sad . . . . Her little nose was what kept her from looking altogether aggressive. Her jaws were very square and broad and met at a light cleft at her soft wide chin. Her lips were finely drawn lines on a wide generous mouth . . . . (37)

The daughter-in-law's remembrance of the nameless Korean woman stresses the contradictions—the "sad" creases, "aggressive" face, and the "generous" mouth. The daughter also confesses that "It may seem strange but I do not remember ever calling her by any name. She was my mother-in-law" (38). While this custom is part of the Korean culture that they both share, it also suggests how this code serves to protect the mother-in-law's privacy, and re-suggest the kind of life that she probably wanted to lead.

The reunion, however, only occurs on the train by chance. As she recollects the time they had spent together, the daughter-in-law hears a familiar voice calling a grandchild:

> She no longer looked like a sad clown. There was peacefulness about her. She had learned to receive the love and respect that was rightly hers, after denying them for so many years. She had thought that sacrificing oneself was love.
>
> Now, at last, she had learned that loving meant accepting love as well. (40)

The changed appearance leads the daughter to recognize that the mother-in-law "had found herself" (40). As a result, the daughter does not reveal herself: "Why stir up old memories that could do no good [?]" (40). Certainly there is kindness in saving the peaceful grandmother from having to relive the traumatic memories of the past, but it also points to how their lives, sharply separated from before, have continued to diverge. Crossing paths without recognizing each other casts light on the growing distance between the different generations of Korean diasporic women, however close or far apart they might have been.

David Hyun

Hyun was born in Korea in the late 1910s and immigrated to the Hawaiian Islands in the mid-1920s after a four-year stay in China, thus belonging to the 1.5-generation. If his brother Peter focuses on his ties to the ancestral land, David Hyun in his stories "Shooting Marbles," "I Work Sugarcane Field," and "Lunch Time" shows how he is connected to Hawai‘i. These narratives reveal the plantation life of a local Korean American boy who lives in an integrated community with people from different ethnic backgrounds.

"Shooting Marbles" recollects Hyun's boyhood self and how children compete when they mingle together. The story also depicts local scenes of Hawai‘i, and suggests how the writer sees its community. On Saturday, some boys begin to play marbles, but the tallest, a boy named Vincent, whose ethnicity is not given, keeps winning. This they feel is an injustice, and one of the boys, Kazu, accuses him of cheating:

> Kazu said, "You no play fair. You reach over too much."
>
> Vincent said, "What! I play fair. I stand behind the line."
>
> Kazu said, "You reach too far inside, no fair, you stand one feet behind line."
>
> Vincent said, "You not referee. You no can make rule for shoot marble."
>
> Kazu said, "You big you make too close."
>
> Vincent said, "No make jealous my size. I no make jealous your finger. Yeah, next time you shoot one feet back because you have good finger for shoot marble." (295)

This verbal argument in pidgin between Kazu and Vincent, with its "You no can make rule" and "No make jealous my size. I no make jealous your finger," shows the distinctive linguistic setting of the Islands.

The diversity of the children reflects the multi-ethnic environment of Hawai‘i. If the young narrator is Korean, his other friends, Kazu and Kaz are Japanese, and Issac and Josh are Hawaiian. Despite their different ethnicities, they bond together against a common opponent:

> My Japanese playmates were short like I was. Kazu was younger and shorter than I. Kazu also did not like to see Vincent leaning so far over before he made shoot, and Kaz stopped clenching his teeth with eyes wide open one day. (295)

This bonding among them, especially that of the "I" and the Japanese boys, contrasts with the hostility between first-generation Koreans and the Japanese, based on Korea's colonial history, suggesting that the following generation finds the local community more congenial than its own ethnic group.

Vincent's insistence on having his own way leads the playmates to cooperate further. For the next day, Kaz secretly makes the ring much bigger, to prevent Vincent from taking advantage of his height again. When he notices the larger circle, he protests, but "everyone was silent . . . . I liked the big ring, but I shut my mouth. Finally Koon Yee spoke; he said, 'Let's play. The ring is the same for everybody.' A chorus of 'yea, yea, yea' filled the air" (295). The children's agreement challenges the privileged rival. The tension between Vincent and the rest dissolves through a willing compromise to overcome conflicts. But frustrated by Vincent's continuing victory despite Kaz's adjustment, Hyun's "I," the son of a minister, prays that Vincent will lose:

> My father's church was west of the shoot marble circle. I said to myself, 'Papa's church is the House of the Lord God.' That's what Papa preached . . . I faced west—straight at Papa's House of the Lord God . . . . 'Please God, only a

miss.' (296)

The prayer shows the boy's naïveté, but the divine seems to answer, because "The first time I prayed, Papa's God answered me—Vincent missed . . . . God's power was on my side. I prayed again, and again, and again. Vincent missed four times in a row" (296). But the prayer is soon discovered, and Vincent complains: "'You pray, not fair! Your father is Minister of God. You asking for help from your father's God. No fair!'" (297). Aware of his priviledge position, the "I" admits his guilt:

I said, 'OK, OK, I no pray anymore.'

Vincent said, 'Yeah, but what about the misses you make for my shooting?'

I was silent.

Vincent said, 'How about giving me one agate for punishment? I think you make me miss more than one time. OK?'

I said, 'OK.' (297)

This acceptance of Vincent's proposal, however ridiculous, shows a willingness to compromise for peace among the playmates, affirming the writer's vision of a local community in which people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds accept one another—through adjustments and negotiations.

Hyun's other narratives, "Lunch Time" and "I Work Sugarcane Field" depict the plantation labor of the Korean youngster in Hawai'i and display other examples of his sense of being local. The poem "Lunch Time" presents a glimpse of his labor in the fields:

Dewy mornings to hot noon suns
A thousand times my hoe had struck
Fortress weeds circling each cane,

My hoe and I were invincible. (302)

Despite the long hours, wielding the tool convinces the boy he has both mental and physical strength. And yet, with this sense of maturity and accomplishment comes a recognition of restraints, since he cannot break free until

The whistle blew three times at twelve.

The Luna's voice cried loud and clear,

Pau . . . Hana . . . ! Pau…Hana . . . !

Lunch time . . . ! Lunch time . . . ! (302)

His confinement is partially compensated for by the freedom of his short lunch break:

The sun, the sky, the clouds, the earth

My lunch time friends free as the wind

To sit, to eat, to see, to touch

To have, to be, just at lunch time. (302)

"Lunch Time" therefore represents the plantation life of a second-generation Korean as restrictive, yet empowering, and above all at least at times enjoyable and social—something shared among fellow local workers who are not necessarily Korean.

"I Work Sugarcane Field" provides more details about the teenager's life as a plantation laborer, and also about his relationship with his local friends, and his growing interest in the opposite sex. The story of ghosts suggests shared folktales of Hawai‘i, and the account of his sexual awakening with a Japanese girl while working on the plantation suggests that he is departing not only from the cultural code of propriety that his Korean ancestors, following both Christian and Confucian principles, advocated, but also from their bad terms with the Japanese. Identifying with his local working peers rather than

with the first-generation Koreans, Hyun produces an American text from a local Korean's perspective, which sharply contrasts in content and language with Korean texts by the first-generation immigrants.

This plantation work was necessary because of financial shortages. His minister father was "always short on cash for the family's daily needs" (299), because he devoted himself to the Korean immigrant community, which did not pay him enough to support his own children. The narrator and his older brother, Joshua, must therefore supplement the family income. In the early mornings the mother wakes them up:

> Then I awoke, ready to do a man's work. I washed my face, brushed my teeth with forefinger and salt, put on my precious long pants to protect my legs from the saw-edged cane leaves, long-sleeve shirt (ugh) to protect my arms, a straw hat with string straps, and then looked over my trusty bare feet . . . .
>
> It was five o'clock; the night was still dark. Stars were bright and moonlight helped us see our way up the trail to the main road and then to the Hanamaulu train station almost two miles away . . . . We then marched another ten to fifteen minutes to the location of the cane field. (299)

This daily routine that starts with journeying from home to the plantation fields coincides with thousands of other workers—it is major fact of local life. The actual labor, which involves "kalai (hoeing weeds) and how to work hard to make many lines (one line was about sixty feet long)" also integrates him with land, as a Korean who has played a part in making Hawai‘i's plantation history.

The accompanying details—the ghost story and his time with a Japanese girl named Fumiko—also record his transition from childhood to puberty, and the further

transformation of a Korean boy into a local teenager. The ghost story represents a shared experience. He and his local friends get together on the days they don't work in the cane fields. One night they pass through a public cemetery in Waialua, where unhappy ghosts are said to come out of their graves and snatch boys. Though they act boldly about the dead spirits, regardless of their ethnicity, they all scramble to rush away when the narrator yells:

> 'White fireball. I see white fireball; white ghost coming.' Nobody spoke; everybody ran. After this ghost experience, we detoured past the cemetery because no can tell when the ghost come out to catch little boys. (300)

This panic and wariness arises from their naïve but powerful belief in the folk tales of Hawai'i, which they have become familiar with in the same way they know plantation labor.

Hyun's account of his transition from boyhood to adolescence also suggests that sexual arousal is a local, rather than a strictly Korean thing. While working on the plantations, he becomes aware of flirting and other relations between the young male and female laborers. Then he recognizes special attention given to him by Fumiko. He approaches her, and they come together during the lunch break:

> She said, 'You like touch me?' I said, 'How I touch you?' She said, 'Oh you don't know? I show you.' She took my hand and pressed my hand upon her breast. She said, 'You like?' . . . . Fumiko took my hand away and slipped it inside blouse. I touched naked skin. Ooh, Ooh . . . . She said, 'I feel real good. You feel good?' I was already out of my body. I was swimming in the sky. (301)

This scene, complete with pidgin, suggests that local sexual customs will triumph over

any sense of traditional modesty, whether Japanese or Korean, and not just in the sexual act. Even presenting, though years later, such a scene calls into question Korea's customs of abstinence under the Confucian influence. The self in "I Work Sugarcane Field," "Shooting Marbles," and "Lunch Time" therefore reveals his departure from the former generation, acknowledging his close ties to the local place.

Daisy Chun Rhodes

Daisy Chun Rhodes, the author of *Passages to Paradise*, was born in 1933 to Korean immigrant parents, and brought up in Hawai‘i. Just as her collection of oral histories affirms her ties to those of Korean ancestry and to the Islands, her autobiographical stories in *Yobo*, including "A Place of Noise," "A Celestial Kitchen," and "Forever Long, Never End," also foreground her ethnicity, and her sense of Hawai‘i as home. These stories feature the self of the American-born Korean disconnected from the generation of her parents, whose cultural and geographical backgrounds differ from her own, and who do not accept the interracial relationships of their children, whether serious or casual. Like Hyun's, then, Rhodes' stories trace the transition from Korean ethnic values to a strong sense of belonging to Hawai‘i, and therefore sharing a sense of identity with other local diasporic people.

In the "Contributors' Notes" to *Yobo*, Rhodes explicitly states her close ties to her family, her birthplace, and its community:

> My life has been nourished, enriched, and made creative by the love and sharing of my parents and members of the community with which I lived in Hawai‘i. They have become inspirational sources of my writing. Wahiawā has

given me a sense of place and is, indeed, my 'home.' (374)

Rhodes' stories feature the early immigrants and how her cultural and ethnic heritage becomes associated with geographical areas. "A Place of Noise" displays her local identity by containing folk stories of Hawaiians, and by tracing the history of her Korean parents and other immigrants in Hawai'i. "A Celestial Kitchen" and "Forever Long, Never End," however, show how the second-generation Korean Americans are both attached to, and disassociated from, their first-generation immigrant parents, and from native Koreans.

In *Legendary Hawai'i and the Politics of Place: Tradition, Translation, and Tourism* (2007), Christina Bacchilega explains how Hawaiian *mo'olelo*, or connected (hi)stories, folktales, and other indigenous stories were appropriated through many translated English-language narratives from Hawaiian-language sources, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, by and for non-Hawaiians, especially Americans, to experience the "exotic and primitive while beautiful and welcoming" place and promote the tourist industry (5). Walking in step with Bacchilega's argument for "a re-recognition of Hawai'i as sustained by indigenous conceptions of place" (1), "A Place of Noise" interweaves a local folktale set in Wahiawā, or "A Place of Noise," with accounts of Korean immigrants and their children, including the Hawai'i-born narrator herself. Locating her younger self in this place affirms her historical and physical presence, as well as that of Hawaiians:

> I lived on the red earth of Wahiawa, Hawaii. Wahiawa means 'a place of noise,' according to Hawaiians, because it was said that the sound of waves pounding on the north shores of Oahu are heard at the top of the island in

Wahiawa. (80)

Linking self and location helps her to identify herself, and introducing the legend believed by Hawaiians and other residents further suggests that she belongs to the local community and the place, to which she now adds stories of Korean immigrants.

The accounts of her parents, a plantation laborer and a picture bride, stress how they helped to make the local history or Wahiawā, where they initially lived:

> When the plants matured, they stooped over and over a million more times to pick ripened fruit, filling pineapple crates, then loading heavy crates onto trucks that went to the cannery. At the end of each day, workers returned to their plantation homes or to their homes in Wahiawa. (80)

Their offspring also belong to this environment:

> I remember being six years old, the noise of trucks taking men and women laborers out to the pineapple fields as I crossed the bridge to go to school. The trucks shook the bridge and I knew that I'd fall over the bridge rails and drown in the river below. One day, frightened by the moving bridge, my milk money nickel fell on the concrete walkway and was jarred into the river as rumbling trucks passed me. (80)

These loud noises of travels not only invoke the Hawaiian mythical tale, but also lay claim to being a part of local history. Wahiawā is still Wahiawā.

The accounts of tragic incidents in Wahiawā, including the outbreak of World War II and the death of interracial lovers, a Korean woman and an American soldier, show how the ethnic community is actively shaping historical events in Hawai‘i, and sustaining the local myth, and the appropriateness of the name. The 1941 Japanese attack

on Pearl Harbor killed many people, leading to "wailing mothers dropping tears of sadness on the red earth of Wahiawa" (81). This "wailing of crying women and men" (81) continues when parents lose little children to an unexploded grenade on a path. The heartbreaking love story of a Korean girl and a white soldier adds even more crying, as "the Korean women and men wailed and mourned their dead" (81). When the Korean parents oppose this interracial relationship, the solider kills the lover and himself. This tragedy highlights the different attitudes of Korea-born and American-born generations towards cross-racial marriage; the result contributes to the continuity in "the place of noise."

Fifty years later, these tortured noises have been replaced by the bell of the newly established church in Wahiawā, and by the laughing sounds of children attending the nearby elementary school. These sounds nevertheless continue the myth and the place. Where the grown-up narrator once lived, and now recalls, remains intact as "the foundations of the buildings are stained with red dirt. It is the color of Wahiawa and it will never go away" (82).

While "A Place of Noise" focuses on the connection of the Koreans and their offspring to Hawai'i, "A Celestial Kitchen" and "Forever Long, Never End" show how the American-born Koreans are linked to, yet different from their parents. "A Celestial Kitchen" focuses on the mother's exclusive cultural space, where she makes such traditional Korean food as kimchi:

> The smell of chopped and minced garlic cloves permeated our house until I wondered whether the smell of garlic would ever leave my fingertips. "Hands" of ginger, my favorite scent, exuded exotic spice aromas in my mother's

> kitchen. Add fresh green scallions to almost every dish, and one enters a land of organic effervescence. (82)

The mother's or Omanee's kitchen is where she maintains her culture, carried with her from the ancestral land. The daughter's presence shows how the family shares this cultural legacy across generational boundaries, and also suggests the importance of the narrator's relationship with her Korean mother.

And yet, the daughter cannot help but feel estranged from her parents or other native Koreans. When the mother explains the traditional custom of eating noodles by telling her that "'maidens who are engaged to be married eat these noodles for long life,'" the daughter would 'blink my eyes a dozen times, wondering what noodles had to with life'" (82). The American-born girl also feels alienated from the native Koreans that she sees in a picture:

> As a child, I'd often stare at a picture of Korean maidens wearing long pastel dresses, seated on swings under wavy willow trees. Their images, painted on a piece of tin, became slightly bent out of shape and aged. In my mind, unique images of beautiful faces painted porcelain-like often made me feel that their world was foreign, one I might never know as I stood on bare feet clutching the straps on my Levi coveralls. (82)

The formal and traditional attire of the painted Korean women clashes with the informal western jeans of the Korean American girl. The gap between "their world" and where the "I" stands parallels the cultural and geographical boundary that the Pacific Ocean represents.

"Forever Long, Never End" is a third-person narrative about a second-generation

local Korean American woman called Young Sil—Rhodes' Korean name. As the story describes how she learns the meaning of her given name, the cultural and generational gaps between her and her Omanee [mother] widen.[59] In the early 1940s, during World War II in the Hawaiian Islands, the daughter helps run the family's laundry shop, located near the army base in Wai'anae. While working there, Young Sil gets to know Hartje from Iowa, a young American soldier who has "blue eyes, as blue as the Hawaiian skies and skin so very white" (85). Any potential for a relationship between the two, it, however, is ended by the mother. One day when the couple are speaking together, Omanee comes and reproaches the daughter:

> 'Look at you,' her mother said. 'All white now. Dust off. You've shaken more than enough starch.' She removed the ugly mixture of worms in the cleaning fluid. Hartje tipped his olive drab cap as he stood while Omanee walked away.
>
> 'Dust off, hurry, hurry. You have rinsing to do,' Young Sil was reminded. (85)

The dust covering Young Sil's body indicates her growing association with the white soldier. The mother obviously does not approve, but the daughter's reaction to whiteness strongly differs from her mother's generation, creating a potential breach. Instead of cleaning off the dust right away, Young Sil savors "the experience of being white for a brief moment, looked at her arms, no longer tan but white with starch" (85). And yet, she soon complies with her mother's demand, dusting off and following "Omanee's footsteps into the shops to begin rinsing heaps and heaps of fatigues and khakis" (85).

On the following day, she by chance sees Hartji riding in an ambulance away from the camp building. Running over to say goodbye to him,

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[59] Rhodes calls her mother Omanee, a dialect meaning mother.

> She waved as dozens of tanks roared by. The hot, oily, metallic smell of engines rose into the air with the red dust of the road. The convoy rounded a curve, and the ambulance was out of sight. Young Sil's voice was drowned in the roar of steel vehicles as she waved goodbye forever. (86)

This sudden, if inevitable parting suggests that although the American-born descendant eventually conforms to her mother's wishes, the sense of conflict shown the day before still remains.

Young Sil's ignorance of the meaning of her own name also suggests her indifference to, and disconnection from, the native culture of the Korean parents. When Hartji asks the significance of her given name, she realizes she doesn't know. She asks her mother, who says that it means '"Long.' 'Forever Long.' Never, never end" (86). A thread stands for one's longevity in Korean culture, but the daughter instead thinks that

> The never-ending miles and miles of cloth made in factories in mainland United States, shaped in factories by women, folded by women had reached the shores of a large laundry basin where a young Korea-American girl was ready to perform another wartime job. (85)

These different understandings of her name by her Korean-born parents and the American-born child point to the divergence in their cultural backgrounds. The fact that "She hated her Korean name" (85) is a rejection of all least part of the inheritance passed down from the early Korean immigrants. In "Forever Long, Never End" the ties between the parent and the child generations are frayed, and ready to break.

* * *

Examining how the 1.5- and second-generation Korean writers and speakers—Peter Hyun, Margaret Pai, the Hawai‘i-born oral history subjects, Victoria Sung Hye Chai Cintrón, David Hyun, and Daisy Chun Rhodes—represent themselves and their parents in relation to Korea, Hawai‘i, and America reveals the continuities and discontinuities of their heritage, and the discursive nature of a diasporic Korean identity no longer limited to the ancestral land. Hyun's *Mansei!* and *In the New World* narrate his transforming self, which retains Korean-ness while acquiring American-ness. Pai's *The Dreams of Two Yi-min* records her movement away from her parents' generation and their conflicted dreams, and also affirms her local identity. The selves of the oral history subjects are diverse. While some acknowledge their Korean-ness by emphasizing their preservation of Korean names and their parents' legacies, and by pointing to their felt connection to the people during their visits to Korea, others choose their American identity, and some prioritize their ties to Hawai‘i.

Cintrón's representation of the mother-in-law isolated from American society and her American-born children, and of the growing relationship between the mother-in-law and the speaking "I," present a generational gap that could be narrowed and yet still exists. David Hyun and Rhodes revisit Hawai‘i's plantations fields, and the ways they presents their earlier selves and the local community highlight the writers' and the ethnic community's connection to Hawai‘i. In so doing, they also record the cultural movement away from the immigrant generation, who maintained their Korean morality and traditions in their new home.

How would the third-generation children reclaim or reject their grandparents' and parents' ethnic and local heritage? How and to what degree would they too acknowledge

or deny their ties to their ancestors, to Korea, and to Hawai‘i?

CHAPTER THREE: THIRD-GENERATION DIASPORIC KOREANS AND HOMECOMING

this place in which I do not belong,

this place in which *i hankuk saram*

do not recognize me,

call out to me in *il bon mal*,

aniyo, hankuk saram ye yo,

gurigo Hawai'i ae seo wasseoyo,

kureondae, hankuk saram ye yo,

Brenda Kwon, "Century's Lullaby" (160-61)[60]

In *Reading Asian American Literature*, Sau-ling Cynthia Wong explains how mobility is the essence of America in general, associated with freedom since the arrival of the Pilgrims in the early seventeenth century. This notion also appears in the writings of Asian immigrants to America, as in Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart* (1973), Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dicteé* (1982), and Cynthia Katohada's *The Floating World* (1989) to name only a few. In the previous chapter, Hyun's *Man Sei!* and *In the New World* and Pai's *The Dreams of Two Yi-min* are examples of how Hawai'i-born Koreans have represented their own movements, as well as the travels of the first generation. Hyun's works show him moving across cultural, geographical, and linguistic boundaries. *The Dreams of Two Yi-min* charts the parents' physical and economic mobility, as well as

[60] The translations below in the brackets are mine.
this place in which I do not belong,
this place in which *i hankuk saram* [these Koreans]
do not recognize me,
call out to me in *il bon mal*, [the Japanese language]
aniyo, hankuk saram ye yo, [no, I am Korean]
gurigo Hawai'i ae seo wasseoyo, [and I am from Hawai'i]
kureondae, hankuk saram ye yo, [however, I am Korean]

Pai's own movement, that parallels Hyun's to some degree.

What is significant about the idea of mobility for the self-representations composed by third-generation Korean Americans from Hawai‘i is that they seek "an end of immobility, but immobility of a desirable kind: that of having created a permanent home and cast down roots" (122). According to Wong, the travelers' journeys anticipate an ultimate settlement, for they search for a home or a sense of stasis even while on the move. This sense, what Wong calls "at-homeness, rootedness, or centeredness" (122), is closely linked to the third-generation traveler's identification with family, community, and ties to the home place. For example, the earliest immigrants' longing for Korea, and their close association with Hawai‘i's Korean community, show how they still identify themselves in relation to the homeland. In contrast, Hyun's ultimate return to the United States, which partially results from a disconnection from Korea, suggests his wish to be rooted with his family in the adopted land. Finally, Pai's departure from the mainland and return to Hawai‘i illustrates her sense of belonging to a specific local place.

This chapter explores the works of such writers as Glenda Chung Hinchey, Cathy Song, Brenda Kwon, Gary Pak, and Nora Okja Keller, and how they develop various senses of ethnic and local identity that are very much related to family, community, and landscape in Hawai‘i. As Wong anticipates, their self-representations entail imaginary or real visits to Korea that show how those whose families left generations before have lost much of their Korean-ness, but are still trying to recover and preserve their ethnic heritage. At the same time, these writers also explore their rootedness in Hawai‘i. All have moved away at some point for education or other reasons, but all have come back and settled down permanently. If this earlier movement, usually to the U.S. mainland,

enacts a journey, intentional or not, away from their ethnic or local selves, the eventual return to the family and Hawai‘i is a homecoming to both genealogy and place. Examining these ethnic travelers' voyages over cultural, generational, and geographical boundaries reveals diasporic identities that differ from, yet sometimes eerily resemble, the earliest pioneers.

This chapter, however, also complicates any easy understanding of third-generation Koreans in Hawai‘i. To be precise, Kwon is one of the 2.5-generation, since her father was born in Hawai‘i, but her mother was born in Korea, and moved only later. Keller is also Korean-born, but her father was an American—or in Hawaiian terms a haole. She immigrated to the U.S. at the age of three in the late 1960s. Song is also of mixed descent: she is of Chinese ancestry on her maternal side. These generational and ethnic fluctuations point to even greater changes, as the second generation becomes the model that must be questioned. What remains important, however, is how these third-generation Korean American writers identify themselves in relation to their family, community, and Island home. Because this study has tried to be inclusive, the emphasis here will be on the integrative, diasporic self, composed of both Korean-ness and local-ness.

Glenda Chung Hinchey

Hinchey was born in the mid-1940s to second-generation Korean American parents, and lived in the Islands until she graduated in 1968 from the University of Hawai‘i with a degree in Psychology. She then traveled to California and New York, and to Thailand and Europe. After several years, she returned home, married, and has resided

in Hawai‘i since then. Unlike such writing contemporaries as Song and Keller, Hinchey is not well-known to a national or even a local reading public. She has self-published three memoirs: *Like a Joyful Bird: A Memoir* (2003); *Love, Life, and Publishing: A Second Memoir* (2005); and *Look for Me in Hawaii: A Third Memoir* (2005). She has also written articles for the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and *The Honolulu Advertiser*. Finally, she now runs her own blog, http://gigihawaii.wordpress.com, which describes her daily activities, and also makes accessible selections from her published autobiographical accounts.

These three memoirs and the blog suggest that third-generation Koreans have found a number of ways to represent themselves and former generations. Why three memoirs? As Smith and Watson remind us, memoir "refers generally to life writing that takes a segment of a life, not its entirety, and focusing on interconnected experiences" (274). Hinchey's first memoir, *Like a Joyful Bird*, explores how she understands her connection to her Korean ancestors and to the Islands: "I wrote my book in time for the Korean Centennial—a celebration commemorating the hundredth year since the first arrival of Korean immigrants in Hawaii in 1903" (111). This memoir also records the American-born descendant's departure from tradition, for she has crossed cultural, gender, and linguistic boundaries that the former generations could or would not. Finally, all of her memoirs address directly ethical issues arising from representing others—her grandfathers, in this case. The following analysis will therefore consider not only Hinchey's identification with Koreans and locals, but also the moral implications of life writing that her representations raise.

The immigrant experience of Hinchey's maternal grandparents adheres to the typical model minority framework, and also involves the American fixation on mobility

that Wong explains. According to Hinchey, her maternal Korean grandparents came from P'yŏngyang in 1904 as a laborer, and from Masan in 1915 as a picture bride. Although her haraboji (grandfather) began his foreign adventure very poor, he "rose from plantation laborer to storekeeper to irrigation *luna* (foreman). Eventually, he purchased several apartment buildings and houses" (2). Her halmoni (grandmother) helped support the family by working at the store, running a tailor shop, and managing their property. These patriotic immigrants also took part in Korea's independence movements. Her grandfather raised "funds (contributing much money himself)," and the couple attended "rallies, encouraged other to listen to freedom fighters, and promoted unity among the Koreans" (3). If her grandparents' achievements result from their adaptations to the adopted country, their nationalistic involvement shows their continuing sense of Korean identity.

The accounts of Hinchey's own trips to different places represent a continuation of her Korean ancestors' journey: "[m]y life which took me from a provincial childhood in Honolulu to a journey around the world" echoes "the adventures of my grandparents, who emigrated from Korea to Hawaii" (xiii). After graduating from the University of Hawai‘i in the summer of 1968, Hinchey goes to Los Angeles to join the Presidential campaign. During her six-month stay, she realizes that a place where "hippies and druggies walked the neighborhood with beaded necklaces and dirty long hair. This wasn't the kind of milieu I was used to in Honolulu" (40). She is also shocked by "seeing so many *haoles* on the streets. Asians were the minority. It was definitely an eye-opener for a Korean-American from Hawaii" (40). But gradually she overcame her surprise, much in the way her grandparents did shortly after they arrived in the foreign country.

Hinchey then sets off on a seven-year trip through Asia and Europe. While living in Thailand for about a year, she learns the culture, appropriate manners, and language. In Europe, as she passes through France, England, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, she sees snow for the first time, and meets many interesting people, adding yet more diversity to her experience. Finally settling in New York for five years, Hinchey finds work, goes to school for an advanced degree, and makes quite a few friends. But her life abruptly changes when she is victimized by two burglaries, and then mugged shortly after. Confronting the dangers of living in a metropolitan city, and becoming homesick for her family and Hawai‘i, Hinchey finally comes back to “‘the best place to live’” (62).

Hinchey’s cross-cultural experiences, and the progressive quality of her life, parallel those of her grandparents and parents. The major differences, however, result from attitudes about gender. Her grandparents may have progressed from working as poor laborers to owning real estate, and her father and mother have been economically successful themselves. But in both generations, women were still restricted by their domestic work. The grandmother/picture bride, who could only have left Korea alone because of the particular circumstance that she was to marry immediately her future husband, “worked tirelessly in the kitchen all day” (5). Hinchey’s mother “began cooking for the family” at the age of eight, and “was taught how to sew and helped *Halmoni* in her tailor shop” at nine (8). Hinchey herself could move rather freely around the world on her own, and seems less confined by her domestic activities, even after her marriage. As she explains,

> We Koreans have come a long way. Each generation has improved the lot of the next. Unlike my grandparents, I’ve never had to labor in the plantation fields.

> Instead, I graduated from college, traveled, and now lead the relatively stress-free life of a wife, mother, and writer. (111)

Despite her own relative privilege, Hinchey still speaks of "We Koreans," showing her identification with "us." Her improved quality of life does not separate her from her ancestors; instead, she credits their labor with providing her different experience as a Korean woman.

But some of Hinchey's experiences, including her withdrawal from a graduate program, marriage, and her role in a family dispute do suggest that she has moved beyond the linguistic and cultural borderlines of the earlier generations. While in New York, she became inspired to study music, and pursued a master's degree at Columbia University. In her ethnomusicology program, Hinchey passes all the required examinations, and only needed to complete one more course and a thesis project:

> My thesis was to be about the Korean *sijo*, a short three-line song with a set number of syllables per line, much like the Japanese *haiku*. My work involved transcribing the music, translating the Korean lyrics, and researching the history of the *sijo*. But this project fell through, and I dropped out of graduate school after second year. (59-60)

Her academic interest in studying classical Korean poetry and music arose from her understandable natural attraction to the traditional literature of her ancestors. But her failure probably resulted from her weakness in the Korean language, since she had to translate everything into English. Hinchey is therefore the prototypical third-generation Korean, divorced from the language of her grandparents. Hinchey's grandmother "felt more comfortable with the Korean language" (5). Her father, the former President and

Treasurer of the Koreans' political party, Kook Min Hur, gave speeches in both Korean and English at their gatherings. But the grandchild really only has English.

Hinchey's interracial marriage maps out a similar transition. Her grandfather "was determined to have children who were one hundred percent Korean, so he didn't even consider marrying someone outside his own race" (1), and sent for a picture bride. Hinchey's American-born mother was more liberal about marrying someone outside her own ethnicity, and she dated a few men before marrying, but "Mom liked Dad the most because he was Korean" (9). As for Hinchey, she "never dated a Korean because no Korean men asked me out" (65), and she marries David, a white man who moved to the Islands at a young age.

Hinchey's cross-racial wedding is presented as an example of the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment of the Hawaiian Islands, "the melting pot of the world" (*Look*, 22). She claims her parents "never objected to their children's dating and marrying people of another ancestry," so the children have Hawaiian and white spouses, making the whole family, including their mixed-race children, "truly a melting pot" (65). And yet, she does acknowledge that the success of the marriage triumphs over a common notion that "a Korean and a *haole* wouldn't get along because of cultural differences" (65). The governing metaphor is adaption. If her daily interactions with the husband have made her "less Korean and more cosmopolitan than my ancestors" (111), he has become more Koreanized by learning Hinchey's culture and some Korean words: "David always removes his shoes before entering the house. He also has acquired a Korean vocabulary and refers to body parts in Korean. Best of all, he enjoys Korean cuisine, especially *kimchi*" (65-66). These mutual adjustments, and their multi-ethnic family, explain for

Hinchey how Korean immigrants have over the generations ultimately integrated into Hawai‘i.

Hinchey's multi-faceted voyage as a local Korean also raises issues that John Eakin explores in *The Ethics of Life Writing* (2004). For Eakin, representing others calls for moral scrutiny, "the deep subject of autobiographical discourse" (4), because the issue is not simply whether the representation is true, but whether it could damage the reputation of those represented. Any exposure of another's story raises questions about the writer's freedom of expression and about ownership of any particular narrative. Is the owner the one representing or the one represented? Hinchey's representations of her grandfather in the second and third memoirs, *Love, Life, and Publishing* and *Look for Me in Hawaii*, have definite ethical implications that she must confront as a family member and a writer. In "Across the Street from the Alan Wong's Restaurant" in the second memoir, Hinchey reveals that her grandfather owned a rooming house and a cottage on King Street, which he rented to prostitutes, a black pimp, and a suspicious white soldier. One day, the grandfather discovers that the soldier has pistols, rifles, grenades, and ammunition, and so calls the police. When the FBI agents arrive, they ask the grandfather not to evict the suspect until they finish their investigation. He agrees, but then drives the soldier out. The solider is murdered soon after.

Hinchey clearly felt the anecdote was an important part of the story, but one of her aunts found it disrespectful to the grandfather and the whole family. Hinchey discusses this clash in "Writing Is Not for Sissies,"[61] an entry from her blog dated November 26, 2006:

[61] This entry is later published in the third memoir, *Look for Me in Hawaii*. See p.109-111.

> An aunt was upset when my second memoir discussed how my grandfather rented out his rooming house to prostitutes and a pimp. My uncle had given me this information, but my aunt insisted it was false. Even if it were true, why bring it up? By doing so, she complained that I'd ruined the family's reputation and standing in the community. (110)

The relative's complaint over possible harm done to the family, and her question of the anecdote's truth, are examples of what Eakin describes as ethical concerns raised by life writing when it represents others. But in this case, cultural factors are probably at work as well, because the story contradicts the model minority narrative that her grandfather and his descendants have constructed within their community. Given the character of his tenants, money was clearly more important to the grandfather than morality, and his breaking of his agreement with the FBI, probably on grounds of personal danger and the possibility of scandal, clashes with the family's reputation as exemplary citizens. Similarly, the aunt's disapproval—"Even if it were true, why bring it up?"—suggests that she is far more concerned about the impact of the revelation on the family's reputation, than whether it is accurate.

Faced with this criticism, Hinchey first argues for the story's truth by quoting her uncle as the source. But then she steps away from the position of a family member, and addresses the situation as a writer:

> Of course, as some people have suggested, I could fictionalize my memoirs by writing a novel. Unfortunately, novelists, too, have been known to be castigated. For instance, local author Lois-Ann Yamanaka was denounced by Filipinos for writing about a Filipino rapist in one of her novels, and that outcry cost her a

> prestigious award, which was rescinded. My point is that no writer — of fiction or non-fiction — can escape criticism. (110-11)

The argument here is a familiar one. Since all writers are criticized, the accused yet innocent memoirist must only concern herself with telling the truth. In the published version of "Writing Is Not for Sissies" in *Look for Me in Hawaii*, this fidelity is what Hinchey stresses by adding reviews from her readers. One reader "liked both books [the first two memoirs]" because "The stories were real, describing common experiences many of us had growing up in Hawaii" (109). Furthermore, Hinchey openly writes about her family's attempts to censor her writing, describing the pressure she has often received from her parents and family:

> You can't imagine how often my relatives have tried to censor my books and newspaper columns and even my letters to the editors of local newspapers. My mother warned me not to write anything embarrassing about the family. (110)

These requests to omit unfavorable stories reflect the diasporic family's wish to maintain the good name they worked long and hard to create. Hinchey, however, sees such pressure as an attack on her freedom of expression as a writer, and as an example of unjustifiable domestic censorship. This is itself a generation clash, and an example of changing values. Hinchey feels that she has a greater obligation to her readers than to her family.

In her first memoir, this was not the case. Hinchey's account of the immigrant generation in *Like a Joyful Bird* in retrospect shows signs of felt censorship. Here she celebrates the achievements of her maternal grandfather, but keeps information about her father's family to a minimum, because "I know very little about my paternal grandparents,

and they never had a strong presence in my life" (12). Then in the second memoir, she doesn't mention her father's father at all. But if family's pressure and self-censorship were at work in these texts in relation to Hinchey's paternal grandfather's story, in the third memoir, *Look for Me in Hawaii* she casts off such restraint. The section called "Tale of Two Grandfathers" compares successes and failures, and for the first time, Hinchey talks about her paternal grandfather's failure:

> Being a highly educated and proud man, however, he adjusted poorly to plantation life, drifting from job to job. Grandpa was an alcoholic, abused his wife, and couldn't get along with anyone else, either. [. . .] Ironically, Dad's father died a pauper with no money or property to pass on to his children, whereas Mom's father died a millionaire. [. . .] All Dad's father had going for him were his education and his pride – neither of which resulted in anything great or permanent. (14)

By telling a less than flattering story, Hinchey chooses her freedom of speech as a writer over her duty to protect her grandfather's name or that of the family. But what is the value of her claim to this writerly right, and what is the value of family reputation? And in what way does he "own" *his* story, which she never participated in, and which other relatives lay claim to, for the sake of his privacy?

In "My Father's Penis," the life writer and life writing scholar Nancy Miller reflects on the complicated and overlapping ethical boundaries of family stories:

> Had my father still been able to read, I would never have written about "the penis." By going public with the details of domestic arrangements on Riverside Drive, I was flying in the face of the parental injunction not to "tell" that had

> haunted my adolescence and continued well into my adult years; the panic my parents felt that they would be exposed by us. (146-47)

Miller's narrative dealing with her father's penis also raises questions about the vulnerability of the represented, and about infringements of confidentiality.[62] Ownership is also an issue: is the story her father's or hers? And even if it is hers, what gives her the right to talk about it? Such questions are difficult, but Miller's confession that "I would never have written about 'the penis'" if her father could have known indicates both her awareness of her father's vulnerability, and her own sense of guilt. Hinchey's exposure is arguably less extreme than Miller's. But telling her grandfather's personal story certainly impacts whatever reputation he might have. Though Hinchey recognizes the complicated moral questions involved, an appropriate question here is "Would the granddaughter have written about Grandpa had he been able to read?"

Hinchey's self-identity as a local Korean life writer carries her beyond the cultural and familial boundaries of privacy that she feels restrict her freedom when writing her stories about herself and her family. This identity does not, however, reject its Korean heritage. Her account of her visit to the ancestral land shows how Hinchey identifies herself as one of "us" (Koreans) despite "our" differences. Years after the death of her maternal grandparents, Korean immigrants to Hawai‘i are finally recognized by the Korean government for their overseas contributions to the nation's independence movements. In turn, Hinchey, her husband, and other family members take the remains of the deceased to Korea, to be buried in its National Memorial Cemetery. On this first trip to Korea, Hinchey notices many differences, despite their similar biological features,

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[62] See G. Thomas Couser's *Vulnerable Subjects* for further discussion on vulnerable aspects of the represented in life writing.

between her diasporic self and native Koreans:

> It was strange seeing throngs of people whose faces resembled my own and who could have been my close friends or in-laws were it not for my grandparents' emigration to Hawaii. During that week, I realized I was more American than Korean in thought, word and deed. As a native Korean told me over lunch, I didn't act Korean. In other words, I didn't really blend in with the natives in Seoul. (*Like*, 97-98)

But this awareness of her own foreignness does not lead her to deny or reject her ethnicity. To those who mistake her for something other than Korean, Hinchey asserts her ethnicity firmly:

> "Are you Japanese?"
>
> "No," I said. "I am Korean from Hawaii."
>
> Surprised, they smiled and walked on. Yes, I have a Korean face, an American passport, and Hawaiian clothes. To people in Korea, I am unique. (98)

In fact, Hinchey makes a point of stressing her Korean-ness:

> [m]y Korean heritage hasn't totally disappeared. I eat Korean food with chopsticks regularly and remove my shoes at the door. I remember Korean words learned when I was little and refer to body parts in Korean. I even studied the language for two years in college and took classes in Korean dance and drums. (111)

This emphasis on her familiarity with Korean culture and language, however minimal it might seem, represents her willing recognition of her ethnic heritage, something she shares with Koreans living inside and outside the mother country.

Her ancestors' journey ends with their return to the homeland in *Like a Joyful Bird*. Hinchey's own story ends with her return to Hawai‘i, the home of the local Korean diaspora. She gives an example of her continuing association with Korea:

> I bought a new Hyundai Accent, made in Korea. It's a sub-compact car [. . .] just right for a short Korean woman like me. People ask me why I didn't choose a Toyota, instead. I always reply that I wanted to support the Korean economy. (98).

Her patriotic purchase from the ancestral home is a rather pale parallel to the actions of her grandparents, who took part in the nationalistic movements while living thousands of miles from the native country, in Hawai‘i. Merchandise therefore stands in for a connected self with strong ethnic roots. And while she values her Korean-ness through her ancestors, at the same time, "Looking at my *hapa-haole* (half-Caucasian) children, I wonder what they'll remember about their third-generation Korean-American mother. This memoir is for them and their children and grandchildren" (111). These children, who represent for Hinchey "truly a melting pot" (65) of Hawai‘i, embody the changes and adjustments that some local Korean families have made through different generations. Her positioning herself as granddaughter/daughter/mother/grandmother conveys her sense of belonging to a Korean local family that will continue to create original, hybrid legacies.

Cathy Song

Song was born in Wahiawā in 1955 and spent her childhood and teenage years in Hawai‘i. After attending the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa for two years, she

transferred to Wellesley College and earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature in 1977. She then completed an MFA in creative writing at Boston University in 1981, eventually returning to the Islands in 1987. Song is one of the most prominent Asian American poets, having published five collections since 1983, including *Picture Bride*, for which she won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award in 1982 and a nomination for a National Book Circle Award in 1983; *Frameless Windows, Squares of Light* (1988); *School Figures* (1994); *Land of Bliss* (2001); and *Cloud Moving Hands* (2007). She is also the co-editor of *Sister Stew: Fiction and Poetry of Women* (1991) and *Yobo: Korean American Writing in Hawai'i* (2003), both published by Bamboo Ridge Press.

According to Jinny Huh, many of Song's poems throughout her career "are autobiographical and reveal the difficult aspect of having an Asian American identity" (283). Together, they record the personal and literary journey of a local Korean American writer away from, then back to the Islands, and her mixed ethnicity family heritage. While the self/narrator in several poems of *Picture Bride* explores her sense of detachment from her ethnicity and local home in Hawai'i, and expresses a wish to depart from them, in other poems, she affirms her connection to, and longing for them. The poems which appeared after Song's homecoming, however, describe her eventual return to those that she had earlier left behind. Since Song has said her poems are "the best way to express myself" (Chun, G7), reading them closely shows how this diasporic writer rejects, but returns to and acknowledges her local and ethnic identities.

Song's search for identity within her Korean, Chinese, American, and local self parallels her physical movement away from and back to the Hawaiian Islands. In a 1984 interview with Debbie Murakami Nomaguchi, shortly after the publication of *Picture*

Bride, Song rejects such labels as Asian American or local poet, claiming instead that "I'm a poet who happens to be Asian American" (9). The craft is clearly foremost: "She hopes her readers will look beyond the external characteristics of Korean Chinese heritage and her family roots in Hawaii to see the poet who molds images and meaning through words" (9). Here Song wishes that her readers adopt her own attitude toward going beyond ethnic and cultural assumptions to encounter a poet at work.

It is thus rather ironic that *Picture Bride*, arguably the first nationally-recognized collection of Asian American poetry, and whose title, referring to Song's Korean ancestor who came to Hawai'i, is a quintessential Korean American title, is read by Richard Hugo, the judge for the Yale Younger Poets Prize, as a collection about the poet speaker's "hidden but relentless desire for escape" (xiii). Many of the poems anticipate Song's downplaying of her ethnic and regional backgrounds, and articulate her wish to be "just" a poet. In poems such as "The Youngest Daughter" and "Leaving," the daughter "I" longs to leave her family and residence that she finds constraining, and describes "my" readiness to escape. "The Youngest Daughter" presents a Hawai'i where "The sky has been dark / for many years" (5), and through this poem Song expresses her sense of entrapment in her heritage culture and displays her dilemma in trying to choose between staying behind and leaving. Confined in "this sunless room" (6), the speaker has lived and taken care of a sick mother who "has been injecting insulin / for thirty years" (6). Consequently,

> My skin has become as damp
> and pale as rice paper
> and feels the way

mother's used to before the drying sun

parched it out there in the fields. (5)

The pale, weakened body mirrors the daughter's exhaustion and despair after years of living with her burdensome parent in this gloomy place. The nearly drained "I" watches for any opportunity to run away, for the sake of her survival, before she becomes totally absorbed by her damp, stifling life:

She knows I am not to be trusted,

even now planning my escape.

As I toast to her health

with the tea she has poured,

a thousand cranes curtain the window,

fly up in a sudden breeze. (6)

"My" current circumstance contrasts with the imagined cranes that freely soar up to the sky, an emblem for escape and independence that shows how much the dutiful daughter feels deprived and yearns for her autonomy. The "thousand cranes" therefore not only point to her strong wish to leave for a new beginning, whether through marriage or something else, but also embody herself. In her culture they—not one paper crane but a thousand—are gingerly made in hopes of achieving one's major dream, and the "I" has almost completed the wishful project out of "my skin . . . as damp / and pale as *rice paper*" (emphasis mine). Her heart no longer wants to stay with the mother in that place; in fact, she is "already planning" an escape from both family and environment. And yet, she is still blocked by the window, just watching the cranes leaving.

Similarly, "Leaving" describes the unpleasant surroundings of the local narrator's

home in Wahiawā, where “We grew there / in the steady rain / that felt like a gray curtain / through which my mother peered: / patches of depression” (14). The recalled memories of “the sticky smell / of pineapples / being lopped off” and “the passion fruits rotted / on the vines / before they could be picked” (14) portray Hawai‘i scenes often encountered in her childhood. Inside the house,

> The mildew grew in rings
> around the sink
> where centipedes came
> swimming up the pipes
> on multiple feet
> and the mold grew
> around our small fingers
> making everything slippery
> to touch
> We were squeamish and pale. (15)

The moldy indoors signals potential danger, and the sister’s frightened screams one night caused by “the bat / that clung to the screen” (15) create a sense of menace. The “images and meaning through words” (Nomaguchi, 9) in this poem therefore are inseparable from a grim outlook stimulated by the speaker’s local Hawai‘i home.

The reasons the “I” dreams of “Leaving” are necessarily tied to her troubled ethnic and geographical identity, suggesting the speaker is disconnected from her own background. For Song, this detachment led to her actual departure from the Islands in the late 1970s to attend school on the mainland. Another strong indication of a desire to

locate the self elsewhere is Song's identification with the American painter, Georgia O'Keeffe, and especially for the poems of *Picture Bride*. Richard Hugo, Nora Okja Keller, and Shirley Geok-lin Lim have all written about the importance of O'Keeffe to Song's poems. Hugo speaks of her "personal relationship with O'Keeffe's work," noting that she "identifies" with the artist (ix), and Lim writes about O'Keeffe's "strong aesthetic influence" (235) on Song's poems. In "Artistic and Cultural Mothering in the Poetics of Cathy Song," Nora Okja Keller identifies two maternal figures in *Picture Bride*: the biological and artistic. For Keller, the feminist poet Song is trying to separate the self from the ethnic, local family because the predominantly Asian culture empowers patriarchy, demanding women's obedience and submission. Instead, Song adopts O'Keeffe as her role model for imaginative insight, because the American painter resists traditional representations of women in her self-referential works. Such poems as "From the White Place" and "Blue and White Linens after O'Keeffe" in *Picture Bride*, written during Song's literary training on the mainland, demonstrate O'Keeffe's impact on the poet's self-representations.

Titled after O'Keeffe's oil painting, and dedicated to the artist, "From the White Place," articulates Song's recognition of an artistic matriarch who likely influenced many women's work. The "I" here turns into the painter, who has been painfully working on her current project:

So dry, there are no flowers

to paint,

but this pelvic mountain

thrusting toward light and heat,

insistent: I hack slabs of it at breakfast,

lie prostrate against it at night;

an arthritic who cannot sleep,

tormented by bones and joints—exposed,

and it is still there. (72)

The visual artist "I" paints, the poet uses words to revisit, and even reproduces poetically the work of art which O'Keeffe eventually produced. The overlapping images here of the self as painter and writer speak to Song's identification with her adopted American artist parent. Furthermore, the transformation of the painting into the poem results from an inspired daughter's creativity in response to an artist mother's achievement.

"Blue and White Linens after O'Keeffe" follows the American painter's geographical movement within and beyond the United States, seeing it as part of her artistic feminist escape from the gender boundaries that limit autonomy and self-expression. O'Keeffe's free travel to New Mexico, Maui, Andalusia in Spain, and Wisconsin contrasts strongly with the confined situation of the "I" in "Youngest Daughter." This liberated self corresponds to the speaker's own early rejection of conventional female values and behavior:

I discovered my own autonomy then,

crawling out from your wide skirts

and into your flowerbeds,

where I proceeded to crucify the dolls,

decapitating your crocuses.

You scowled (and I clapped) (47)

By damaging the mother's flowers, the "I" leaves "your wide skirts" and "your flowerbeds," seeking out a freedom the mother seems to reject. This departure fulfills both the painter's and the writer's wish to liberate themselves for the sake of their own autonomy and creative representations. By transforming herself into "I, the young painter" (43), Song claims descent from the independent, artistic white mother, and also denies her cultural and familiar inheritance, to which she feels less connected.

And yet this desire for freedom and autonomy paradoxically informs some of Song's most culturally explicit poems. In both "Picture Bride" and "Easter: Wahiawa, 1959," she describes how the Korean diaspora to Hawai'i was often reactivated by a desire similar to the one that led to her own escape from Hawai'i to acquire advanced artistic training, and to create an artistic personal identity. In fact, these poems represent the "self" moving closer to, rather than away from, her ancestors. In "Picture Bride," the granddaughter tells the immigrant story of her grandmother, who left her homeland to marry a prospective husband in the foreign country of Hawai'i:

She was a year younger
than I,
twenty-three when she left Korea.
Did she simply close
the door of her father's house
and walk away. And
was it a long way
through the tailor shops of Pusan
to the wharf where the boat

waited to take her to an island

whose name she had

only recently learned,

on whose shore

a man waited (3)

The descendant "I" tries to understand her ancestor by calling attention to their similarity in ages when the latter came to the Islands about a century ago. And yet, the questions the "I" poses suggest a lack of knowledge: "did she simply close / the door of her father's house [?]" (3), "What things did my grandmother / take with her?" (3), and "Did she politely untie / the silk bow of her jacket [. . .] where the men were burning the cane?" (4).

In an interview with S.E. Solberg in 1999, Song confesses how little she understood her Korean grandmother's ready departure from her family and homeland to marry an unknown man laboring in a foreign land:

> *She was about my age at the time I wrote the poem.* [. . .] *Once my grandmother left (Korea), it was forever. She could never go back. I find that incomprehensible, that she could leave willingly, forfeit all that was familiar for a place she had never seen, to marry a man she had ever met*. (543-44)

Nevertheless, by asking these questions, the American-born granddaughter in "Picture Bride" shows her keen interest in the grandmother whose cultural, geographical, and linguistic backgrounds were so different, yet linked to her own. The poem then expresses a desire to step closer to the grandmother by taking an imaginative journey not only to the ancestral land, but to Hawai‘i plantation fields of the past. The poem crosses spatial, chronological, and cultural borderlines as the disassociated "I" explains her severed

ethnic roots.

In “Easter: Wahiawa, 1959,” a granddaughter writes about her Korean grandfather, who immigrated to Hawai‘i. This time the “I” describes confidently the grandfather as a boy in Korea, where “if he were lucky, / a quail egg or two / would gleam from the mud / like gigantic pearls.” She sees just as clearly his “long walk / through the sugarcane fields / of Hawaii, / where he worked for eighteen years, / cutting the sweet stalks / with a machete” (8). And she also recalls vividly her own close proximity to him as a small girl:

> We burst loose from Grandfather
> when the mothers returned
> from planting the eggs
> around the soggy yard.
> He followed us,
> walking with stiff but sturdy legs.
> We dashed and disappeared
> into bushes,
> searching for the treasures (8)

This family picture suggests a strong sense of connection between the generations, and it also represents the success story of the immigrant first generation. The boy who searched for eggs, and “could never eat enough / of them” (8), grows up into a man who could “at last buy / cratefuls of oranges, / basketfuls of sky blue eggs” (9) for his offspring for a special day like Easter.

The poem’s very specific location and time also acknowledge the cultural and

local heritage of the ethnic family, including the poet herself. As we've seen in earlier chapters, Wahiawā, where Song was born, was a place where many plantation laborers and their families lived during the initial stage of their settlement in Hawai'i. By recalling her old home, the writer invokes the immigrant story of her family and Islands plantation history. 1959 is a highly significant year as well, for it was when Hawai'i officially became the fiftieth State of the United States of America. And Easter, that Christian holiday so much part of American culture, also underscores the adaptations and achievements of the Korean family, possibly Christian, since their arrival in the Islands. They too celebrate it by hunting and gathering.

The poem ends with an image of unity between cultures and generations that seems perfect. Despite of the sense of connection to the ethnic family and local place illustrated in "Easter: Wahiawa, 1959," the Korean American self, nonetheless, is somewhat disjointed from the immigrant antecedent:

> I found three that afternoon.
> By evening, it was raining hard.
> Grandfather and I skipped supper.
> Instead, we sat on the porch
> and I ate what he peeled
> and cleaned for me
> The scattering of the delicate
> marine-colored shells across his lap
> was something like that what the ocean gives
> the beach after a rain. (9)

The blue eggs that Grandfather peels for her are literally food that nurtures his descendant, who readily accepts what he gives, illustrating their close relationship. The shared food, time, and space further confirm "our" ties to each other. And yet, the silence that permeates this scene recalls the grandfather's "broken English" (7), and reminds us that the Korean-born and the American-born live on different sides of a common linguistic boundary. Though few poems invoke more powerfully the shared cultural, familial, and physical experience of Hawai'i for its Korean residents, a certain distance separates the speaker from her ancestor.

The coexisting themes of disconnection/escape and association/return in *Picture Bride* echo the autobiographical experience of the Hawai'i-born, Korean American daughter on her writerly and identity-seeking journey away from home and family. If O'Keeffe's influence leads Song to adopt American feminist aesthetics, and to stand at a distance from her ethnic heritage and geographical roots in Hawai'i, the poems in which the offspring visits imaginatively the ancestral land and local plantations conduct a continuing search for her cultural and ethnic origins, and contain her wish to reconnect with them, in spite of the existing gap. When the "I" in "Blue and White Lines after O'Keeffe" recognizes after a long absence from her mother that "It has taken me all these years / to realize that this is what I must do / to recognize my life" (48), she returns imaginatively to "the hems of your white dresses" (47), through aspects of "my life" that differ from American mainland feminist identity. The now autonomous movement of the self between the white American painter and the emerging ethnic writer is a crossing over the racial boundary in her literary expression that integrates her aesthetic and cultural experience, and hints at an eventual return to those she has previously denied.

Song's subsequent collections, published after she returned to Hawai'i in 1987, register her presence in the Islands, explore her closeness to her family, and acknowledge her ancestral ties. Critics have commented on the importance of Song's incorporation of her own cultural and local background into her later works. Susan M. Schultz writes that and "In *School Figures* Song ventures further than before into the local world of Hawaii's Asian American community" (271). And Jinny Huh remarks on "her promotion of Hawaii's literary and artistic culture" (286). Song's collections after *Picture Bride* often invoke the idea of arrival, connection, and reunion, of how the returned writer reclaims her inherited roots. Such poems as "Magic Island" and "The Tower of Pisa" in *Frameless Windows, Squares of Light* and "A Conservative View" in *School Figures* commemorate her own transformation back into a local Korean diasporic self, at home with her own family.

"Magic Island" offers a close view of a well-known and popular place in contemporary Hawai'i where locals and tourists often spend their time leisurely. The atmosphere contrasts strongly with those things in the earlier poems, "The Youngest Daughter" and "Leaving":

> A collar of water
> surrounds the park
> peninsula at noon.
> Voices are lost in
> waves of wind
> that catch a kite and keep
> it there in the air

above the trees.

If the day has one color,

it is this:

the blue immersion of horizons,

the sea taking the sky like a swimmer. (19)

The bright, breezy beach, where "Under each tree, / a study in small pleasures: / a boy, / half in sunlight, / naps with his dog; a woman, / marking a page with a leaf, squints up / to bite into an apple" (19) is the opposite of the confining environment that oppresses the local daughter. The kite, air, horizons, sea, and sky, all expansive images, suggest a sense of freedom absent from Song's earlier representations of the self and the place.

The particular attention given to a recent immigrant family on Magic Island recalls the Islands' long history of immigration that included the arrival of Korean workers, and celebrates Hawai'i's multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic milieu as the product of diverse migrants' continued arrival:

It is a day an immigrant

and his family might remember,

the husband taking off his shirt

to sit like an Indian

before the hot grill

He would not in his own language

call it work, to cook

The sticks of marinated meat

. . .

On the grass beside their straw mat,

a black umbrella,

blooming like an ancient flower,

betrays their recent arrival.

Suspicious of so much sunshine,

they keep expecting rain. (19-20)

The local speaker notes the immigrants' presence, and their foreign native tongue, with an approving acceptance of them as part of the scene. If the black umbrella represents a more troubled and wary past that ultimately pushes them out of their native country, the continued sunshine signifies opportunities and a hopeful future in Hawai‘i. "Magic Island," then, presents Hawai‘i as promising land of an "arrival" and settlement for locals and immigrants alike, rather than a destination follwing departure or escape.

If "Magic Island" focuses on the physical setting of Hawai‘i, "The Tower of Pisa" centers on the returned daughter and the local father, and her wish to restore their close connection before she went away. The grown-up "I" recalls that as a child "I was always afraid he'd hurt himself, / die and leave us unprepared," since "I witnessed / a pickax slam into his right hand" (52). Sensing the danger around him,

I knew he needed protecting.

I was convinced of it.

From that moment, I became his shadow,

a pair of eyes on the lookout

for imminent catastrophe,

scanning the yard for possible pitfalls—

removing shovels, nails, bear-clawed weeders

from his path,

anchoring the flimsy ladder as he descended,

gropingly, paint or sawdust in his eyes.

I was never far from his ferocious energy. (52-53)

The younger self's nearness expresses her concern and affection for the father, and her sense of obligation as well. But this relationship goes two ways, as she powerfully learns:

I was riding my bicycle

with one eye on him

when I toppled in.

I hadn't yet learned to swim.

I would've stayed at the bottom—

for a second, I was resigned to it—

were it not for his arm reaching out

like a branch above the water. (54)

Similarly, despite her commitment to look after him, the daughter at some point left, but has now come back: "I went, was gone, he's still here / alive, sprinkled with sawdust, / thirsty, a man of forty-five." She then recalls seeing him crying alone at night a long time ago, now realizing that "I have owed him this / all my life—this worry, / this constant concern" (54). For her, the father is the Tower of Pisa, because he seems destined to fall sooner or later, and her remembrance of the broken promise to be his guardian angel only intensifies her renewed feeling of gratitude and attachment to him, as she now anticipates how she will keep her pledge, and even pay back her debt to him.

The Hawai‘i’s location and the retrieved relationship of the “I” to her cultural environment in “Magic Island” and “The Tower of Pisa” are crystallized in “A Conservative View.” Here the poet shows the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environment of the Islands by preserving her Hawai‘i-born Korean American father and Chinese American mother’s stereotypical views of each other’s ethnicities. The father criticizes the Chinese for their stinginess—“‘How else are you going to get those damn pa-kes to share?’” (17)—while the mother disapproves of Koreans for “being big spenders, show-offs” (17). But there’s more:

> She believes Japanese and Korean
>
> parents spoil their children.
>
> “Doormats to their kids.”
>
> And the bok gwai?—well,
>
> they ship their offspring to camp or boarding school right?
>
> For the Chinese, discipline begins at home.
>
> And it begins with teaching the value of money. (15)

The parents’ opinions on Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese are common stereotypes that most locals knew. What the Korean Chinese daughter offers is an insider’s viewpoint that not only emerges from different ethnicities, but can note and correct common misunderstandings. The local speaker knows that the Koreans and Japanese put much emphasis on education, preferably at public institutions, while the Chinese highly value domestic learning. By recognizing the different educational preferences, but also noting that they all believe in proper discipline for their offspring, the speaker re-evaluates the ethnic stereotypes that her local parents’ generation preserves.

"A Conservative View" also displays the multi-linguistic environment at home, where the speaker has been exposed to Korean, Chinese, English, and pidgin. In addition to bok gwai, which refers to white ghosts or people in Cantonese, and the very stingy Chinese and their families, or pake, in pidgin English, the poem uses "standard" English to provide examples of other "foreign" terms:

> Her clear and practical sentences
> are sprinkled with expressions
> semantically rooted to the conservation of money.
> . . .
> "Poho"[63] if we bought something we couldn't use.
> "Humbug" if we have to go out and buy
> something we don't need.
> "No need"—her favorite expression of all. (16)

If the Chinese mother's common expressions reveal her cultural and linguistic backgrounds, her adoption of "Pee-sa," "expensive" in Korean, and a term she "borrows liberally from her Korean in-laws" (16), shows how she has incorporated into her own vocabulary the language of her Korean American relatives. The presence of these diverse languages in the writer's growing-up experience also offers a vivid picture of Hawai'i's community, where locals have learned to communicate with many ethnically specific terms.

In Song's fourth collection, *The Land of Bliss*, most of the poems are "my way of saying goodbye to Mom" (Chun, G7), who was suffering dementia at the time of their

[63] Hawaiian. It also means in vain, lost, useless, and without profit.

writing. “Mountains of Ash” describes an aged, demented grandmother in a nursing home, and her pitiful husband who misses his wife. At an earlier time, “Grandma fed us fists of rice / packed hard as snowballs, / musubi we saved for the drive-in movie, / a broken fence our ticket through” (58). But now, in the nursing home, “‘what about the fleas?’ / Grandma asks every visitor. / ‘Has anyone seen the fleas?’”(56). No longer capable of taking care of herself, she lives apart from her husband, who wonders “‘When will I see her?’” (56). When the children come to take away her belongings, “Although it is chilly, Grandpa chooses to stay outside. / He stands like a totem in a circle of clay pots / stacked beside old shoes, old hats” (55). The poet confesses that “Grandpa’s prayers perfumed my dreams” (58), prayers that “form a mountain of ash” (60), embodying his futile wishes for his dying spouse. The grandfather’s praying mirrors the writing grandchild/daughter/poet’s “accepting her condition” as well as “saying goodbye to Mom.” The formed mountain of ash thus turns into the offspring whose emotional condition overlaps with his—showing her to be a self connected to her ancestor and ethnic immigrants.

In the 1991 co-edited publication, *Sister Stew: Fiction and Poetry by Women*, which features local writers and poets, Song writes that as individuals and as a whole group, the contributors have generated “the voice that chased us across the fields, calling ourselves home” (7). Though she removed herself from her home and family to search for an autonomous identity as an artist, she has ultimately returned to “us,” claiming her ethnic and local identity by restoring ties to the original heritage and even by inviting back those who have also gone away. Song herself heard the voice that followed on her journey away from Hawai‘i, and called her until the eventual homecoming, when she

confessed the process of discovering a personal voice that nevertheless also embodies and represents the local third-generation Korean diasporic self.

Brenda Kwon

Kwon was born in 1968 to a second-generation Korean American father, whose parents immigrated in the early twentieth century, and a Korean mother who moved to Hawai‘i in the late 1950s. After finishing high school in Hawai‘i, she went to California for college; in 1990 she graduated with a B.A. in English Literature and creative writing from the University of Southern California, and then completed a doctoral degree in American Literature from the University of California at Los Angeles. After returning to Hawai‘i, she taught at ‘Iolani School and then at Honolulu Community College. Kwon started publishing her poems in 1991, in such literary magazines and anthologies as *Amerasia Journal*, *Disorient: An Asian Pacific American Literary Arts Journalzine*, and *Making More Waves*. “Century’s Lullaby” and “Remembering Pieces” have appeared in *Bamboo Ridge: Journal of Hawai‘i Literature and Arts*, and she also co-edited *Yobo: Korean American Writing in Hawai‘i*.

Kwon’s writing is reminiscent of Song’s identity journey, in that it maps out her movement away from and back to her ethnic and local identity. Her earlier withdrawal from her Korean ethnicity resulted in part from the vanishing history of Korean immigrants in the United States, including Hawai‘i, following the upsurge of Korean migrants in the late 1960s. Her 1997 dissertation, “Beyond Ke‘eaumoku,” which contains poems and autobiographical narratives as well as a scholarly exploration of Hawai‘i’s history and local Korean American writers, describes how she, as a local Korean

American student, has recovered "our" forgotten past that for her means acknowledging her connection to her grandparents. In such poems as "2.5," "Century's Lullaby," and "Remembering Pieces," however, she records her sense of alienation due to her sense of Korean inadequacy when encountering Koreans on the mainland or in Korea. This connected and disassociated self points to her keenly-felt understanding of her diasporic identity as linked in sometimes confining ways to Hawai'i and to the homeland of her mother and grandparents.

Kwon emphasizes that her departure from her Korean ethnicity stems from the marginalization of Korean immigrants in US national and local history. Sau-ling C. Wong's "Denationalization Reconsidered: Asian American Cultural Criticism at a Theoretical Crossroads" looks at recent developments in the United States, and warns about the risk of denationalization due to the visibility of Asians, including Koreans, as a result of a large influx after the 1965 Immigration Act. Massive immigration and economic development in the home countries have created some intriguing dynamics between recent Asian arrivals and Asian Americans. One result has been a downplaying of the longtime, multi-generational presence of Asian immigrants in the United States. The permeable boundaries between native-born and American-born tend to erase such differences, thereby weakening the sense of identity for many long-time residents and their families.

Kwon's childhood experiences include this historical marginalization, which in turn allows her when convenient to hide or deny her ethnicity. "As one of the few Koreans at my school, and the only one in my grade, I was *special*," Kwon recalls, "In fact, I remained special until the third grade when Mi Young walked into the classroom"

("Beyond Ke'eaumoku," 29, emphasis original). Even though the Korean student could not speak English, "The entire year, the teachers made us partners because of our 'sameness'" (29). The American-born Kwon, who "could only utter some numbers and food words in hangul," realized that "I couldn't explain my difference from her, but in my six year-old head, I knew her kind of Korean and my kind of Korean were worlds apart" (29). The teachers' lumping of Kwon and Mi Young under the assumed "one" category displays their ignorance, the outcome of the marginalization of a local Korean immigrant history that began in the early twentieth century. Consequently, "Until late in my teenage years, I didn't even know Koreans worked on the plantations. I happened to ask about my grandfather one day, and I remember feeling surprised that one side of our family had been in Hawai'i that long" (30). This ignorance of Kwon's own ethnic roots is a consequence of the past of the early pioneers being neglected at school, and at home, making her sense of detachment hardly surprising.

In addition to her interactions with the Korean classmate, which set a linguistic boundary, her Hawai'i-born Korean American family on her father's side and her native Korean family on her mother's side also introduce her to subtle cultural disparities:

> At family parties, the group usually split into two: the Korean speakers, the English speakers. I stayed with my father's relatives who spoke English, sometimes pidgin. They felt different to me, even looked different. Comfortable, familiar. There we were at Christmases and New Years: The Kwons, the Kims, the Changs, all of us Korean. But there was a difference. There still is. (82)

Language plays an important role in dividing the family. That the members "even looked different," though "all of us" were Korean," shows how strongly Kwon and the "we"

reader feel disconnected from "them." Kwon's physical and emotional nearness to her father's family contributes to the assertion. As she remarks, "There was a difference. There still is," and her identification with the Korean speaking relatives as "us" fades in time, affirming the impossibility of blending together, even though they share an assumed "sameness" outside of the Korean community.

That American society tends not to distinguish Kwon's "us" from the Korean-born erases the prior presence of local Koreans or Korean Americans. It also leads Kwon to conceal her ethnicity:

> I remember that at certain moments of my childhood I felt embarrassed telling people I was Korean, in part because there seemed to be so few of us, but mostly because being Korean meant being "FOB" and in Hawai'i that meant "less." Admitting my ethnicity threatened to revoke my Local heritage. When I came to Los Angeles to attend college, those issues transformed into "Pan-Asian" ones, and for a long time I preferred to identify as "Asian American" in the same way I sought protection under the "Local" umbrella in Hawai'i. (184)

Kwon refers to "us" Koreans as people different from yet somehow the same as the contemporary Korean immigrants, despite their dissimilar histories and languages. This is the dilemma that local Koreans encountered, and Kwon fears that her own local-ness, her Asian American-ness, her sense of ties to places, and connections to the community, will be erased as the distinction disappears between "we" and recent Korean immigrants. This is the idea of denationalization that Wong describes, and Kwon sees it as a danger that she has gone through.

Published in 1991 during her graduate studies on the mainland, Kwon's "Fix"

apparently has no interest in representing or exploring her Korean ethnicity, while her poem "(Dis)Integration" articulates the diasporic daughter's coming to terms with her heritage from her Korean mother, whose ethnicity coincides with her daughter's to some extent, despite their different histories. In "Fix" an unidentified "I" recalls an earlier friend:

> Once upon a time we crept into the storage room and you kissed me behind the Bauhaus records and took an earring from my ear saying you wanted to keep it . . . . you said *I need you I need you* like I was your fix and the next summer I came back and waited for you to say something but you didn't except that we should hang sometime and when you waved goodbye I saw fresh bruises all over your arms. (55)

The anonymous self in this poem is not ethnically specific. The past association of the "I" and "you" suggests their love and sexual relationship, and the "fresh bruises all over your arms" indicates his addiction to drugs, which accounts for why the "I" can no longer be his "fix." This poem thus shows Kwon's preference to address gender and social issues rather than contemplating and representing her diasproic identity, reflecting her feeling "embarrassed telling people I was Korean."

The 1993 poem, "(Dis)Integration" hints at a closer movement toward the speaker's Korean-ness, even as she subordinates her own experience to that of other Asian Americans, whose supposed history and presence in America parallels her own, thanks to the recent arrival of ethnic immigrants. In this poem, the "I" overcomes self-denial and self-deprecation, gaining a sense of ownership over her body by realizing its connection to her mother. At first, the speaker suffers from a negative body image:

And then there was a time

when I hated my body;

standing naked before my reflection

I would dissect myself:

face, arms, shoulders to hips, legs

and rank them in order

of preference:

shoulders to hips, arms, legs, face

I would hate the parts I could not love,

and search others

for the parts I could . . . (69)

This dissected body suggests an identity crisis, which in the speaker's case also relates to her denial of her Korean-ness in Hawai'i and on the mainland. The fragmented self dreams of "rebuilding myself, / disowning everything but my breasts and waist, / the parts to me least Asian" (69). While this self-rejection partially results from her realization that "It was not my body that he loved" (69), it is also related to another's taunting remark, "*go back to where you came from*" (70, emphasis original), which arises from the insulting speaker's ignorance of the history of early Korean immigrants or Asian Americans. In fact, only halfway through the poem does the specific ethnicity of the distressed "I" emerge, and only come into view when she recalls how she "would turn the crisp / paper pages of my mother's photo album" (69):

with tiny black and white pictures

pasted in patterns, and love her face;

which seems to me perfect;

I have often gazed at her

as she moves in the kitchen,

telling me stories of her childhood as

she pinches the roots off the *namul*

and peeled the garlic . . . (70)

After writing "*namul*," the Korean word for vegetables, and the first clue to the self's specific Asian background, Kwon begins to provide such references as Seoul, *aigoo*, and *hahn* that confirm the speaker's ethnicity. The childhood accounts of her mother as a refugee/teacher from Korea, her childless uncle, and her poverty-stricken cousins not only identify the ethnic roots of her maternal family, but also explain the divergent histories of the immigrant Korean mother and her American-born daughter.

Despite these differences, the offspring acknowledge "our" common experience and *hahn* for being rejected where they now live. Staring at a picture of the parent "with wide cheekbones and the eyes filled with *Hahn*," the speaker recognizes their similarities, for she also has "this face / this round, broad cheekboned face" (69) and "I am painfully aware / of my integration, of my wholeness" (70). In the end, the daughter resolves that

. . . I will stand naked before my reflection

and repeat *this is mine,*

this is why I must love you

as I stand naked before you,

why you must remind me

to love all of this, to whisper to me

"It is yours" on the days

I somehow seemed to have forgotten (70)

The reflection is not only of herself, but her mother, since they resemble each other and share corresponding experiences. When she tells herself, "'*It is yours*,'" the division between the "I" and the body, and the "I" and "you," and the "I" and the mother also disappear, since the speaker acknowledges "our" common pain of being denied. Furthermore, this whisper is directed towards not just the "I," but includes all others who have heard "*go back to where you came from*," and experienced an identity crisis as she has done. By recognizing her ties to the parent who did come from somewhere else, as well as their distinctions, the speaker embraces her ties to "*where you came from*."

Kwon's return to her ethnic and local self becomes clear in "Beyond Ke'eaumoku," which evaluates Koreans' early arrival through an academic evaluation of Hawai'i history, and of literary works by such local writers as Magaret Pai, Ty Pak, and Gary Pak. While such poems as "Cane" and "White Horse Woman" restore "our" past through accounts of her immigrant grandparents, her narrative poem, "2.5" explores her difference from those Korean-born, including her mother. "Cane" attends to plantation history; "White Horse Woman" celebrates her grandmother, who defied patriarchal tradition. In "Cane," while passing the fields, the granddaughter talks to her immigrant laborer grandfather:

Driving inland to Haleiwa

I imagine roads you came to hate,

under the sun that burned the paper

of your already brown skin.

For you these fields meant

weary hands and a broken back,

laying track after track for a train

you'd never ride.

. . .

Harabuji,

you would never see my face,

though I would later trace

letters of your name

carved in weathered grey marble.

Deep into Waialua

is your weary gift to me—

the sight of these green fields

with longing and sadness;

this inheritance built and wrought

from the labor of your years

. . . . (31-32)

By invoking her Harabuji working on the plantations, the "I" retrieves a story that belongs to the past of local Koreans. While the poem stresses the actual lack of contact between the granddaughter and grandfather, which stands for the distance now lying between first- and third-generation Koreans, her efforts at tracing the vestiges of his life are also a search for her roots in Hawai‘i. The carved Korean name verifies her presence in the Islands, a "weary gift" of an immigrant laborer for her that is life itself.

"White Horse Woman" further seeks to restore local Korean history by telling the story of a female ancestor who grew up in Korea's patriarchal culture. While acknowledging the gender prejudice in Korea and among immigrant Koreans, it also shows how her grandmother challenged that practice by refusing to conform to the stereotype of the obedient Korean women:

On the day of your birth,
your family cried bitterly
at the unfortunate numbers
that meant a white horse woman.
As you fought to climb free
she struggled to hold you in,
knowing even then that you were
Too strong to be tamed. (38-39)

The family's discontent with the baby girl's birth reflects the cultural preference for boys with Korea's male-centered tradition. Even worse, she is "a white horse woman," because girls born in the Year of Horse are supposed to be disobedient—making it one of the least favorable animal signs, at least for women. As for the "white," the Year of the White Horse comes once every sixty years, and girls born under that sign are considered to be the most daring and difficult and brave.

The grandmother paradoxically confirms traditions about birth year by rebelling against Korea's patriarchal customs. Having learned "early that men leave," the grandmother concludes that "you wear years on your back / to prove you have fought, / even when they break your body" (39). When the horse woman leaves her native land,

she even trades husbands with another picture bride on the same boat because "a young girl's hysteria brought / jeopardy for the rest" (38), showing the grandmother's audacity, yet self-sacrifice for others sharing a common destiny. Years later, the granddaughter recognizes her grandmother's "shrewdness and the understanding / of what it means to survive" (38):

> *Halmoni,*
>
> *at war with the pattern of your life*
>
> *you refuse to even die quietly.*
>
> *They call you difficult,*
>
> *but nod respectfully towards your grave.*
>
> *On my return home,*
>
> *the flowers I bring you seem small and few.*
>
> *As if you remember I fear geckos,*
>
> *one scampers across your name,*
>
> *leaving only the memory of instinct*. (39)

The grandmother's "war with the pattern" of her life included physical, gender, and cultural battles. The speaker's visit "on my return home" to the graveyard shows a due respect, and the maintaining of ties even with "only the memory of instinct." The visit therefore acknowledges what it took for the granddaughter to arrive home, finally, with a sense of rootedness and connection. "The White Horse Woman" not only restores the missing accounts of a Korean predecessor who made her second home in Hawai'i, but also records the homecoming of a granddaughter now consciously linked to her ancestors.

If "Cane" and "White Horse Woman" describe how diasporic Koreans claimed

an ethnic and local identity for their descendents, "2.5" presents a self alienated from "those" Koreans, including her own mother. The American-born "I" lives in California away from her Hawai'i family. One day in Korea Town of Los Angeles, she is waiting for the mother to arrive, so they can do some shopping together:

> *Waiting for her becomes an exercise in difference. Amidst bodies like and unlike my own, I help them take stock of the unfamiliar features, mannerisms, and articles of clothing that add up to the one that we share—the belief that I don't belong*. (81)

On her own, the self feels like a stranger in an area populated by so many Koreans. Her ethnicity, however, becomes less tenuous when her mother arrives: "Cultural guide, cultural shield, legitimator, proof of my blood. Proof I'm not / Japanese, Proof I'm not hapa, proof that like them, I turn when I hear the word *yobo*" (81). This provisional ethnic self that depends on her physical proximity to her native Korean parent suggests that for the "I" her Korean-ness is insufficient, inadequate. The number 2.5 in itself reflects the daughter's sense of in-between-ness—"the belief that I don't belong" to "them."

Kwon's sense of alienation among Koreans also appears in "Remembering the Pieces" (2003) and "Century's Lullaby" (2007). An autobiographical narrative and a poem, they describe her trip to Korea, where the third- or second-generation diasporic Korean is marked as foreign by the natives, and therefore constantly reminds of her difference:

> When we walk the streets of Seoul, well-meaning vendors call out "Kon'nichi wa," much to my confusion. My mother explains that I look different; that my foreignness shows in my clothes, my walk, is detectable in my gestures, my gaze.

> The idea of a Korean so far removed is odd, so they make the default assumption: that I'm Japanese. (354-55)

Earlier Kwon wrote about her maternal family that "They felt different to me, even looked different" ("Beyond," 82). Koreans clearly feel the same way about her. In Korea, her mother, whose "tongue and body remember what they must do," blends in well with others in the native country, but her daughter realizes that here, even her "proximity doesn't guarantee reception," and also "It occurs to me that . . . . I'm somewhat of a freak, a source of amazement, perhaps, but mostly shock." Despite her hope that "If I stand near enough, maybe they will see our resemblance after all" (355), her mistaken identity as Japanese confirms her foreignness and alienation in the homeland of her ethnic ancestors.

In "Century's Lullaby," the Hawai'i-born, 2.5-generation Korean confirms her estrangement from native Koreans, despite her denial:

> And as I walk these city streets,
> I still feel time and my mother's belly flesh
> encapsulating me from this place of my ancestry,
> this place in which I do not belong,
> this place in which *i hankuk saram* [these Koreans]
> do not recognize me,
> call out to me in *il bon mal*, [the Japanese language]
> *konnichiwa*, [good afternoon]
> always surprised when I say,
> *aniyo, hankuk saram ye yo*, [no, I am Korean]
> *gurigo Hawai'i ae seo wasseoyo*, [and I am from Hawai'i]

kureondae, hankuk saram ye yo, [however, I am Korean]

and that vague suspicion

that perhaps I am confused or refusing them the truth. (161)

While considering herself still connected to "this place of ancestry," through "time and my mother's belly flesh," she also feels certain that "I do not belong" as much as *i hankuk saram* do. Her ambivalence becomes more obvious when she replies "*aniyo, hankuk saram ye yo*, / *gurigo Hawai'i ae seo wasseoyo*, / *kureondae, hankuk saram ye yo*." Ironically, her claim of Korean ethnicity denies the status, because of her non-native tongue that gives out her foreignness, as the unconvinced hankuk saram faces suggest. And yet, the un-translated Korean words of the poem create a similar feeling of difference for those readers who do not know the language.

Kwon's sense of Korean belonging paradoxically emerges when back in Hawai'i. After their visit to Korea, she and her mother go to the local Korean Buddhist temple, Mu-Ryang-Sa in Pālolo Valley, where she comes to comprehend her own roots and diasporic identity at the same time. When they arrive at their destination, the daughter sees:

> Straight ahead is the peace pagoda, a replica of Sokka-Tap in Kyongju. To the left, the stone brother of the Buddha Miruk Bosal Sang in Korea's National Museum. To the right, the likeness of Korea's oldest bell, Emille, beckoning all to enlightenment. If it's possible to be in two places at once, then this is what I feel seeing Korea's twin. I know that we are still in Hawai'i. I know that this is not Korea. But the buddha, pagoda, and bell feel like home. (357, "Remembering the Pieces")

This shrine built in Hawai‘i corresponds to Kwon herself. If its resemblance to its original structure in Korea confirms their close connection, its transplantation to the local environment makes it something different as well. Similarly, she recognizes her own rootedness in the Islands, where some of her family moved a century before and have continued to live since arriving. By seeing “Korea’s twin” in the sanctuary, she is therefore seeing her own as a product of both Korea and her own home.

The breathing exercise that she practices at Mu-Ryang-Sa illustrates the ways in which the Korean descendant accepts and incorporates her ethnic and local heritage that represents her identity:

Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale, north, south, inhale, exhale.

Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale, here, there, inhale, exhale.

Inhale, exhale, inhale exhale.

inhaleexhale.

inhaleexhale

Kwon’s blending of her breaths in this blended place affirms the continuing and living connection between those of Korean ancestry across cultural, geographical, and generational boundaries. This blending also mimics her ultimate understanding of her integrative diasporic self, at home in Hawai‘i, yet “in two places at once,” where the “twin” Koreans, including herself as the 2.5-generation, have settled and made their home.

In “Beyond Ke‘eaumoku” Kwon recalls “the feelings of exclusion that I’ve sometimes had” while growing up in the Islands before reclaiming “a history that until recently I did not see as my own” (185). Her recovery of the submerged past of her ethnic

ancestors through historical exploration and the creation of representations of the self and her ethnic family grant her a sense of ownership over "our" ongoing history that will not be forgotten. Moreover, she claims that "Hawai'i does have a specialness that is difficult to deny" (185) for herself and "the people who have always been my 'ohana'" (184). Kwon's eventual return to Hawai'i and family, after roughly a decade of living on the mainland, confirms her hard-won understanding of where her diasporic self belongs, and what should be the subject of her poetry.

Gary Pak

Gary Pak was born in 1952 to local second-generation Korean American parents, and has spent most of his life in Hawai'i, except for when he went to Boston University. With the completion of his B.A. in Social Psychology in the mid-1970s, Pak returned to Hawai'i and received his M.A. and Ph.D. in English in 1990 and 1997 from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where he currently teaches as a professor in the English Department. Although he wrote poems and stories in his spare time, his career as a writer did not start until the 1980s. Since then, he has published such works as *The Watcher of Waipuna and Other Stories*, for which he won the 1993 National Book Award for Literature from the Association for Asian American Studies, *A Ricepaper Airplane* (1998), *Children of a Fireland* (2004), *Language of the Geckos: and Other Stories* (2005), and a children's play, *Beyond the Falls* (2001). He also co-edited *Yobo: Korean American Writing in Hawai'i* (2003). Pak has written other short stories and essays, including "Catching a Big Ulua" and "In That Valley Beautiful Beyond," and he is working on several projects whose titles include "Brothers under the Same Sky," "Jingu wa Ojin,"

and “Cheon-go Ma-bi / High Heaven and Horse Fattening and Other Essays,” an autobiographical work about his experiences in Korea.

Pak’s writing makes him “one of the most important Asian Hawaiian writers of the day” (236), as Jeehyun Lim observes, and many of his works explore in different ways the local culture and history of the Hawaiian Islands. His stories focus on the lives of locals and Hawaiians and their relations to the land. He is especially interested in interactions among Hawai‘i’s diverse residents, which for Brenda Kwon shows Pak’s “Local ‘sensibility’ and examination of Local culture that marks him as a Local writer” (145). *A Ricepaper Airplane*, however, is devoted to the stories of Koreans—those of the early immigrant, Kim Sung Wha, and his Hawai‘i-born nephew, Yong Gil. This novel captures the realities and dreams of the ethnic immigrants as shaped and revised by the cultural and historical facts of Korea and Hawai‘i. Through the ricepaper airplane, or ch’anghoji or hanji pihaenggi in Korean, Pak illuminates Sung Wha’s Korean identity, and explains how despite his stubborn resistance, he ultimately remains in the adopted place, becoming part of it after all. The uncle’s telling of his life story to Yong Gil also recalls and preserves the history of local Koreans for future generations. Pak therefore asserts both the Korean-ness and the local-ness of the diasporic Koreans, and in the process suggests something about his own identity as their descendant.

A Ricepaper Airplane resembles how Smith and Watson describe life writing, which not only “takes a life, one’s own or another’s, as its subject” but also “can be biographical, novelistic, historical” (4), unsettling the boundary between fiction and non-fiction, and often shifting ground in genre. Discussing *A Ricepaper Airplane* in an interview with Brenda Kwon (2000), Pak said “I’m afraid to say *novel*, which is a loaded

word. People say, "It's a novel!" and all of a sudden they start fantasizing . . . . It's a fractured kind of novel" (317, emphasis original)." In my first interview with Gary Pak, he said that this novel partly derives from family stories about his maternal grandfather, Yang Eung Whan's close friend and next-door neighbor, Kim Sung Wha,[64] who came to Hawai'i from P'yŏngan province in northern Korea, and dreamed of returning to the motherland on his own airplane. According to Pak's mother and aunt, Kim "actually believed that he was gonna build this airplane to fly back to Korea" and "was serious about doing it." In addition, Pak draws on such historical elements as Korea's colonization, Hawai'i's plantation history, and the downtown Honolulu eviction protests that took place in the late 1970s. Pak therefore integrated non-fictional and creative components to create a cross-generic representation of Hawai'i's Korean immigrants.

Sung Wha's self-image as Korean, and his undeniable local-ness, connect motherland to adopted place in ways that reflect how Pak sees himself as a writer. During our second interview, Pak called himself "a cultural activist" and rejected any demarcations in defining himself. In his interview with Kwon, he explained the issue he has with labels this way:

> I also identify myself as a local writer, and a writer from Hawai'i, and just a plain writer. The thing is, I accept all these names. I'm very proud to be an Asian American writer, and I'm proud to be a Korean, but I don't go around with it on a picket sign. I think what happens is that it comes out in my writing. My father has always been very nationalistic, always proud, and it kind of rubbed off on me in a sense, but, then again, it's not something that I have to prove. It's there.

[64] Pak notes that he used the names Sung Wha and Eung Whan in the story.

(307)

In *A Ricepaper Airplane*, Pak's particular interest in his grandfather's friend's dream throughout his life of a flight to Korea becomes the vehicle for exploring the cultural and ethnic roots of Hawai'i's diasporic Koreans. Furthermore, the passing on in the novel of the first-generation's Korean and local heritage to Yong Gil becomes the teller/writer's way of preserving what the earlier generation has left to its descendents. Pak's writerly voyage across geographical, generational, and generic borderlines coincides with his personal rejection of isolating or essentializing different identities, and enacts the integrative and complementary nature of local Koreans' diasporic identity as well.

Sung Wha's stories unfold in a Hawai'i hospital in the late 1970s, where the dying patient with cancer tells them to his frequent visitor, Yong Gil, who was only dimly aware of the events, because "I was too small at the time. Can't remember all the details" (17). But as the nephew listens to the accounts of "the revolutionary in China, the Korean patriot, and the Communist, the aviator" (3),

> I begin to live them. It is a bizarre feeling—frightening at times—to be suddenly thousands of miles away, or forty or fifty years in the past. When a story begins, I lose track of myself and time. I don't know how to explain it any clearer: pictures just start to come to my mind, but I can also smell, hear, and feel things. It is a real world. (14)

Sung Wha's life is therefore not only his own, but becomes his descendant's. Yong Gil's imaginative shift from the Hawai'i-born to Korean-born, and between different times and places, allows him to accept his uncle's living legacy regardless of the time passage, spatial shift, or generational change. The result is almost a manual of how the ethnic and

local heritage of Hawai‘i’s Korean diasporas can be preserved.

Like many other Koreans, Sung Wha’s firsthand experience with Japanese colonization leads to his departure from Korea and his exile status in Hawai‘i. In his mid-teens, Sung Wha and his cousin Eung Whan confront some Japanese soldiers insulting the people of their village, which leads to the community’s cooperative resistance. When the youngsters leave their hometown to escape the colonizers’ inevitable retaliation, and to create a better chance for someone successfully getting away, Sung Wha goes to Manchuria, while Eung Whan heads to Hawai‘i. While traveling through the Diamond Mountains, or Kŭmgangsan, to Manchuria, Sung Wha is introduced to such revolutionary ideas as communism, anarchism, and democracy, and to the dynamics of Japanese imperialism as well, by his teacher, Lim Tong Il, and Hae Soon, Lim’s daughter and Sung Wha’s wife-to-be. Having turned into a patriotic and communist activist, Sung Wha joins the Chinese revolutionary army, in hopes of contributing to Korea’s liberation. But he is captured by the Japanese, separating him from his spouse and his two children. When he manages to escape from the Japanese prison, he departs for Hawai‘i.

Sung Wha’s story communicates his patriotism and proud Korean identity. When confronting the Japanese colonizers in Korea and Manchuria, “us Koreans is da most bravest, da most strongest” (185). For Sung Wha, Hawai‘i was supposed to be a temporary shelter, where he would wait until he could return to a liberated Korea. But plantation work also teaches him how oppressive and disempowering it can be for ethnic laborers, and he soon recognizes how the class and race system in the fields openly separates whites and non-whites, and divides different ethnicities. When laboring with other Koreans as strikebreakers against the Japanese and Filipinos, he realizes that

"Japanese, Filipinos, Korean . . . we're all the same" (23), and asks to himself

> *How can we work when the Japanese and Filipino laborers are striking? They're just like us. Or are they? Damn plantation wants to divide us. But if we Koreans went out on strike, would the Japanese support our cause? And why do they have so many* luna*s watching us? So the strikers don't attack us? Or so we don't run away? Must they force us to work?* (21)

Sung Wha recognizes that the exploitive and repressive world of the plantations is not much different from colonized Korea. And yet, when an armed luna warns him, "'Boy, 576, you watch out . . . . You one big troublemaker . . . . you friggin' yellow bastard. You sabby? No sabby? You no-good sonavabitch, stinkin' yellow bastard,'" Sung Wha finds that he "lowers the blade, lowers his eyes, lowers the power he's so proud of, that strain of dignity so Kumgangsan-esque" (22). Though the Korea patriot had rebelled against the colonizers on behalf of his people and nation, the immigrant laborer finds that he cannot resist the lunas. "[W]hat's the future now?" (23), he asks, for he realizes that this new place does not free him or protect him, but rather subjugates him, making him susceptible.

Plantation life, with all of its hardships and injustices, was life for Sung Wha and thousands of other immigrant Korean laborers, who "work and sing while the sun—a swollen ball of fire—falls slowly on the not-so-distant sea" (24). Their suffering and accomplishments are "the living history of labor in Hawai'i" (194), and although "I no regret all does hard working days, Yong Gil. I no regret dem days" (210), Sung Wha insists that Yong Gil knows that "Way back does days, how many people *maké* overworking . . . . Da plantation bosses, dem no give one shit. Dem think us dogs. Dem treat us like dogs" (24). As an eyewitness, he can describe "how things was befo'," and

he knows his story's importance: "No forget what I telling you, Yong Gil. Dis is history. Dis is what happen in da past. No forget all dis. Even when I *maké*, you remember what I telling you" (25). Sung Wha's reference to history not only includes his own participation, making him a legitimate part of Hawai'i, but that of all local Koreans, for "you go check da gravestones dere. Eh, get so many Korean names ovah dere and dey all so young. All from ovahwork" (25). Sung Wha speaks for "us dogs" and for "so many Korean names" all at once.

His desire to flee, however, parallels his earlier departure from Korea, and in fact stimulates his longing for home. Aware of his complaints and disruptive ideas about the plantation, the lunas come to the workers' barracks one night and beat him. He barely survives with the help of other Koreans, and while fleeing his pursuers, he comes across his separated cousin, Eung Whan. That night Sung Hwa sees a movie with Eung Whan's family, and takes an instant interest in the airplane:

> [*w*]*hat a wonderful thing, that mechanical bird*. He pictured birds and kites flying, dropping and rising in the wind, and himself among them. Excited with that vision, he slapped the bench of the wagon, forgetting himself and startling Eung Whan.
>
> "What is it?" burst Eung Whan, looking around with alarm.
>
> "If the *paginsaryum* [white person] can do it, so can I," Sung Wha declared.
>
> "What? Do what?"
>
> "Build a *paeng-gi* [airplane]. That's what I'll do. I'll build myself a *paeng-gi* and fly back to Korea." (49-50)

The idea of making an airplane coincides with his disillusionment about Hawai‘i, which is as oppressive as Korea for laborers, and far from an ideal hideout for him. Because he feels he cannot wait until Korea regains its sovereignty, his remembrance of birds and kites reminds Sung Wha of both freedom and Korea, where “out from dusty corners of their crowded dwellings would come kites flashing with colors of earth’s spirits, and aggressive declarations would ring in the air: *I’ll be the champion of the wind and sky!*” (111). His airplane could restore what he has lost:

> Why can’t life be as free as birds in flight, soaring high with the begging wind, gracefully touching the belly of an opal sky and gliding into spacious blue canyons of airy white mountains made of rain?
>
> The airplane will make him free. It must be built strong and light. It will make him free. Free from gravity, enslaving grace that it is. He’ll travel the length of the world in a breath. (233)

The kind of airplane that Sung Wha imagines will not be like an American one, but instead has “a large wing out of bamboo and rice paper, similar in structure to his champion kites” (236), thus embodying his Korean identity. As he explains to Eung Whan, “‘This is a Korean airplane, made by a Korean with Korean ideas. Look at it. Feel it. It’s strong and tough. Like a Korean’” (237). For Sung Wha, bamboo symbolizes his own strength and flexibility:

> My body like one bamboo. Strong and hard. And flexible. I no can feel da pain, no can feel ’em. Da pain not here. No mo’ pain. My body like one strong pole bamboo. Can survive one terrific monsoon season, da wind blowing heavy on it, bending ’em to da ground. (82)

The quality of strength that Sung Wha sees in himself goes back to his grandmother, "one strong wahine from P'ih-yon, no can go bully her around . . . no can fight her and win" (52), and to the lessons and stories she used to tell:

> "Our *halmuni*, she look us straight in da eye, she say, 'Listen to me and no forget dis. We all tigers. We all come from da tiger family. We tiger people. No matter what go happen to us, we always going survive . . .'cause us strong and powerful like da tiger and flexible like bamboo. We going endure like da tiger and roar no-end like him make when daytime going to nighttime, roaring up in da forest.' (53)

This sturdiness and pliability, the in-born fact that "We all tigers," are Sung Wha's inheritance. His ricepaper airplane embodies a Korean self that wishes for liberty and homecoming, and his storytelling is the means for passing on this cultural and ethnic heritage to the American-born generation, since Yong Gil, a member of "da tiger family," hears what the ancestor has to tell.

Building the airplane becomes an expression of Sung Wha's reality as a poor immigrant holding onto his dreams. In addition to the technical issues that arise from the project, and the political issue of Korea's colonial status, which pushed him out of the country, Sung Wha does not have the financial resources to return any way other than by building the ricepaper plane. When he flees the plantation, he has only fifty some dollars, some earned by his plantation labor, and some given to him by his co-workers. But he loses it all when tempted to gamble by other Koreans notorious for debauchery and drug abuse, because "if he wins, he'll have enough to pay passage to Korea on a steamship" (71). Despite his dejection and dismay, Sung Wha does not abandon his dream, which is

now his only way to reunite with the family. Even though Eung Whan, who seems more realistic and calls him a dreamer, disapproves, Sung Wha saves a broken bicycle from a dumpster and begins working on it diligently.

While inadequate materials for the airplane mirror Sung Wha's own wretched situation, he maintains a hopeful perspective until almost completing the plane. His optimism and blind devotion suggest how strongly he desires to go home. But as the construction comes to an end, he suffers from a repetitive nightmare for several days:

> *Why do you have those nightmares of birds, Sung Wha? Why does that nightmare repeat itself, haunting you over and over again? Are you telling yourself right from the start that your airplane will fail? What are you telling yourself?* (235)

This self-doubt suggests he is dimly aware of the realities that he has suppressed, yet he convinces himself that "the airplane will fly; it will rise above all those grabbing shadowy demons, and their outstretched hands will not touch him . . . . On his way home, Korea. *Hangguk kamnida* [I'm going to Korea]" (261). But the plane catches fire from the cigarettes and matches he has mindlessly tossed into the shed, and Sung Wha then conludes, "'No more dreams'" (262), and never tries to build another airplane. He also never reunites with his family, permanently stranded in the adopted land.

Sung Hwa's continued longing for Korea is part of his identity throughout his life. As he tells Yong Gil, "Every Korean gotta go back Korea" (211). But after fifty some years of residence in Hawai'i, as a plantation laborer, "Now at least I can kick back and relax and watch da sunset" (210). But as a member of "our working-class community" (194), he not surprisingly gets involved in a eviction protest, confirming his connection to

the local community. Sung Wha lived for more than twenty years in the dilapidated Kekaulike Hotel in Chinatown, home to many low-income, retired tenants. The landowner tries to remove them so he can demolish the building and construct a modern one for high-cost rentals. Sung Wha participates as one of the leaders of the community's struggle against expulsion, attending meetings and making flyers. Yong Gil objects, but the uncle does not listen: "Every time you come here, you tell me same-same story . . . . If you going come here every time and tell me dis same-same thing, no come. I get my own life live. I not asking fo' special-kine treatment. I not asking fo' handouts" (209). He firmly believes that he and other occupants have the right to claim their residence for themselves and the community, and his refusal to live with his nephew shows his sense of belonging in "our" place.

That Sung Wha will be forcibly evacuated if the eviction protest fails echoes his earlier expulsion from Korea, and his flight from the plantation fields. As a result, his yearning for his homeland and family intensifies: "[w]ill he ever see Korea again? Will he ever see his wife and children? Can he ask Yong Gil for some money for a plane ticket back home where he can die in peace? (212)." Until the expulsion demonstration happens, he seems to believe that he really only has one home:

> *Me . . . I one old horse now, jus' put me in da pasture. But funny, yeah, dey no mo' one pasture fo' me ovah here. My pasture in Korea, not here, even though I live most of my life ovah here. Chee, but I still no feel I belong. I wondah if evah going feel I belong. I wen go everywhere, everywhere: China, Manchuria, Japan, Hawai'i, even da mainland fo' few weeks*. (212)

And yet, his recognition that "[dey] *no mo' one pasture fo' me over here*" before the

eviction incident paradoxically suggests that Hawai‘i seemed to be “*da pasture*” where he would like to stay, since he has no other destination except to the remote, inaccessible homeland. If so, the Islands, perhaps, could have been “*My pasture*” for the old immigrant resident.

Sung Wha’s acquisition of pidgin English over his prolonged stay in Hawai‘i also has drawn him into the local environment. During his plantation days, most of his fellow workers were Koreans, so he barely knew or spoke pidgin. His conversations and monologues were predominantly in Korean. At the time he goes into the hospital, though, he not only communicates fluently in pidgin with Yong Gil and other locals, but he even talks to himself in pidgin. When looking in the mirror one day, he happily recalls the time when “*you could fly to da moon and stars if you like, Sung Wha, you can run across da biggest continent in da world . . .*” but soon confesses that

> Y*ou know you cannot, not in all yo’ dreams, nevah in your life, you one old man, Sung Wha, ready to* maké, *your dreams have come and gone already, you no can dream no mo’, you old man! All the energy fo’ make yo’ dreams, dey all gone, and only thing left is fo’ you think about yo’ dreams, live in da dreams of yo’ dreams past, and das all.* (221)

In this private dialogue with himself, Sung Wha unconsciously speaks in the new tongue he has obtained, indicating the Korean expatriate’s acquisition of local-ness in Hawai‘i, even as he dreamed of leaving it.

Though Sung Wha considers himself firmly Korean, his nephew thinks about the possibility of return in a matter-of-fact way. Yong Gil sees his uncle as part of Hawai‘i rather than a long-ago and faraway motherland, but feeling sorry for Sung Wha, Yong Gil

buys the dying patient a plane ticket to Korea. And yet, he hesitates to give it to him:

> [i]f he gets there, where will he go? He can't go to the north, the border is all closed up. He doesn't even know if his wife is alive or not, or where she or the children might be living. I don't know any of our relatives there who could take care of him. And I don't think even he, too, remembers any of the family. He's never had any contact with them for all this time.
>
> So what should I do? Give him this ticket and a false dream? [. . .]
>
> I don't know why he wants to go back to Korea, but he's always talking about it. He's lived here for at least fifty years, and still he talks as if Korea is his home. And how many times already since I've been visiting him at the hospital have I heard his story of that ricepaper airplane. [. . .]
>
> And he doesn't even know what happened to his family over there. But he has family here . . . us. And he has lived here most of his life. He is more from here than there. (214-15)

Yong Gil also notes about his uncle that now "all his friends are locals," and he does not "even have a Korean friend" (215).

What's important here is that the clashing views about Sung Wha's home are complementary rather than contradictory, part of the way many long-term Korean residents felt they belonged both to the motherland and to Hawai‘i. Though Sung Wha always refused to admit a sense of belonging to his adopted home, he comes to realize it as the eviction protest develops. As an activist and invited speaker, he visits college students to explain his community's collaborative efforts to save the Kekaulike Hotel, but is disappointed by the students' unexpected indifference. Realizing the disparity of

interest between hotel residents and their supporters, and those not at all involved, he concludes that their fight against landlords will eventually fail: "When we not looking, dey going pull da stops, do some undah-da counter tricks on us, and like every time, dey going get dey way" (225). He tries to pull out of the demonstration, but his close friend, Eddie, confronts him by asking, "'You no call dis home? Eh, dis is yo' home and my home, too. No?'" (253). Sung Wha is forced to agree—"'Yeah-yeah, dis my home" (253)—which contradicts his nationalist idea of where his home is, but also confesses his sense of attachment to the place where he has lived for a long time. Eddie's pleading with Sung Wha makes this clear:

> Why you not staying in wit' us? You know we put plenny years inside dis place. Yo' life, my life, everybody's life, is in da wood of dis building, you know what I mean? We all going maké here, das one fact. You know dat. [. . .] Sung Wha, no leave us like dat. Dis is where yo' heart stay. Where my heart stay. Where everybody heart stay. You our spokesman. You know dat. (253)

After listening to his friend, Sung Wha realizes "How can I leave my home, eh? You tell me how?" (254), and although he does not believe that they will win the battle against the landowner, he agrees to remain "wit' us" and "Where everybody heart stay." This acceptance also represents for him the ultimate loss of the remote homeland. As his friend leaves, "Sung Wha went inside his [room], shut the door behind him, and began to cry silently for the first time since the last time, which he could not remember" (255). But the reader remembers: it was when he faced the impossibility of reunion with the family due to the burning of the airplane. The present tears thus confirm that Sung Wha again recognizes and accepts the failure of his lifelong dream. If the expatriate's pining for the

native home was tied to his self-identity as Korean, it also masked the fact that he was acquiring local-ness, whether or not he was aware of it.

But Sung Wha's sharing of his life journey near the end allows Yong Gil to "live in another world, your world" (259), following him "in the clouds, climbing Kumgangsan, punching out the *luna* on the plantation . . . . I even have a few bruises from your fight" (260). He has learned and now remembers the past of local Koreans, including their sense of their homeland and Hawai'i. At first, Yong Gil explains that "This uncle . . . hard to understand him sometimes—most of the time—though he's always telling us that his life is like an open book. What kind of open book I really don't know" (215). But at that life's end, Yong Gil now understands Sung Wha and his longing for Korea. On the night of his passing away, Yong Gil goes to Tantalus and flies a kite for the departed:

> That night, I flew the kite that I had made weeks before out of ricepaper and ribs of bamboo and mashed rice for paste, just the way Uncle taught me, in preparation for this time. On the kite I drew a tiger, the one I saw entering and leaving my mind those times of story. I went to a park on top of dark Tantalus and let the kite feed off the rising wind, and I let yards and yards of line spool off the spindle, the one Uncle had made for me years and years ago. And when I could not see by the city's lights the white kite against the night anymore, because of distance and blurriness from tears, when I could not hold on to this dream anymore, I took out my pocketknife and released it to its windy journey. (266)

That the nephew made the kite "just the way Uncle taught me" shows he has understood the wishes, reality, and legacies of his Korean predecessor. Although Yong Gil previously

did not know why "'The kite wants to fly home'" (227) when his uncle cut a kite string, he now does, and freeing a kite himself allows his uncle to return to wherever and whomever he thinks he belongs, fulfilling the frustrated dreams of his life.

And his death also is the cause of his nephew's return to the ancestral land. Before Sung Wha became hospitalized, he and Yong Gil took a walk to the waterfront and saw the sunset together. The uncle urges the nephew to visit Korea: "You like see one beautiful sunset, you go Korea. [. . .] you gotta go. Every Korean gotta go back Korea and see one sunset." Yong Gil accepts his idea: "I want to go Korea and see that sunset [. . .] If you say the one in Korea is more beautiful than this one—and this one is beautiful—then I gotta see the one in Korea" (211). When very little, Yong Gil had visited Korea once with his father, but he remembers little, except "That old family picture in the album with the black moldy cover. North Korea. The family village" (15). The old photos have little significance for him until later. But Yong Gil's commitment to return suggests how Hawai'i-born diasporic Koreans can embrace their ethnic heritage and visit their country of origin.

Pak's account of local Koreans in *A Ricepaper Airplane* shows how he explores the ethnic and local legacies of his own ancestors by following Sung Wha and Yong Gil's voyage across different boundaries. When Yong Gil expresses his wish to see the ancestral land, it also may have reflected that of the writer's own. In August 2002, four years after the 1998 publication of *A Ricepaper Airplane*, Gary Pak did to go to Korea, and has visited there almost every year since. Since writing allows us to "live in another world, your world" (259), Pak's ongoing project, "Cheon-go Ma-bi / High Heaven and Horse Fattening and Other Essays" will offer us his own journey to the motherland of the

early diasporic Koreans, and instruct us in how it can become part of "our world," too.

Nora Okja Keller

Keller, the author of *Comfort Woman* (1997) and *Fox Girl* (2002), was born in 1965 in Korea to a Korean mother and a German American father, and immigrated to Hawai‘i in the late 1960s. Raised by her mother after her parents divorced when she was five, she lived in the Islands until graduating from University of Hawai‘i with a B.A. in Psychology and English. After studying at University of California at Santa Cruz for a master's and doctoral degree in American Literature, she returned to Hawai‘i in the early 1990s, and currently lives in Kāhala with her husband and two children. *Comfort Woman* won the American Book Award in 1998. She also co-edited *Intersecting Circles: The Voices of Hapa Women in Poetry and Prose* (1999) and *Yobo: Korean American Writing in Hawai‘i (2003)*. She has written autobiographical essays as well, including "A Bite of Kimchee," the short travelogue "South Korea," "Ghost Stories," and "RockHead." "Small Moments," a weekly column in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, ran from March 2002 for several months.

All of Keller's writings describe her own development as someone who is hapa, local, American, and Korean. Her hapa identity, a general term she embraces for her mixed-race ancestry, expands on the ways that other diasporic Koreans, including her contemporaries in Hawai‘i and on the mainland, have identified themselves. For example, while she strongly affiliates herself with locals, her own background challenges/changes the definition of local identity offered by such scholars as Stephen H. Sumida (*And the View from the Shore*, ix-xxii) and Brenda Kwon ("Beyond Ke‘eaumoku," 6-8). How

Keller portrays the major characters, Beccah and Akiko, and their relationship in *Comfort Woman* reflects her autobiographical experience as a daughter and mother, and also shows her own detachment from her Korean identity as well as her later wish to reclaim it. "A Bite of Kimchee," "Ghost Stories," and "South Korea" also articulate Keller's continuing hope of recovering these lost ties which she earlier denied.

In "Circling 'Hapa,'" the introduction to *Intersecting Circles*, Keller recalls how she began to associate herself with hapa:

> As far as I can remember, my appearance—the shape of my eyes in contrast with the slope of my nose, the color of my skin in contrast with the color of my hair—has been explained as "hapa," half-Korean, half-"American."
>
> Swallowing this label applied to me by others, I came to define myself as hapa. Reflexively, almost as soon as I meet someone, I explain: "I'm hapa." (17)

While this mixed-race identity acknowledges a racial marker imposed upon her based on physical appearance, it has further significance because it has enabled her to merge eagerly with locals who also have multi-racial backgrounds. According to Sumida and Kwon, "local" generally refers to people born and raised in the Hawaiian Islands, whose working-class ancestors labored on the plantations, and whose families have lived in Hawai'i for more than a generation. Born in Korea, and immigrating in the 1960s, Keller belongs to that later group of immigrants whose prominence has tended to obscure the national and local history of early Korean expatriates and their descendants in the United States, including Hawai'i. But if Sumida and Kwon's categories for locals exclude Keller from being local, her mixed-race hapa identity allowed her eventually to become one of "us" locals. This process was not easy, as Keller recalls

> [t]he discomfort she felt as a young child growing up in Honolulu, trying to fit into a new culture as a recent immigrant. "First grade was so traumatic. [. . .] I was FOB [fresh off the boat] and felt so isolated from the other kids. Public school was very tough." (Hong, 13)

When explaining her former reluctance to acknowledge her ethnicity when growing up, Brenda Kwon also has written that "being Korean meant being 'FOB' and in Hawai'i that meant 'less' (184). If Kwon's Korean-ness, which clashes with local identity in ways too apparent to hide or ignore, as her assignment of her third-grade partner Mi Young confirmed, Keller's racial mixture ultimately allowed her her to "form connections, build bridges, make friends" with her local peers ("Circling 'Hapa,'" 21):

> One of the best things about Hawaii is that the majority of people are mixed race in some way or another, so I grew up where that was the norm. And I think I would have had a very different experience if I had grown up in either Korea or in the Midwest, say, in the States. It would have been very different. In both places I think I would have been noticeably different, whereas in Hawaii I was very much accepted as a local girl. (Young-Oak Lee, 146)

Because the hapa identity proved more permeable with local-ness than other subject positions, she often claimed "with exuberance, 'You hapa? Me too'" ("Circling 'Hapa,'" 21). Not only did it generate a sense of belonging among "ourselves," but it also created her strong ties to Hawai'i, which recognized the new comer "as a local girl," who now says she has "too many roots here. [. . .] I could never live anywhere else" (Hong, 13). But Keller's sense of her hapa identity as overlapping with the local also accounts for her previous preference to consider herself as less Korean. In so doing, she modified the

concept of local identity that potentially could have barred her from "us."

Like Pai's *The Dreams of Two Yi-min* and Pak's *A Ricepaper Airplane*, Keller's novel *Comfort Woman* lies somewhere between fiction and non-fiction. Its origin was the testimony of a former comfort woman, Keum-ja Hwang, who came to the University of Hawai'i in 1993 to talk about her sexual abuse in the Japanese military camps during Korea's colonial period:

> Her story took hold of me. I felt so haunted, I began dreaming about images of blood and war, waking with a start. Finally, I realized that the only way to exorcise these dreams and story from my mind was to write it down. (Hong, 13)

While Keller's portrayal of the sex slave and later shamanist Akiko displays Korea's difficult past and the victimization of its people, especially women under the Japanese, the representation of Akiko's American-born mixed-race daughter Beccah and her relationship with her mother mirrors Keller's personal experience as a teenage daughter, and later a parent:

> *Comfort Woman* is autobiographical in the scenes that talk about the mother-infant bonding, because at the time my daughter had just been born and I was nursing. So all those tactile feelings, those sensations of being a new mother, that's all in there. Also there are certain parts that reflect my relationship with my own mother—especially during my teenage years [. . .]. (Hong, 13)

For example, Beccah's initial isolation from her peers is related to "the discomfort she felt as a young child growing up in Honolulu" (13). Furthermore, if the daughter's desire to distance herself from her mother points to Keller's own denial of the Korean-ness her mother represented to maintain the "local girl" status that the mixed-race identity made

possible for her, Akiko's motherly affection towards her baby is influenced by Keller's experience of motherhood at the time of writing—an experience that seemed to have intensified her wish to (re)connect to her Korean family, including former and following generations.

In *Comfort Woman*, Akiko embodies the people, history, and culture of Korea, and her way of living in the Islands sustains this heritage while denying western culture. Sold to the Japanese at the age of twelve by her sister, as a sex slave she serves countless soldiers, indicating her vulnerability and suffering as a Korean. Her preservation of the Japanese name given her predecessor, Induk, who was killed by the Japanese for her rebellion, represents the sharing of spiritual links between the suffering. Akiko eventually runs away from her Japanese pursuers, meets her future American missionary spouse at the mission school in Korea, and moves to Hawai‘i after marrying him when the country is finally liberated in 1945. When her husband dies, she becomes an exorcist with the help of Auntie Reno, who pities her and notices her spiritual gift. How she supports herself and her daughter also preserves her Korean-ness in the adopted country. She rejects American culture. She believes that "to learn to be an American was to learn to waste" (109) and that "you have no face and no place in this country" (110). How Akiko lives and responds to the foreign environment indicates that she still belongs in the Korea she came from.

The daughter's childhood experience is one of alienation from her mother and her classmates. In elementary school she is often made fun of. When singing "Hawai‘i Pono‘i" at the tryouts for the May Day Pageant, she fails miserably, and the other children mock her:

They followed me out of the building and pinned me against the wall. "You suck," said Toots.

"Yeah," said Tiffi, a Toots wannabe. "You suck."

"You gotta be the worst singer in the school," Toots said. "We don't want you in our chorus."

"We don't even want you in our school, you weirdo," said another Toots follower. (29)

Beccah's wish to be part of the singing group is clearly a desire to belong, but the others reject the Korean girl, and not just for bad singing: "'Yobos must have bad ears!.' The girls laughed and stepped closer, the half-moon made by their bodies tightening around me. 'You're nothing but stink Yobo-shit," said Toots. 'Nothing but one big-fat-shit liar'" (30). As "stink Yobo-shit," Beccah cannot be part of "us" locals.

At home Beccah begins to reject her superstitious Korean mother because Beccah does not understand her, and feels quite restricted. Akiko insists that Beccah "was not allowed to ride the bus without her or to swim at all. [. . .] I was not supposed to attend school field trips" (75). In response, the daughter lies to her. "I rode a bus and went swimming on a field trip," declaring there was "No need to watch me anymore" (81). Although "earlier I had cherished the moments my mother paid attention to me, recognizing me as her flesh-and-blood daughter," Beccah now withdraws from her "because I knew that if I did not move out of her scope, she would hit me with another barb" (82). In fact, when Akiko comes to school to look for her, Beccah feels ashamed of "the frail, wild-haired lady in pajamas throwing handfuls of pebbles into the crowd" (87), and runs away from the scene, confirming her denial and disconnectedness from her

mother.

A pivotal moment, which affects Beccah's later relationships with men, takes place when the sixteen-year-old has her first boyfriend named Max. Despite a love so intense that "there was only one time in my life I wanted children" (133), Akiko's act of exorcism, when she "sliced the air around me" with a knife, "cutting me loose from the demons she thought were holding me," actually changes her relationship with the boy. "I began to watch Max again," Beccah recalls, and "finally told him it was over" (136). After that, Beccah does not have a serious relationship until grown-up, working as a journalist writing obituaries for the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, and living separately from Akiko. She begins an affair with her supervisor, a married man named Sanford. Though plagued with guilt—"Now, as an adult, I am too conscious of the eyes of the neighbors, of the law . . . . I am too aware that that is what I am now, a trespasser out of place and time" (133)—Beccah is not willing to stop the affair, and becomes irritated when her mother tells her to settle down: "I remember thinking how ironic and how convenient that my mother thought of taking care of me only when I was a grown woman" (126). Even though she visits Akiko, Beccah condemns her—"Where were you when I needed you?" (127)—and feels alienated from her Korean mother.

Akiko's death confirms the remoteness of their relationship. Beccah reports that she "found my mother after she had been dead a night and a day and another night" (121), and then bitterly confesses that "It has taken me nearly thirty years, almost all of my life, but finally the wishes I flung out in childhood have come true. My mother is dead" (13). Furthermore,

When it came time for me to write my own mother's obituary, as I held a copy

> of her death certificate in my hand, I found that I did not have the facts for even the most basic, skeletal obituary. And I found I did not know how to start imagining her life. (26)

If this response is partly due to Akiko's sudden departure, it is also the product of Beccah's prior indifference to her. Auntie Reno directly accuses her of this neglect: "You was her daughter, dah one come from her own body. But you nevah know shit about her, did you?" In response, the daughter had nothing to say, wiping "the back of my hand across my eyes" (203). Only when Beccah discovers her mother's Korean name, Soon Hyo, and learns that she was a comfort woman from the letter and tape Akiko left her, does she try to restore their mother-daughter relationship, possible now only through dreams and wishes born of grief.

The relation between the Korean mother and "this half-white and half-Korean child" (15-16) in *Comfort Woman* parallels to some degree Keller's own childhood, as represented in her autobiographical story, "A Bite of Kimchee." Keller and her sisters used to go "crazy for the smell of kimchee—a perfume that would lure us to the kitchen. No one in our home had to eat alone; the odor of kimchee beckoned for companionship" (296). She is humiliated, however, when a girl at school, who "could be my sister, another part-Korean, part-haole hapa girl," asked her "'You Korean? . . . You smell like one'" (296). The young Keller concludes that "the smell of kimchee was too much a part of myself. I belonged to a tribe of kimchee eaters" (296). Hurt by the attack, she decides "I didn't want to smell like a Korean. I wanted to smell like an American, which meant being odorless." As a result, "I stopped eating my mother's food and purged it from my system . . . . and became shamed by kimchee" (297). Her "mother grieved at the food we

rejected" (297), and Beccah's demands for western foods such as cheese, pizza, and Tater Tots also "pushed away the Korean-ness" (298).

In an interview, Keller recalls her childhood escape from her Korean ethnicity, and her identification with American culture—something she arrived at through the other component of her hapa identity:

> Growing up as a teenager, there was point where I rejected anything Korean. It was like, "No, I'm not Korean. I'm an American girl." I liked American foods and I really rejected my mother's heritage . . . . Ethnicity was so closely tied to my mother that I rejected [her] food, culture and language.[65] (Birnbaum)

This denial of her ethnic inheritance undeniably helped her to integrate herself into the "new culture" that marginalized the FOB. And Keller not only arrived in Hawai'i at a time when Koreans, regardless of how long they have lived in the Islands, were often considered foreigners rather than locals, but was in fact "the recent immigrant" (13)—Korean-born, and arriving in Hawai'i only later.

Keller's desire to recover her Korean-ness corresponded to her own motherhood, which necessarily connected former and following generations. In "A Bite of Kimchee," she recalls that after giving birth, "It hit me then, what my mother must have felt looking at each of her own mixed-race daughters: how strongly I do identify as a Korean American woman, how strongly I want my child to identify with me" (298). Keller's own bond to her infant reduplicates her Korean mother's relation to herself, leading Keller to reclaim her cultural and ethnic heritage. In *Comfort Woman*, Keller explores "the mother-infant bonding," and "sensations of being a new mother" ("The Dual Lives," 13). When

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[65] "Nora Okja Keller: Author of *Comfort Woman* and *Fox Girl* Talks with Robert Birnbaum." <http://www.identitytheory.com/people/birnbaum43.html>.

pregnant, Akiko wishes that her child "would never feel homeless, lost," and hopes that "with her first suck, with her first taste of the dirt and the salt and the milk that is me, she would know that I am, and will always be, her home" (113). Moreover, Akiko notices that Beccah's "crying turns into my mother's singing. My mother is crying and dancing and singing a song that I heard her sing repeatedly in my childhood" (71). In short, she realizes that to bond with her daughter is to bond again with her mother.

Keller's own wish to restore ties with those she formerly rejected appears in "South Korea." Her story of her trip with her mother to Korea for the first time since they left in the late 1960s is an account of their search for familiarity and connection to the land. For the American-reared daughter, Korea was a place far removed: "In the earliest days of my childhood, I thought Korea was a mystical place [. . .]. Never mind I was born there. [. . .] It was a land of dreams and fairytales, brightly present yet ultimately elusive" (17). But the thirty-year absence from the native land makes her mother feel disconnected and disappointed. So drastic have been the changes that "'it's nothing how I remember'" (17). In hopes of finding traces of the past to which they once belonged, they visit the National Folk Museum, where Keller realizes that "after 25 years of absence, my mother has returned to find that the place of her childhood is dead" (19). The objects of the past are now only in museums, and Keller confesses that "I can only dimly sense what it must feel like to look at childhood memories through a museum display case" (20).

Despite their dismay, Keller and the mother keep looking for a place that can provide a sense of belonging. Sometime later, they go to the Pomunsa Temple in Kanghwha Island, near the capital Seoul. Here they begin to regain their feeling of belonging, as they see more familiar, rural scenes: "We stroll through the footpaths,

nodding to the men sitting cross-legged in the midst of piles of red pepper or dried anchovy, smiling to the women leaning against waist-high ceramic pots containing pickled vegetables or fish" (38). When she looks closely at a Christian church, Keller also recognizes how Korea has always integrated and modified foreign cultures—something her mother does as well.

> Except for the cross on the roof, the building does not look like a typical church; the front gate is decorated with the Taoist yin-yang symbol, the structure looks classically Korean with wood and tile, and a bodhi tree—symbolic of Buddhism—shades the main courtyard. Perhaps this is typically Korean; my own mother's religious beliefs are layered like this. She sees no contradiction in incorporating the best of several religions, in believing in them all—"just in case." (38)

First of all, the Christian church stands for Western culture, which has influenced many aspects of Korea. But the Korean-style building is evidence of a cultural mixture that has taken place during their absence, blending Korean-ness and foreign influence. Her mother's belief in Christianity, Buddhism, and other faiths now strikes her daughter as a merging of perspectives and identities that is also quintessentially Korean.

If Keller's developing understanding of hybrid Korea suggests her gradual sense of identification, the experience at a Buddhist sanctuary represents a complete connection. Not only does she learn how to bow down to the Budda statue like her elders, "as they fold their hands in front of their chests, drop to their knees, place their foreheads on the floor" (38), but she also enjoys Korean foods, including cucumber kimchee, a variety of other pickled vegetables, and a bowl of rice. Even more importantly, the old style latrine

and a short blackout overnight, according to her mother, let Keller "'experience what it was like. This was how it was to live every day—no electricity, or running water, or toilet'" (40). As a result, Keller's dreams "are filled with the chanting of monks, and I stir whenever the giant bronze bell—supposedly the largest in Korea—in the temple courtyard is rung" (41-42). As mother and daughter end their trip, "With the mountain god watching over us, we link arms and look at the colors of the island" (42), suggesting that both have reunited with Korea, and with each other.

The importance of the mother-daughter relationship for this trip is crucial. In Seoul they visit the Great South Gate. At a famous shopping area called Namdaemun, they find the kind of housedress that the mother used to wear in Hawai'i:

> My mother rubs the hem of a magenta orchid-print dress between her fingers. When she lifts the dress in front of her, I remember that when I was little my mother always wore these free-flowing Korean housedresses, boldly printed and silky to the touch. At nap time, I used to cuddle alongside her, stroking the silk until my fingers tingled and I fell asleep. (20)

For Keller, the dress is a reminder now of Korea, of her mother, and of the intimate bond that she felt when "I used to cuddle alongside her." Realizing her childhood memories, when her mother buys a dress, Keller tries one on, and buys it as well. Back in Hawai'i, "when I wear the dress at home, I feel like I am walking in my mother's body. At night, I let my daughter curl up next to me and I watch her fingers play against the smooth fabric" (20). Her body now takes on the role of her mother's for her own child, as the Korean dress links through memory three generations.

Though Keller's return to her birthplace and her desire for intimacy with her

mother both do result in strengthening family and natural bonds and her cultural heritage, renewing her Korean identity, she still feels somewhat disconnected, and even perhaps less Korean than her children. When "A Bite of Kimchee" records her childhood rejection of her mother and Korean culture, Keller is enacting a common path, in which the second generation is somehow left out. Her daughter, for example, had her first bite of kimchee at fifteen months old, and has enjoyed and never declined it since then, proving that '"she is Korean'" (298), as the grandmother proudly announces. The two have in fact developed very close ties: "When she visits, my daughter cleaves to her, follows her from room to room. Grandmother and granddaughter run off together to play the games that only the two of them know how to play" (299). Keller's mother teaches her granddaughter the names of the other Korean foods, such as kooksoo and kalbi, and they pretend to make kimchee:

> My mother stirs a pot over the stove and passes the mixture to my daughter who pours it on the cabbage.
>
> My daughter brings her fingers to her mouth. "Hot!" she says. Then she grabs the green plastic in her fist, hold the cabbage to my mother's lips, and give her halmoni a taste.
>
> "Mmmmm!" My mother grins as she chews the air. "Delicious! This is the best kimchee I ever ate." My mother sees me peeking around the door. (299)

That Keller is watching from a distance points to both her disintegration from them, and her wish to join. Keller's mother notices: "'Come join us!' she calls out to me and tells my daughter, who really is gnawing at the fake food, 'Let your mommy have a bite'" (299). Although having once detached herself from "a tribe of kimchee eaters" (296),

Keller now seems willing to return.

"Ghost Stories" and "Small Moments" echo "South Korea" and "A Bite of Kimchee," for they too represent how Keller has disengaged from her heritage and family but now wishes to reconnect. In "Ghost Stories" she remarks, "In my family, ghosts are somewhat commonplace; we have a history of conversing with the dead" (10). This spiritual gift, however, is possessed only by her mother, sister, and daughter. When growing up, her mother talked with "the spirits of her mother and father, with those in her family that still visited and protected her" (10). Keller's younger sister also has "a supposed ability to communicate with spirits" (11). Once she spoke of seeing in a dream an aunt ghost who gave her one-month rent, which she actually found in her wallet after waking up the next day. It is however very difficult for Keller to accept this. And yet, though she wants "rational explanations (sleep-walking, lying)—part of me wants to believe. It has always been this way: my sister seeing ghosts and omens, me squinting blindly, grouping for a handhold between scientific reasoning and the desire for faith" (11).

But her daughter has also inherited this gift that runs in the family. She sees and speaks to ghost friends that Keller cannot. The grandmother, however, understands the granddaughter, so "instead of laughing at my daughter's imagination, my mother scolded me: 'Tell them to go home! I told you before not to have too many kids!'" (13). So even though Keller "cannot fully believe in any ghost story," she now confesses that "I am haunted in my own way. That each time I sit at this computer, I call upon the ghosts that have possessed our family for generations and the new ghosts we have recently picked up" (13-14). Though Keller "may not see them as clearly as my mother or sister or daughter

can," she hears "them telling their stories. My mother's baby sister, forever three years old; my grandmother who died too young and with too many regrets; my daughter's orphaned friends; the hundreds of wandering hobo-ghosts muttering disjointedly" (14). Even if only as a dim echo, then, Keller has recognized the fact of surrounding spirits.

In "Small Moments" Keller explores her mother-daughter ties within the family by declaring her wishes for her children in terms of identity. When teaching her first daughter, Tae Kathleen, at home, Keller senses her frustration over Math problems:

> I took her into my arms, holding her gingerly as I thought about what I wanted to say and how to say it. I thought about what I most want to teach her—what I most want her to learn—are lessons not about numbers or grammar, but lessons about herself. (A19)

Part of what the mother wishes to see in her daughter undoubtedly includes the Korean heritage represented by her grandmother. For Keller, in time "what it meant to be a Korean American woman became very important. In the sense of what do I want to pass on to my children and how do I want them to see themselves."[66] This connection she hopes to build in her family will directly combat her own earlier feelings of loneliness. In another column, Keller comments that "I've had one flying dream in my life" and that "I didn't like it," for she felt "lonely, longing to hold on to family and friends that were so far away from me—because of time or distance or circumstance" (A13). Of course, at another time, a flying dream could also signify freedom and independence from a self confined by cultural and ethnic boundaries: "[M]y mother encouraged us to behave like proper Korean girls: quiet, respectful, hard-working" ("A Bite of Kimchee," 297). And

[66] "Nora Okja Keller: Author of *Comfort Woman* and *Fox Girl* Talks with Robert Birnbaum." <http://www.identitytheory.com/people/birnbaum43.html>.

Beccah's rebellion against her mother in *Comfort Woman* certainly represented another kind of flight. But Keller, for all her earlier distance, nonetheless no longer wishes to fly away from who and what she has become, because "I decided I like to be rooted, tied to the history of land and family. I think I would have liked to live [. . .] where tradition was passed on from mother and daughter to granddaughter, from the time of the First Mother" (A14). Keller therefore has not only developed a sense of rootedness in Hawai'i that acknowledges her as a local girl, as one of "us," but also as an ethnically Korean woman.

In "Circling 'Hapa,'" the writer expresses her concerns for her mixed-race children's relation to their Korean-ness. "My daughters look hapa," she writes, "But I am concerned about how will they feel on the inside. Will they learn how to be Korean from their mother, and their mother's mother [. . .]?" (20). Having drifted away from her ethnic heritage herself, she has returned to reclaim it—now hearing the ghost stories of her family, and willing to accept her mother's invitation to take a bite of imaginary kimchee. Keller's hope is that the woman's heritage will endure: "I envision the woman my daughter will one day become and know that I am whispering stories to that ghost of her future self" ("Ghost Stories," 14). The next generation will probably listen to her, and be accepting of a self in a Korean family linked to both Hawai'i and the ancestral land. And if we are lucky, they will write about it.

* * *

Glenda Chung Hinchey, Cathy Song, Brenda Kwon, Gary Pak, and Nora Keller all record their journeys away from home—family, community, and birthplace—and return voyages to where they belong. Hinchey's memoirs describe her travels around the

world, including Korea, which parallel the transnational movement of her maternal grandparents even as she represents her cultural and linguistic departure from "them." While Song's earlier poems present herself as removed from her Hawai'i family and community, her later self-representations mark her return to them, acknowledging her ethnic and local heritage. Kwon's verses and narratives explain how the Hawai'i-born Korean feels related to, yet disconnected from the Han'guk saram, including her own mother and relatives, she encounters in the United States and Korea. Pak's story of the political exile Sung Wha and his nephew Yong Gil in *A Ricepaper Plane*, which relates their travels through Korea, and between Korea and Hawai'i, crossing chronological and spatial boundaries, points to the characters' becoming part of the local place while preserving their Korean legacy. Keller's *Comfort Woman* and her autobiographical accounts portray her earlier rejection of her ethnic roots, and her later embrace of a local identity, yet also document her attempts to recover her Korean-ness, especially for her children. Hinchey, Song, Kwon, Pak, and Keller all affirm their own sense of rootedness in Hawai'i, *and* their acknowledgement of their Korean heritage. The exiled or alternative home of the earliest immigrant generation has ultimately become the cherished home of their offspring, who embrace their ethnic and their local selves.

EPILOGUE: CONTINUING GENERATIONS AND NEW ARRIVALS

Over the course of a century-long journey of Koreans to the Hawaiian Islands from 1903 until today, Koreans have sustained and engendered Korean, Korean American, local, and American identities. Contemporary local Koreans represent multiple generations of the earlier pioneers, and first-generation immigrants from different periods. Such representative recent works as *Century of the Tiger: One Hundred Years of Korean Culture in America 1903–2003*, the four volumes of a Korean-language literary magazine published by the Korean Literature Association of Hawai‘i since 2002, Sandra Park’s *If You Live in a Small House: A Story of 1950s Hawai‘i*, and Nora Keller’s teenage daughter Tae’s poem “Halmoni, I Wish You a Pendant,” reflect the current diversity of diasporic Koreans in Hawai‘i, and display characteristics familiar to us from the previous chapters on how Korean writers in Hawai‘i have represented and identified themselves.

Century of the Tiger: One Hundred Years of Korean Culture in America 1903–2003 is a special 2002 edition of *Mānoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing* that like *Yobo* commemorates the centennial of Korean immigration to the United States. The collection’s five chapters introduce modern Korean and Korean American history up until World War II, except for the last chapter, and feature a wide range of art works—ceramics, calligraphy, photographs, autobiographical and fictional narratives—either by or about native Koreans and Korean Americans in Hawai‘i and on the mainland. The collection focuses on experiences of first-generation Korean Americans, including the earliest pioneers and the Korean War and post-war immigrants, and emphasizes Koreans’ continuing arrival in Hawai‘i and the US mainland. Juxtaposing Korean American writings and translations of Korean mythology, folk songs, poems, and stories creates an

integrative and transformative space for both native and diasporic Koreans, stressing their connections beyond national boundaries.

Korean adoptee Jenny Ryun Foster's "Once Upon a Time in America: An Introduction" in *Century of the Tiger* introduces another dimension of Korean immigration to the United States. Now living in Hawai'i, Foster was adopted by a Midwest American family in 1974, and "hardly knew what being Korean meant" while growing up. Even in college, "as a Korean I was still a singularity, and still found it difficult to learn very much about what it meant to be Korean American" (156). This ultimately led her to Korea, where she realizes that "Being Korean meant having a certain cultural history that carried me back through time, a heritage made up of countless experiences, events, and people who were part of me and who continued to form who I was and would become" (157). How the Korean adoptee "journeyed from Korea to the Midwest, back to Korea, and now to Hawai'i" (157) not only articulates an important trend in Korean immigration to the United States, but also foregrounds her voyage to the motherland, where she discovers and accepts the Korean-ness in her diasporic self.

Si wa hawai (Poetry and Hawai'i), *Munhak kwa Hawai: Hawai hanin munhak tonginji* (Literature and Hawai'i: Literary Coterie Magazine of Hawai'i Koreans), *Hawai sisim 100-yŏn* (100 Years of Korean Poetry in Hawai'i), and *2008 hawai hanin munin hyŏphoe hoewŏn sijip* (2008 Poetry Collection of the Korean Literature Association of Hawai'i) are the titles of four issues published so far of Hawai'i's Korean-language literary magazine, written by contemporary first-generation immigrants. This magazine has collected literary works on various topics across different genres. Leilani C. Lee's 2003 autobiographical essay "Nam ŭi nara e sanŭn pangpŏp" (How to Live in a Foreign

Country), and Kim Ok-sŏk's "Ansikch'ŏ Hawai" (Haven Hawai'i) found in *Munhak kwa Hawai* and *Hawai sisim 100-yon*, for example, echo the earliest immigrants' longing for Korea and their developing connection to a new home. Lee has lived in Hawai'i for more than twenty years, yet still feels nostalgic for her home country. But recent participation in Koreans' small and large cultural events has helped her to feel empowered as Korean. Or as Lee puts it, "우리는 외국에서 살던[sic] 살면서 자기 민족의 문화를 사랑하고 가꾸고 보여주는 것이 우리의 힘을 키우는 것이 아닌가" [To show how we love and cultivate our people's culture while living in a foreign country is to develop our strength] (126).

Kim's "Ansikch'ŏ Hawai" compares the US mainland, where "하와이같이 시원한 / 바다와 하늘은 볼 수 없어 / 움츠려드는 마음 문을 / 계속 열어야 했는데. . ." [I had to keep trying to open / my cowering mind / because I could not see the sea and sky / as fresh as Hawai'i], to her new haven that "나를 보고 / 말없이 대화를 나누자고 / 손짓을 하네" [gestures / for me / to have a talk in silence] (162). Such a reaction by the diasporic Korean speaker as this one—"활짝 웃는 꽃을 바라보며 / 미소 지우고" [I smile when looking at beaming flowers] (163)—recalls Mun Yang-mok's poem and the anonymous immigrant's "Hawai ŭi hanin" in the 1910s. If Kim's "our people" in "Nam ŭi nara e sanŭn pangpŏp" clearly indicates her strong association with Koreans when identifying herself, Lee's "ansikch'ŏ" suggests that she herself is "하와이에 머무르는 / 하나의 조각이려니" [a piece of strip / that remains in Hawai'i]—perhaps permanently.

The Hawai'i-born third-generation Korean writer Sandra Park's novella, *If You*

Live in a Small House, and Tae Keller's "Halmoni, I Wish You a Pendant," show how these descendants of immigrants confirm their ties to previous generations. *If You Live in a Small House* is a story of Korean American family—the Korean-born immigrants, their children, and grandchildren—who have lived through the Depression and World War II periods. The snapshots of the twelve members' individual lives reveal retention and loss of Korean-ness by each generation. Set in the 1950s, they live in Mother and Father's tiny house in Kailua, since Grandmother and Grandfather on the maternal side lost their Honolulu home due to the City's construction of a highway in the area. Not only does the extended family in this over-crowded house stand as a metaphor for the difficulties of living in Hawai‘i for its residents, including Koreans, but it also parallels the traditional Korean way of living, where more than two generations live together.

Mother, the youngest daughter and only married child, fulfills her filial duties by taking care of her parents, her two older brothers, a step-sister, and another relative during a family's crisis that seems to last forever, and also raises her own four children. The World War II veteran Father "once told his bride that they would take a trip to Korea, see their homeland for the first time . . . . He wanted to inhabit an ancestral world where he would reap admiration and respect over time, growing long white hair, wearing a tall horsehair hat with a wide brim" (73), but now "his sense of the distant past was reduced to hot spicy foods and a reputation for a corresponding bad temper" (73).

When Lana and Liz, Mother's daughters, dance for Grandmother and her Korean Ladies Funeral Club, they integrate their generation into the new settlement, because they "appeared in plastic straw-colored hula skirts" instead of the traditional Korean clothes, hanbok, and "danced the Hukilau, singing the song that everybody in Hawai‘i knew by

heart" (83). Yet, the women mourn their recently deceased friend Mrs. Lee by singing the Korean folk song, *Arirang*, and dancing to its rhythm, pointing to their preserved Korean-ness, and to their own passing as well:

> Arirang, arirang, a-ra-ri-yo.
>
> Arirang ko-ke-ro no-mo-kan-da.
>
> Everyone knew the tune and words,
>
> Walking over the peak at Arirang (you left me behind).
>
> You will be tired before you reach one mile. (85)

Though sharing the domestic space with Grandmother, her grandchildren seem less mindful of their ancestral heritage. The third one, Ezra, embodies the third generation's loss of Korean-ness. "Where was the famous Korean temper?" his father wonders: "The kind of hot temper that causes grown men to drink too much, gamble their paychecks, double their losses?" (130). Ezra later leaves for the mainland, where he will "live with strangers [. . .], preferring to eat in restaurants, making eyes at healthy girls with good teeth and an outgoing sense of humor." All this signifies his departure from his ethnic roots and local community, "eventually losing his palate for hot spicy foods" (140), just as his father feared.

Moving between the realms of reality and imagination, *If You Live in a Small House* is Park's "tribute to my parents' generation," who did "whatever they could to make a better life for their children." Intended to convey "the passing of generations and of times gone by" and "an indescribable sense of loss" (164), the book also leaves open the possibilities for recovery of the lost heritage by the grandchildren—Lana, Liz, and Lucy—who are of the same third generation as the writer herself, and who remain with

the family in Hawai‘i. During the Korean elders’ mourning ritual, “From the kitchen, the girls watched the ladies get up from their seats, swaying their bodies to the upward wail and downward beat of *Arirang*, filling the room with their voices” (86). Though the girls did not then participate in the singing and dancing, their cultural exposure is significant. Like the stories of the eventual homecoming of the third-generation Koreans and their claims to their Korean-ness in the previous chapter of this dissertation, these girls, and even possibly Ezra, may return in the future, like their mainland-living creator, to their roots.

Tae Keller’s “Halmoni, I Wish You a Pendant” represents a very young self profoundly connected with her Korean grandmother. Her expressions of how much she loves Halmoni’s food, and enjoys listening to her stories of Korea, confirms this bonding:

I love the way
You make the best musubi.
I can hear it crackling
in the pan,
smell it fresh,
Spam and seaweed.
See you press Spam
onto rice.
It tastes like love.

I love the way
We turn the lights

low,

cuddle up at night,

tell stories of Korea,

your voice painting

pictures

of ghosts and tigers

in my mind. (D1)

The granddaughter's "faithful chain of echoing love, / my love, / your diamond pendant" is a poetic token of how she feels "safe / and warm / in your hugs / that smell like flowers and rubies" (D1). This ornament, made priceless by their sharing of Korean stories, represents this Korean family's continued legacy and reciprocal affection that transcends the generational difference.

* * *

The selves represented in Hawai'i's diasporic Korean writings, in either Korean or English, not only indicate "our" Korean-ness as distinguished from "them," but also represent "our" ties to Hawai'i. Their self-identity and where they ultimately feel they belong result at least in part from acknowledging "my" and "our" ethnic and local roots. If for many Korean offspring the ancestral homeland at first seems to stand far away from "me," at least for some writers this felt distance becomes narrower when they begin to seek their heritage and accept it as their own. The representations of future generations of local Koreans, of both new arrivals and descendants of first immigrants, will probably

continue to present something like Brenda Kwon's "Korea's twin" in Hawai'i, or something like Tae Keller's "diamond pendant" to their ancestors.

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