

PREFACE

This book tells the story of the people who live ‘on the border,’ both physically and psychologically. The core theme is how the Korean diaspora in Northeast China, formerly called Manchuria, has survived, passing through turbulent historical periods of modern China while keeping a relatively peaceful relationship with the host society. This project is partly based on my doctoral dissertation, which I completed in 2005. The idea first occurred to me while I was taking a graduate course on International Politics of Africa, for my master’s degree at the London School of Economics and Political Science in the late 1990s. I was fascinated by the survival of the people’s national identity in Eritrea and their relationship with Ethiopia in the context of dynamic regional politics of Africa. The subject concurrently reminded me of a fiction entitled *Bukgando* (north Jiandao, Jilin China) by a well-known Korean novelist, Ahn Soo-gil, that I had just finished reading in Korea before I left for London. I was inspired by the stories and historical backgrounds of the novel that zoom in on the lives of marginalized people living back and forth between the Qing and Joseon dynasties under severe oppressions by both in the border regions. The core similarity that connected my two separate incidences of inspiration that came from two completely different places, Africa and East Asia, was the peoples’ struggle to preserve their collective identity and the patterns of compromising for survival as they faced various political tumults. Another reason this

region piqued my interest concerns the intriguing life story of my grandfather, a Waseda University law student turned anti-colonial activist. Much of his life he was on the run all over Japan, the Korean peninsula and Manchuria, often in and out of jails and tarred with various labels by different authorities throughout the colonial and de-colonialization periods: first as an anti-imperialist rebel, later as a communist activist, and finally as revisionist partisan. To my regret, I never met him. For my Ph.D., as I was advised that the scope of the case of the diaspora in China was not broad enough for a dissertation, I added two more case studies, the Korean diasporas in Japan and Uzbekistan. After completion of this longer project in 2005, it took me a decade or so to again develop this project, this time focusing only on my initial interest, the Korean diaspora in Northeast China. For helping me to regain my courage, I would like to thank Prof. Chun Lin and Prof. Dominic Lieven, who have constantly inspired me and supported me to continue fulfilling my academic tasks. Also, my thanks go to Lingnan University Hong Kong, for generously offering me the opportunity to carry out this project over the past few years. However, I acknowledge that any faults that might be found in this book are of course solely mine. My primary intention to publish this book is to share what I so far have learned through this research with anyone who may have similar academic interests and serious concerns about how the historically accumulated community in China or elsewhere could peacefully preserve a distinctive but stable collective identity and share a mutually prosperous community life for the wider region. My special thanks go to the publisher, Palgrave Macmillan, for accepting my manuscript and providing me patient support. Lastly, my family, both in Korea and in France, has been my most important supporter. I particularly thank my dearest friend, Frédéric Bourdais, who offered me a great deal of support during my research, while remaining full of good humor, constantly giving me confidence to carry out what I believed to be best.

Hong Kong SAR, Hong Kong

Jeongwon Bourdais Park

Identity, Policy, and Prosperity

Border Nationality of the Korean Diaspora and Regional
Development in Northeast China

Park, J.B.

2018, XV, 193 p. 2 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-981-10-4848-7