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Detail der Collane des Chrysanthemen-Ordens der höchsten Stufe (*Daikun'i kikkashō keishoku* 大勲位菊花章頸飾). Diese 1888 durch Meiji Tennō gestiftete, höchste Auszeichnung Japans symbolisiert hier die enge Verbindung von Politik, Religion und Ideologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart.

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Inhaltsverzeichnis

Religion
Politik und Ideologie

Politik
Ideologie und Religion

Ideologie
Religion und Politik

Bones to Pick: Nationalism Beyond the Grave

Jackie J. Kim-Wachutka

1. Introduction: A Symbolic Home-coming

Rows of 115 boxes in ceremonial white, containing the ashes and skeletal remains of named and unnamed Korean laborers, finally made the return journey to their homeland of Korea. Once men, now bones and ashes, they had left their hometowns more than 70 years ago when Korea was under Japanese colonial occupation. Many were forcibly conscripted during the Asia-Pacific War (1941–1945) to toil in the coal mines, construction sites, military complexes, and industrial factories in remote northern regions as well as the metropolis.[1] In 2015, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Korean independence from Japanese colonial occupation, an emotional journey of the bones of the now long dead, faceless and many nameless, was captured in the media in both countries. For almost 20 years, their anonymous remains were excavated, identified, and collected from labor fields or industrial accident sites where they had lost their lives by collaborative citizen's groups from both Japan and Korea seeking peace and reconciliation.[2] Other long forgotten remains sat in Buddhist temples.[3] On 11 September 2015, however, the bones began their symbolic pilgrimage home during Korean thanksgiving with a procession, accompanied by dignitaries and representatives. The journey started from Sapporo via Tōkyō, Ōsaka, Hiroshima, and Shimonoseki with religious commemoration ceremonies in temples such as the Nishi-Honganji temple in Kyōto. The procession continued to the port of Pusan where the now long-dead had initially started their journey towards Japan. Finally the bones were buried at the Seoul Municipal Cemetery in P'aju City near the DMZ after a ceremony in front of city hall.

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[1] During the colonial period over a million men labored in sites in Japan and occupied territories. More than 145 000 were brought to Hokkaido (Chung 2017: para. 1). The majority of the excavation took place near Uryū Dam in Shumarinai and Asajino Airfield (Morris-Suzuki 2015: para. 2).

[2] Anthropologist Chung Byung-Ho initiated a program in 1997 called "Korean-Japanese Student Workshop for Excavation of the Remains of Forced Labor Victims." Chung, Buddhist priest Tonohita Yoshihiko in Hokkaido and the associated East-Asia Citizen's Network have been involved in this project of excavation and return (see Chung 2017: para. 8; Morris-Suzuki 2015: para. 3).

[3] Some of the remains of the laborers were kept in temples affiliated with Japan's largest Buddhist sect Jōdō Shinshū in its efforts to reconcile with its past involvement in Japanese colonial efforts in Korea (Morris-Suzuki 2015: para. 2).

The symbolism of this process seeks to fulfill an emotional humanistic resolution and restoration on both sides that involve the dead and even more so the living. These Korean laborers who have lost their lives in the other's land, disintegrated into ashes within foreign soil, or were discarded and forgotten in an urn collecting dust in a small unacknowledged temple ignited deep sentiments. Fellow countrymen said to have been violently uprooted during a commonly shared historical memory of colonial oppression stir sympathy and a collective sense of ethnic roots, brotherhood, and nation. The spirits of the dead have crossed the threshold to the other world of the sacred. Ultimately they are no longer connected to the things of this world. However, within the minds of the living they represent both a spiritual as well as a secular existence of politics and ideology, adorned with the memories and narrative of injustice of an unreconciled colonial past. As the media focused upon delivering the emotional climax of narratives that were expected from each respective country — Japan's efforts to acknowledge its past wrongs and facing the responsibility of doing right for the dead; Korea embracing the emotion of nationalistic sentiment by giving the lost souls their proper burial finally in their home soil — this dream of a return journey to the homeland even after death has long been in the making within the Zainichi Chōsenjin[4] community in Japan.

The fate of Zainichi Koreans[5] is the result of the tumultuous colonial period of 1910–1945.[6] Their collective narrative of suffering as the colonized in the colo-

[4] Japanese referred to Koreans as Chōsenjin. After the Korean War (1950–1953) the political division of North and South also deeply divided Koreans residing in Japan. Zainichi Chōsenjin usually refers to those who are aligned with the pro-North Korean political organization Chŏngryŏn. Zainichi Kankokujin on the other hand refers to those affiliated with pro-South Mindan.

[5] "Zainichi" Koreans refers to those who migrated to Japan during the colonial period and their descendants. As of Dec. 2016, officially there were 335 163 Zainichi Koreans, i. e., those with special permanent residency status (see SMS 2017), but their number is actually much higher as many have naturalized and the rates of intermarriage with Japanese have increased.

[6] Koreans were viewed as a temporary labor supply, willing to accept employment in areas that the natives avoided due to poor wages, undesirable working conditions, and long hours. In order to fill the demand for low-wage labor, recruiters of individual firms and independent labor brokerage agencies, with the help of local assistants, solicited Korean workers. In 1941, the Japanese Ministries of Home Affairs and Welfare and the colonial government in Korea set up labor recruiting stations in local provinces, counties, and villages and assigned quotas. Starting from 1943, over 350 000 Korean men were drafted into the Japanese army and navy (Ryang 2000: 2–3, 18–19; DeVos/Lee 1981b: 52–53). Finally, during the latter stages of the war in 1944/45, the government resorted to more forcible methods known as *kyōsei renkō* (forced

nizer's land[7] laid the groundwork for a memory and utterance of injustice, nurturing the seed of what Koreans view as *han*, an unresolved grudge or regret caused by wrong-doing. This traumatic sense of being victimized and befallen with a fate of having to leave one's land generated the affective verses for *shinse t'aryŏng*, a lamentation decrying one's lot and seeking to possibly appease or console it through repetitive verbal narration. From the first generation,[8] these words passed on to the subsequent generations and in time transformed into a legitimate and authoritative collective Zainichi narrative that has been further reconstructed and strengthened as an inherited legacy of roots and the reason for their very existence in Japan. The memories of the first generation serve as the "origin" and "roots" that take on the distinguished role of "genesis" — telling tales of how it all began. This "beginning" expounded with suffering, sacrifice, and survival transcends into a sacred dimension.

As the first generation fades into the past, a site of active Zainichi Chōsenjin cultural memory — remembering as a personal and cultural experience — is found in the Buddhist temple Kokuheiji in Tōkyō. Grand Zen-master Ryu Jong-Muk 柳宗黙, who came to Japan in 1938, established the temple in 1965 as a place where first-generation Zainichi Chōsenjin, unable to go back to their homeland, after their death could have their memorial service held and their cremated remains stored. Ryu also intended the temple to nurture a sense of "continuation" by educating and reminding the younger generation of their ethnic roots, history, culture, and tradition. Within this Zainichi Chōsenjin temple, sacred religious rituals and secular cultural practice amalgamate whose power and authority depends on the legacy and memory of the first generation, colonial injustice, and the "sacred" imagination of a unified homeland.

This paper focuses on the temple Kokuheiji and in particular its founder's vision of a unified nation and homeland that is proclaimed and elevated into a sacred dimension.

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migration) or *kyōsei rōdō* (forced labor) to supply workers for coal and metal mining, construction, factory work, and other manual labor. The population of these laborers and draftees numbered 280 303 in 1944, as the whole Korean population in Japan reached an all-time high of approximately 2,4 million at the end of the war in August 1945 (see Weiner 1994: 193–194; DeVos/Lee 1981b: 37).

[7] Koreans in Japan see themselves in relation to the history of wartime forced labor recruitment (Ryang 2001: 57). Although not all were brought by force, first-generation Koreans in Japan construct their realities within this collective historical origin of forceful uprooting and displacement.

[8] For detailed oral histories of first-generation Zainichi Korean women, see Kim 2005.

2. Kokuheiji and the Grand Zen-master Ryu Jong-Muk

About 300 years ago under the eighth shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune (1684–1751) a temple was constructed in Kodaira, today a small town in greater Tōkyō. Its roof tiles still display the Tokugawa family crest of a three-leaved hollyhock inside a circle. The temple was originally used as a place for retired monks to spend their remaining years. Approximately eighty years ago, the Zen-monk Ryu Jong-Muk (fig. 1) came to this small region. Grieving the desolate temple, he sought to utilize it to hold memorial services for those Chōsenjin Koreans who were not able to return home and died in a foreign land. Wishing for the "peaceful reunification of the fatherland" (*sokoku no heiwa tōitsu* 祖国の平和統一), Ryu combined the Chinese characters 国 (*kuni*/ *koku* = country, land), 平 (*taira*/ *hei* = peace), and 寺 (*tera*/ *ji* = temple) and called the sanctuary *Kokuheiji* 国平寺. He travelled throughout Japan to collect the bones and cremated remains of Chōsenjin — migrants, forced laborers, soldiers, as well as those with no name. He made it his mission to give them a place of rest with dignity and console the deceased spirits until their eventual return to their homeland. Presently, the temple plays a prominent role for funeral and memorial services and also as a place where cremated ashes are kept (Kokuheiji 2016a).

Ryu lived and trained at the famous Wŏljŏngsa temple in Kangwŏndo's Mt. Odaesan, studying under the renowned Sŏn-(Zen-)Master Hanam 寒巖 (1876–1951). In 1938 he came to Japan where he graduated from the Rinzai Zen-Buddhist affiliated Hanazono University in Kyōto and continued his ascetic training at the nearby temple complex of Myōshinji 妙心寺, the head temple of the largest Rinzai branch. In 1940, he took over Manjuji 万寿寺, today a subtemple of Tōfukuji and one of the so-called five great Zen temples (*gozan*) of Kyōto. There were oppositions by some Japanese priests at Tōfukuji that a Korean monk would enter the temple, however, due to his prestigious Buddhist training lineage, he finally was accepted.[9] In the abandoned partitioned section of the once famous Manjuji[10] — without a main hall, except a bell tower, under the supervision of the main temple Tōfukuji — Ryu utilized the humble space

[9] Interview with Kim Suk-Ja, the wife of the present head monk at Kokuheiji, on 16 July 2016.

[10] In 1935, Manjuji had been separated from Tōfukuji's main areal by the newly build Higashiyama and Kujō streets as well as a rail for Kyōto's city tram. Ponsonby-Fane (1956: 154) writes that Manjuji, "now little more than a name, was itself once included with the Gozan, and originally occupied a part of Goshirakawa's (77) Rokujō palace, the old maps showing it as extending over the whole space between Higuchi on the north, Rokujō on the south, Higashinotōin on the west, and Madegakōji on the east. It was moved to Tōfuku-ji during Eikyō (1429–1441)."

Figure 1: *Ryu Jong-Muk during a prayer ritual.*

for training young monks of the Zen-Buddhist order Sōkeishū 曹溪宗 (kor. Chogyechong) who came to Japan from Korea (Miyashita 2015: 51). He also provided support and advocacy for Korean students in Japan who needed emotional as well as financial support. In August 1955, he obtained the names of the thousands of Koreans who sacrificed their lives in the Japanese Army during the Pacific War. He learned that some of their remains were stored as unnamed and unknown in various prefectures and initiated that the names of the dead become accessible to the public and the remains be stored with dignity. In 1959, the initial 1670 boxes of cremated remains that he could obtain and a corresponding name list found a resting place at the temple Yūtenji 祐天寺 in Tōkyō (Hong 2013: 141). In 1965, Ryu entrusted Manjuji temple to his protégé Yun Il-San 尹一山[11] and went to establish Kokuheiji temple in Kodaira.[12] In 1969, the Buddhist federation that Ryu had founded took over the former Unsuiji 雲水寺 in Ōsaka's Tennōji district and renamed the temple Tōkokuji/T'ongguksa 統国寺 ("Temple of the Unified Country"). It is based on the principles of transcending borders, political affiliations, and division between Koreans themselves as well as the Japanese in order to highlight the faith of Buddhism and peace in Asia.[13]

According to Yun Byeog-Am 尹碧巖, son of Yun Il-San and Kokuheiji's current head monk whom I interviewed on 16 July 2016, in addition to its original Tokugawa heritage the temple now has a history of more than half a century of conducting memorial services for Zainichi *dōhō* (brethren). Moreover, it serves as a place to heal the regret or remorse (kor. *han* / jp. *urami* 恨) of the bereaved family who could not accomplish a homecoming for their dead.

[11] Yun Il-San was born in 1919 in Kyŏngsang-namdo and came to Japan as a young junior high student to further study Buddhism and later entered the present Ryūkoku University. In 1943, he became a protégé of Ryu and took over his position at Manjuji (see Kim 2006: 80). Manjuji temple is now headed by Yun's first son Yun Ju-Jik.

[12] In Manjuji there are 1 300 cremated remains and in Kokuheiji 1 500 remains, including 300 unknown (Miyashita 2015: 51).

[13] Furthermore, two sections of the former Berlin Wall — symbolizing unification — are set up on the temple grounds (See <*toukokuji.com/history*>).

His predecessor Ryu always preached the importance of the fatherland and the harmony of the nation. He believed that a temple does not only exist for consoling the dead but also for the living and that it should be a place of shelter for the hearts of the Zainichi *dōhō* who have roots in the Chōsen peninsula and do not have a homeland (interview; see also Kokuheiji 2016b). Ryu Jong-Muk's faith and ideological positioning consolidated the sacred religion of Buddhism with a secular political discourse that in combination possessed power and authority to lead the living as well as the dead in collective prayer for the people/nation (kor. *minjok*, jp. *minzoku*) and unification of the homeland.

3. Sacredness of Nation and Homeland, Secularity of Religion

A specific prayer mixed with Buddhist sutra and written by Ryu is read out loud by the present head monk of Kokuheiji for all rites conducted at the temple. Through the presence and recitation of the sutra at every "traditional" event, the participants are reminded each time of their roots, ethnicity, and identity as Zainichi Chōsenjin:

In the highest place
On the lotus seat
Crossing safely to the other world
Our bodies healthy
Without illness
To be prosperous
All things go well in whatever one does
For our children to have a good and successful life
All things go well
With prosperity
Patriotic duty
Achieving perfection
At the temple gate
Good fortune will gather like the clouds
There will be good rain for harvest
No more war within the country
Complete healing of the nation (*minjok*)
Hope for the unification of the homeland
People's rights be secure
Hope for world peace
All things of this world be peaceful and harmonious
To help us cross to paradise

Everyone to have a successful life
I pray for these things to Buddha[14]

Along with good things for the secular world and well-being for the descendants, Ryu's prayer also describes the diasporic historical circumstances of war, division, and disharmony of the nation. He incorporates the history of the collective postcolonial reality of a divided Korea and of the former colonized Koreans in Japan and their descendants as well as the hope for their success and good life in the foreign land. For Ryu, individual success of the believers and their children and descendants is important, but simultaneously the patriotic duty and effort of restoring peace and unification of the fatherland/homeland (kor. *choguk*, jp. *sokoku* 祖国) are equally imperative. His reference to *choguk* or *sokoku* reminds the listeners that the lives of many first-generation diasporic Koreans in Japan were temporary and their fate of being in Japan was not by choice, but the result of a violent enforcement and displacement. The collective discourse of *kyōsei renkō*, forced migration, is shared by Zainichi Koreans regardless of whether one was a victim of that particular experience. *Kyōsei renkō* unites varied situations and circumstances of migration, drafts, and enforcement under a representative discourse, commonly uttered by all generations of Koreans to explain their feelings of displacement within Japanese society. This common discourse demands recognition of the ongoing injustice of social prejudice and validates the demand for civil justice for past wrongdoings (Ryang 1998: 3–15).

The continual reading of the sutra prayer with each rite is conducted in memory of the founder, but at the same time the oration also emphasizes the importance of one unified nation that becomes an imaginary sacred homeland. The secular and worldly actions of violence, discord, war, and division can be appeased through the sacred pursuit of peace, harmony, unification, and wholeness. Ryang (2008: xv) argues that the collective experience of dispersal ignites a sense of yearning and longing for the homeland. Through the workings of nostalgic memories of "tradition," "cultural heritage," shared myths, and stories, the mind is directed towards this imaginary homeland and dreams of an eventual return. Persons who identify themselves with the history of uprooting and loss of homeland encounter the state of being displaced or dislocated as a focal point, initiating the search for this lost place. In time, the longing for this "home" as imagined native place or homeland elevates itself to a sacred dimension.

[14] This prayer and the pledge below were translated from Korean by the present author.

In other words, the emotional intensity and impact of longing for this nostalgic "homeland" becomes consecrated and sanctified, transcending time, space, and realistic circumstances.

In addition to the sutra, a mealtime prayer also written by Ryu is placed in the middle of the hall and recited. The content of the prayer is a mixture of the sacred Buddhist treaty of reflection along with Ryu's political stance. The partaker of the meal is asked to reflect upon self, the world, its desires, including the actual food that will be consumed, its origin and cook, as well as the secular political hope for peace and eventual reunification. In sections six, seven, and eight of the prayer, the message is made clear—through the consumption of the food, the *dōhō* brethren has the strength to carry on the imperative duty of working towards unification of the country and protecting the sovereignty of the nation. This final part underscores and emphasizes an active patriotic pursuit of the resident Chōsenjin Koreans, rather than being passive, for the common cause of working towards the peace and reunification of the homeland.

Pledge Before a Meal

We have received a meal. Therefore, let us partake of it with the brothers and sisters of our faith.

First, with a meditative heart, reflect on where I am and ponder upon where the food came from.

Second, examine myself to see if my actions match my words and make a commitment once again to align my actions to my words.

Third, calm my mind and thoughts and surrender my selfish desires as the purpose of partaking of the meal.

Fourth, the reason why we are receiving this meal is to maintain our health. Therefore, eat slowly and do not overeat.

Fifth, follow a daily habit of a righteous life.

Sixth, do your utmost to hasten our country's unification.

Seventh, safeguard the right of our nation.

Eighth, in order to prepare and organize for this cause, let us receive this meal. Let us cast away our passive behavior and cultivate our active characteristic. Let all people unite in solidarity and move forward in the right direction.

As this prayer is recited with each meal, the speakers reaffirm the link between the sacred and the secular—the political hope of uniting a divided country and a collective mind-set that can only be fulfilled through the sanctification of calling upon the spiritual intervention by a greater power. The religious oration grants a legitimization for seeking wholeness of a divided nation that can only be achieved through a peaceful gathering of like minds. The sacred prayer is

brought ever-so near to the everyday, necessary, and mundane act of mealtime, coalescing the two spaces of sacred and secular, thus giving meaning and purpose to a recited "myth" of a unified homeland. Nancy (1990: 50) contends that "Myth is very precisely the incantation that gives rise to a world in the advent of a language. It is therefore in-dissociable from a rite or cult. Indeed, its enunciation or recital is itself already a ritual." Hence, the words that formulate myth elevate into common knowledge through ritual in the process of repetition, dissemination, and transmission. "Ritual memory culture" gives meaning to our world, ensuring a sense of survival and continuance, while a "functioning memory technique", such as sutras, recitation, myths, storytelling, and narratives allows one to live on through an "incantation" of ritual based on repetitive stories (Assmann 2006: 10–14). According to current head-monk Yun, Ryu was a passionate religio-political activist and speaker preaching in his sermons and daily interactions the importance of hard work and patriotic activism through dedication and duty towards peace and reunification. In one of his very few personal writings published after his visit to North Korea at the age of 88 and printed by the Korean Buddhist Federation of Japan[15], Ryu narrates his love, passion, loyalty and longing for his imaginary homeland — a unified nation under the leadership of Kim Il-Sung who he believed symbolized the epitome of resistance and possessed the power to restore an independent and unified fatherland. Within Ryu's narrative, the concept of nation is transcended from the realm of a secularly political notion of a nation-state to a sacred dimension that gives an existential meaning that binds those with the fate of diaspora looking towards an eventual return:

[15] The Chae-Ilbon Josŏn Bulgyodo Ryŏnmaeng or Zai-Nihon Chōsen Bukkyōto Renmei 在日本朝鮮佛教徒聯盟 was established on 1 August 1948 by its main founders Ryu Jong-Muk, elected as first chair-person until 1955, Kim Seong-Hae 金星海, Yi Yeong-Pyo 李英表, Jang Tae-Seong 張泰成, and Seo Jong-Do 徐宗道. It later came under the umbrella of head political organization Dai-Nihon Chōsenjin Sōrengōkai 大日本朝鮮人総連合会 (Chōsen Sōren) that was established in 1955. In 1989, the name of the Buddhist Federation was changed to Zai-Nihon Chōsen Bukkyōto Kyōkai 在日本朝鮮佛教徒協会. Another organization, the Buddhist Federation of Ethnic Koreans in Japan (Zai-Nihon Kan-minzoku Bukkyōto Sōrengōkai 在日本韓民族佛教徒総連合会), was founded in 1991. It integrated two separate organizations, Zainichi Kankoku Bukkyōkai 在日韓国仏教会 established in 1963 and Zai-Nihon Daikan Bukkyōto Kyōkai 在日本大韓仏教徒教会 established in 1969, who wanted to distinguish themselves from too much Sōren/Ch'ongryŏn influence. An association that attempts to incorporate all Korean temples in Japan, regardless of Buddhist sect or political stance, is the Daijō Bukkyō Kaitōkai 大乗仏教海東会, the Mahayana Buddhism East of the Sea [i. e., Korea] Association, established in 1995. See <*kjbutu.com/seventy.html*> and <*kaitoukai.net/history.html*>.

I have lived the time period of the Yi dynasty, leading to the bitterness of the Japanese occupation to the 35 years of national division. It has been some 40 years of being estranged from my homeland to come to Japan to study Buddhism. While living on this island country I have come to embrace two hopes.

One is seeing with my own eyes the socialist fatherland built by the revered General Kim Il Sung and another hope is to venerate the General as well as the 50 million brethren to live harmoniously and shout out the celebration of unification.

Quite unexpectedly last fall I have had the honor of visiting the socialist fatherland.

[…]

In the plane, gazing upon the endless passing clouds, I could vividly see the past gone by before my eyes.

Born on January 1893 in Ch'ungchŏngnamdo Chŏnan-gun, I have witnessed the "Japan-Korea Coalition" that five cursed Ŭlsa ojŏk traitors[16] had committed. As a youth of 27 I have also yelled at the top of my lungs for the independence of the fatherland that was stolen by the Japanese. Wailing, unable to suppress the inflamed anger brought on by the loss of my country, I have also been to Manchuria[17] following the people who believed that there was no other way but to raise up a loyal militia.

However, what followed was the sadness and contempt of a ruined country, the terrifying stare of Japanese military police and the bone-breaking beating.

Just as a dog that has lost its owner that has to beg for food and is not welcomed anywhere, as people, who have lost their nation, our life whether in our homeland or foreign land was filled with hunger and tears.

There was no one we could trust or depend on.

In order to be able to feed myself, I decided to go to Mt. Odaesan, known for abundance of honey bees, to try my hand in bee farming.

In the process of wanting to renounce the world I came to believe in Buddhism and in 1938 I came to Japan as a foreign student to study Buddhism and have stayed ever since.

After the venerable General Kim Il Sung regained the country, along with Buddhist monks who had the same purpose we established the Korean Buddhist Federation of Japan and have conducted patriotic works.

I stepped foot onto my homeland without having been able to accomplish unification of the socialist fatherland.

[16] The Ŭlsa Treaty of 1905 signed by five ministry officials allowed Japan to become protectorate of Korea (see Eckert et al. 1990: 242–246).

[17] The first formal socialist organizations comprised of patriots intent on overthrowing the Japanese rule emerged in Russia and Manchuria (Eckert et al. 1990: 297).

> The more I think of not being able to repay the benevolence of venerable General Kim Il Sung and only receiving the honor of being able to visit the homeland, I felt nothing but shame.
>
> We arrived at the Sun-An Airport [Pyongyang] on October 9th.
>
> […]
>
> Under the wise leadership of the venerable General Kim Il Sung, spurning the Japanese and American imperialism, people of the fatherland that was reduced to ashes, endured the turmoil of not having anything to eat or wear, spent sleepless nights, building the people's paradise. How can we stand and walk justly in front of those people who welcomed us with such warmth, we, who did not even shovel a scoop of soil? I was blinded with burning emotion.
>
> […]
>
> Pyongyang was what the people said, "The flower garden of the earth," "The extraordinary city." (Ryu 1980, p. 44–47)

The mythical vision of nation is constructed through a specific plot formed in Ryu's narrative that juxtaposes political events of a loss of country to the patience and faith of belief both in the teachings of Buddha and the impassioned dedication of the political figure Kim Il-Sung. The narrative proceeds in the following segments: colonial domination of the fatherland, suffering and victimization of the brethren, the fate of war between brothers and continued division fueled by imperial domination, preaching a common faith in Buddha and belief in an eventual unification, and finally the dream of homecoming either in life or in death. Indeed, the sojourn and residence of first-generation Chōsenjin Koreans were initially temporary, also their remaining bones are on an unfinished return at Kokuheiji, just as the bones of its founder. But who decides to which nation these bones belong? What is a nation to a spirit but a figment of memory of a particular time and space in a bygone history remembered only by the living?

4. Temporary "Home" for the Dead at Kokuheiji: Interview with Monk Yun Byog-Am

Kokuheiji's crypt is located in a connecting building. On the first floor, there is a stone pagoda that holds the remains of the founder of the temple Ryu Jong-Muk. There are also rows of permanent tombstones where ashes of families are stored together. The tombstones are topped by Korean-style cornered roofs and one's place of birth — region, hometown, and village — is written on the side in Chinese characters. Some of the tombstones also have the deceased's Japanese passing name such as "Kaneyama" and next to it the original ethnic name of

Figure 2: *Open urn-shelves at Kokuheiji.*

"Kim" and the particular regional lineage such as "Andong Kim." In the building's second and third floor the urns are not stored away in an enclosed crypt, but are placed in simple decorative boxes in rows of accessible open shelves (fig. 2). Names are placed on the box and some have pictures of the deceased in the front. Families are able to visit and leave flowers in front of the white or golden boxes. The idea behind the open urn-shelves and the portable form of the box is to be able at any time to transport the remains to the unified homeland. Kokuheiji has taken on the responsibility of taking all of the remaining ashes back, once unification happens. Until then, in life as well as in death, the sojourners are in transit in a temporary place awaiting their eventual return.

A week before my visit, a citizen's delegation called *Tan'gun minjok p'yŏngwa t'ongil hyŏbŭihoe* ("Tan'gun Peace and Unification Council")[18] — in the name of "Our Task for the Descendants of Tan'gun"[19] and holding up a sign that read "Blood is thicker than Water" — came to visit the remains of those without names or family members to make preparations for one hundred remains to return to their homeland (cf. Kim 2016). Yun explained in our interview on 16 July 2016 that through the request of the Buddhist Association *Zai-Nihon Chōsen bukkyōto kyōkai* as well as grassroots organizations, the South Korean government has recently agreed to repatriate one hundred remains, most

Figure 3: *Boxes of bones and ashes at Koheiji, ready to be transported to the DMZ.*

[18] A right-wing citizen's group whose mission is to repatriate one million remains of Koreans who died in Japan. A detailed article on this organization by the present author is in preparation.

[19] Tan'gun, a son of a bear and a celestial deity, is said to be the founder of the first Korean state. The myth has been utilized by Korean nationalist to emphasize the uniqueness of the Korean people and their culture (Eckert et al. 1990: 250).

of them unidentified or without family. They will be buried in P'aju City. One of this burial site's significance, Yun explained, is its location near the grave of Korea's royal physician and historical figure Hŏ Chun 허준 (1539–1615) whose famous book of ancient Korean medicine *Tongŭi pogam* has been recognized by UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme in 2009.[20] At the time of the interview, rows of boxes of ashes awaited their "return" in a small room, ready for their journey to the line of division DMZ at the end of July (fig. 3).

5. Conclusion

As generations advance and memories of the first generation fade into a distant past, the authoritative discourse of Kokuheiji and its head monk bears the torch of legitimizing narrative and memory as an essential "reminder". The inherited memories of the previous generation's displacement provide a legitimate historical and political justification for Zainichi Korean's existence in Japan. They also serve as a reference point to which subsequent generations locate their sense of origin and roots. Communal history and hegemonic memory allow the juxtaposing of public legitimate discourse of nation and homeland with personal subjective utterances of personhood in life and in death. Homi Bhabha (1994: 10–12) argued that the unhomely and "*unheimlich*" memories, told by disenfranchised minorities, and their utterances of alienation and trauma within society and private sphere open up a space of "alternative histories", which contest the sovereignty and homogeneity of a "national culture and history". We see that for Zainichi Chōsenjin Koreans, who have nurtured their temporary sojourner identity in life and in death fueled by the hope of an eventual return to a unified "homeland", their particular "nation" — a reunified Korea — becomes an alternative space within their imaginary. Just as the founder of Kokuheiji, Grand Zen-master Ryu Jong-Muk, believed in one nation and one people, his story, like the story of many first generation, is a "history" that stirs the collective memory of a once unified nation. It is a nation tragically divided until the day of reunification when all could return to a nation that is whole; it is a homeland of utopia within the imaginary. Ryu's founding principle for Kokueheiji was to appease the dead for the injustice that they had endured on foreign land. However, the prayers chanted and rituals performed also aid the living souls participating in the act, perhaps even more so, to find a place of belonging in body and spirit.

[20] See Hŏ Chun Museum at <*www.heojunmuseum.go.kr*>.

As volunteers dig in unnamed graves in search of bones, as monks such as Ryu and others pray for the forgotten souls, as citizens groups petition the government, as conservative organization such as Tan'gun chant nationalistic sentiments of blood and soil of homeland, as symbolic procession ceremonies are performed, and as respective countries look on — "nation" is being conceived and created in the minds and imagination of each partaker. Ryu, who had so longed for home for those who have passed on to the next life without setting foot on their homeland's soil, himself is permanently stored under the small stone pagoda at Kokuheiji. Where would this homeland be for the monk who was born in southern Korea, believed in the fatherland built by Kim Il-Song, spent his entire life since youth in Japan and himself took his final breath in the colonizer's land? Just as nation comes to life in the subjective narrative of identity and lives on in inherited memory that is strengthened through collectivity, "nation" and "homeland" is reenacted within the sacred rituals and secular cultural traditions of the country once called Chosŏn (kor.)/Chōsen (jp.) in living and in death at Kokuheiji temple. The reunification of the homeland that Ryu Jong-Muk dreamed of continues to be uncertain, even more so within the current times when escalated tension between North and South Korea is at its highest. Perhaps it is this division, along with a longing for a unified homeland that may never be fulfilled, which makes the sentiments of "nation" ever so sacred.

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