Cultural Performance, Subjectivity and Space: Osaka’s Korean Festival

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Abstract: Performance studies have often placed their attention on performance as an event, and on how it reflects people. This article, however, focuses on the relationships between cultural performance, identity and space, as it plays out in the constitution of ethnic identities. Through a qualitative analysis of the Ikuno Korean Festival in Osaka, it examines and critiques how identities are constructed, and how this process is shaped by the mediation of intra and inter-community concerns. Particular attention is paid to the potential of reorganized culture through a thinking of similarity rather than difference. The dynamic interrelations suggest that festival provides a particular and informal public sphere wherein certain social logics and identities are contested. These discursive arenas are therefore marked by certain exclusions and inclusions. This study shows the complex process of identification at the micro-level through which identification is constituted and continuously negotiated through the mimetic process of everyday life.

Key words: festival, performativity, identity, space, Koreans in Japan

Introduction

The Ikuno Ethnic/National Cultural Festival (Ikuno Minzoku Bunkasai) has been held each fall since 1983 in Ikuno Ward, Osaka City. It was the first Korean festival in Japan and within a decade had inspired the development of three other significant Korean festivals: Nagata Madang in Kobe started in 1990; 3.1 Bunkasai in Fukuoka, 1990; and Higashikyo Madang in Kyoto, 1993.

Ikuno, located in Osaka’s inner city area has been significant to the Korean community and its culture in Japan since the Japanese colonial period. Ikuno is currently the most concentrated area of Korean residents in Japan.

Why are there so many Koreans living in Ikuno? Before we come to that, let us pause here to look briefly at why there are Koreans living in Japan. After enforcing an ‘unequal treaty’ in 1876, Japan gradually gained administrative and political control over Korea and eventually, in 1910, took over the whole country by way of annexation. At that time the bulk of the Korean population was comprised of subsistence farmers and tenants. The political, economic and social dislocation which accompanied the incorporation of Korea within the Japanese empire had far reaching effects into the daily lives of people throughout the peninsula (Weiner 1994).

In the 1920s, as Osaka grew into a large industrial area, workers were in high demand. After the direct sea route to Osaka from Cheju Island was opened in 1923, many people from the Island began to travel to Osaka to work as factory hands (Sugihara and Tamai 1986). Another basis for the increased number of migrants from Cheju Island was chain migration through family ties. Since the 1930s Koreans in Osaka became concentrated in the eastern part of the city (present Ikuno and Higashinari Wards), where a number of small factories were located. Already during that decade, Ikaino had become the neighborhood with the highest Korean concentration in Japan.

When the Japanese empire collapsed in 1945, more than two million Koreans were living in Japan. More than two thirds of them returned to Korea while the rest remained in Japan and became the foundation for the present-day Koreans in Japan. Those who were unable to return to Korea from Japan in the postwar turmoil formed self-help organizations. Both the League of Koreans (the predecessor of Chon-
gryun or Soren) formed by a leftist group, and Mindan formed by the rightwing, were fiercely nationalistic and anti-Japanese. When the allied powers partitioned Korea into North and South, these extranational communities clearly reflected the division of the Korean Peninsula. The subsequent confrontation of North and South in the Korean War of 1950–1953 consolidated the polarization of Koreans in Japan (Ryang 1997).

In this article the issue is not how performance reflects people, but how it constitutes and constructs them. We can only make sense of it by taking the relations between cultural practice, identity and space, and taking on both an individual and a social identity. An attempt is made to show how politics are melted into a cultural performance and fused with the activities and emotions of people, while suggesting that it is undertaken with an ambivalence that is found in the space of the subjective and the social. Attention should be paid to what the festival at Ikuno tells us about Korean society in Japan and how the people are constituted and constructed through the world of festival.

This study of the Ikuno Ethnic/National Cultural Festival is undertaken through interviews with several people involved in the planning and execution of the festival, and through participant observations since 1997. Secondary data has been obtained through related reports and materials.

Only a few studies have so far been devoted to Korean cultural performance in Japan. Iida (1997) focused attention on how the Ikuno Festival reflects or represents the people. Such conventional performance studies, by focusing only on the cultural event as a symbol of collective identity, without placing it within its particular local as well as broad context, may miss much of its significance, such as its makers’ specific claims, as well as its multiple interplay with subjectivity and spaces.

The suggestion that social life resembles some sort of performance is one which has been elaborated in much of the social sciences and humanities (Gregson and Rose 2000). More recently, Butler’s work (1990; 1993) on performativity has been highly influential in wider interdisciplinary areas. Butler has deployed the definition of performativity to subvert discourse and knowledge and produce a new hybrid of subject construction. While she focused especially on gender and sexual identities, this sense of performativity has recently been used as a way to approach the study of ethnic identities (Nash 2000).

Butler’s model, however, lacks social and historical specificity of performative agency. This account of agency is viewed without reference to the time and space at performance and is perceived as being negative or constraining (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000). Making up for these points on Butler’s idea, performance and performativity could be more important conceptual tools for a critical human geography concerned with understanding the construction of identity, social differences and power relations, and the relationships between performance and space in everyday life.

The Ikuno Ethnic/National Cultural Festival in Its Context

The Ikuno Festival was started by Kim Duckwhan, a former social worker and director of the local Seiwa Community Center. He said that the idea of a Korean festival had been raised by a member of a study group (Kim 1997). ‘There are so many Koreans living in Ikuno. So why don’t we have a festival of our own? It’s such a pity.’ As soon as Kim heard this proposal he was caught by a memory from his childhood of a farm band with Korean traditional dress, played by issei (first generation Koreans in Japan). His memory of the performance reminded him of his Korean homeland. He thus had a vision that he ought to gather Korean residents in Ikuno in a joyful cultural event. During the following year from 1982, Kim and many young nisei (second generation) and sansei (third generation) Korean residents devoted all their time and energy to preparing for the event. The finer details of the festival program were made up by a remarkable woman, Yi Young-yo who was born in Ikuno. So why don’t we have a festival of our own? It’s such a pity.’ As soon as Kim heard this proposal he was caught by a memory from his childhood of a farm band with Korean traditional dress, played by issei (first generation Koreans in Japan). His memory of the performance reminded him of his Korean homeland. He thus had a vision that he ought to gather Korean residents in Ikuno in a joyful cultural event. During the following year from 1982, Kim and many young nisei (second generation) and sansei (third generation) Korean residents devoted all their time and energy to preparing for the event. The finer details of the festival program were made up by a remarkable woman, Yi Young-yo who was born in Ikuno. Kim’s impression of her at that time was that; ‘She beamed with inspiration, and she was a well-spring of imagination for the festival’ (Kim 1997).
Even among subsequent generations of Koreans there was not a homogeneous unity. Likewise there were many differences between the festival founders for example, in terms of generation and family background. Kim, who was a *nisei*, had attended Japanese public schools in Ikuno from elementary to high school, and after dropping out of college worked for some time in his brother’s rubber firm. Later, he became involved in the activities of the KCC (Korean Christian-church Center in Japan), and played an active part as a volunteer teacher in *omoni gakko*, a night school teaching Japanese language to Korean women. Through these activities, he gradually came to recognize himself as a Korean. In 1982 he became a director of the Community Center. On the other hand Yi, who was a *sansei* had attended a *Mindan* Korean school from elementary to high school, since her mother had wished her to escape discrimination against Koreans. When she entered college, she became truly aware of Koreans’ situation in Japanese society for the first time. From this time forward she made the decision to live as a Korean. After graduation she taught Korean children at a Japanese public school as a *minzoku kosi* (Korean lecturer). Like the cases of Kim and Yi, despite differences in generational and family backgrounds the founders could help reciprocally, as they shared an awareness of co-ethnics based on their diasporic experiences.

The festival slogan was ‘Become one and foster our ethnic/national culture and spirit.’ It was made as an appeal to build an ethnic community, and to inspire a sense of collective belonging to the same culture. The event was planned for two days duration over a weekend, and was eventually performed in October 1983 at Ikuno. The original festival was made up of a play, instrumental peasant music, folk singing, mask dancing, fan dancing, and a masquerade for the wedding march. The news of the festival had by then been dispatched through the local area and was attracting a wide audience drawn not only from the Kansai area but also those Koreans from Kanto area, and numbering approximately three thousand men, women and children.

Though the festival leader had ties to socio-political issues such as the fingerprint refusal movement, he had not intended the event to mirror organizational movements like the existing political associations supporting either South or North Korea. Rather he insisted that it must stand above not only the political interest of *Mindan* or *Chongryun*, but also the barriers between the local Japanese residents and Korean community.

Some Korean culture has remained among Koreans in Japan through forms of ancestor worship based on Confucian style and through Korean food culture and clothing on the domestic level. These trends are particularly evident in areas with high concentrations of resident Koreans such as Ikuno. Their daily lives, however, have taken place within the Japanese cultural sphere, where they were increasingly distanced from the culture of the Korean homeland. While the resident Koreans at the community level had no more than distinct cultural forms from mainstream culture, there was almost no room for joining public (Japanese) cultural events such as existing local festivals.

They employed the notion of ‘ethnic/national culture’ for the festival, and selectively imitated folk cultural elements such as music, dance, and play, which were revived from cultural movements in South Korea of the 1980s. In order to perform the version for the festival, it was necessary to learn ‘ethnic/national culture,’ since they already did not hold it. Then they attempted to express their own festival through a festival form, one of the most popular cultural styles of Japan. In other words, the general cultural form that the festival took is regarded as a symbol of the dominant culture based in every locale.

The Ikuno Festival is, indeed, an invented culture bearing some resemblance to both the Japanese form of festival as well as its Korean counterpart. Despite the distinction in its traditional and non-religious character, as Iida (1997) points out, it is also similar to Japanese festivals, based on the fact that it is place-bound, open, and periodical.

**Contest for Urban Space**

In the 1970s there were many changes within
the Korean community as well as in the wider context. Japanese society experienced political, economic and social changes, and Korean residents also had the opportunity to make a better living. Most nisei and sansei began to want permanent residence in Japan. This aspiration was, however, at odds with the challenge to define their identity (Onuma 1993).

These changes seemed to have pulled Korean residents in two directions; one towards assimilation, and one towards dissimilation. It is almost impossible to distinguish between Japanese and Korean residents by physical appearance. Koreans born in Japan already spoke Japanese as a native language and were generally Japanese-oriented in their education and culture. Korean residents were, however, conscious that they were regarded by Japanese as almost the same but not quite.

In the 1970s there was still open discrimination against granting accommodation to Koreans. Advertisements posted on telephone poles openly bore the expression 'No chosenjin (Koreans).’ Through negotiations between the government of Osaka Prefecture and housing brokers, this blatant discrimination was gradually reduced. However, land owners continue to ask potential Korean renters, ‘Do you have a certificate of residence (jumihyō)?’ As the certificate of residence is only for Japanese citizens, and Koreans carry only ‘the certificate of alien registration,’ the owners can distinguish Koreans from Japanese on this basis. Through these daily experiences, Koreans have become well aware that even if they protest against discrimination it can be perpetuated through other means (Kim 1997).

In 1971 the KCC emerged, functioning as a community center for the local Korean people. The problems over housing and schooling could be reformed gradually by the activities of KCC through negotiation with the local authorities. Moreover, as another result of KCC’s activities, omoni gakkō came to be able to hold regular classes at Seiwa Community Center from 1977. Some young Koreans related to these activities became more subjectively concerned about local issues surrounding resident Koreans. Ikuno itself thus seemed to be at a turning point in the 1970s.

In this area, there is a high concentration of Koreans in the manufacturing industry, for example, producing plastic sandals. Like many other Koreans in Japan, Ikuno’s Koreans experienced rapid social and economic advancement, and a significant transformation of career opportunities occurred between generations. For instance, the younger generation proved capable of achieving occupational mobility. The rest, however, still work in co-ethnic labor markets of the area, which are characterized by strong co-ethnic networks. The division of labor markets further explains the social distance between Koreans as foreigners and Japanese as citizens. Despite increasing cultural similarity with Japanese, Korean people have not been fully accepted as citizens even at the local level, but regarded as ‘the others.’ In any sense these situations served to enforce ethnic consciousness among some Korean residents.

The Ikuno Festival could not have been held without complications. The eve of the festival is staged in the narrow streets of the old Ikaino. Its basic mobile unit consists of a colorful farm band in traditional Korean dress, providing a loud and heavy beat, and accompanying about two hundred performers, as well as audience and supporters.

They encountered many problems concerning the performance of the parade. For example, the local police misunderstood the parade as a demonstration. Furthermore Japanese residents protested that the route of the parade overlapped with that of danjiri, a local Japanese festival, and argued that the purity of danjiri was polluted by the Korean parade passing through the same road (Kim 1989b).

The most difficult problem for the preparation was concerned with securing a ground for the performance. They hoped to borrow a school, which many Korean children attended. It was, however, not so easy for them, because every school is closely related to a chonai-kai (neighborhood association) which consists of local citizens, and whose members can intervene in all affairs within a certain range. Even though most Koreans living there have permanent resident status, most of them are noncitizens, and are thus generally excluded from the association. Through negotiation with Osaka
Association for the Education of Foreigners, which is located in Ikuno and belongs to the Osaka City's School Board, they eventually managed to get permission to use an elementary school, based on the attached condition of usage only for the festival.

The first festival could be finished at the schoolyard without any incident. However, during the performance there was already a shower of calls to the principal of the school from Japanese residents, including the staff of chonaikai. Some of them visited the school later, and protested against the event. What they uniformly demanded was 'Don't let the Koreans have their way at our school,' 'Don't lend it to them again.' These circumstances became an obstacle to borrow the grounds for the following year, and the Koreans' second request to the same school was rejected.

Among the organizers of the festival, some people who were from outside the local area or related to other social movements, wanted to stage a radical reaction to the refusal such as a demonstration in order to secure the grounds. On the other hand, many local Koreans objected to such a measure, since they were well aware through their daily lives that it is far from being useful and rather could make conditions worse for them. Hence no such demonstration was carried out. An alternative solution was suggested by a director of a middle school to stage the festival in a rotation of the local schools each year. This proposal was adopted as a means to locate the festival year after year. These conflicts reflected the prejudice against local Koreans in specific situations at that time. It shows the contest for urban space between the divided residents. Over time, the Korean festival has been accepted to a certain extent by the Japanese residents as an annual celebration of Ikuno.

Production of Space of Subjectivity

Expansion of social relations

During the preparation of the first festival, there was a great deal of support from beyond the local area. For instance, a researcher of Korean culture from Kyoto came to Ikuno to teach a folk play for the performance, and a Korean college student staying in Kyoto also visited Ikuno to instruct a mask dance with techniques acquired in South Korea. Some young people from Kobe and other areas also regularly attended rehearsals in Ikuno.

For the annual festival young Korean people gather to rehearse mask dance, agricultural dance and plays for more than half a year in advance. Through mutual visiting of performers and other artistic exchanges, the social relations among resident Koreans were created and expanded from the local area to the whole of Osaka and other places in Japan. Furthermore new relationships between Koreans in Japan and Korean people of the homeland were facilitated. These matters make it clear that through the festival, translocal and transnational networks are developed, and furthermore that 'the space of flows' is socially produced. The festival has played a significant role not only for the Koreans in Ikuno but increasingly for other people of Osaka and visitors as well.

Many people have come to be involved in the festival, being drawn together for the first time. A significant new dimension thus has been added to the festival culture. It inevitably produces and fosters new relationships. There are now countless overlapping networks of stable relationships of amity among Koreans who are active for a half year in festival preparations, and even among the masses of supporters. These social networks and opportunities for interaction go far beyond festival affairs.

The cultural activities of the festival production and consumption draw people together, and lead to the embodiment of collectivity and the fluidity of spaces. The Ikuno Festival plays an important role for the local Koreans in every day life. The festival is the focus of many social gatherings, helping to establish and strengthen the bonds of this ethnic community. The festival is thus bound up with the production of social relations as a fundamental part of everyday life.

Production of space of subjectivity

In the previous section, it was shown that the festival practices establish, maintain, and transform social relations. This section goes on to
explore the production of identity and space in social relations through the festival. To determine 'identity' we first need to consider individual identity as well as social identity.

In the report of the Committee of Ikuno Ethnic/National Cultural Festival (1988) a high school student said: 'My first attendance of the performance of the farm band was in the first grade of high school. At the first stage of the preparation I entered a wonderful and marvelous world, and walked around feeling feverishly excited. I was so happy. The festival became fundamental and indispensable to me.'

The experience of music and dance also is an experience of identity. Compared with the free play of individual creative performance, group performance re-emphasizes codes and traditions while reflecting the constraints and rules of performed identities. Considering specific traditions around the performed dance and music, these cultural performances are obviously collective (Nash 2000).

The following is evidence of the process of searching for individual identity through the festival. A young lady said (The Committee of Ikuno Ethnic/National Cultural Festival 1995): 'Even though I lived in Ikuno, I didn't know about the Ikuno festival at all. By chance I got to participate in the preparation of a Korean dance for the festival through introduction by a colleague in the workplace. It was the first time for me to see the dance as well as to dance it, and I was so nervous. Strangely, I came to feel as if I had known for ages the instructor and the members who taught me the dance. When I danced in front of the audience at the festival, I felt fulfilled. For the first time I felt satisfaction in being born as a Korean. Until then I had lived in the midst of Japanese society concealing my ethnicity.'

In this way the festival creates and constructs an experience through the expression of music and dance by taking on both an individual and social identity. The festival describes the social in the individual and the individual in the social, the mind in the body and the body in the mind. Nash (2000) notes, that performance through dancing and music is simultaneously bodily and social, simultaneously about sense of self and individuality and collective experience and shared identification.

Identity comes from the outside not from the inside. And it is not a thing but a process which is dynamic and produced in performance (Firth 1996). Indeed, the festival plays a role in re-shaping Korean identity in Japan, in both articulating cultural values and enacting collective commitment to the audience as well as to fellow performers.

Let us now turn to production of spaces through the festival. Spaces for the festival performance are used only temporarily, for example streets used for the parade on the eve of the festival and a schoolyard used for the festival performance itself. Even after the event is over, the residential space becomes transformed into structured space. Let us have a look at the process in detail.

Through the parade on the festival eve, the organizers tried to reproduce the sense of place of Ikaino. Kim recollected the first parade at Ikaino as below (Kim 1997).

3:00 p.m. 15 October 1983. Colorfully dressed young people and children gathered in the Seiwa Community Center. For the farm band parade, the zing (a gong) and kwengari (a small gong) started to sound. I was at the head of the parade and I had to go out into the street. However, when I tried to leave, I couldn't move my feet. I had never walked in Korean traditional dress in the street, though I have grown up and lived there. I was so afraid that my body was paralyzed. If it were another place I could go out more easily. At that time I was in my mid-thirties. Of course although the neighborhood knew that I am a Korean, it was so difficult to go out into the street. Eventually I went out as if I was pushed by someone. Then I was deeply moved. Koreans as well as Japanese in the area seemed to be surprised by our sudden and collective appearance as Koreans. In 1973, the name of 'Ikaino' disappeared from the map by the request of many local Japanese residents for the reason of stigmatized imagery, chyosenjin buraku or Korean ghetto. Many Korean residents, however, regarded 'Ikaino' as their home which was embedded in their diasporic experiences. The reproduction of Ikaino seems to be an attempt to give it a re-imaging as their home. The Seiwa Community
Center and Miyukidori Shopping Street (still called Chyosen Ichiba among the residents) has been located in old Ikaino, and through the performance the places are accepted as more actual and symbolic centers of Ikaino.\textsuperscript{10}

As a result of the festival, Korean identity was defined as a reaction to 'ethnic racism,' but it was also a creative process of self-reconstruction and production of space. Through the festival a stigmatized place and identity were turned into positive things, the notion of a 'chosenjin buraku' was turned into simply that of a Korean area, and the sense of being hidden was turned into being visible as resident Koreans.

It can be said that these Koreans got to know themselves as a group through the cultural performance. Making a festival is not just a way of expressing ideas, but rather a way of living them. In other words, it is not to reflect a reality which stands behind them but to ritualize a reality that is within.\textsuperscript{11}

On the other hand, a remarkable spatial transformation occurred in the Ikuno. The Miyukidori Shopping Street has been developed as a daily consuming center for the neighborhood. It consists of three associations and 115 shops. Two of these associations, comprising 86 shops renovated the old establishments and renamed the street 'Korea Town/Road' in 1995. This renovation was punctuated symbolically by the construction of new gates and erection of street lighting in traditional Korean style.

It is likely that they tried to be more daring in embodying the identity of the place for commercial vitality as a way out of stagnation.\textsuperscript{12} After that Ikuno became a clearly identifiable place, both from the outside and from the inside. Yoshida (1996) indicates that the social attributes of these associations' members enable other forms of active expression. That is, the great number of Koreans, and the young and new business owners, differed from the other association. As Tani (1992) points out, the cooperation that was achieved is a rare case that goes beyond the differences in ideology amongst Korean residents whether from the South or the North, and furthermore included some Japanese owners.

There is one other thing that is important from a spatial perspective. The Ikuno Festival may have indirectly induced the shop owners to embody the sense of place. In fact the plan for 'Korea Town/Road' began in 1987. At that time Ikuno Festival began to take root, and the event reached a wider potential audience outside the community via the mass media. As has been suggested, the festival could turn the identity of the place into something more positive, while not being immune from prompting forms of spatial commodification (see Harvey 1990).

As Castells (1996) says, in this respect Ikuno is still a place. In between home and world, there is a place called Ikuno. 'The space of places' indeed is socially and symbolically produced through the festival. Many changes in the process were made by 'place-bound (place-based) politics' (Harvey 1990; Massey 1994) centering on Ikuno, although some parts were achieved contingently through unintended effect.

Through the festival in this process, while Ikuno has become a cultural node for Koreans in Japan, the space is extended beyond the place of Ikuno by translocal and transnational networks. Festival thus is able to both cross borders and define spaces. On the other hand, the production of space through the festival is a contested process. The dynamic interrelationship between the festival and space suggests that the festival plays a very particular role. This evidence points to a spatial restructuring generated through the festival, to the fact that the space is socially and symbolically produced.

**Politics of Performativity**

**Supplementary necessity**

This section is concerned with why resident Koreans had to be expressed this way and in this time-space, and why they came to feel the creative necessity of a festival. If the event in Ikuno came to take a festival form purely by accident, then there would have been no particular reason to accept its makers' special claims to the significance of the celebration.

 Koreans represent one quarter of the population of Ikuno, and approximately seventy percent of them came from Cheju Island. They are, however, differentiated by their village of birth,
relatives, present nationality (South or North Korea) and so on. Many associations have been developed based on village of origin and kinship, for example shinbokukai and soshinkai, or to political leanings, Mindan or Chongryun. However, no formal all-Korean association in the local area had so far been developed.

In the early 1980s Ikuno's Korean society was still influenced socially and economically by issei. Most of these people thus lived within a certain political ideology, adhering to either that of Mindan or Chongryun. Nisei had generally strong experiences of discrimination and low self esteem as Koreans in Japan, having held a vague dream of returning to Korea in their younger days. In contrast, the emergence of sansei showed signs of developing more positive attitudes towards living as Koreans in Japan. At the time many sansei Koreans were getting married and having children, determined to live in Japan permanently as members of an ethnic minority.

As their permanent residence in Japan became an undeniable fact, some young Koreans came to recognize the absence of their own festival. Furthermore, they came to view such a festival as an essential factor in order to live continually in Japan, since nearly every area in Japan has its own festival. Ikuno of course has had an annual Japanese festival related to Shintoism like many Japanese festivals, and the local Shintoist shrine is a significant place for the event. While Korean children of Ikuno would attend the festival, the adults were more reserved. Korean adults often held a negative impression of the Shintoist shrine, caused by memories of enforced worship at the shrines during the colonial period. Considering this, the children's participation in the Japanese festival seems to have encouraged the desire to create their own festival.

For these people a festival was also regarded as the best way to make themselves a visible entity in the area. Reported in the Asahi Shimbun (25 Oct. 1987) Yi recollected feeling at the parade 'We are Korean, we are living here.' They wanted to cease living in the shadows, and come out into the wide open space (Maher and Macdonald eds. 1995).

It was impossible for them to gain entrance fully into the whole society and culture even at the local level. There was a clear exclusion in their everyday lives, despite the relaxation of institutional discriminations. Since they lacked any public cultural form for the community securing their permanent residence, they needed a public sphere that could be freely attended. At that time they also considered the construction of an integrated community at the local level beyond the existing political issues. Precisely this necessity in the everyday life encourages them to supplement a cultural form. Then they strategically adopted the mainstream festival form, one of the most popular culture in Japan.

They wanted it to be a different performance from the existing local festival, and selectively imitated Korean cultural elements within the festival frame. The festival is a manifestation that what was once a place of temporary dwelling has been transformed into a place of permanent residence, as sojourners transformed into settlers. Through the festival people could make themselves visible in the local. In the inventing of the festival the resident Koreans do not merely confront the powerful master-discourse with an opposite ethnic nationalism, but need to produce cultural difference and affirmative identities for their daily lives. By the same token, the invention of festival is not the negation of pre-constituted social constructions of the past or present, but the renegotiation or reorganization of those times, terms, and traditions (Bhabha 1994).

On the other hand, this reorganized 'culture' is unique, yet at the same time it shares similar features between the existing cultures. As Benjamin (1933a, 1933b) notes, the sphere of life that seemed to be governed by the law of similarity was comprehensive. We can suppose that the mimetic gift (ability) for producing similarities, and therefore also the gift of recognizing them, have changed in the course of history. In the inventing of the Ikuno Festival, we can see such mimesis could be produced, such similarity dealt with. In this way people identify themselves by means of their mimetic abilities when they see themselves in the Other and perceive a state of mutual equality (Gebauer and Wulf 1995).
If mimetic desire is desire 'according to the Other,' it would seem obvious that a first factor that must be supplemented, that is, 'added to,' is the elementary situation of desiring (Livingston 1992). In the supplementary strategy identities of difference are not merely given to experience through an already authenticated cultural tradition. Insinuating itself into the terms of reference of the dominant discourse, the supplementary challenges the implicit power to generalize, to produce a sociological solidarity (Bhabha 1994). In the festival invention mimesis can be understood with ambivalence as the performativity for the purpose of subversion. In this way the question of ambivalence is necessarily raised in the mimetic process.

Search for identity

This section focuses on an issue, which caused a serious rift in the festival leadership, namely the question of whether the festival ought to be a distinctive cultural event of Koreans in Japan or be an extension of the culture of the Korean homeland.

In South Korea of the 1980s, there spread cultural revival movements aimed at democratization and for reunification between the South and the North. In fact, at the early stage of the Ikuno Festival some young zainichi (Koreans in Japan) used to go to the South to learn artistic techniques such as folk music, dance and dramatic arts, and become instructors for the performance after returning to Ikuno. In this way, the Ikuno Festival became related and affected by the homeland's movement.

At that time most of the influential organizers of the festival were nisei, and on the whole they retained a yearning for the homeland and its people, and tried to be close to them. Until 1987 the freedom of South Koreans to travel abroad, including to Japan, was restricted. After that time, however, cultural activists gradually came to Japan from the South, and some of them became related to the festival in Ikuno. Some radical activists called for the participation of resident Koreans in the movement of the homeland, and wanted to consider the festival as a part of the movement.

The cooperation of the two sides was, however, caught in a deadlock and it was difficult to reach a mutual understanding. The circumstances surrounding them were different in many respects. In South Korea, Koreans in Japan are regarded as a group of 'overseas Koreans,' not part of the 'authentic Korean.' On the other hand, many resident Koreans already were aware that they are different from the homeland Koreans. Furthermore there was a big gap in recognizing the subject of these movements, in the case of the activists of South Korea, the subject took the form of 'the people' (minshu or minjung); on the other hand for resident Koreans it was the 'local residents' (chiiki jumin). They were also aware of differences in language, cultural customs and so on.

These circumstances brought about serious conflicts among resident Koreans concerning the way they should search for their identity, and also caused a rift in the festival leadership. Some resident Koreans wanted to maintain the strong link to Korea and perpetuate its culture without modification, while the rest became aware of themselves as being neither Korean nor Japanese and wanted to create their own culture. The former believed that they could identify themselves through affiliation with the homeland, and the latter through the creation of a third culture distinct from both Korean culture and Japanese culture.14

Looking back at this fracturing between the two sides, the homeland linkage line and the creative culture line, the festival leader of that time said as follows (Kim 1997). 'It was so serious in 1987 and 1988. At one time the situation became so bad that it looked as though he would have to cancel the festival. To recover from the crisis a great deal of energy was needed.'

As the festival leadership eventually gave in to the cultural creative line, their identity was relocated within a new culture. Here, the effort by the festival organizers to reinvent the Korean folk dance and music towards a new culture, came to be performed as a version of Korean resident identity by incorporating but maintaining the difference of imported cultures. It was no longer important to search for origins or authenticity. To them the reinvented culture is regarded as 'zainichi culture,' neither authentic Korean culture nor Japanese.
They still deployed the notion of 'ethnic/national culture,' in spite of the festival direction being geared to a new culture. In their search for identity, they thus face an increasingly ambivalent situation. The notion is regarded as coping with both cultures of Korea and Japan, and under some circumstances as being fixed to another essential subject to some extent. In this way identities are often constructed through the binary logic, of Self/Other. In fact, the self divided between 'Japan' and 'Korea' has been a main issue for the cultural expressions of resident Koreans in Japan. However, to Koreans in Japan as well as Koreans in Korea, resident Koreans' in-betweenness tended to be negatively represented in terms of lacking authenticity as either Korean or Japanese (Iwabuchi 2000). In this situation, the experience of diaspora becomes a disempowering rather than an empowering one, in a manner contrary to Hall's suggestion (Hall 1992).

The Festival and Society

Although the festival founders say that they did not intend for it to be an organizational or political movement, there were some people related to the other social movements for human rights. The founders made a conscious effort to control the character of the festival, to gather all Koreans together at the local level, to make themselves publicly visible as Koreans to Japanese residents, and to make a successful festival of 'their own.' Kim wanted to establish a local and ethnic sense of community in everyday life through the Ikuno Festival.

The Asahi Shimbun (25 Oct. 1987) reported this sentiment as follows: Kim said 'for the first three years the festival seemed to be releasing something repressed, and since the fourth festival there has been a sense of machitsukuri (community-building). Yi said 'All performers and audiences at a Japanese festival enjoy it fully in a natural way, while somehow we still overextend ourselves. I hope our festival will bring us back to our ethnic roots in the resident Korean society, and at the same time it will be a natural festival by younger generations.'

Kim resigned as executive director of the Ikuno Festival in 1995 and was replaced by a sansei in the following year. The leadership and committee members wholly changed from nisei to sansei. At present the festival is organized by people in their twenties, and mostly performed by people in their late teens and early twenties. This generational shift in the Ikuno Festival can be attributed to minzoku gakkyu in the local area, and to a more rapid shift of generation than the other Korean neighborhoods since Ikuno had the longest community history. On the festival day children of elementary school and preschool appear as guest groups, for which they have a special rehearsal.

The festival slogan has remained the same since its beginning. It has been organized and attended by a larger number of women than men. Even today, Japanese people are not invited to serve on the executive committee. The committee still gathers in April, and disbands in November each year after the festival is over. Although the basic form has remained as the nucleus, the contents have altered little by little, and the implications of the festival have also changed. To take an example, the folk play has changed little in the form of a performance, yet the narrative transformed from a play of indictment against Japanese society into a play based on daily life. Interaction with homeland youth have also influenced the play narrative, as in the case of the 1987 play which follow the theme of the reunification of the two Koreas. In these ways the festival has been transformed, within certain cultural conventions, into an instrument for the construction of a new culture and identity, in confrontation with the social and political realities for the Koreans in contemporary Japan.

The present leader wishes to provide a more joyful festival day and entertainment for all kinds of audience. The event has passed into the hands of younger generations, and its function and direction has also changed accordingly. It has now become something to be enjoyed and consumed. While the former members regard this direction as problematic, the present members do not. The former members, including the festival founders, are now not in charge of the festival, but they are sensitive to its orientation. We can therefore foresee some
friction between the past members and the present organizing committee with regard to the meaning and value of the festival. From the viewpoint of the former organizers, the transformation of the festival towards a simple recreational event is not so desirable. They say that the original purpose of the festival has almost been achieved. They, however, hope that it is preserved at the least with holding a symbolic meaning, even though the audience decreased to hundreds of people from thousands of people at the peak time.

While the Korean people became more aware of themselves as local residents through the festival, many Japanese people still object to the idea of accepting them as fully fledged local resident members of their society. In general this way of thinking comes from their view that only those who have Japanese nationality are legitimate residents. These conditions often stimulate ethnic nationalism to resident Koreans. Above all, the question of lingering uneven power relations between ‘the dominant’ and the dominated still arise.

Even though most members involved in the festival still do not wish to include Japanese in the production of the festival, some previous members worry about the problem of breaking entirely with the local society. In this respect the local resident groups remain exclusive of each other. Compared to the early stages, however, the relationships between Korean residents and Japanese in the area has improved. For instance, some local Japanese have even begun to contribute money to ensure its progression. In addition, the renovation process of Korea Town/Road, as we have seen, helps account for a possibility of inter-community symbiosis.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The Ikuno Festival has been affected by the social and political realities of the resident Koreans, reflecting social and cultural trends in both Japan and Korea. Japanese civil activists had begun to focus their sights on the local issues in the late 1960s; the Ikuno case by early 1970s. On these base the Ikuno Festival could be set up as a community movement for Koreans' civil rights in early 1980s.

The festival is neither a simple cultural event nor represents an opposite ethnic nationalism, in spite of the fact that it shares the key word of 'ethnic/national' with other previous Korean movements in Japan. Rather, the emergence of the festival can be understood as a cultural movement reflecting evolving ideas of identity and subject, and of ethnic diversity in contemporary Japan. In the past decade there has been a rapid and visible increase in the number of Korean festivals in Japan. Although the specific purpose varies in each case, it may be said that these Korean festivals in fact owe much to the Ikuno Festival for their basic development.

Therefore, the Ikuno Koran Festival has significant implications for Japanese society as well as the Korean society in Japan. This is in spite of its size and ability to attract only those from a particular group in Korean society from Ikuno to Osaka-Kobe region. The festival also plays a role in producing spaces as a setting for daily social relations, practices, and interactions, and as a setting for negotiating of individual and social identities.

The Ikuno Festival is a significant intervention in the discourse constructing ‘ethnic culture,’ leading some to recognize it as a site of performativ politics. Of course, the culture of this case is not a harmoniously agreed upon principle, but a fragmented unity, where members are simultaneously both fragmented and unified. The festival provides an informal public sphere which enframes their worlds for people to intervene in the discursive relations.

Everything possible was done in order to make their new festival resemble the form of Japanese local festivals seen all over Japan, and to introduce the content of folk cultural elements revived in contemporary South Korea. The festival was invented through mimesis of parts of Japanese as well as Korean culture. This reorganized ‘culture’ is thus unique, yet at the same time it shares similar features between the existing cultures. It is shown that identification is constituted and continuously negotiated through the mimetic process of everyday life. Indeed, the culture and identities through the festival are ambivalent, hybrid, in-
between, and double. The question of ambivalence is necessarily raised in the mimetic process as well as through the definition of identity.

Here mimesis needs to be understood in a more positive sense and its meaning extended beyond passive imitation, as Benjamin or Derrida suggested. For Benjamin, mimesis refers to a flexible interaction with another, and denotes the original impulse of all creative activity. While considering that mimetic capacity permits revision of everyday life in new ways (Leslie 2000), the ambivalence and in-betweenness can be understood as interstitial cultures in a more optimistic sense. In this sense, the constructed culture through the festival belongs to Korean culture as well as Japanese culture.

The question concerning their ethnic/national cultural identity is how they can reconcile intra-ethnic social relations among more diverse Koreans in Japan with inter-ethnic relations between local residents. It also raises issues as to how uneven power relations are dealt with. On the other hand, in their daily life they are facing an increasingly ambiguous situation between the conventional cultural boundary including blood, nationality, history and so on. To them old identity labels provide nothing more than starting points. In spite of the differences of identities, peoples, and culture, they have always resembled one another through conscious or unconscious mimesis, and, as Said (1993) suggests, are overlapped through inter influence, crossing, incorporation, and conflict.

This paper illuminates that through a new critical consciousness no culture may appear completely alive without mere semblance. In the qualitative analysis we can find some possibility in order to transform mutually through a blurring of boundaries and sharing of similar features. We, however, encounter the crucial question of incommensurable cultural difference as well as ambivalence. I want to end with a suggestion to reconsider how the perplexity of incommensurable gaps and ambivalent reality can be shifted to a radical potential.

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Notes

1. Throughout this paper, the term of minzoku has been translated as 'ethnic/national.' Since the concept of minzoku is subject to nation state, the distinction between nation state and nation seems to be unclear (See Sato 2000).

2. Ikuno accounts for about 35,000 Koreans, 39 percent of Osaka City's Korean population. A remarkably high proportion of them were from Cheju Island. Koreans in Osaka account for 81 percent of the city's foreigners, and most of them are old timers rather than new comers. In this paper the term 'Koreans in Japan' refers to Korean people born before World War II or their descendants. Here I will interchangeably use the term 'resident Koreans' borrowed from Field (1993). At present many of them are categorized as 'special permanent residence' in terms of legal status, while some have naturalized in Japan.

3. At that time Ikaino belonged to the northwestern part of Higashinari Ward, after which it split up and was renamed as parts of Ikuno and Higashinari Wards. See Yoshida (1996), and Fujita and Hill (1997).

4. All the names of interviewees have been omitted, except the festival founders, Kim Duckwhan and Yi Young-yo.

5. See Tanaka (1995).

6. In Osaka danjiri generally refers to a ceremonial float pulled at Japanese festivals.

7. This school located in old Ikaino had a large number of Korean children, over 70 percent of the total students at that time.
8. According to Castells (1996), space is not a reflection of society, it is its expression. In other words, space is not a photography of society, it is society. And he suggests two forms of space. He proposes the idea of a new spatial form characteristic of social practices that dominate and shape the network society: the space of flows. The space of flows is the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through the flows. And the space of flows is made up of personal networks. On the other hand, people do still live in places, so they perceive their space as place-based. A place is a locale where form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity: the space of places.

9. Those who did away with the place name were in-migrant Japanese of the post war, the majority group in Ikuno area. On the other hand the old timer of Japanese did not support the abolishment, and Korean people were excluded from the debate. To both the former name 'Ikanino' was not so easily excised from their memory. They thus have tried to maintain the name apart.

10. Although the two places have ever passed on the way of the parade, the course of the parade is not fixed. Rather, it is changed annually by the selection of site for the second day's festival.

11. For excellent discussions of the issues about music, see Chernoff (1979) and Firth (1996).

12. Another explanation is the enhanced prestige of South Korea following the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games.

13. See Yoon (2000) about the concept of minjung in contemporary South Korea.

14. These arguments have been explained by such a phase as 'zainichi as a method' (Kang 1988) to the former, and 'zainichi as fact' (Yang 1988) to the latter. Wender (2000) also refers to the Ikuno Festival within these debates. The difference between these arguments, however, is of degree rather than kind (Takeda et al. 1995).

15. From such a colonial encounter between the 'Japanese' presence and its 'Korean' semblance, there emerges the question of the ambivalence of mimesis as a problematic of colonial subjection (Bhabha 1994).

16. Minzoku gakkyu means a class for foreign students in a public school. Especially in Ikuno most schools have a class in which Korean children encounter Korean folk arts or Korean language. From the early days of the festival, the parents' associations of the schools have supported the festival as a means of educating children about their own culture.

17. Unlike the Ikuno Festival, staff of some Korean festivals, for instance, Higashikujo madang in Kyoto, are experiencing difficulties in the succession by younger members.

18. One of the proponents of the homeland linkage line who participated as a performer at the festival criticized the rhythm of the performance for being somewhat different from the original and similar to the western style, but she still often participates as a performer at the festival.

19. See Tani (1992) and Harajiri (1995) about the exclusivity in the local.

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(J): written in Japanese

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