

*The Displacement of Borders among
Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia*

To My Parents,

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* All the photos in this book were taken by the author, unless otherwise specified.

Note on Transliteration, Translation and Names

Transliteration

In transliterating from Russian to English, I have followed US Congress Library system (soft sign was not transliterated).

In the transliteration of Korean language to English, I have followed the McCune–Reischauer system. For Russian Koreans' spoken Korean language does not have any official spelling system, I have tried to transliterate as closely as possible to the sounds I heard.

Translation

All the translation from Russian and Korean to English is mine, unless otherwise specified.

Names

Throughout this book, I have used pseudonyms except for the names of regions, counties and cities. Despite the pseudonyms, in the cases that some contexts reveal the identity of people concerned, I have changed the context slightly in so far as it does not change the argument concerned. Concerning the order of first name and family name for Koreans, I have followed the convention of the name holders. Thus, for example, South Koreans' names were stated with the order of family name and then first name, but for Russian Koreans' case, I have followed their convention in which family names comes after first name.

In geographical names, I did not convert Russian administrative units to English and did not italicise them throughout my book. Thus, a brief note on usage in hierarchical structure is required. The Russian Federation is composed of republics, *krai* [province], *oblast'* and *raion*; while republics and *oblast'* are designated with special autonomous status assigned to minority people or particularity of territoriality, *krai* is a more general administrative unit encompassing *raions* [counties] and cities.

Map 1. Russian Far East 1884-1917

Map 2. Russian Far East circa 1937

Map 3. Contemporary Russian Far East

Preface: Clearing the Ground

Two contrasting images have come constantly to mind during the time that I have been conducting my fieldwork research and writing this book about the history and contemporary lives of Koreans in the Russian Far East. One is the image of a huge rock embedded in the landscape and the other is of reeds swaying in the wind. I have often wondered about the significance of these mental images, as they are not merely a product of my imagination but have been inspired by the people and the landscape I have encountered in the course of my work. In this Preface, I would like to elaborate on these images as they indicate the direction taken by my research in this book.

There is a saying among Koreans in the former Soviet Union that they would survive even if a rock were to fall upon them. Here, the rock can be interpreted as a symbol of state violence and oppression, and more specifically, the forcible deportation in 1937 of all Koreans from the Russian Far East to Central Asia during Stalin's Great Terror. The saying itself bears witness to the remarkable resilience of Koreans in the face of such hardship.

The photograph on the cover of this book shows the reeds that can be seen everywhere in the marshlands and alongside rivers and ditches in the Russian Far East and also in the vast steppe of Central Asia. I took this particular photograph in 2010 during my fieldwork in a village where many Koreans were involved in agricultural work. It shows a bed of reeds beside a canal, which had probably been constructed to enable rice cultivation by the Korean farmers who migrated to the Russian Far East from the Korean Peninsula (though this would require historical investigation). Such reeds were often mentioned by Koreans as they told me their life stories, particularly in relation to the development of virgin land. Elderly Russian Koreans would describe how they had to clear large areas of reeds with their bare hands following their deportation to Central Asia; this was something I had not expected to hear when asking about their experience of Stalinist totalitarianism.

In contrast with a rock which is heavy and immovable, reeds are constantly in motion as they sway in the wind. Yet as I contemplated this image, it too appeared to represent suffering and hardship for my interlocutors, not only following the 1937 deportation but also after their repatriation to the Far East in the 1990s. One elderly woman described how 'we had to clear the reeds with our bare hands in Central Asia', and a middle-aged man in a village in

the Russian Far East told me how 'before cultivating this field, it was filled with reeds which we had to remove'. In this way, reeds have come to symbolise for Koreans their experience of displacement and the hard labour involved in developing new tracts of waste land. They also act as a reminder of the status of Koreans as landless peasants lacking any sovereignty over their land or labour; at any time, they could be displaced and the fields they had cultivated would return to wasteland covered in reeds.

I believe these two images are also helpful in considering the scholarly landscape of works addressing the subject of Koreans in the former Soviet Union. Given the scale of its impact on Koreans and their relationship with the Russian Far East, academic research has inevitably focused on 'the rock' of their 1937 deportation and its pre-history, either as the historical background of Koreans in Central Asia as part of Korean studies (Kho 1987; G. Kim and King 2001) or as an example of a Stalinist purge by means of forcible relocation as part of Russian studies (Gelb 1995; Martin 2001; Pohl 1999).

In contrast with the prevailing tendency in existing literature to view Koreans in the Russian Far East as historical figures who disappeared from the region with the deportation, the aim of this work is to shed light on the contemporary presence of Koreans in the Russian Far East against the background of their three consecutive displacements from the Korean Peninsula, the Russian Far East and Central Asia. Yet, as an anthropological engagement with Koreans in the Russian Far East, this work is not merely a reflection of the reality resulting from being 'there' through my fieldwork, but also involves the construction of reality in collaboration with the people with whom I talked and socialised. This process necessarily entails a certain change in perspective from the 'rock-focused' landscape of existing literature to a more 'reeds-focused' approach that explores the daily lives and social relationships of Koreans in the former Soviet Union.

While hoping that this book will be viewed as a valuable ethnographic contribution to existing anthropological work on minority peoples in Russia, my research also aims to augment historical research focusing on nationality questions in the former Soviet Union. In doing so, this work discusses a region (the Russian Far East) and a people (Russian Koreans) that have been neglected by international scholarship in anthropology of post-socialist studies and historical study of Soviet nationality question. I believe that such neglect is a result of a certain framework which has defined and limited previous academic research on minority peoples in the former Soviet Union. Since the establishment of the Soviet Union, Soviet

nationality policy has systematically promoted 'the national consciousness of ethnic minorities' and has provided ethnic minorities with an institutionalised base similar in form to small nation-states (Martin 2001: 1). Therefore, the most prominent feature of the Soviet Union's nationality policy since the 1920s has been the provision of territorial and administrative autonomy for minorities at various levels from republics to districts. Reflecting this territory-based policy, anthropological research on minorities in Russia has concentrated on those ethnic groups which were granted their own territorial administration demarcated by a clear boundary of designated residency, and much ethnographic work has been carried out on 'small peoples (*malochislennye narody*)' in Siberia, the northern Arctic and the Russian Far East.¹ With a couple of exceptions², studies on ethnic minorities in Asiatic Russia highlight the impact of the Soviet state's modernist projects, which often resulted in the loss of traditional ways of life without bringing the benefits envisioned by the socialist planners, and ethnographies of indigenous peoples in Siberia and the Russian Far East bear graphic testimony to the destructive force of Soviet state policy on those regarded as underdeveloped and primitive due to their Asiatic lineage.

The influence of Soviet nationality policy on fields of research resulted in a gap in the study of diasporas and also a disruption in the study of East Asian peoples after the Stalinist purge, as the deportation of East Asian populations was accompanied by the repression of researchers in this field marked by the closing of the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok. Research on Russian Koreans was adversely affected on both these counts. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent opening of the door to foreign researchers produced work that aimed to fill these gaps with Lemon (2000), Goluboff (2002) and Uehling (2004) conducting studies on diasporas in the post-Soviet context. Both Lemon and Goluboff focused mainly on 'classic' diasporas (the Jews and Romani) in Russia; these were affected by state terror during the Stalinist period but were not subject to 'ethnic deportation'. In this sense, Uehling's (2004) work is more comparable with the case of Koreans in the former Soviet Union as it discusses memory and politics of place among Crimean Tatars who were charged with German espionage and deported from the Crimean Peninsula to Central Asia and Urals at the end of WWII. Uehling's work has a clear focus on memories of the deportation, as she travelled not only to Crimea but also to Central Asia to listen to their stories on past atrocities and hardship.

¹ See Vitebski and Alekseyev (2015) for a list of ethnographic research in Siberia including the Russian Far East; this list particularly focuses on research on reindeer-herding and indigenous peoples.

With a similar focus on memory that connects distant places, the historian Kate Brown (2005: 16), who became an 'ethnographer-journalist', recorded stories of 'no-place' people in a world of territorialised nation-states. While conducting research on Poles deported from the borderland known as the *kresy* (lit. the corridor) where Ukraine and Poland meet, Brown (2005) writes about the life stories and experiences of displacement that have been excluded from the texts and documents that comprise the usual historical records.

My work, however, does not adopt the same approach as Uehling, Brown (2005) and other researchers on diasporas in the Soviet Union, who quite understandably followed the routes of displacement and tried to reconstitute the memory of displacement in past. The reason for my different approach is simple: the people whom I encountered in the course of my fieldwork showed little interest in the past; instead they constantly emphasised the importance of adopting a vigorous and positive attitude towards the present and the future as they had put the hardship and suffering of the past behind them. As a result, I decided at an early stage of my project to abandon any discussion about deportation from the research agenda for my fieldwork, not only because it did not appear relevant to people's everyday lives, but also because it was a topic that was difficult to introduce naturally in the course of conversation.

Consequently, this work deliberately avoids focusing on the 'rock', the image that symbolises the deportation and memories of it, and instead turns attention towards 'the reeds and the wind', the image that similarly alludes to the hardship of displacement but also depicts the mobility and resilience of Russian Koreans that has accrued over generations and across different locations. Russian Koreans have quietly moved around the Soviet Union like the wind, becoming part of the landscape at particular times and in particular places and then disappearing and re-appearing somewhere else again. In the same way as the wind is present but invisible, the Koreans present us with a challenge as to how we view them; we need to articulate the conditions which render them visible or invisible, and also the social and economic factors that lead to their appearance at certain times.

In my analogical metaphoric use of rock and reeds, the rock might be interpreted as such a huge obstacle which might blind us to understand the contemporary social life of Russian Koreans with its historical weight. Or the imagery of the rock might be tightly linked with a haunting hegemonic power which makes the Russian Far East as the space only for the past of the Koreans implicating that the Russian Far East is a space only for ethnic Russians in

present time, as the Stalinist purge intended this borderland to be cleansed. I am hoping that my ethnographic provision for the story about Russian Koreans would enable us to see the landscape of this borderland bypassing the rock. What I am trying to do in this book is something similar to clearing of the ground done by Russian Koreans before they cultivate for the continuation of their lives after displacement.

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Introduction: The obscure presence of Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia

I first met Katia Kim in the early spring of 2003 when I was conducting fieldwork amongst Russian Koreans in a village called Novoselovo in Primorskii Krai (see Map 3). She had been born in Pos'et, a coastal fishing settlement near the border of Russia and North Korea in 1928, and had been forcibly relocated with her parents to Ushtobe, Kazakhstan during the Stalinist purge of Koreans in the Russian Far East¹ (hereafter the RFE) in autumn 1937. In Kazakhstan in Central Asia she married and lived on a rice-cultivation collective farm where her husband worked until she returned to the RFE with her family in 1993 following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Her experiences of displacement were the direct result of great political upheaval. She described to me how Koreans in the former Soviet Union were forcibly relocated and endured back-breaking labour because they did not have 'their own land'. This sense of displacement pervades the perception of the majority of elderly Russian Koreans, especially those who are old enough to have personally experienced the events of 1937. Yet this acute awareness of themselves as a displaced people lacking any territory of their own appeared to be somewhat at odds with the vigorous and tenacious vitality that characterises their lives; this led me to wonder whether their view of the past and their lack of 'their own land' was more a nostalgic lament than a fundamental issue in their day-to-day lives. At the level of the nation-state, her summing up of Russian Koreans was consistent with social scientific studies on their migration and displacement. However, my ethnographic observation of her daily social transactions and those of many other Russian Koreans in the RFE led me to question the very meaning of displacement. This book is a result of that questioning and it

¹ The Russian Far East is hard to define; as John Stephan (1994) rightly points out, its 'elasticity', whereby it sometimes encompasses Eastern Siberia i.e. the eastern part of the Ural Mountains and at other times 'the entire Far East vanishes into Siberia's capacious embrace', is partly due to historical administrative changes. At present, the Far East (*Dal'nyi Vostok*) is an administrative economic zone that includes the Republic of Sakha, Chukotka National Oblast, Koryak National Oblast, Kamchatka Oblast, Magadan Oblast, Amur Oblast, the Republic of Buryatia, Chita Oblast, Khabarovskii Krai, Primorskii Krai and Sakhalin Oblast (see Map 3). Although my fieldwork did not extend beyond Primorskii Krai, I use 'the RFE' interchangeably with it in this work. This reflects the historical circumstances whereby Khabarovskii Krai and Primorskii Krai were merged and were known as *Dal'nevostochnyi Krai* (Far Eastern Krai) between 1926 and 1938. As this was the situation at the time of the 1937 deportation, many elderly Koreans still use this term without regard to the subsequent and existing division of Far Eastern Krai into Khabarovskii and Primorskii Krai in 1938. While many people in this region, such as the Nivkhs on Sakhalin Island (Grant 1995), consider themselves to be residents of Siberia, the residents of Primorskii Krai make a distinction between Siberia and the Far East. Local residents and the media often use the term 'Primore' instead of Primorskii Krai.

attempts to address the issue of displacement at the level of the nation-state from an ethnographic perspective based on long-term fieldwork among Russian Koreans in the RFE.

Russian Koreans in the RFE are hard to define as a collective community; they lack clear boundaries of their communities such as areas of concentrated residence, a traditional religion or their own native language, as all these were lost in the process of 'Russification' that they underwent during the Soviet socialist period. Despite this, Koreans in the RFE still maintain a certain sense of themselves as 'Koreans'. In addressing this sense of identity, this book adopts a situational and relational approach to their scattered communities, focusing on how they maintain their way of life based on their kinship-centred sociality that places great emphasis on being 'among our own people (*sredi svoikh*)'. This is not a static condition requiring fixed geographical boundaries, but relates to contextualised behaviours and customs rooted in core family relationships, such as between parents, children and siblings.

So, for example, even if a person is born from a mixed marriage (*jagube* in the vernacular used by Russian Koreans), they may be viewed as and consider themselves to be 'Korean' if they engage with other Koreans more frequently and intensively than with non-Koreans and if their way of life and behaviour conforms to certain conventional cultural norms, such as showing respect for one's elders, working hard, showing hospitality, and caring for family members. Conversely, it is quite possible for someone whose parents are both Korean to be brought up to 'live like a Russian'.² In fact, many Russian Koreans are highly-educated professionals who would be rarely found in the social contexts of the marketplaces and agricultural fields that I discuss in this book; such people are viewed as Korean merely by virtue of their birth and their nationality as stated in their passport according to the Russian (or former Soviet) 'national order of things'.³ In other words, the state of 'being Korean' is contextual and can be changed and adapted depending on the social situation and interaction with other social actors. Hence, my interlocutors often emphasised that 'ethnic identity' for so-called Russian Koreans is defined above all through 'behaviour (*povedenie*)' and

² Peshkov (2015) points out that 'in the Soviet world' ethnic minorities were usually perceived as being inferior to Russian 'cosmopolitans'. This is still the case in Russia today after the collapse of Soviet socialism. When meeting for the first time, the question, 'Who are you?' is usually understood as seeking information about nationality when addressed to ethnic minorities, but about a person's profession in the case of Russians and other Slavic people. During the Soviet period, Koreans aspired that their children should move up the social scale to the same position as Russians and other elite ethnic minorities who were dispatched to marginal areas of the Soviet Union as colonisers; consequently, many of the younger generation during the period of late Soviet socialism are seen as the product of 'Russification' which is indistinguishable from Sovietisation.

³ Malkki (1992, 37) proposes the notion of 'a national order of things' in producing the ethnography of displaced peoples instead of 'nationalism', which is a 'political ideology'.

'upbringing (*vospitanie*)' rather than by more intrinsic factors. It would, however, be misleading and somewhat tautological to say that Koreans spend time among their 'own people' for the sake of maintaining their Korean identity. On the contrary, I would argue that Korean sociality is the product of the political transformation that they have undergone during the post-Soviet transition. Therefore, this book explores Korean sociality not only as an end in itself, but also as a response to state violence, the socialist modernisation project and nationality questions in both the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia.

Displacement and mobility

Russian Koreans achieve a sense of being among their 'own people' in the space provided by domestic households, in other words, in the 'private' (Siegelbaum 2006; Gal and Kligman 2000) and 'informal' spheres (Shlapentokh 1989). Domestic space under the socialist regime and in the post-socialist world has been not only a site for 'reproduction and consumption' but has been 'transformed for many into the place where the really intense, productive, and rewarding work of their lives was accomplished' (Gal and Kligman 2000, 50). This sphere of the economy has been described in various terms, such as 'the shadow or black economy' (Jiménez and Willerslev 2007), 'the informal economy' (cf. Hart 1973) and 'the second economy' (Verdery 1991). The 'regional tradition' (cf. Fardon 1990) in anthropological studies of post-socialist societies, including Russia, is centred on the study of social relations in this informal sphere and how it connects with the institutionalised hierarchy of the state (cf. Humphrey 1998; Verdery 1996; Ssorin-Chaikov 2003). These studies provided me with a basis for investigating the prevailing social practices among Russian Koreans in their informal domestic spheres with a focus on their history of repeated displacement.

During the period of my fieldwork in the early 2000s until my latest visit in 2013, the majority of Russian Koreans in the RFE worked in marketplaces or were involved in agricultural activities; these lay outside both the direct influence and the protection of the state. During the early stages of my research when my knowledge of their Soviet past was limited, I assumed that their involvement in the informal economy was due to lack of local connections following their recent migration from Central Asia and the demise of state institutions

following the collapse of the socialist system. Although this was partially true, as I gradually learned more about the life stories of these Russian Koreans of the 'last Soviet generation' (Yurchak 2006, 31) who had been 'born between the 1950s and the 1970s' and had experienced the late period of socialism in the 1970s and 1980s as young adults, I realised that many who were now involved in marketplace trading and vegetable cultivation had previously worked in state institutions in Central Asia in various skilled positions, such as engineers, factory workers, accountants, veterinary doctors, nurses, school teachers etc.

This 'last Soviet generation' are the children of the 'older generation', who were born during the Stalinist period and experienced the hardship of the 1937 deportation and the World War II years. Many of my older interlocutors had received little education and had been involved in rice production on collective farms before working on contract teams for vegetable cultivation between the 1960s and 1980s (see Chapter 3). The contrast with the younger generation was remarkable. Whereas the 'last Soviet generation' is completely fluent in Russian and often incapable of communicating in Korean (this being seen as a sign of their successful 'Russification' or 'loss' of Korean culture), their parents' ability to speak Russian was much more limited and varied depending on their level of schooling. Whereas their parents had toiled in the fields, the younger generation with their higher level of education had often been able to obtain professional jobs in state institutions in Central Asia. How can we understand this generational change in relation to the position of Russian Koreans in the former Soviet Union? Why did each generation have to suffer displacement on a massive scale with the making and 'unmaking of Soviet socialism' (Humphrey 2002a)? And what are the implications of the social mobility of the 'last Soviet generation' of Russian Koreans during the late Soviet socialist period?

In answering these questions, I draw on research on the Soviet Union's nationality policy and subsequent ethnographic studies of post-socialism in order to understand how Russian Koreans are located not only in the formation of the Soviet socialist state in territorial terms but also in the economic sphere. The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in an outbreak of autochthonous nationalism, ethnic conflicts and a wave of migration in the constituent republics of the former Soviet Union. Accordingly, academic attention turned to Soviet nationality policy dating back to the early Soviet period in an attempt to explain the sudden rise of this ethno-nationalism (Suny 1993; Suny and Martin 2001; Tishkov 1997). In discussing Soviet nationality policy, researchers point out a certain mismatch and incoherence

within it. For example, Brubaker (1994, 47–49) notes that ‘territorial/political’ and ‘ethno-cultural/personal’ modes were established in the institutionalisation of multi-nationality by codifying nationhood and nationality as ‘fundamental social categories’. Similarly, Slezkine (1994a, 339) observes that the tension inherent in the Soviet Union’s nationality policy lay in ‘the coexistence of republican statehood and passport nationality’. In other words, nationality policy was operated on two tracks: on the national level with the granting of administrative territories, such as republics, oblasts and okrugs, and on the personal level with the issuing of internal passports that contained a nationality section for every Soviet citizen since 1932. However, this double track approach produced contradictions rather than coherence, particularly in the case of diasporas, who were not granted any autonomous territory but were accused of ‘bourgeois nationalism’ and ‘rootless cosmopolitanism’ (Slezkine 1994, 336).

The research produced in the 1990s explored these contradictions that simultaneously promoted ethnic particularism and Soviet universalism; it was predominantly reductionist in approach and viewed the Soviet nationality policy as a major reason for the eruption of ethnic problems in the post-Soviet period. However, subsequent researchers, such as Martin (2000; 2001) and Hirsch (2005), view Soviet nationality policy as a modernisation process and attempt to locate the contradictions within a single explanatory framework. Martin (2000) argues that Soviet nationality policy in the 1920s was motivated by a neo-traditionalist approach, drawing on Gellner’s work (1983). However, he differentiates nationality as a Soviet social status not only from the previous Tsarist one but also from Gellner’s notion of traditional social status by emphasising on socialist ideology as the main driving force for Soviet nationality policy; he explores how the Soviet state deployed socialist ideology in an attempt to transform the traditional social structure into a nationality-based ‘social status (*sos/lovie*)’ (2000, 360). In other words, traditional social categories for minority peoples such as religion and lineage were incorporated into the single category of ethnicity within the state’s nationality policy, thus creating a wide social basis for socialist transformation. Martin (2001) further argues that this initial instrumental approach changed into primordial nationalism in response to border insecurity and ‘Soviet xenophobia’ in the mid-1930s.

In contrast to Martin’s focus on types of nationalism dependent on changes in Soviet socialist policy, Hirsch (2005, 8) argues that the Soviet nationality policy must be seen in the framework of ‘state-sponsored evolutionism’, which was ‘premised on the belief that “primordial” ethnic groups were the building blocks of nationalities and on the assumption

that the state could intervene in the natural process of development and “construct” modern nations.’ Hirsch maintains that the main aim of Soviet nationality policy was to ‘modernise’ and ‘transform all the lands and peoples of the former Russian Empire and bring them into the Soviet whole’ (Hirsch 2005, 13). Despite their difference in focus, both Martin and Hirsch study the Soviet Union as a whole and examine its nationality policy as a process for the construction of the modern state; Hirsch (2005) highlights the disciplinary power of the state by focusing on knowledge production on populations in terms of nationality by ethnographers and census workers, while Martin (2001) focuses on the geospatial boundary and territorial governmentality carried out by the modern sovereign state.

According to Mitchell (2006), the production of population data by means of censuses and other demographic techniques and the drawing of the boundary of the state are prerequisite for the invention of the economy as an object of the state governmentality; subsequently the population and the economy appear as separate entities on which the state can work. Mitchell (2006, 170), however, continues to argue that ‘the task of a theory of the state is not to clarify such distinctions but to historicise them’. In such a creation of the Soviet state, the presence of diasporas, including the Korean diaspora, blurred both the drawing of the border and the organisation of society in accordance with the socialist ideology of nationality in territorial terms. In contrast with ‘affirmative action’, a term Martin (2001) uses to describe Soviet ethnic particularism, diaspora nationalities like Koreans in the former Soviet Union became the target of ‘negative action’. Initially, Koreans were displaced as ‘enemies of the nation’ in the drawing of the far eastern boundary of the Soviet state, and were subsequently excluded from those considered eligible for territory-based administrative autonomy. The deportation of Koreans in 1937 could be understood as trimming and tidying of the ragged border of the Soviet Union’s territory by relocating them in a mosaic of multinational socialist states deep in the Soviet Union.

However, I argue that the border of the Soviet Union was not established by means of the 1937 deportation as intended by the Stalinist regime, but rather through the transformation of these Koreans and other numerous nations into ‘Soviet people’ (*sovetskii narod*). In other words, the border was internalised for the people (in the case of Soviet Koreans in this book) who were accused of blurring the territorial border, hence, stigmatised as ‘the enemy of the people’. Therefore, we need to understand the 1937 deportation and Korean mobility in the late Soviet period not only in relation to the creation of external

boundaries but also as resulting from changes in the internalised boundaries of Soviet socialism; drawing on Yurchak's (2006) study, this is what I refer to in this book as 'the displacement of the border'.

To explain this further, let us consider that in socialism, the driving motor of Soviet society was not capital but 'the labour force' (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003); in other words, 'wealth' resided 'in the people' (Rogers 2006). 'Populations' were created by the state in the Soviet geo-space as the basis for production and were moved (or prevented from moving) according to the demands of economic activity and modernisation. As a result, the state sought to sedentarise nomadic people such as Romas (Lemon 2000), at the same time as mobilising others to fill gaps in the labour force (Hoffmann 1994; Slezkine 2006). Therefore, the 'allocative power of the state' (Verdery 1991, 75) was central to the working of the Soviet-type economy and society, rather than 'maximising the resources available for allocation'. The state exerted its power and maintained its influence over people by establishing and regulating a hierarchy of social relationships and by assigning varying degree of access to available resources. In this way, it was able to categorise and mobilise people to achieve production targets set by the central government.

While such hierarchical social relationships were most strongly established in official state institutions, the effect of socialist egalitarianism was most usually experienced in social space where kinship-like communities flourished and where sociality occurred on an intimate level. Yurchak (2006) refers to this kind of social space as a 'de-territorialised social milieu'. By de-territorialisation, Yurchak (2006) refers to the displacement of Soviet socialism in knowledge production and its symbolic constitution in everyday life that occurred in the Soviet Union from the late 1950s. The reproduction of Soviet socialism as cultural ideology began to be based on the 'hegemony of forms' through 'performative shift'—that is, the signifiers of authoritative discourse (how it is represented) were meticulously reproduced, but its signified (what it represents) became 'relatively unimportant' (Yurchak 2006, 114). Thus, people continued to carry out their roles in the discursive field without negating socialist ideology, but without enthusiastically advocating it either.

In this context, Soviet socialism became increasingly integrated into everyday life through the ritualisation of mundane activities, such as participation in Komsomol (Communist League of Youth) meetings, speeches, elections and parades that fulfilled the authoritative standardised ideological instructions from the central government. The agency

of such acts of symbolic reproduction of socialism lay in the endeavour to 'remain an ordinary person' within close-knit 'kinship-like' communities that existed alongside the official state apparatus. Yurchak (2006) describes how socialist ideology became increasingly irrelevant and of little concern to ordinary people, as the authoritative system did not allow them to participate in the production of socialist knowledge and any variations or creative input by ordinary people were viewed as dangerous. Therefore, people's creativity and energies, based on a genuine belief in socialism, found their milieu 'outside (*vnye*)' the realm of the state institutions in which state socialism resided, in a process which Yurchak refers to as 'internal displacement' and 'de-territorialisation'. Siegelbaum (2006) also notes the emergence of the 'border of Soviet socialism' in various realms such as car ownership, pet keeping and private plot cultivation, through which people were able to discover their 'true selves' and create their own space in which to live.

The experience of Koreans largely confirms Yurchak's sympathetic and humanising interpretation of Soviet socialism. Most Russian Koreans were proud of belonging to the Soviet Union and 'the last Soviet generation' of Koreans truly believed in socialism, as did Yurchak's interlocutors. Yet, as one of the minorities in the Soviet Union, the spatial displacement for Koreans from their homeland (the RFE) to the alien steppe region resulted in a significantly different type of internal displacement during the Soviet socialist period. With their forcible deportation and lack of entitlement to any territory-based Soviet administrative structure, their internal displacement resulted in a highly flexible economic life based on widespread mobile agriculture and collective kinship-based temporary groups. Somewhat ironically, it might be possible to argue that the political status of a person or a group in the Soviet Union lay in their power to control the distance between the authoritative realm of socialism and a de-territorialised milieu in temporal and spatial terms. In that sense, Korean displacement can be understood as the transference of external territorial boundaries to the internal borders of Soviet socialism in a very particular way.

This becomes clearer when we compare Soviet Koreans with other minorities who were granted territories with autonomous administration of their own. The case of the Buryats, studied by Humphrey (1998), is illuminating, especially with regard to the relationship between their kinship system and the state. According to Humphrey, the Buryats were able to trace their genealogies to the fifth or sixth generation and possessed a well-developed kinship network that, during Soviet times, could be 'constructed' with its 'extent and shape' adapted in

various ways to the Soviet political economy (Humphrey 1998, 340). In contrast, Russian Koreans are not able to trace their genealogies as far back as the Buryats, but usually end at their grandparents' generation and with those who were their 'consociates' (Schutz 1967, 15–6). This vertical genealogical link tends to be broken at the point of their displacement either from the Korean Peninsula or the RFE with no memories or records of their ancestors previous to that time. During my fieldwork, it was usually the bilateral 'grandparents' who formed the centre of the kinship group, with previous generations on both the paternal and the maternal side being of little concern for most people. Hence, it is hard to say that patri-lineages exist among Koreans, although the family name and some aspects of inheritance usually pass from father to son. Instead, it is horizontal kinship relationships that are most evident and important for Russian Koreans, but these are amorphous in form. It is hard to configure the rules of kinship relationship, as their relatedness can appear random and chaotic, being highly dependent upon social contingency. My interlocutors usually explained their relatedness to me 'via somebody (*chez koro*)' rather than based on genealogy.

Humphrey (1998) observes that Buryat kinship groups usually consists of three or four generations' agnatic links and that they were closely interwoven with the Soviet hierarchy in the workplace. This connection enabled state resources such as agricultural equipment, transportation and construction materials to be used privately for domestic herding, cultivation and the selling of products in the marketplace. Illustrated with a meticulous diagram of the administrative organisation on a Buryats' collective farm, Humphrey (1998) traces the biographies of several prominent figures in local state institutions and links these with the Buryats' extended kinship networks; she shows how each position is connected to others by kinship in a way which is either hidden or overlaps with their position in the state institutions. By contrast, the kinship network of Russian Koreans, who did not have their own administrative territory, appears to be disconnected from state institutions, especially since the 1960s and the rapid growth of urbanisation. As I shall describe in Chapters 2 and 3, this does not mean that Koreans were excluded from employment in state enterprises during Soviet times; rather it was their voluntary displacement from state institutions and their preference for working in mobile groups in the informal economy which, although tolerated, resulted in disapproval and condemnation by the state. In other words, while the kinship aspect of relatedness among Buryats and other ethnic groups with autonomous territory was built into

the administrative apparatus, this was not the case for Koreans; instead, they accepted mobility in order to be 'among their own people (*sredi v svoikh*)'.

Nowadays, the Russian Korean kinship network cannot be defined by boundaries or by exterior criteria and is only apparent in specific social interactions. In other words, without a territorial base from which to claim collective identity or for social groups to specify membership, what binds Russian Koreans together appears to be a 'de-territorialised' form of kinship; hence, it is no longer possible to talk about descent group or lineage in regard to kinship in which 'blood' and 'territory' are prerequisite components (cf. Kuper 1982). The centre of the kinship network for Russian Koreans today is the nuclear or extended family, within which most social interactions take place. One crucial aspect of this network is spatiality, with each household forming a point in the network. As Ushakin (2004) observes, people often take a spatial approach to 'family ties' in Russia. Therefore, relatives act as points at various locations for the enactment of a relationship or the negation of other social relationships. Similarly, the decision by Koreans to move or stay put is usually based on the importance of relationships in their network, as illustrated by the typical comment: 'I wouldn't have moved to the RFE if my sister hadn't been living here.'

Encounters: Russian Koreans in the urban landscape of the RFE

Before conducting my fieldwork in the RFE, the image I had of Soviet Koreans was from a TV programme I used to watch as a child. The picture that had remained in my memory was of women selling kimchi in a marketplace in Central Asia; it may have been the juxtaposition of two familiar images (kimchi and women) with an unfamiliar background (Central Asia) that created such a strong impression. Whatever the reason, this image remained buried deep in my subconscious until I encountered it in person in a market in Ussuriisk, Primorskii Krai, a couple of decades later in 2002, when I arrived there for my fieldwork. Such a scene, however, is neither unique to Ussuriisk nor Central Asia, as Koreans can now be found throughout Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union, with their number reaching nearly half a million. Hence, anyone who has travelled to Russia or Central Asia is likely to have encountered Asian-

looking women in the marketplace selling spicy vegetable pickles and speaking fluent Russian.

Nevertheless, whenever one encounters Koreans in the countries of the former Soviet Union, and particularly in places such as Central Asia or Saratov, in southern Russia, which are very remote from the Korean Peninsula, the question arises of how these people came to be living there. Unravelling the puzzle leads one back to the original place they settled when they first left the Korean Peninsula, namely the Russian Far East. Hence, it was a natural choice to go to the RFE when I first decided to carry out research on Koreans in the former Soviet Union. My original intention was to investigate what it was like to have experienced 'real' Soviet socialism, rather than socialism as a utopian ideal or as a vilified and dangerous regime as presented during the Cold War in South Korea. The collapse of the Soviet Union not only shattered this bipolar image of socialism but also provided people with the opportunity to go and see its ruined remains with their own eyes.

The repatriation of Korean refugees to the RFE also raised public awareness of the tragic history of their 1937 deportation to Central Asia during the Stalinist purge. The prominent South Korean anthropologist, Lee Kwang-kyu, played a leading role in making the situation in Primorskii Krai known to the general public in South Korea, appealing for humanitarian aid for those who had been displaced (K. K. Lee 1998). In the RFE, the sudden inflow of Koreans from Central Asia resulted in the media featuring the history of the region in the late 1930s that had remained hidden and forgotten for decades. It was this public discourse and the publication of some studies on Koreans in the former Soviet Union that fuelled my interest in the subject and motivated me to set out for Ussuriisk.

My first impression on arriving in Ussuriisk was the total absence of Koreans in central areas of the city, such as the wide avenues and the plaza where the municipal administration and a statue of war heroes were located; instead, they were to be found in the marginal spaces of the city. As Brown (2005, 15) notes in her work on the Polish-Ukrainian-Russian borderland: 'the problem with writing a history of people who slip from one margin to another lies in the invisibility of the periphery.' Such urban scenes in Ussuriisk illustrate the 'plasticity of landscape' (Sturgeon 2005, 9–10). In a study of two settlements of the Akha on the border of Thailand and southern China, Sturgeon notes that the landscape is flexible and fluid in its response to changes in policy by the nation-states. This is evident in the lives of the Akha people, especially in their use of the forest and their cultivation practices, and her notion of

'plastic landscapes' in the borderland effectively captures the 'intersection of Akha practice and state plans' by the Chinese and Thai states.

Similarly, in the 'plastic landscape' of Ussuriisk, it was almost impossible to encounter Koreans at certain places and at certain times, such as on festive occasions in the city centre, but at other places and at other times, they were much more visible. Korean traders dominate the scene in the daytime markets and can be seen working alongside the Chinese in the Chinese market; groups of elderly Koreans are a familiar sight chatting together in the streets of poor residential areas on the outskirts of the city; and early in the morning in front of the police station many Koreans can be found, along with people of other nationalities, in the queue for residency registration (*propiska*) and application for permanent residency and citizenship. A city map is not sufficient to understand the urban landscape; people move around the city in particular ways, thus creating a landscape and becoming part of it themselves (de Certeau 1984, 91–93; cf. Bourdieu 1977, 2).

'Wounded attachment'

A public holiday in Ussuriisk led me to think about the marginal position of Koreans in this region in terms of the political landscape. Victory Day on May 9 every year is the biggest national holiday in Russia and celebrates the victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany in the Second World War. It is celebrated on an impressive scale in Ussuriisk and sections of local newspapers are taken up with the testimonies of veterans and older people. In the midst of this mood of celebration, I pondered the position of Koreans in relation to the commemoration of the war, given that they were excluded from joining the army in defence of 'our great Fatherland' against the Nazis and were labelled as an 'enemy nation' and 'collaborators and spies for the Japanese imperialists', such accusations forming the grounds for their forcible relocation to Central Asia.

A page from a Korean newspaper published in Ussuriisk, which featured a dedication to a Korean hero of the Second World War, grabbed my attention. His name was Aleksandr Pavlovich Min and he died in battle in 1941 (*Koryŏ Sinmun* 9 May 2004: 2). The article sought to highlight the existence of a Korean war hero and also implied that many Koreans would have

joined the Russian army to fight the Germans if they had been given the opportunity. A similar narrative often appears in the writings of Koreans (for example, (V. D. Kim 1994; G. Li 2000), in which they assert their loyalty to Russia or the Soviet Union based on their willingness and desire to participate in the war against Germany. It is interesting to note that their claims are made in relation to German rather than Japan, despite the fact that many of their forefathers were anti-Japanese socialist partisans.

From these attempts to prove their loyalty, it is obvious that Russian Koreans did not see themselves as opposed to the state – whether it be the Soviet Union or the Russian Federation – or as victims of state violence. Reflecting on the past, one elderly woman who was born in 1918 stated her opinion about the position of Koreans succinctly as follows:

There was an entire system that prevented Koreans from moving outside the area in which they were confined. We had a black stamp in our passports. It is difficult for young people nowadays to imagine being unable to move out of one's *raion* [county], city or village without the permission of a commander who was in charge of keeping the deportees under surveillance. Thank God, my grandchildren do not experience people calling them 'Japanese spies', 'hopeless elements', 'ungrateful' and other upsetting things. We thought of ourselves as second class – no, not even second class, rather the lowest class. Young people need to value the current freedom they enjoy with their right to an education, free movement and equal rights. But I tell you that never, even during the hardest years, were Koreans opposed to the state (Chen 2003, 38–39).

While members of the Korean intelligentsia make efforts to document the loyalty of Koreans, ordinary Koreans often exhibit a more ambiguous attitude toward the state. They do not oppose the state but adopt a certain indifferent and non-demanding attitude towards it, keeping themselves at a distance from its influence. My acquaintance, a woman in her fifties whom I met in the Chinese market in Ussuriisk in 2003, summarized this attitude as follows:

Tatars know how to unite and demand their rights [she had divorced her Tatar husband]. But Koreans earn money, live well and give their children an education – that's all. Making demands is not in our blood. (*Koreitsy zarabatyvaiut, zhivut khorosho, doiut detiam obrozovanie-eto vsio. V krovi, koreitsy ne khotiat trebovat'ia*).

However, this pragmatic stance has its downside. A series of affirmative legal measures concerning the status of Koreans as 'repatriates' or 'refugees' to the RFE were introduced in the 1990s making many Koreans eligible to benefit from state rehabilitation programmes. However, most Koreans were indifferent toward these measures and failed to apply. As one interlocutor commented: 'Koreans are not friendly towards the law.' Despite this tendency to distance themselves from the state, most of the Russian Koreans that I met did not consider themselves to be detached or separate from it. Strictly speaking, what they wished to distance themselves from was Russian bureaucracy, while still retaining their sense of attachment to the Russian state. This sense of belonging was based on the ways in which their fragmented history of displacement had been interwoven with their cultural and historical experience of Soviet socialism.

It is helpful here to consider the term 'wounded attachment', which was coined by Wendy Brown (1995) to describe a person's sense of belonging to the state despite state-induced suffering in the past. Brown drew on the work of the Jamaican-born cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997) on the post-colonial subjects of the British Empire who came to Britain in the post-war period. Hall himself describes how he came to Britain with a great affection and sense of affinity with the former colonial power. Some similarities can be seen in the way that many Soviet Koreans moved to Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although one reason was to escape the violent conflicts in Central Asia, their move can also be seen as an affirmation of their cultural affinity with Russia, which had been forged during the Soviet period. Of course, this cultural affinity was partly the product of Soviet education and reflected the dominant position of the Russian nation in the Soviet Union, but it was also influenced by the emphasis placed on the concept of 'friendship among nations' in Soviet socialism. What differentiates this ethnography from other works is that the scar or wound by the state was not perceived as evidence of the state's violence, but rather implicitly considered to be a marker of belonging to the state, especially for ordinary people. In other words, it was a marker of their belonging to the Soviet Union (and later to Russia), as their tenacious residence indicates their strong alliance with Russia despite the wound and scar. This becomes more evident when comparison is made between Koreans and other East Asian peoples, especially the Chinese who were deported to China around the time of the Koreans' forcible displacement in 1937 (see Chapter 1).

The fieldwork on which this work is based was conducted during the period 2002-2004 (with follow-up research taking place later) at a time when Russian citizenship was a topic of hot debate. With the influx of people from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the 1990s, the newly founded Russian Federation had to grapple with the question of what it meant to be 'Russian' and whether citizenship should be granted only to 'ethnic Russians (*russkie*)' or to non-Russian people as well, including migrants from republics of the former Soviet Union. Against the background of a growing Russian nationalistic mood, Russian Koreans, by refusing to claim victimhood and criticise the state, continued to assert their affinity with ethnic Russians and other peoples within the Soviet Union and the contribution that their hard work had made to the Soviet socialism (see Chapter 3).

The Sovietisation of Russian Koreans during their time in Central Asia can be clearly seen in their strong desire to distinguish themselves from later waves of Korean migrants which arrived in the RFE in the post-Soviet period. In the early 1990s, border controls in the RFE were dramatically changed from a state of hermetic closure to one of total opening without any visa regulations. Although this visa-free border regime was soon revoked, it resulted in a dramatic influx of Chinese traders to the RFE, including Chinese Koreans. Adventurous entrepreneurs, NGO workers, language students and missionaries also flew into the RFE from South Korea. In this context, Russian Koreans performed a dual role in regard to the social control of the border: on the one hand, they provided the incoming Koreans from China and South Korea with mediating points in the RFE, thus helping to keep the border open; on the other hand, they were instrumental in keeping the internal border guarded by asserting their sense of belonging to the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation not only by referring back to their shared memory of Soviet socialism but also by differentiating themselves from other groups of Koreans (see Chapter 2). It is this latter role that reveals their deep-seated fear of being labelled as 'aliens (*chuzhoi*)' in the RFE.

Russian Koreans and Soviet disengagement from the Asian-Pacific frontier

The question posed by the presence of Koreans on the Russian border in Northeast Asia in its geopolitical context is not the main topic of this book but is still crucial for our background

understanding. One of the intriguing aspects of the position of Koreans during their long period of residence in the RFE until their deportation in 1937 was the dilemma of being situated between the two empires of the Soviet Union and Japan. Koreans in the RFE were widely identified with Japanese imperialism, with scant regard paid to their resistance against it and little acknowledgement of their pro-Bolshevik partisan activities during the Russian civil war or their valuable contribution towards agricultural productivity in the RFE. Stalin's decision to deport the Koreans in 1937 was designed and executed in an attempt to strengthen the Soviet border and minimize Japanese infiltration into the RFE (Martin 1998). As I shall discuss in Chapter 1, the threat of a Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union increased from the mid-1930s following the Manchurian Incident of 1931 and the subsequent establishment of Manchukuo; this meant that, in its infancy, the Soviet Union had to face the challenge of wars on both its European and East Asian frontiers. Viewed retrospectively, the deportation of Koreans from the RFE left a lasting impact on this borderland that presaged the upcoming Cold War; this uneven impact of the Soviet socialist revolution on Eastern Europe and East Asia is an important research question that deserves attention but unfortunately cannot be fully dealt with in this book.

In this regard, Kimie Hara (2007, 3) provides us with an interesting and helpful insight into the Cold War on the Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific frontiers. She claims that 'the Cold War differed in its nature between the Atlantic and Pacific sides of the continent' and argues that a post-colonial perspective must be applied not only to understand the creation of the Cold War system but also its dismantling. Thus she contends that although the Cold War on the Euro-Atlantic frontier has ended, it still continues on the Asian-Pacific front, as evidenced by the division of the Korean Peninsula and Russia's ongoing territorial disputes with Japan over islands in the Pacific Ocean. To understand this disparity, we must consider not only the peace-making process at the end of World War II but also how Asian countries in the Asian-Pacific region in the post-war period became 'surrogate battlefields' for the Soviet Union and the USA, with 'hot wars' resulting in divisions of territory in Korea, Vietnam and China. Her discussion focuses on the origins of current territorial disputes in Northeast Asia resulting from America's decision not to clearly define Japan's borders and its desire to protect its strategic interests in the region following Japan's defeat.

However, I would like to add that Soviet disengagement on its Asian-Pacific frontier has also been an important factor in the creation of the current post-Cold War situation in

Northeast Asia; this can be seen as dating back to Russia's defeat in the war against Japan in 1904-5, which was referred to as World War Zero, as it precipitated both World War I and the Russian Revolution (Steinberg et al. 2005; Wolff 2007).⁴ International conflicts on a global scale have not only divided land but have also divided people groups with large numbers of refugees being scattered in various directions. In Northeast Asia, from the beginning of Japan's expansion of its empire until the end of World War II, Koreans have been divided into several groups, such as North Koreans, South Koreans, Chinese Koreans, Japanese Koreans, Sakhalin Koreans and Russian Koreans (cf. Schmid 2002). Of these, the Russian Koreans and the Chinese Koreans were the earliest to migrate away from the Korean Peninsula from the late nineteenth century onwards. What distinguishes Russian Koreans from other Korean diasporas in Northeast Asia in contemporary academic research is their 'presumed absence', a notion that has been reinforced by the relative lack of academic research compared with other Korean diasporas and by the Russian central government's policy of maintaining the RFE as a stronghold throughout the Cold War. Therefore, while the majority of the somewhat sparse research on Koreans in the former Soviet Union focuses on their history in the RFE and their deportation, research on the RFE in general tends to concentrate on its geopolitical aspect, often with the keywords of 'security' and 'strategic importance'.

The deportation of Koreans from the RFE to Central Asia was one of the means by which the Soviet Union sought to disengage from East Asia and minimise its involvement in conflicts arising from Japanese imperialism. As Zhanna Son (2012) argues, Koreans were held 'hostage' between the Soviet Union and the Japanese empire in the early twentieth century, being used by both sides as pawns in their conflict (also see, Huttenbach 1993). Japan used the excuse of needing to pacify anti-Japanese Korean partisans in the RFE for its incursions into Russian territory in East Asia, and Russia aimed to invalidate such excuses and secure its borders in the RFE by removing all residents of East Asian origin. The idea that an administrative territory could be sealed and secured by forcibly relocating more than 170,000 Korean residents in the late 1930s is pertinent to Putin's current approach to the RFE, which pursues the development of the region in accordance with Russia's so-called 'pivot to the East (*povorot na vostok*)'. This same utilitarian approach that uses the region to serve the grand

⁴ Two volumes on the Russo-Japanese adopted the term, 'World War Zero', highlighting global scale of the war in commemoration of the centennial of the war. The global scale in these works was drawn in the opposition between Europe and Asia and consequently not only neglecting Japan's imperial expansion in East Asia but also presenting the war as if the clash was between civilizations, though it was the result of clash between empires aiming at obtaining northeast China and Korea as their colonies.

designs of the state without regard to local conditions and the needs of its residents produces certain contradictions between the state's policy and the residents' interests in this marginal borderland. In what Etkind (2011) refers to as 'internal colonialism', the people in Siberia and the RFE are viewed as chess pieces, which can be removed or settled according to the wishes of the central government. Early observers, such as Lattimore(1932) and Kolarz (1954), adopted an extremely pessimistic view of the prospects for the region; they compared its internal colonialism with European colonialism in Africa and concluded that while the problem of African colonialism would eventually be solved, there was no prospect of finding a solution to the problems in the RFE.

Throughout the century and a half of Russia's occupation of the RFE, the region has played an important role in Russia's dream of transcendent prosperity. This 'imperial vision', inspired by the successful exploration and settlement of the American West (Bassin 1999), was the driving force behind the eastward expansion of the Russian empire in the nineteenth century. The fantasy of the Amur River as the Siberian equivalent of the Mississippi in the American gold rush of the nineteenth century has now been replaced by the dream of a new 'Silicon Valley' with free international commercial ports on the Asian Pacific and the transformation of Vladivostok into a new Hong Kong or San Francisco. Therefore, the Far Eastern frontier experiences an ongoing state of tension between the state's geopolitical aspirations to bring 'civilisation' and development to the region and its xenophobic concerns about neighbouring countries in East Asia. I argue that the history and contemporary social structure of Russian Koreans epitomises these acute problems and intrinsic characteristics of the RFE. My aim in this book is to shed light from an anthropological perspective on the way in which the lives of Koreans are entwined with other local residents in this borderland of Northeast Asia. Thus, it is important to describe their on-going contemporary relationship with the RFE as a 'dwelling place' (cf. Ingold 2000), rather than as the geopolitical object of state projects based on grand projects to transform the human environment.

Unity and diversity

Although I use the term 'Russian Koreans' in this book, there is in fact considerable diversity amongst Koreans in the RFE, largely deriving from the time and politico-geographical background of their migration from the Korean Peninsula. According to Kim German (2008) and others (5), Koreans in the former Soviet Union can roughly be divided into three categories: 'Soviet Koreans', including those deported from the RFE, numbering 171,000 in 1937; 'Sakhalin Koreans', consisting of residents of Sakhalin Island who were drafted in as labourers by the Japanese government in the early 1940s during World War II but were unable to obtain permission to be repatriated to Korea after the war (approx. 60,000 in the late 1940s); and 'North Koreans' who came from North Korea with labour contracts to work in the Soviet Union (approx. 40,000 in the late 1940s).

Although this broad categorisation is helpful, the passage of time has blurred the distinctions between these three groups as people have moved around during Soviet times and successive generations have evolved. For example, many men of the third category went to Central Asia after completing their period of contract work in Russia and ended up marrying women belonging to the first category. For those born from such marriages, the distinction between the original groups has little significance.

While the old groupings became mixed in the process of marriage and generational succession, political change subsequently brought about a new type of differentiation amongst Koreans. It goes without saying that the term 'Soviet Koreans' lost its meaning with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but this was accompanied by the emergence of many regional or micro-regional groups, such as Uzbekistan's, Kazakhstan's and Kyrgyzstan's Koreans. For example, 'Primorskii Koreans', who returned to the RFE following the death of Stalin in 1953, occupy a different social position in the RFE today from those who migrated from Central Asia from the early 1990s onwards. Also, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the following surge of migration, Koreans in the former Soviet Union and their offspring are trying to cope with these changes by strengthening their ties with the countries and the local areas where they now dwell.

However, despite the diversity that has emerged since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union is still a meaningful reference by which Russian Koreans define and perceive their world (now Russian language is replacing Soviet Union for reference in tying Koreans in Russia and CIS countries), as many post-socialist changes are rooted in the socialist past. With this in mind, this book mainly focuses on the experience of the first category of

Koreans; however, it does not exclude those with different historical backgrounds, and the question of how different groups interact and perceive each other will be explored in terms of the time of their migration (see Chapter 2).

In addition to the geopolitical changes brought about by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the ending of the Cold War resulted in an increasing transnational dimension in the representation of Koreans in the former Soviet Union. In this context, the medium of language and its political connotations became an important factor in their naming and categorisation. This work is concerned with three languages: Russian, English and Korean. In Russian, Russian Koreans usually refer to themselves simply as *'koreitsy* (Koreans)' without any supplementary preceding adjective, as their use of the Russian language indicates their long historical presence and sense of belonging to Russia. Other Koreans, however, including those such as myself from South Korea, ethnic Korean traders from China, refugees and migrant labourers from North Korea, and Christian missionaries from America, are referred to with the respective adjectives for 'South', 'Chinese', 'North', and 'American' before *'koreitsy*' (see Chapter 2 for more details).

However, when the language switches to vernacular Korean (this is different from the Korean currently spoken in South Korea), Russian Koreans refer to themselves using the endonym 'Koryŏ saram' (lit. people of Koryŏ). Koryŏ was the medieval kingdom which existed on the Korean Peninsula from the tenth to the fourteenth century, and both the English exonym 'Korea' and the Russian exonym *'Koreia'* originate from this. People who leave their homeland usually adopt the exonym for their country as it is known in their host country; in other words, the exonym becomes their endonym, as it is more easily acknowledged and understood in the new host society and is also resistant to historical changes that occur in their country of origin. Hence, it is ironic that although these diasporas were forced to leave their home country due to radical historical change, their ethnonym was frozen and preserved reflecting the time of their migration without being influenced by subsequent changes in the endonym of their home country. In Northeast Asia, this has been the case for both Russian and Chinese Koreans in their severance from South Korea during the Cold War. However, the end of the Cold War brought about a new transnational movement of Russian Koreans to South Korea and resulted in a complex situation that is reflected in the various terms used for them depending on the medium language and place of the term is used.

In South Korea, Koreans in the former Soviet Union are referred to using various terms, each with varying connotations about the degree of inclusiveness or distinction felt between South Koreans and the diaspora. In the 1990s, they were usually referred to as '*soryŏn saram* (Soviet people)' in the context of their role as migrant workers. Around this same time, as research on Koreans in the Soviet Union began to emerge, '*jaeso hanin*' (Koreans in the Soviet Union) became the normative term of reference, especially in historical research on their anti-Japanese activities in the RFE. A new term '*koryŏin* (koryŏ people)' also emerged, not only in popular discourse but also in academic research, which adopted a cultural relativist stance towards them. However, my interlocutors often asked me in a somewhat offended tone, 'What on earth is a *koryŏin*?' indicating a certain sense of alienation from this newly created term. This topic of naming in Russian and Korean requires a separate investigation with a focus on the political implications of the production of knowledge about Russian Koreans. However, the relatively neutral English term 'Russian Koreans' that I use in this book has the pragmatic advantage of enabling me to maintain a certain distance from the politically charged contexts of their relationships with Russia and South Korea.

Fieldwork and outline of chapters

My fieldwork was based mainly in three locations, which are connected via the Korean network. The arrangement of the chapters in my book reflects these three different places and I draw on common issues and practices which connect people across them. Initially, I went to Ussuriisk in June 2002 and studied Russian for the first six months of my stay, before embarking on my fieldwork. It was crucial to be able to communicate with my interlocutors in Russian, as it is widely spoken among them; their Korean language is a northern dialect of Korean which I could not understand fully and is also a somewhat 'domestic' language (cf. Humphrey 1979) spoken mainly by elderly people at home. As a result, conducting fieldwork research in Korean would have limited the scope of my research and the range of people with whom I could interact. My second visit was not until 2010 and the time lapse between the two visits provided me with a valuable sense of change and continuity in the lives of Koreans in the RFE. The three locations for my research were the Korean House and the Chinese market in

Ussuriisk, and a village (referred to in my research as Novoselovo) in Spasskii Raion, roughly at the midpoint between Vladivostok and Khabarovsk (see Map 3).

The Korean House was located near the pedagogical institute where I studied Russian and was the home of the Koreans' ethnic organisation and of a couple of South Korean NGOs. I did not intend to conduct fieldwork there, but practical reasons, such as internet access and eating in the Korean restaurant in the building, resulted in occasional visits. Initially, I was reluctant to spend too much time there, as I regarded the Koreans who gathered at the Korean House as 'well-known Koreans' rather than the 'ordinary' Koreans, who were the focus of my interest. However, I later discovered that the building was not only a venue for ethnic politicians but also for Koreans from many walks of life. In Chapter 5, I analyse the data collected through my observations of the activities of Koreans in this building and discuss the meaning of public space for them in relation to local politics.

Having completed my Russian language study and with the aspiration of conducting fieldwork amongst 'ordinary' people from March 2003, I began to search for 'communities' of Koreans. Given the scattered nature of Koreans residing in urban areas, I aimed to find a village in which a significant number of Koreans were living in close proximity. After visiting several villages, I decided on Novoselovo, where there were around 60 Korean households mainly engaged in commercial vegetable-growing using greenhouses. In Chapter 4, I discuss how these rural Koreans maintain their 'independence' derived from their domestic economic and social activities and particularly focus on their family and kinship relations in gender terms. I consider their emphasis on 'independence (*samostoiatei'nost'*)' from the market and the state as an 'illusion', but one that is connected to economic reality. In describing the specific labour process for growing vegetables in greenhouses, I draw on Lévi-Strauss's notion of the 'house society' as 'a moral person'. In tandem with an analysis of the male moral person objectified in the green house, I focus on the changing status of women within the household in order to explore how the Korean household extends across generations and carries out transactions beyond its boundary through the activities of women and food consumption on both quotidian and festive occasions.

While my fieldwork in the village was conducted during a relatively short but intensive period, I spent a longer time in Ussuriisk where I visited the homes of my Korean acquaintances for social occasions and to conduct interviews, attended family ceremonies, accompanied local Koreans to churches opened by South Korean missionaries, observed

public events held by ethnic political organizations and spent time in the Chinese market and central market talking with Korean traders. During interviews and informal conversation, I asked people about their migration stories, and it is these that provide the basis for Chapter 2, in which I examine how the temporality of migration affected the different status of Koreans in response to the social changes during the 1990s and early 2000s in the RFE. In this respect, I discuss how links with the Soviet past are used as a basis for distancing oneself from other Korean groups, especially from the Chinese Korean traders who have significantly increased in number since the opening of the border with China.

In addition to my fieldwork, I carried out historical research in two state archives and collected written materials from the library of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East (IHAE DVO RAN). I draw on this research in Chapters 1 and 3 to examine the shared historical experience of Russian Koreans in the RFE as a discursive condition of their contemporary lives. In Chapter 1, I examine the formation of the 'Korean question' from the initial migration of Koreans to the RFE from the Korean Peninsula during the expansion of the Russian Empire. I view the presence of Koreans as central to the colonisation of this region and as a defining factor in constituting the periphery and borderland of the empire. I argue that the 'Korean question' was formed, changed, and has been attempted to be resolved in accordance with the very idea of this region, and that Koreans came to embody the region as a borderland. In Chapter 3, I explore the Koreans' transformation in the building and sustaining Soviet socialism in Central Asia following their deportation in 1937, focusing on their work ethic and their experience of migration cultivation. By looking at the change from their traditional rice-farming in institutionalised state enterprises to migration vegetable cultivation in the informal economic sphere, I examine their work ethic and the creation of mobility in the context of the political economy of the Soviet Union. I argue that their hard-work ethic is the basis of the transformation in their status from 'enemy of the nation' to participants in Soviet socialism and from objects of state violence to subjects of their own social world.

Chapter 1 The history of ‘the Korean question’ and border making in the Russian Far East

I prefer a Russian desert to a Korean-made paradise.

(Governor-General of Priamur, P.F. Unterberger, in the early 1900s, (K. K. Lee 1998; Saveliev 2010)

Koreans provided (*obespechli*) the Russian Far East with an abundance of fish and vegetables. Now see what has happened here since they forced the Koreans out. Following their deportation, fish and vegetables are in short supply.

(T.A. Kim, from field notes in August 2004)⁵

From the economic point of view the anti-Korean measures [forcible relocation] resulted in a clear disadvantage for the Soviet Far East, though not for the USSR as a whole.

(Walter Kolarz 1954, 40)

With the Peking Treaty of 1860, Russia expanded its territory into East Asia and consequently came to border both China and Korea (see Map 1). Since then, the disparity between the region’s remoteness from the Russian centre of government and its proximity to East Asian countries has been a central issue in the colonisation of the RFE and the treatment of residents

⁵ According to John Stephan, the RFE in 1939 ‘had met none of its Five-Year Plan targets. Production indexes for industry, fisheries, and forestry were below 1935 levels [...] Far Eastern agriculture suffered irreparable losses: repression of rural leaders and specialists, compounded by the havoc wrought by forced collectivisation and the expulsion of Chinese and Koreans, deprived the Far East of its most productive farmers’ (Stephan 1994, 219–220). Although there is no information available with which to verify the correlation between these low production levels and the mass deportation of Koreans to Central Asia, it is equally hard to deny the latter’s detrimental effect on the primary industries of the RFE.

originally from neighbouring China and Korea. Whereas there has been a persistent and obvious negativity towards China and the Chinese – often phrased as the ‘Chinese threat (*ugroza*)’ or ‘yellow peril (*opasnost*)’ – the representation of Korea and Koreans in the RFE has been characterised by greater ambiguity and complexity and has come to be referred to by the simple but popular phrase, ‘the Korean question (*koreiskii vopros*)’.

The Korean question has been a complex aspect of the colonisation of the RFE both by the Russian Empire and, later, by the Soviet Union, and in this chapter I argue that it is rooted in the regional problems, both domestic and international, with which Russian colonisers have struggled since their acquisition of the region. On the one hand, rather than being viewed simply as a threatening presence in the RFE, Koreans were seen as ‘useful’ (*poleznyi*) in colonising a territory that was so remote from Moscow,⁶ especially in the development of arable land and the production of food that formed the main mode of colonisation in the Far East. On the other hand, the Korean Peninsula, from which Koreans originated, and Manchuria, from which many others migrated, were continually at the centre of international power conflicts that due to their geographical proximity inevitably affected the RFE. Following the acquisition of the RFE by Imperial Russia, a series of conflicts arose in its vicinity, including the Qing-Japan War (also known as the First Sino-Japan War, 1894-5), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), the Russian Civil War (1917-22), the Manchurian Incident in 1931, and, finally, World War II. Despite these conflicts, Russia’s main international policy focused on maintaining the status quo in the RFE following its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War and the Soviet Union continued with this same stance (cf. Pak 2004).

Although internal colonisation and international conflicts are not identical problems and require different solutions, the Russian authorities gave greater weighting to the western (European) frontier in both matters, as the western region was more developed and the European frontier was viewed as more strategically important. Walter Kolarz (1954, 13), the mid-20th century observer of the Soviet Far East who focused on the question of colonialism and socialism, rightly argues that ‘the dividing line in the Far East does not run between various groups of European colonists [such as Ukrainians, ethnic Russians, Poles, Moldovans, etc.] but between Europeans and Asiatics.’ However, the collaboration with certain Asian groups in the colonisation of the RFE crossed or blurred this dividing line and the position of those who collaborated, such as naturalised Koreans, was affected by problems related to Russia’s internal colonialism. This is an important aspect of Russian imperialism which distinguishes it from

⁶ The expansive nature of Russian territory is often represented in geographical phrases, such as ‘from Nakhodka [a harbour city in the RFE] to Kaliningrad [on the Baltic Sea]’.

other forms of imperialism. While other Western imperial powers maintained a clear dividing line between the colonisers and the colonised, helped in many cases by a great maritime distance such as between Great Britain and India and between European empires and their African colonies, the colonisers and the colonised in Siberia and the RFE were one and the same (cf. Kolarz 1954, 180–181; Etkind 2011). The majority of Russians who migrated to the RFE were poor peasants looking for arable land following the abolition of serfdom in 1856. Their motivation was not very different from the Korean peasants who migrated to the RFE, however one group came from the West and the other from East and this placed the Koreans in the RFE at the intersection between Russia's international relations with East Asia and its internal colonialism. I therefore believe that understanding the Korean question goes beyond a simple ethnic problem pertaining exclusively to the Koreans and that it can provide the key to understanding the complex nature of the RFE.

This chapter therefore examines the history of Koreans in the RFE from the time of their migration from the Korean peninsula in the 1860s until their removal to Central Asia in 1937, focusing on the emergence, submergence and re-appearance of the Korean question in order to examine key issues in the RFE, particularly in relation to its role as the frontier to East Asia. In so doing, I take 'the Korean question' in the RFE as a trope, rather than as an actual problem *per se*, in order not only to facilitate the exploration of various aspects pertaining to the presence of Koreans in relation to the colonisation of the region, but also to tease out a certain repetitive pattern in the trope's invocation. In addition, the influx of Koreans to the RFE throughout the history of the Imperial Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet Far East has been closely interlinked with the loosening of the border regime in the region, raising again the trope of the Korean question, which is 'replicated, but not quite the same' (cf. Green 2005).

The border regime in the RFE also illustrates the ambiguity of Russia's position: situated between East and West, the regime turned back on its endeavour to fix her into a certain category with clearly-defined borders. On the one hand, the borderland of Primorskii Krai sharply represents a part of Russia just like any other borderland or frontier, but is also nested in Russia's ambiguity.⁷ Thus, with the assistance of oral material collected during my fieldwork, an historical overview of the Korean question in the RFE shall draw on the condition of the presence of the Koreans, in turn embodying the tension arising from the endeavour to 'fix things' in this region.

⁷ Ssorin-Chaikov (2003) discusses such a 'nested Orientalism' in the study of the Evenki, a small ethnic group in sub-arctic Siberia. While the Evenki were represented as connected with nature through the use of the term '*inorodtsy* (aliens)', Koreans were mainly represented as '*inostrantsy* (foreigners)'.

Drawing on sources in the state archive and in public media, my research highlights that Koreans in the RFE have been represented as a problem in both the pre-1937 and the post-Soviet periods. This contrasts with the mid-1950s, when thousands of Koreans voluntarily repatriated to this region after the death of Stalin. I did not come across any historical material relating to the Korean question concerning this migration, nor relating to the socialist period when Primorskii Krai was closed to the outside world, even though 6,000–8,000 Koreans were residing there at this time and were joined by many more who migrated later in the 1990s.⁸ In other words, public awareness of the Korean presence as a question or a problem appears to only emerge when the border is open to the outside world. If Vladivostok is seen as a window of the RFE towards the outside world, then the Korean question might be viewed as a floating marker of this borderland that comes to the surface when the border is open but sinks out of sight when the border is closed.

An early crossing: the flight from hunger

The RFE was chronologically the last region to be conquered and geographically the most eastern territory associated with the expansion of the Russian Empire; it was acquired even later than the far-northern arctic lands of Chukotka and Alaska (for a detailed and excellent discussion with rich historical data on the change of direction from expansion towards the North Pacific to expansion towards the Ussui River, see Bassin 1999, chapter 7). When, by virtue of the Peking Treaty in 1860, the Russian Empire obtained the RFE, encompassing the land beyond the Amur River and the territory between the Ussurii River and the Pacific Ocean, the region was sparsely populated with only the Russian colonising army and a small number of indigenous peoples residing in this vast area (see Map 1). Figures for the population of Primorskii Oblast⁹ in 1861 range between 15,600 and 35,100,¹⁰ but these are merely estimates as the first census in the region was not conducted until 1897. Before the arrival of the Russians,

⁸ In the next chapter I shall discuss different groups of Koreans according to the time of their migration to the RFE.

⁹ There have been several changes in territorial administration in the RFE. In 1860, when the Peking Treaty was agreed, the present Primor'e was called Ussuriisk and South-Ussuriisk Krai. It formed the southern part of Primorskii Oblast', which included the former Kamchatka Oblast on the lower Amur until 1856 and also Ohotskii Okrug from 1858. For an outline of the changes in the territorial and administrative structure of the RFE, see Stephan (1994) in English and Vashchuk et al. (2002, 10) in Russian.

¹⁰ Assimilating various sources, Vashchuk et al. (2002, 10) estimates that the population at this time reached 35,100, while Slezkine (1994b, 95, cited sources omitted) provides the lower figure of 15,600.

Chinese and Koreans were forbidden to enter this region as it was considered to be the sacred origin of the Manchu Qing dynasty.

This lack of population was the most acute problem faced by the Russian imperialists in their desire to exploit the region's natural resources and colonise the region. They took various measures to ensure that their subjects settled in the region and thus the expansion of Imperial Russia into the RFE was critically aligned with population movement (Vashchuk et al. 2002; Rybakovskii 1990). Migration from Russia's other regions was encouraged by conferring certain advantages (*vygody*) and benefits (*l'goty*) on the settlers.¹¹ Chronologically, the acquisition of the RFE coincided with the abolition of peasant serfdom in 1861; this historical coincidence acted as an impetus for the migration of landless peasants from the more densely populated western parts of Russia to this newly acquired colony of the Russian Empire.¹² In addition, on 27 April 1861, the enactment of the law on 'Rights for the settlers of Russians and foreigners in Amur and Primoryi Oblast' of Eastern Siberia' provided the basis for a colonising process marked by significant benefits for settlers (Kuzin 2001, 16–17). The benefits comprised an allotment of 100 *desiatin*¹³ of land for each male person (*po muzhskoi dush*) and exemption from army service for 10 years and from tax for 20 years¹⁴ (Kuzin 2001, 17; A. I. Petrov 2000, 96).

¹¹ In the Epilogue, I will briefly discuss similar kinds of benefits and allowances provided by Putin's government for the development of the RFE today.

¹² For a comparative historical study on the colonisation of Russia's peripheries by means of population relocation, see Breyfogle et al. (2007).

¹³ One *desiatin* is equivalent to 1.09 hectares (2.7 acres).

¹⁴ This benefit was reduced to 15 *desiatin* (16.39 hectares) for each male person (*po muzhskoi dushi*) in 1901; prior to that, the grant of 100 *desiatin* to foreigners had already been cancelled in 1881 (A. I. Petrov 2001, 97; G. Li 2000, 16). Until then, the settlers had been called 'old resident-100 desiatinnians' (*starozhili-stodesiatinniki*) (G. Li 2000, *ibid*). Petrov (2001) points out that Koreans were admitted to the RFE with the social status (*soslovie*) of 'peasants' until the Chosun Kingdom and Tsarist Russia established diplomatic relations in 1884 and drew up a treaty in 1888 dealing with the status of migrants. However, although the law stated that not only Russian subjects but also foreign settlers should be granted 100 *desiatin* of land, this ruling did not seem to be applied equally to all Korean migrants. It could be said that the modern notion of citizenship (*grazhdanstvo*) was not established at that time; instead, 'subject-hood' (*poddanstvo*) was assigned to some Koreans, with the acceptance of Russian Orthodox Christianity as the central criterion. In the late 19th century, although many Korean settlers in the RFE converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity and received *poddanstvo*, this did not guarantee the receipt of 100 *desiatin*: the only clear example of a grant of 100 *desiatin* was to the Koreans relocated from Pos'et to Priamur, who were refugees from the great famine of 1869. In 1871, they were relocated to near Blagoveshchensk in Amurskaia Oblast, forming a village called Blagoslovenie, where they received 100 *desiatin* for each household and were treated equally as Russian subjects. In this historical context, the movement within the Russian Empire served as the basis for the assimilation of 'people from another country' (*inostrantsy*) into 'people of different origin' (*inorodtsy*), the former term emphasising the 'foreign nature' of the migrants and the latter term recognising their sense of belonging to their adopted country. In a similar vein, the deportation of 1937, in a sense, formed the basis of their integration into the Soviet Union, although it produced great suffering and death for many Koreans.

However, despite these incentives, Russian settlers preferred the Priamur Oblast' to Primor'e, due to better living conditions and food supplies. This created a favourable situation for accepting Koreans from across the Tumen River (the border between the Russian Empire and the Chosun Kingdom in the Korean Peninsula), despite the fact that they risked severe punishment from the Chosun Kingdom's authorities if they were discovered making the border-crossing.¹⁵ Although there is controversy surrounding the date when Koreans began to settle in this region, the earliest 'official' date for their arrival is recognised as January 1864, when thirteen families were granted the right to live in the Pos'et area, which borders Korea. According to an army officer of the border guard in November 1863, this was according to their express wish (S. G. Lee 1994; A. I. Petrov 2000; Pak 2004).¹⁶ The number of Korean settlers subsequently increased year by year, while Russian settlement was delayed until the opening of the Trans-Baikal Railroad in 1900 and the Chinese Eastern Railroad in 1902 (Ban 1996, 17).¹⁷

In the summer of 2004, I had the opportunity to visit the place where the Koreans' first settlement village, Tizinkhe, was located. The area was wild, covered with weeds, and it was impossible to find any remains of the village; it felt like a place of lost memories rather than the historical origin of the Koreans in Russia. A beekeeper was there collecting honey during the summer season; he was setting up his camp and had hung up the Russian national flag above his tent. I joked to the elderly Korean man who accompanied me, 'It looks like we will need an archaeological excavation to uncover evidence of the Korean settlement here!' In fact, archaeological objects have been found in the current Khasanskii Raion, images of which have been displayed on the local authority's website, and the archaeological research conducted there has led to the publication of a journal article on the topic (Zhushchikhovskaya, Niktin, and Teleyuev 2013).

Figure 1. A Memorial Stone for the First Korean Settlement in Khasanskii Raion

¹⁵ According to Bishop (1985, 10), 'the whole of the Russo-Korean frontier, 11 miles in length, and a broad river full of sandbanks, passing through a desert of sand hills to the steely blue ocean, lay crimson in the sunset.'

¹⁶ Przheval'ski (1947, 97), who recorded his travels in the RFE (then Southern Ussuriisk Krai), noted that 12 Korean families crossed to Russia in 1863 but that the number had increased to 1,800 across three villages when he travelled to the border of the Tumen River in late 1867. See Przheval'ski (1947, 299) for statistics on the number of Russian and Korean settlers in the three villages at the time of his travel.

¹⁷ Before the opening of the Trans-Siberian Railway, peasants migrated to this region by sea from the port of Odessa to Vladivostok; the journey took two months. Until 1897, more than half of the settlers were from the Ukraine (Vashchuk et al. 2002, 11), leading some Ukrainian nationalists to refer to Primorskii Krai as the 'green wedge (*zelenyi klin*)' (Kolarz 1954, 13).

Figure 2. The Governor of Primorskii Krai in Excursion to the Border in Khasanskii Raion

Figure 3. A Memorial Statue for War Heroes in Khasanskii Raion

My interlocutors also told me how they often came across objects when they ploughed their land that appeared to have been used by former Korean settlers. This was not complete coincidence, as many of my interlocutors worked on land that used to be cultivated by their forefathers. Commonly found objects included hand stone mills (*maetdol*), rice and soup bowls, and farming implements, all in traditional Korean style.

These ‘archaeological remains’, abandoned and long buried, contrast starkly with the prosperity enjoyed by Korean villages near this site in the past, as observed by an English woman traveller, Isobel Bishop, in 1897.¹⁸ These archaeological objects are not only the debris that the Koreans could not take with them when they were forcibly relocated to Central Asia, but their burial can also be seen as a means of silencing the past. According to Ann Stoler (2008, 201), ‘ruins are not just found, they are made’. This means that ruins are not simply things in the past, but are constituted in the present as a refusal of alternative futures or as an evocation of ‘irretrievability’. She also observes that some ruins are not acknowledged at all and, in this sense, the Korean settlements that have vanished are similar to the Palestinian villages which were ‘razed, bulldozed, and buried by the state-endorsed Israeli Afforestation Project, an intensive planning campaign that has literally obliterated the very presence of Palestinian villages and farmsteads on Jerusalem’s periphery for over 50 years’ (Stoler 2008, 201). In a sense, my discussion of the Koreans’ history in the RFE resembles the discovery of these archaeological objects in their former settlements: as the excavated objects tell us in a fragmentary way of the past, my discussion of topics strongly related with the present may appear somewhat fragmentary, but I believe that both the past and the present are necessary to

¹⁸ Bishop (1895, 16–17) provides a detailed description of a Korean household she visited: ‘Most of the dwellings have four, five, and even six rooms, with papered walls and ceilings, fretwork doors and windows, “glazed” with white translucent paper, finely matted floors, and an amount of furnishings rarely found even in a mandarin’s house in Korea. Cabinets, bureaus, and rice chests of ornamental wood with handsome brass decorations, low tables, stools, cushions, brass samovars, dressers displaying brass dinner service, brass bowls, china, tea-glasses, brass candlesticks, brass kerosene lamps, and a host of other things, illustrate the capacity to secure comfort. Pictures of the Tsar and Tsaritzza, of the Christ, and of Greek saints, and framed cards of twelve Christian prayers, replace the coarse daubs of the family daemons in very many houses. Out of doors full granaries, ponies, mares with foals, black pigs of an improved breed, draught oxen, and fat oxen for the Vladivostok market, with ox-carts and agricultural implements, attest solid material prosperity. It would be impossible for a traveller to meet with more cordial hospitality and more cleanly and comfortable accommodation than I did in these Korean homes’.

help us obtain a better understanding of the intertwined history of Koreans and the RFE.

Writing the history of Koreans in the RFE could be likened to treading over uneven land and avoiding certain traps and stumbling blocks, such as considering their history in purely ethnic terms which results in reducing complex problems to one simple explanatory framework. One example of such a stumbling block relates to the date when Koreans first came to the region. There is overall consensus, both among the migrant Koreans themselves and in texts written by Russian travellers, that poor conditions in their native country were the main ‘push factor’ for Koreans making the border crossing to Russia (Przheval’ski 1947; cf. Kuzin 2001; A. I. Petrov 2000). However, the date of their first migration has remained controversial with a question mark as to whether or not Koreans were living in this area before the Russian Empire acquired the region. Russian Korean historians Nam (1998) and Pak (1993) state that the first Korean settlers in this region can be dated to 1849 (Nam 1998, 26) or 1857 (Pak 1993, 18), thus preceding the Peking Treaty of 1860. However, Petrov (2000, 54–60) and Kuzin (2001) strongly criticise Nam and Pak’s respective studies on the grounds of insufficient evidence and Kuzin somewhat pedantically maintains that, even if the Koreans did cross the Tumen River before 1860, it is nevertheless largely agreed that 1863 or 1864 was the first year of Korean settlement in the ‘*Russian territory*’ (Kuzin 2001, 14, original emphasis).

Rather than becoming entrenched in this controversy, my approach adopts the ‘parochial’ position and focuses on the responses of my interlocutors concerning this question. Most conveyed either indifference or a sense that it was ‘outside of their concern’. In 2004, the official 140th anniversary of the migration of Koreans to the RFE was marked with commemorative events initiated by the central government of the Russian Federation and encouraged via diplomatic channels between South Korea and Russia. One of my interlocutors working for a local ethnic political organisation told me that even though ‘they know Koreans were living here before the Russians came, [...] it doesn’t matter’. For the majority of my interlocutors, the most important aspect of the ‘origin’ of their lives in Russia does not lie in the question of *when* their ancestors first arrived, but in the strong sense of aspiration and initiative that led them to risk the danger of crossing the border to escape the deteriorating social and economic conditions in the northern part of the Chosun Kingdom. During the initial period of my fieldwork in the early 2000s, tales of the great famine suffered by North Koreans in the second half of the 1990s were still rife. Consequently, my interlocutors extended their historical imaginations from the migration of their forefathers in the past to events in the present, identifying with the North Koreans’ suffering as an experience that could hypothetically have been their own if their ancestors had not bravely crossed the border.

It is worth highlighting that most of the Koreans who entered the RFE had been poor peasant tenants in Korea who continued their work of cultivation after crossing the border, in contrast with the Chinese migrants who sojourned on a seasonal basis to conduct trade and find paid employment as labourers. This agricultural aspect of the Koreans' migration meant that they could be readily incorporated and accepted into Russian life and they were initially viewed in a positive light as 'useful' (this agricultural feature continues to be attached to Koreans in the present day, as I shall discuss in Chapter 4). However, sentiments began to change as their numbers increased and as the number of Russian agricultural settlers from western regions also grew. The serious famine in northern Korea in autumn 1869 (the *Gimi* Famine) marked not only a sudden increase in Korean migration but also the rise of a more cautious attitude on the part of the Russian authorities.

Following this mass influx of Korean migrants in 1869, the Russian authorities had to face the question of 'to what extent' they would accept further Korean migration. This marked the beginning of the Korean question, whereby the authorities perceived the growing presence of Koreans as a problem that needed to be controlled and regulated. A related issue concerned the legal status of the Korean incomers, as until international diplomatic relations were established between Russia and the Chosun Kingdom in 1884, there was no judicial basis for their status in Russia (A. I. Petrov 2001, 97).

Despite this absence of jurisdictional status, the Koreans were accepted as a community and formed villages near the Tumen River.¹⁹ They were treated as part of 'peasant society' (*krestianskim obshestvam*), a particular social status group (A. I. Petrov 2001, 98), and from 1871 were issued with identity documents (*Russkii bilet*) conferring the right to reside on Russian soil (ibid). However, this early stage of Korean migration changed from being a purely economic matter and took on a political aspect following the creation of diplomatic relations between Chosun and Russia in 1884 and the influx of political exiles after Japan's attempt to colonise Chosun. Consequently, the Korean question was no longer confined to the usefulness of Koreans in the colonisation of the RFE, but expanded to include the nature of Russia's sovereignty over Korean nationals fleeing from Japan's threat to the crumbling Chosun Kingdom.

¹⁹ Pak (2004) notes that the colonial policy taken towards the indigenous peoples in Siberia was also employed in administering Korean migrants. It largely imparted autonomy to the traditional communities of colonised peoples, allowing the community leaders to mediate between the state authorities and the residents.

The formation of a border and the beginning of regulation (1884–1904)

The border between the Chosun Kingdom and Russia was not created by the diplomatic treaty between the two countries, but was the result of the Peking Treaty, which stipulated that the Qing Empire should cede the territory along the Ussuri River to Russia. Following this treaty, the mouth of the Tumen River came to act as the border between Russia and the Chosun Kingdom, as new borders were only demarcated overland, while rivers and maritime areas were considered to be shared by neighbouring countries; in other words, the rivers and sea themselves were ‘natural borders’ delineating the boundary of the countries concerned without requiring any juridical demarcation on the riparian surface. Therefore, a short distance of fifteen kilometres at the mouth of Tumen River ‘naturally’ became the border between the Chosun Kingdom and Russia, with the remainder of the 521 kilometre length of the Tumen River acting as the Sino-Korean border. Yet, this physical geographical border was not effective in regulating the flow of Koreans. Despite the erection of wooden posts to indicate the border and the presence of guards, early Korean migrants discovered other routes to Russia or crossed the border at night. There were many routes for this crossing (S. G. Lee 1994, 23), mainly via Manchuria and also by ship from Korea’s ports. Many Koreans in northern provinces of the Korean Peninsula migrated to Russia via Jiantao, which is now the Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province. Thus, there existed since the late 19th century, a transnational route for migration that connected Chosun, Qing China and Tsarist Russia.

Because of the ineffectual nature of the geographical border, governance of the population became a more crucial matter for border control. This aspect of border making requires us to critically re-examine our notion of the space and its relationship with the body of the subject in a broader sense, as notions of the border and the moving body of migrants are not completely separate. Anthropologist Nancy Munn (1996) proposes the notion of ‘somatic space’ to counter the tendency to think of space as an abstract concept which exists in isolation from human bodies. In her study of prohibited space with aborigines in Australia, she argues that the exclusionary power prohibiting entrance into a sacred place does not lie in the sacred place itself, but is enacted in ‘space-time as a symbolic nexus of relations produced out of interactions between bodily actors and terrestrial spaces’ (Munn 1996, 449). Similarly, although the physical border between the Chosun Kingdom and Russia was located along the Tumen River and was indicated by guard posts, the locus of the power of the border was actually created through the introduction of regulations on the movement of the Koreans themselves.

In this newly acquired territory, boundary making was not only a territorial and physical problem but also one that required the control and regulation of the settlement patterns of the people who moved to this land. As Topey(2000, 1) argues, ‘nation-states are both territorial and membership organizations, they must erect and sustain boundaries between nationals and non-nationals both at their physical borders and among the people within those borders’. The Seoul Treaty in 1884 and the subsequent treaty, ‘Rules on Border Transactions and Trade on the Tumen River’ in 1888, marked diplomatic cooperation between the Chosun Kingdom and Russia in an attempt to control the movement of the Korean migrants between the two countries; the treaties also saw the introduction of passports for the control of each other’s nationals.

In 1889, based on the agreements between the two authorities in 1884 and 1888, the regional government of Imperial Russia categorised Koreans into three groups according to the time of their migration to Russian territory. The first group of Koreans comprised those who came to the RFE before the treaty was signed on 25 June 1884. They were granted the right to apply to become Russian subjects and to receive fifteen *desiatins* of land, granted with the duty of paying tax. The second group were those Koreans who came after 1884 but wished to settle in Russia permanently. They were given two years’ suspended time for the renewal of their Russian visa. The third group comprised temporary settlers (S. G. Lee 1994, 72; Pak 1993, 63–65, source omitted; Unterberger 1912, 71–72). Since this granting of state land to one group, no further allocations were made to Koreans until the introduction of Soviet socialism in the 1920s when ‘land allocation’ became a crucial topic for Korean peasants.

This newly implemented policy created inequalities in access to land and led to significant economic differences amongst the Koreans. Those from the first group, who were accepted as subjects of the Russian Empire, were in a better position than those from the other two groups and could more easily improve their economic situation. Amongst this first group, many converted to the Russian Orthodox religion, which was the condition decreed for the transformation of ‘people of different origin (*inorodtsy*)’ into subjects of Imperial Russia (cf. Slocum 1998, Ssorin-Chaikov 2003).²⁰ Thus, the period between 1895 and 1901 witnessed an increase in the naturalisation of Koreans, each being granted a land plot of fifteen *desiatins* (Ban 1996: 67). During this period, they enjoyed equal rights with Russian peasants, leading to the creation of wealthy Koreans, who were called ‘*wonhoin*’ (in Korean, meaning ‘original

²⁰ According to a report by the Japanese imperial authorities, the proportion of Russian Orthodox converts amongst Koreans in Russia was 23 per cent (S. G. Lee 1994, 157). However, this conversion was not considered to be ‘sincere’, but simply a means of gaining access to land allocation (ibid.).

household heads', *starozhil* in Russian).²¹ This group allowed their children to have a Russian education; such Russian-speaking Koreans could increase their wealth as contractors (*podriadchiki*) supplying beef and construction materials to the Russian army (Ban 1996, 67–68; Pak 1993, 121 citing Pesotskii 1913). However, although naturalisation was a comparatively easy process until the 1880s, the subsequent enforcement of restrictions on migration meant that naturalisation became increasingly difficult and newcomer Koreans were disadvantaged by their lack of legal status. These latecomers, called 'yeohoin' in Korean and *novosel* in Russian,²² were forced to become farmhands (*batraki*) or tenant farmers for Russian and naturalised Korean peasants.

The lack of any significant objection from Koreans in the RFE towards religious conversion as a requirement for naturalisation contrasts starkly with the stubborn resistance exhibited by Koreans in Manchuria, where 'Manchurian clothes and pig-tail hair style' were the pre-requisites for naturalisation. According to Park(2005a) and Ban(1996), protests against cutting of the hair stemmed from the Confucian custom that viewed hair as a part of the body inherited from one's ancestors. At this time, Confucianism was the dominant ideology amongst the Koreans, but with its inseparable notions of 'filial piety' and ancestor worship, it more closely resembled a set of customs than a religion. This helps to explain the ease with which Koreans adopted Russian Orthodoxy, as it could be seen as compatible with Confucian customs in so far as ancestor worship ceremonies were not prohibited by their conversion.

Prospects for improvement in the livelihood of latecomer Korean migrants became increasingly remote after the Russian authorities cancelled the grant of state land to immigrant Koreans in 1898 and Governor-General Unterberger began to pursue an anti-Korean policy to prevent a further influx of Koreans, whom he dubbed 'the yellow race (*zhioityi ras*)' along with Chinese migrants (Unterberger 1912). Despite these developments, the number of Korean migrants continued to increase each year, even though those who came later could not become Russian subjects. In 1910 the Korean population in Primorskii Oblast reached 51,052; of those, 33,932 did not have citizenship (Pak 1993, 92–93).²³ Such stateless people filled the lowest economic strata of the RFE; their lives of extreme poverty were in stark opposition to the bourgeois lifestyle so elegantly recorded in the personal diaries and letters of Eleanor Pray, a

²¹ Ban(1996) translates the term as 'old immigrants'.

²² Ban(1996) translates this as 'new immigrants'.

²³ In 1907, the number of Koreans who naturalised to Russian subjects was 14,000 and the number of Koreans who were foreign subjects in the RFE was 26,000 (Unterberger 1912, 73).

wife of an American merchant who lived in Vladivostok from 1890 to 1926 (Pray 2013).²⁴

The narratives of migration and cultivation of Koreans in the RFE provide us with an interesting perspective on Russian peasants' experiences of settling in this alien environment. The Koreans were productive and efficient in cultivation due to the region's natural environment and climate, which were almost identical to that of the northern Korean Peninsula. In contrast, Russian settlers struggled to adapt to conditions in the RFE. The Russian historian, Solov'ev, referred to Asiatic Russia as an 'evil stepmother' (Bassin 1993, 499), who brought great suffering upon those Russians who moved here from European civilisation. The Russian image of the Far East, initially couched in terms of a 'gold rush' and the 'Siberian Mississippi', was quickly shattered when the settlers faced the harsh realities of the alien terrain and the RFE came to be viewed as 'a sickly child' neglected by step-mother, Russia (Bassin 1999, 247, source omitted). For Koreans, however, the RFE was their 'biological' mother, being an extension of the northern part of Korea from whence they had originated. As a result, Korean migrants in the RFE were more successful in agriculture than the Russian settlers and they formed 'natural economic territories' (Scalapino 1992) via kinship ties with other groups of Koreans not only in northern Korea but also in northeast China. However, as I shall discuss later, the subsequent history of Koreans in the RFE was marred by the state's attempt to sever this natural connection between Korean peasants and the land, denying them ownership and the right to cultivate on permanent basis due to their social status as migrants.

The Korean question, defined by the unexpected increase in migration figures and the introduction of naturalisation laws to control the influx, began to take on a new dimension in the light of radical changes in the international situation in the early 20th century. The question of the 'nationality' of Koreans became ambiguous when Korea was annexed by the Japanese government in 1910. This followed the loss of diplomatic sovereignty by the Chosun Kingdom in 1905 as a consequence of Russia's defeat by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-5, as the two powers were in rivalry over the colonisation of Korea and Manchuria. It is far beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the Russo-Japanese War in detail, but its impact on the region and on the Koreans in the RFE must be noted.²⁵ The most significant impact of Russia's defeat was the change of stance of the Russian central authority towards the Far East from expansive to passive, to an extent that raised the question of 'whether it is necessary to hold the

²⁴ The class division amongst settlers in the RFE was highlighted in Syn Khva Kim's historiography (1965). Given the political atmosphere in the Soviet Union at the time of writing, focus on class was seen as one means of addressing the history of migrant Koreans while remaining true to socialist ideology.

²⁵ See Steinburg et al 2005, 2007 and (A. I. Petrov 2001, 285)Kowner 2007 for extensive discussion of the Russo-Japanese war.

Far East or it would be more profitable to give it up' (Unterberger 1912, i). However, the ambiguous nature of the nationality of Koreans in the RFE and the new influx of political refugees from Korea did not allow Russia to adopt a simplistic stance or walk away from the situation.

From 1905, the Koreans in the RFE whose legal status was regulated by international law became subjects of the Japanese Empire. However, the reality for Koreans without Russian citizenship was that they became *de facto* stateless people, as most Koreans in the RFE refused to recognise their position as 'subjects of Japan' and, when answering a census question, described themselves as either 'subjects of Korea (*poddannymi korei* or *koreiskimi poddannymi*) or 'non subjects (*net*)' (A. I. Petrov 2001, 285). This affected Russia's aim of controlling the movement of Korean migrants by means of issuing passports, and also marked the beginning of a state of limbo in Russia's dealings with the stateless Koreans in the RFE. The discrepancy in the *de jure* and *de facto* status of the Koreans was not merely rhetorical, but entailed a meta-political question concerning the definition of the state and its citizens and the meaning of the political (cf. Mouffe 2005; Badiou 2005). It also brought about the ending of the Russian imperialist system of conferring subject-hood on aliens by granting land in exchange for religious conversion. During their policy of expansion into the Far East before the Russo-Japanese War, accepting Koreans had fitted well with Russia's intention to increase its influence in Korea. However, since the annexation of the Chosun Kingdom by Japan in 1910, the stateless Koreans and political refugees who carried out anti-Japanese activities provided Japan with the excuse to encroach into Russian territory. In this new world order, Russia's main concern was preventing Japanese incursions on its soil and all plans for expansion into East Asia were abandoned.

The Korean question and the 'yellow peril'

Following its defeat in the Russo-Japanese war in 1905, the fear of 'yellow people' became increasingly apparent in Russia (Kwon 2006; Vashchuk et al. 2002, 39–41; Grave 1912; Stephan 1994). However, this racial alarm highlighted differences in the Russians' perception of the Chinese and Koreans, and was also influenced by the 'personal' opinion of the incumbent Governor-General of the Primorskii Oblast (Kwon 2006, Grave 1912).²⁶ In local context, the

²⁶ Many studies agree that fluctuations in the regional authorities' policy toward the Koreans were influenced

‘yellow peril (*zholtaia oposnost*)’ can be seen as a by-product of the colonisation of this region. As Kwon (2006) states, the development of the region required the ‘yellow’ work force, given the delayed settlement by Russian labourers. Thus, from the 1870s Chinese labourers were introduced for road, railway and harbour construction, and from the late 1880s large numbers of Chinese and Koreans worked in the gold mines (Grave 1912, cited in Kwon 2006: 346). However, ‘yellow peril’ arose in global context where East Asia directly encountered Western imperial power in the 19th century, though this Chapter focuses on the relationship between Korean question and yellow peril in regional context of the RFE.

According to (Vashchuk et al. 2002, 39), there were four main ‘problems’ concerning ‘yellow immigrants’, and it is interesting to see how these have re-emerged in the RFE during the post-Soviet period. Firstly, there was the question of officially controlling their movement. It is impossible to ascertain exactly how many Chinese and Koreans lived in the region, partly because many did not possess passports and did not register for identity documents (*Russkii bilet*) in order to avoid the associated fees. More significantly, in the case of Koreans, movement was often based on kinship relationships. Typically, once a family settled in the RFE, one member would travel to their home village in northern Korea or Manchuria and bring back the remaining relatives to Russia (Lee 1994). As I shall discuss in the next chapter, this pattern of movement can still be seen between Central Asia and the RFE today, and the difficulties involved in accurately counting the number of Koreans is perceived as an ongoing problem.

Secondly, the availability of ‘cheap yellow labour’ created concern about its detrimental effect on the morals of the Russian settlers. According to Pesotskii (1913), Russian landowners employed Koreans ‘as farmhands (*batraki*)’, who were more likely to indulge themselves in alcohol that work reliably. Pesotskii attributed the moral decay of Cossack and Russian landowners, which was causing significant concern for local authorities, to their Korean and Chinese tenants, even referring to the Koreans as ‘Jews’.

Thirdly, in urban areas the presence of cheaper and more resilient Chinese and Koreans worker created competition with Russian labourers, and by 1910, 70 per cent of workers in urban areas were Chinese (Pesotskii 1913, 40). In an attempt to benefit Russian workers, Governor-General Unterberger prohibited the hiring of Koreans in gold mines in 1908, but this legislation was rendered ineffective with the outbreak of the First World War, when Russian labourers were called up to the front leading to shortages in the RFE’s labour force.

by the ‘personal disposition’ of the Governor-General. But it would be more accurate to see the tension between the desire to seek expansion through trade and the need to restrict access to foreign influence and migration as personified through the agency of the Governor.

Lastly, the ‘yellow peril’ became linked to problems of hygiene and criminality: ‘Practically, in every city of the southern Far East, there was a Chinese district where criminal bases and the anti-sanitary flourished’, including the infamous ‘Millionka’ in the centre of Vladivostok (Chernolutskaia 2011, 237). The Chinese were thought to pose a more serious problem than the Koreans, since they were not only perceived to be ‘more dirty’ but also to engage in criminal activities and drug dealing (ibid). Even in the present day, my fieldwork identified perceptions of ‘the dirty Chinese’ causing ‘disorder (*besporiadok*)’ in the region.²⁷

When considering the problems created by these ‘easterners (*vostochniki*)’ in pre-Revolutionary times, relocation was mentioned as a possible solution. It was often suggested that the Koreans should be dispersed and moved to more central parts of Russia, rather than allowing them to live in concentrated numbers near the border, thus presenting a ‘pre-history’ of the deportation that eventually occurred in 1937 (Chernolutskaia 2011).²⁸

Internal diversification of Korean settlers and the anti-Japanese movement

While the earlier settlers came from the mainly northern provinces of the Korean Peninsula and were poor peasants,²⁹ the influx of anti-Japanese nationalist activists expanded the geographical origin of the migrants/exiles to the whole of the Chosun Kingdom rather than being restricted to its northern region (see Pak 1993, 74, 91, source omitted). These political exiles were conscientious intellectuals of high social status, who were eager to preserve Korea’s sovereignty by carrying out guerrilla-style raids against the Japanese army (Pak 1993, 140–215; Kho 1987, 21). Their participation in the flow of migration to the RFE encouraged organised political activities for the liberation of Korea and the publishing of newspapers and journals based on an enlightenment movement by intellectuals (Kho 1987, 20).

This movement was considered a ‘state within a state’ by some Russian authorities, as it also functioned as an infrastructure for Korean society.³⁰ According to Petrov (1998, 14, source

²⁷ On the concept of ‘disorder’ connected with the Chinese traders in post-Soviet Russian provinces, see Humphrey (1999).

²⁸ Such a proposition had already been made by a Russian traveller, who visited the first four Korean villages near the border in 1867-9 (Kolarz 1954, 33).

²⁹ One of my acquaintances, who came from Pyŏngyang and taught Korean national dance to teenage girls in Ussuriisk, happened one day to mention ‘Russian Koreans’ in terms of their locality in North Korea – an aspect which I had not previously considered. She evaluated the character of Russian Korean women as being very strong, associating this with their ‘origin’ in Hamgyŏng Province in North Korea.

³⁰ In South Korea, historical studies on nationalist movements in this region have been very well researched

omitted), during the period 1906–1911, 23,624 anti-Japanese Korean partisans were killed or arrested, 75 per cent of whom were killed in Manchuria and the RFE by the Japanese army. However, their nationalist and socialist activism created problems not only for the Russian authorities but also for the Korean migrants living in the RFE. The Japanese authorities continuously complained about the activities of anti-Japanese factions on Russian soil and asked the Russian authorities to take action to suppress them.³¹ Thus, for example, Russia and Japan made a secret agreement in 1907 to search for anti-Japanese emigrants, leading to the arrest of fifteen representatives of Korean patriots in Pos’et (A. I. Petrov 2001, 274). The authorities were aware, however, that such activists enjoyed widespread support and financial backing from Koreans who had already settled in Russia. Petrov (2001, 272) describes this political activity as being unified to defend ‘the fate of their homeland’, but although this may have been the case until the early 1900s, the following period witnessed increasing division. After the Russo-Japanese war, some Koreans were influenced by radical socialist ideas, resulting in an ideological division within the nationalist movement as to the best means of liberating ‘their homeland’ from Japan (for more on this topic, see Ban 1996). This division was further aggravated by the differing interests of those who ‘were living permanently’ and those who were in exile with a view to return to their ‘liberated homeland’.³² Such division caused the Russian authorities to question the loyalty of Koreans and the sincerity of their belief in socialism, as their adoption of socialist ideology could be perceived as a means for the liberation of Korea, rather than as an end in itself (Kolarz 1954).³³

and discussed: see (Ban 1996) and (H. Park 1995).

³¹ This pressure was exerted at various levels. For example, good personal relationships between Japanese diplomats and leaders of the local and central Russian authorities were effectively manipulated for such ends (A. I. Petrov 2001, 303).

³² Ban (1996) discusses the factionalism within the Korean anti-Japanese nationalist movement in the period 1905–1921, focusing on the nationalists’ transnational network across Manchuria, Shanghai, the RFE and America. He argues that the factionalism between socialist and liberal nationalists around the establishment of an interim Korean government in exile in Shanghai reflects divisions amongst American-allied nationalists and Manchurian and RFE socialists. He also observes that differences within the socialist camp reflected the wide political spectrum of the settlers in Russia, influenced by the different interests of *ahoin* (Russian subjects) and *yeohoin* (non-subjects) (in Russian *podannye* and *bez-podannye*).

³³ A similar suspicion about the sincerity of Koreans was made concerning their conversion to Orthodox Christianity as part of the process of becoming Russian subjects: ‘I am not clear in my own mind as to the cause of the success which has attended the “missionary effort” at Yatchihe [a Korean settlement village; its correct name is Yanchikhe] and elsewhere. The statements I received on the subject differed widely, and in most cases were made hesitatingly, as if my interlocutors were not sure of their ground. My impression is that while Russia is tolerant of devil-worship, or any other worship which is not subversive of the externals of morality, “conformity” is required to obtain for the Korean alien those blessings which belong to naturalisation as a Russian subject.’ (Bishop 1985[1898]: 7)

Building Soviet socialism and cleansing the Soviet Far East

After the October Revolution of 1917, it took several years for a socialist regime to become firmly established in the RFE. There was civil war between 1918 and 1920, and then the short-lived Far Eastern Republic existed between 1920 and 1922.³⁴ During the civil war, Korean socialist partisans fought together with the Bolsheviks against an alliance of foreign interventionist armies composed of Japanese, Czech, American, British, Canadian, French, Polish and Italian soldiers. Of these, the Japanese military contribution was the largest, numbering 175,000 men in 1920 (Vashchuk et al. 2002, 59).

The eventual establishment of an effective Soviet administration in 1923 exposed the problems involved in the implementation of socialist ideals in the region, especially in relation to the Korean population. The presence of a large number of poor tenant farmers among the Koreans was cited as the result of Tsarist exploitation in previous decades and ‘the question of land distribution (*vopros zemleustroistva*)’ became a central issue (Kim 1926). Socialist ideals formed the basis of proposals for land allocation to poor Korean peasants and special committees were organised to consider this question (M. G. Kim 1926, 201).³⁵ While the Chinese population decreased from the mid-1920s due to socialist policy aimed at discouraging their commercial activities, more Koreans were attracted to the region by the Soviet land policy which seemed to offer advantages to poor peasants (Vashchuk et al. 2002, 58). In the early 1920s, 88.5 per cent of the Korean population were peasants, with the majority of the latter (over 70 per cent) being classified as poor peasants (*bedniaki*) (ibid., 73), and 67 per cent of Koreans without citizenship belonged to this category of poor peasants (Chernolutskaya 2011, 212).³⁶ With this class-based policy of the early Soviet administration and the nativization

³⁴ For the overall situation in the RFE during the civil war, see Stephan (1994, 117–140), and for special reference to migration politics, see Vachshuk et al. (2002, 59–61). Although the Far Eastern Republic was a short-lived socialist state recognised by the Bolsheviks, its symbolic meaning is currently being revived to assert regional autonomy and criticise the central government of the Russian Federation. For example, when the government recently tried to ban the use of right-hand-drive cars imported from Japan, some protesters said, ‘You will see the creation of the Far Eastern Republic, if Japanese second-hand cars are banned in Russia!’ (Avchenko 2012).

³⁵ In addition to the question of land distribution, the Korean Department (*koreiskii otдел*) under the Primorskii governing committee of the All-Soviet Communist Party (of Bolsheviks, VKP (b)) was also created to support Korean socialist revolutionaries in Korea and Manchuria at this time (Vashchuk et al. 2002, 74).

³⁶ According to Kim Mangem’s article, land ownership in 1923 for Korean and Russian households was as follows (M. G. Kim 1926, 202):

Area of land owned (<i>desiatin</i>)	Percentage of Korean households	Area of land owned (<i>desiatin</i>)	Percentage of Russian households
None (<i>bez poseva</i>)	11.5	None (<i>bez poseva</i>)	12.5

(*korenizatsiia*) policy in the mid 1920s,³⁷ this period was remarkable in that for the first time the Koreans in the RFE had a voice in the political administration, with the formation of native communist cohorts who actively mediated with the Soviet administrative power on behalf of ordinary people.

However, it was not long before the complexity of the Korean question became apparent in the implementation of socialist policy. Firstly, as illustrated in Man Gem Kim’s (1926) article and also in articles in the *Seonbong* [Vanguards] newspaper, which was published in Korean in the 1920s with a distribution of more than 10,000 copies, the question of land distribution began to be linked with the question of nationality. In the first conference of the Primorskii government, the following resolution had been clearly stated: ‘This Conference (*S''ezd*) recognizes the unconditional necessity of the fulfilment of land distribution based on the land codex, making efforts first of all to enable small land owners and landless cultivators to make use of free state funds and spare public land.’³⁸ However, the government was forced to retreat from this position of radical social and economic reform due to protests by middle-class peasants around 1925, following the collectivisation with the liquidation of land owning, causing an even fiercer reaction from mostly Russian landowners (Stephan 1994, 190; Kolarz 1954, 36–37). For example, in 1929 protesters ‘burned grain, destroyed livestock’, and physically attacked and killed party activists as a means of resisting land liquidation (Stephan 1994, *ibid.*).

During my fieldwork, an elderly woman called Klava Ten (born in 1916) shared her personal memories with me of collectivisation in a village in the RFE that reached its culmination in the late 1920s. Her father, a traditional intellectual who had studied classical Confucian literature for 14 years, became the chairman of the *sel'soviet* once collectivisation had been completed. Klava Ten had herself been a member of a young pioneer group that held secret meetings to decide which households should be liquidated and she remembered how badly the Russian *kulaki* (wealthy land-owning peasants) reacted to such decisions. Her aunt was also designated as a *kulak*, as she owned a pedal-operated mill (*tijilbanga*), which was

Less than 1	36.0	Less than 1	13.3
1-2	26.0	2-4	24.9
2-4	18.9	5-7	31.4
5-7	5.5	More than 7	17.1
More than 7	1.5		

³⁷ For nativization policy in the RFE, see Grant (1995).

³⁸ 1923 ‘Resolution on the land question agreed at the first government conference on 13 March, 1923’, GAPK, f1506, o 1. d 6. 11.

considered a ‘means of production’. In addition, she cultivated opium (*yak-dam-bae* in Korean, meaning ‘medicine tobacco’), which was widely produced by Chinese and Korean peasants at that time for their own personal use, as discussed in local newspapers (for example, 22 March 1923, *Krasnoe Znamia*). Following this designation as a *kulak*, her aunt decided to move to Manchuria. As can be seen from this testimony, there were some Koreans who left the RFE during the collectivisation period, but the latter half of the 1920s saw rapid growth in the overall number of Korean immigrants. Koreans composed about a quarter of the total population of the RFE (Chernolutskaya 2011, 212) with new immigration occurring mainly in districts where Koreans already formed a majority, as in Pos’et Raion and along the Ussuri river bordering Manchuria.

The situation in the mid-1920s reflected the mixture of hope and frustration produced by the newly introduced socialist reforms. While many Koreans moved to the Soviet Far East in the hope of a better life under the new system, it is also true that a significant number of Korean peasants moved back to Manchuria after collectivisation (Wada 1987). Although the number is too small to draw generalisations, I heard from a few of my interlocutors that many small and medium-sized landowning Korean peasants adopted a compliant and cooperative stance towards collectivisation in contrast with the resistance displayed by wealthy older settlers. Many poor Korean peasants who crossed the border to Manchuria at this time were not protesting against collectivisation but simply looking for land plots to rent to ensure their means of livelihood in the midst of a rapidly changing political situation. According to one article in a local newspaper at the time that I found in the archives:

Russian landowners (the majority owning 100 *desiatins* of land), who have exploited poor Korean cultivators for several decades by renting land to them with high rents, did not rent land to their old tenants this year from fear that the introduction of land reforms would mean they had to give land to their tenant Koreans. (Nagi³⁹ 11 December 1923, *Krasnoe Znamia*)

Despite this, the movement of Koreans across the border was widely interpreted as evidence of their disloyalty and any economic reasons for their migration were not featured in the public presentation of the Korean response to collectivisation.

³⁹ The author seems to have used a pseudonym, reflecting the sensitivity of this topic, not only because this name is not usual for a Korean name but also I could not find any relevant information about this writer.

In the wider context, the land distribution question raises the issue of the social basis of the socialist revolution. In the RFE, as in other parts of Russia, the new classes on which the revolution was based were created from scratch, so the question of class hinged on people's social status (*soslovnost'*) in pre-revolutionary times. The peculiar factor in the RFE was that the relationship between social status and the nationality of a certain group of people became entangled. This interweaving of tropes of nationality and revolutionary ideas was not viewed as desirable by the Soviet authorities, since the continuity of Koreans' economic status before and after revolution could be read as the negation of revolution. From the late 1920s, the 'Great Transformation' of the old society into a new socialist regime demanded that everyone be reborn from their old status to become a new Soviet citizen: 'everybody should present what she/he has been before 1917 and what she/he should become after that' (Ssorin-Chaikov 2000). In other words, the Soviet Union needed to identify a 'proletariat class' and 'enemies of people', even though there was no 'obvious proletariat' (Humphrey 1994, 24). So the First Five-Year Plan, *dekulakisation* and collectivisation aimed to 'widen the potential base of social support for the Communist party' (Hoffmann 1994, 2) by transforming society itself and the boundary of society became an issue in this borderland.

On the one hand, 'the ascribed class' (Soviet *soslovnost'*) was invented as 'a combination of Marxist theory and the underdeveloped nature of Russian society in terms of their relationship to *the state* rather than in terms of their relationship to each other' (Fitzpatrick 2000, 38–39, my emphasis). The conflict between Russian farmers and Korean farmers during the collectivisation was transformed into a question of loyalty to the state later in the late 1930s. On the other hand, the massive migration of peasants to cities, as a consequence of collectivisation and industrialisation, created a large proletariat on which the socialist ideology could be based (Hoffmann 1994, 2,10). To sum up, a regime rooted in Marxism 'found' the proletariat among the *soslovnost'* in Imperial Russia, and 'invented' urban workers through migration alongside collectivisation and industrialisation (Humphrey 1994; Kotkin 1995).

The other important factor to consider in the interwoven questions of socialist ideology and the social basis of the regime derives from the unique geopolitical nature of the Soviet Far East. In the case of diasporas, domestic nationality policies were closely linked to international relations, especially when the diaspora had its home country outside the Soviet Union. While the Soviet Union did not intend to be a nation (Brubaker 1994; T. Martin 1998; Slezkine 1994a), there was strong ideological propaganda that the Soviet Union could be vulnerable to other nation-states outside the Soviet Union, especially growing nationalist movements in Ukraine and Poland near its border. According to Terry Martin (1998, 829–835), the two Bolshevik

concepts of ‘Soviet xenophobia and the Piedmont principle’, formed an incipient Soviet administrative territory in the border regions. According to Martin’s definition, ‘Soviet xenophobia refers to the exaggerated Soviet fear of foreign influence and foreign contamination’ in ideological terms rather than ethnic ones, and the ‘Piedmont principle’ refers to ‘the Soviet attempt to exploit cross-border ethnic ties to project political influence into neighbouring states’ (Martin 2001, 313). These two principles were particularly influential on the policies aimed at diasporas with ties across the borders of the Soviet Union, such as Ukrainians in Poland and Koreans in the Far East. On the one hand, Soviet xenophobia meant that the Soviet authorities feared contamination of the revolution, which was still regarded as susceptible to the influence of foreign governments, and in this respect, Korean immigrants were regarded as easy cover for Japanese espionage (cf. Douglas 1966, 102). On the other hand, the Piedmont principle was based on the perception that the influx of immigrants was evidence of the Soviet Union’s attractiveness to cross-border populations and that this created the potential for socialism to spill over into neighbouring countries. When the Soviet Union leaned towards the Piedmont principle, local Soviet authorities accepted more Koreans and their mass immigration was seen as a demonstration of the superiority of the Soviet Union to the colonised Korean Peninsula under Japanese imperialism. Until collectivisation, these two policies appeared to be held in balance despite their inherent tension.

In arriving at his argument concerning the breakdown of Bolshevik ideals in the border region, Martin(1998) contends that it was the reversed emigration of diaspora nationalities to avoid the turbulence of collectivisation that led to the abandonment of the Piedmont principle. When collectivisation was undertaken across the Soviet Union, it encountered strong resistance, especially in the western border areas (see also Brown 2005), with violent uprisings on the Polish-Ukrainian border resulting in a massive emigration of Germans and Poles to their home countries in 1930 (Martin 1998, 838). Although upheavals in the RFE during collectivisation were not as serious as on the western border, the rising violence and anti-trading slogans aimed at the Chinese led to a massive outflow of Chinese migrant workers. Wada also reports that approximately 50,000 Koreans fled to Korea or Manchuria after collectivisation (Wada 1987, 40).⁴⁰ In addition to the failure of the Piedmont principle, the Soviet authorities were concerned

⁴⁰ Stephan (1994) and Martin (1998) both cite Wada (1987) in arguing that the emigration of Koreans was the basis for the Soviet administration’s view that the entire population of Koreans was unreliable, but Wada fails to provide any accurate source for his figure of 50,000 – it seems to have been based on Japanese official data at that time. Bone (n.d.) has done some brilliant ‘maths’ concerning these 50,000 Koreans. According to him, despite the slight evidence, 50,000 Koreans’ emigration seems to ‘be about right’. Here is Bone(n.d.)’s math: ‘Roughly one hundred seventy five thousand Koreans were on hand to be repressed in 1937. If fifty thousand ran away in 1930-32, there must have been somewhere around two hundred fifteen thousand on hand going into mass collectivisation. The 1929 special

by the link between the expansion of Japanese imperialism and the demand for Korean autonomy in the Pos'et area (the current Khasan Raion), where Koreans formed nearly 90 per cent of the whole population. Chernolutsckaya (2011, 211–213) considers this claim to have originated as early as 1914, when the Russian authorities became aware of Japan planting spies to agitate for autonomy so that they could take over the Pos'et area. In Northeast Asia, in the early 20th century, Japan used Korean immigrants in both Manchuria and the RFE as 'agents' for expanding their colonial influence within the framework of 'pan-Asian' prosperity, in a process which Hyun Ok Park describes as 'territorial osmosis' (2000). Similar to the strategy used in Manchuria, Japan not only claimed Koreans in the RFE as its subjects, but also demanded that the Soviet authorities pacify anti-Japanese Koreans in the region. Additionally, during the civil war in the RFE, the Japanese military worked in the villages where Koreans were the majority, creating antagonism between Korean and Russian peasants (Anosov 1928, 28; cited in Z. G. Son 2013, 109), thus appropriating anti-Asian racism for Japan's own ends.

Even though Japanese military forces left the RFE following the establishment of the Soviet socialist government, Japan did not stop attempting to influence the Korean residents in the RFE. The treaty between Japan and the Soviet Union in Beijing in 1925 ('The Soviet-Japanese Basic Convention') established diplomatic relations between the newly-formed Soviet state and Japan, and it agreed on the persecution of resistance groups for their mutual benefit: Japan agreed not to oppose the Soviet oppression of former White Army Russians who had fled to China in exchange for the Soviet Union discouraging anti-Japanese movements on its territory, mainly targeting anti-colonial activists of Korean origin in the RFE (Z. G. Son 2013, 2-3).⁴¹ As a result, Koreans in the RFE became 'hostages' between the two countries (Z. G. Son 2012). Following the dismissal of the Communist International (*Komintern*) in the late 1920s and the USSR's adoption of the principle of 'socialism in one country', Korean communists fighting for emancipation from Japanese imperialism in a cross-border network across the Korean, Chinese and Russian borders were considered to be a danger to the security of the Soviet Union. The aim was to strengthen the *border* of socialism by relocating Koreans to a more distant place, as their presence near the border was regarded as rendering it porous. With

census of the Vladivostok district, where perhaps 70 per cent of the Far East's Koreans lived, turned up 150,795. This in fact is roughly 70 per cent of 215,000. Note that the most reliable number of Koreans was on the deportation which was fixed number and others are variables (emphasis is mine)'. However, Kolarz (1954, 35, source omitted) estimated that there were 300,000 Koreans in the Far Eastern Republic period (1920-22) and it decreased to 170,000 in 1927 'according to official data, but unofficially there were 'at least 250,000'. Henceforth, the difference in the number of Korean population before and after collectivisation is around 80,000 which is bigger than the number of 50,000 in other researches above mentioned.

41 See Park Hyun Ok (2000), for an excellent discussion of how Japan utilised Koreans in Manchuria as colonial agents in expanding its empire in Manchuria.

this shift in focus to the border regime, even anti-Japanese communist activities became equated with Japanese espionage, as what mattered was not ideology or belief but whether activities were being carried out across a border demarcating the boundary of the Soviet state.

Indeed, 'Japanese espionage' was cited as the official reason for the relocation of Koreans in the newspaper *Pravda* in September 1937.⁴² Stigmatised as an 'enemy nation', all the Koreans in the Soviet Far East were loaded onto 'cattle trains' and deported to Central Asia as part of Stalin's Great Terror. The collective farms left by Koreans were assigned to Red Army and NKVD (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*, People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) families, who were believed to be more reliable for ensuring the security of the border. Some of the *Khetagurovites*, young women who volunteered to come to the Soviet Far East on socialist missions in the 1930s, were given the job of visiting Korean households to inform them of their relocation; most Koreans accepted the NKVD's orders without protest (Shulman 2008, 205–206).

Both Martin(2001) and Chernolutskaia(2011) argue that the Stalinist purge by means of forcible relocation was not based on ethnicity, although some ethnic groups such as Koreans, Poles, Germans, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Kurds, and Iranians were targeted as a whole. According to Chernolutskaia (2013), the internal passport system (*pasportatsiia*) had already been introduced in Russia, including the RFE, prior to the deportations of the Great Terror and the 'cleansing' (*ochistka*) of the borderland, and had been functioning to 'filter out' undesirable elements in society. As regards the RFE, Martin (1998) and Chernolutskaia (2011) both take the deportation of former residents of Harbin (the *Kharbinsy*) as evidence that the deportation was not 'ethnic cleansing'.

The irony surrounding the Koreans in the RFE is that they became the most powerful agent of the 'Slavicization of the RFE' by becoming victims in the most 'passive' way. Bone (n.d.) describes this irony of the Koreans' position in the RFE during the 1937 events as follows:

42 This aspect has been emphasized by scholars in South Korea when discussing the absurdity in the motivation for the deportation(for example, Kho 1987; Chun 2002; K. K. Lee and Chun 1993). These studies strongly refute the charge of espionage, citing as evidence Korean independence movements against the Japanese government. Thus, the reason for the deportation published in *Pravda* is incomprehensible when viewed from Korean anti-colonial nationalists and this could be one aspect of the absurdity of Great Terror. Being aware of this and against dominant Korean nationalistic approach to deportation, German Kim (his works are available at http://world.lib.ru/k/kim_o_i/) highlights that the deportation was coherent with the Soviet nationality policy, not as an abrupt measure. An alternative approach centres on the expansion of rice cultivation to Central Asia (cf. Kho 1987); in my opinion, this was one of the results of the deportation of Koreans rather than the cause.

The Koreans' role fundamentally was a passive one. As a group they were far less actors than acted upon, by a top-directed state system that for fifteen years struggled to work out who they were, where they belonged, and above all how to fit them into the service-structured society it was attempting to engender. To mark the limits of a workspace for building their vision of socialism in one country, Stalin and his supporters sought to differentiate the Far East from Asia by turning its relatively porous frontiers into well-demarcated borders. The tragedy of the Koreans is that they fell victims to that transformation, to an ethnicized population politics ultimately dominated by exclusion.

Thus, the deportation can be viewed as an attempt to solve the 'Korean question', which inherently defied solutions from its very conception, and as a means of purifying the region and making the border hermetic as part of the socialist project. In this sense, the problem does not lie with the Koreans, but with the creation of the question itself, which has lain at the heart of the RFE since the beginning of colonisation. The Koreans were variously imagined, depending on the political and economic situation prevailing at the time: initially as a useful element, but subsequently as unreliable border violators. The Korean question reflects the marginality of this region and the Russian colonialist project, which has been continuously embodied in Koreans who could not be fitted into the prescribed form of the nation states (cf. H. O. Park 2005b).

Memory in silence in the present

Since perestroika, the change in political mood has allowed people to talk openly about the deportation and memories long buried by the official discourse have been excavated and transformed into history in a process which Pierre Nora calls 'the acceleration of history' (Nora 1989, 7–8). The archives have been opened and some private memories have been made public, being published in literature, historiographies and newspaper articles. This outpouring of memories has been a remarkable testament to people's will to remember, and the resulting increased in academic research has deepened our understanding of the Korean experience in the Russian past.

However, despite the increase in information and the sudden freedom to discuss this matter, it is puzzling that as more information has become available, the more shrouded in mystery the true reason for the deportation has become. For example, Tel'mir Kim, who lost his father at the age of four, was still searching for information concerning the 'true' reason for his

father's execution in 1938. Even though his flat was filled with archive material 'snatched during the struggle between old and new powers from the state archive', it did not provide him with the reason for the death of his father, an ardent revolutionary socialist known as the 'Korean Lenin' who served the Korean people in a high position in the party as a mediator (see Chapter 5). He thought that if he could obtain certain documents concerning the Lyushkov affair (the NKVD Commissar who carried out the purge in the late 1930s in the RFE), they might shed light on how his father's execution came about.⁴³ However, a greater problem than an absence of documentation may be the 'silence' and 'indifference' to be found within the Korean community itself.

During the early period of my fieldwork, I often asked people how they remembered the deportation of 1937, or how such memories had been passed down to them by their parents. Although most of my interlocutors knew of the deportation, they would often reply: 'I haven't been particularly interested in that question', as though it was only my questioning which had reminded them of the subject.⁴⁴ One interlocutor told me that she had not been aware that her parents had been born in the RFE until she saw her mother's passport when she was 16 years old. Until then, her parents had never talked about the fact that they were from the RFE. There is a gap between the discourse of the Koreans in relation to the deportation and people's everyday experience. Such a gap is clearly manifest in the negation of the language used in describing the events of 1937. In the Chinese market, I spoke with a woman called Ira Ten (born in 1956) about the deportation as follows:

HP: Did you hear about the deportation in 1937 from your parents?

Ira: Do you mean the 'repression (*repressiia*)'? My father often talked about it.

HP: Your father didn't use the word 'deportation'?

Ira: No, he just said that they drove out (*vygoniali*) all the Koreans.

HP: What is the difference between 'deport (*deportirovats*)' and 'migrate (*pereselits*)'?

⁴³ For the Lyushkov affair, see Stephan (1994, 209–215), and for a detailed monograph on 'repression' in the RFE in Russian, see Sutin (1991). The silence about the deportation in the RFE contrasts with the outpouring of personal memoirs in Central Asia from Koreans represented in newspapers and self-publications, though a recent publication by Chernolutskaia (2011) is filling this gap. Also see Son (2013)

⁴⁴ Since realising that the deportation was not a matter of concern to people, I did not raise the topic unless they did first. Uehling (2000), who studied the Crimean Tatars' repatriation, said that people spoke passionately about their past, saying 'Your project is our project', thus bestowing on the ethnographer the status of a spokesperson. Koreans, acknowledging their own indifference, often drew a contrast between the Tatars and themselves in terms of a 'collective demand for justice'.

Ira: When we talk about ‘migrate’, there is a process of preparation, but my father told me that he just got hold of his documents and left everything else behind. When we talk about ‘deportation’, it means that there must have been some kind of violation (*narusheniye*), and that people were expelled with a stamp through customs (*tamozhnia*), just like the Chinese are sent back from here to China. Basically, the Russians just kicked out all the Koreans (*vydvoriali vsekh koreitsev*).

Though this chapter was written with the intention of providing an overview of the history of the ‘Korean question’ in this region, my aim was neither to seek a definition of the ‘Korean question’, not its resolution, nor the real truth of the ‘deportation’. Instead, I have tried to show how the ‘Korean question’ is related to the border and how the movement of Koreans has been intrinsically linked with the colonisation of the RFE. However, the spatial factor governing the case of the Koreans placed them in an ambivalent position and it was only when they became the victims of state power that their presence in the former USSR was legitimated.⁴⁵

I was struck by the irony that despite their freedom to talk about the atrocities of the past, Koreans chose to maintain their silence on these issues and instead highlighted their agency by means of a plethora of narratives not only about their survival strategies but also their contribution to the development of the Soviet Central Asia almost as colonisers after the deportation. Amongst other ethnic groups who were collectively deported during Stalinism, there are some ethnographic studies that provide us with an interesting comparative perspective. In a similar way to Koreans, Meskhetian Turks and Kalmyks tried to prove by excessive hard work that they were not ‘the enemy of the nation’ (Guchinova 2005; Tomlinson 2002). Repeatedly they emphasized their hard work and how they had contributed to the development of the Soviet socialist economy, while burying the injustice of their suffering in silence. Nevertheless, the past, although unspoken, continued to exert a powerful influence on their lives.

⁴⁵ This legitimacy through spatial movement provides an interesting contrast with the Buryats studied by Humphrey (1994). According to Humphrey, the Buryats were executors as well as victims of repression and this became the basis of their participation in the building of the Soviet Union. Because of their dual role, the Buryats adopted an ambivalent stance toward the state during the early 1990s when revision of the past was possible. Koreans, however, could be considered justified in seeing themselves purely as ‘victims’ given that the deportation was carried out by non-Koreans after the purging of 2,500 Koreans in administrative roles. However, in people’s perception, this does not seem to be the case. As in Ira Ten’s re-phrasing of ‘deportation’ to ‘repression’, the latter more inclusive term is often used, since it was widely acknowledged that ‘everybody was repressed during the Stalinist purge’. Thus, Koreans seem to address ‘deportation’ from a dual stance: on the one hand, by denying the language used in talking about the incident, and on the other by locating it within the wider perspective of the ‘repression’ that was imposed on ordinary people in the Soviet Union without regard to specific circumstances.

How can one then describe and understand ‘the unspoken’? Is the unspoken located somewhere between memory and history?

I was impressed by Veena Das’s (2007) eloquent analysis of the interweaving of violence and ordinary life in her investigation of violence during Partition in India in 1947 and against Sikhs after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. She examines the case of a woman called Manjit (Das 2007, Chapter 5), who was known to have been abducted and raped by Pakistani Muslims at the time of Partition, although this was not subsequently mentioned by anybody and was buried in silence. Instead, her life was characterised by the physical violence of her husband towards her and verbal abuse from her mother-in-law. When Das asked her to write about her memory of Partition, she wrote a full page of description filled with ‘rumours’ she had heard with ‘anonymous collective authorship’. She made no mention of her own abduction and rape, only the violence in her day-to-day life alluding to such an experience. Thus, ‘the original event was deflected by other stories that were “say-able” within the kinship universe of Punjabi families’ (Das 2007, 88).

There is a deep moral energy in the refusal to represent some violations of the human body, for these violations are seen as being ‘against nature’, as defining the limits of life itself. . . . Those violations of the body cannot be spoken, for they create the sense in oneself that one is a thing, a beast, or a machine; these stand in contrast to the violations that can be scripted in everyday life when time can be allowed to do its work of reframing or rewriting the memories of violence (Das 2007, 90).

Thus, moral dignity is claimed by ordinary people in a strong refusal to speak of the non-human condition, and a boundary for culture is drawn around the universe of family and kinship where such violence is deflected through other forms of suffering. Therefore, the verb ‘drive out (*vygoniat*)’, in replacing the official word ‘deport’, implicates the non-human condition of such historical experience, as this verb *vygoniat* is usually used when the object of action is a herd of animals such as cows, sheep, horses etc. (cf. Tomlinson 2002).

Returning to the context of the Soviet Union, Guchinova(2005; 2007) points out an interesting effect of deportation on the Kalmyks, whereby the stigma of deportation led them to negate their traditional culture in various ways.⁴⁶ Many changed their names to Russian ones, declared themselves to be of different ethnicity, began cooking Russian-style meals, stopped

⁴⁶ The Kalmyks reside in Kalmykia, an autonomous republic in the southwestern part of the Russian Federation. They were forcibly deported to Central Asia and Siberia in 1943.

using the Kalmyk language and simplified their traditional wedding customs. In short, the Kalmyks, like many other ethnic minorities, were partially 'Russified' in the course of their efforts to 'atone for their guilt'. Yet despite this, the deportation also served to consolidate their Kalmyk ethnicity. According to Guchinova (Guchinova 2007, 220), the Kalmyks were not a unitary group before their deportation, but consisted of 'multiple identities based on kin or ethno-territorial parameters'. This was transformed by the deportation whereby 'stigmatized ethnicity and common extreme experience led to the situation in which general ethnic identity prevailed over local forms of consciousness'. Similarly, Koreans were to some extent 'Russified' by their relocation to Central Asia where they experienced the loss of their traditional way of life and, in many cases, their native language. Whereas for the Kalmyks their Tibetan Buddhist religion can serve as the basis for their consolidated ethnicity, Koreans have no such religion to mark them as a nation. Rather, they find their ethnicity in their domestic family and kinship world. The stigma of deportation excluded them from the hierarchy of nationalities in the Soviet Union, leading them to negate their 'ethnic culture'; yet ironically, this exclusion reinforced and strengthened their ethnic base by placing it in the realm of family and kinship. In concealing and containing the pain, 'the passivity is transformed into agency' by 'descending to ordinary life' rather than transcending it through grand narrative (Das 2007, 55).

Chapter 2 Repatriating to the Russian Far East, Confronting the Transition

Primorskii Krai is a land of wind and fog;
The wind blows in
And suddenly the fog rises.
Living in this land one
Appears quietly and then disappears,
Reappearing undetected.

---- By an anonymous poet, a former resident of Primorskii Krai

As we already have seen in the previous chapter, there were not supposed to be any Koreans in the RFE following their forced relocation to Central Asia by the Soviet authorities in 1937. However, as James Scott (1998) convincingly argues, grand designs by the state such as the mass relocation of populations and large-scale development projects often do not fully achieve their aims as there are always holes, gaps and unexpected outcomes due to local practices and human nature. Since their forcible relocation to Central Asia, there was a brief period when Koreans were to all intents and purposes be absent from the RFE,¹ but they soon began to reappear as a result of migration from North Korea following Korea's liberation from Japanese colonialism in 1945 and also from Central Asia following Stalin's death in 1953.

In other words, Koreans have exhibited a tenacious connection to this land despite the Stalinist attempt to 'cleanse' the region. Although more thorough research from a historical perspective is required on Koreans in the RFE during the period from the Stalinist purge until the death of Stalin, this chapter will mainly discuss the repatriation of Koreans to the RFE from Central Asia since 1956 when restrictions on residence by Koreans were lifted in the Soviet Union. There have been two periods of large-scale repatriation of Koreans from Central Asia, one following the 'rehabilitation' of Koreans in the mid-1950s and the other in the post-Soviet period in the 1990s. I shall discuss both in this chapter, although most of my ethnographic material relates to the more recent migration, as does my analytical engagement with literature on this so-called 'ethnic migration' and my discussion of exclusionary practices towards these migrants.

One of the characteristics of the explosive growth in migration following the collapse

of the Soviet Union is that people have appeared to move as homogenous groups, a phenomenon that has often been termed ‘ethnic migration’ (*etnicheskaia migratsiia*)’ (Panarin 1999; Pilkington 1998; Vashchuk et al. 2002). Also, the fact that migration was caused by the outbreak of autochthonous nationalism and violent civil wars in the CIS countries has reinforced the specifically ‘ethnic’ character of this movement in which people of certain nationalities were forcibly displaced from their places of residence.² However, ethnographic studies have made it apparent that the migration of these people was a complex process resulting from many interlinked factors and that it cannot be neatly categorised according to the conventional terms used in migration studies such as ‘ethnic’ or ‘forced’. In other words, the ethnographic description enables us to deconstruct the dichotomy of terms such as ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors in the study of migration (cf. Pilkington 1998), thus revealing not only the complexity of social life but also the interweaving of various factors in the displacement and emplacement process.

In the field of migration studies, the motivation for migration is traditionally considered to be the defining criterion for categorisation. The dichotomy is usually represented by a series of paired antinomies such as economic vs. political, personal vs. structural, migrants vs. refugees. In the case of Koreans who moved from Central Asia to the RFE in the 1990s, however, they were neither ‘forcibly’ displaced, nor did they ‘voluntarily’ move of their own accord. Rather, the motivation for their movement seems to blur this clear-cut categorisation. In the first part of this chapter, I will show that the migration of Koreans from Central Asia to the RFE cannot be understood as a unitary phenomenon, but rather as something that involves many different factors.

In particular, I will explore this process of Korean migration through people’s personal narratives in order to show how external factors such as political unrest and economic deterioration in Central Asia following the collapse of the Soviet Union interplayed with social relationships in the migration process. In this way, I intend to critically engage with the tendency in migration studies to consider the intention or agency as the most important criterion for migration, with this intention or agency in the case of Koreans in the RFE being embedded in their social relations, and particularly in their kinship relations.³ The people who told me their migration stories tended not to act on an individual basis, but as part of a family or kinship group. As I shall show later, some people such as the male head of an extended family made more autonomous decisions, but most others followed the decisions of close family members. The political situation may well have acted as a ‘push’ factor, but in my interlocutors’ narratives, it was personal relationships that were overwhelmingly the main reason for their migration

rather than any external political factors. It is also necessary to note that migration itself influenced social relations, as those who engaged in migration had to decide with whom to go and whom to leave behind. In particular, alliance relations appear to form a nodal point in which (dis-) connectedness is articulated, as kinship relations not only connect but also disconnect. This aspect of migration is also crucial in understanding the emplacement process.

A secondary but no less important issue is that of the relation between the timing of the migrants' emplacement and changes in their socio-economic position in the RFE, in particular, the influence of changes in the citizenship law and exclusionary practices towards migrants from the 2000s onwards. In the second part of this chapter, therefore, I will show how this relationship can be a crucial social resource in the process of emplacement following the rapid economic and social changes in the RFE after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Again, my aim is to deconstruct the seemingly homogenous ethnicity of Koreans by showing how the economic and social differences among Korean migrants that arose due to the time of their migration to the RFE and their kinship networks were created and how they reflect wider political and economic changes.

This second focus allows us to see that social changes are not limited to the Korean population but are common across the RFE. Rather than investigating the case of Koreans in isolation from the rest of the residents of the RFE, my intention is to more revealingly examine the wider changes that took place during the period of the Korean influx. Ethnographic studies of Koreans in the region show diverse social trends during the period from the 1990s up to the early 2000s. Nevertheless, public discourse about migrants in the RFE tends to refer to them as a homogenous group and focuses on their place of departure as in 'people from Central Asia (*liudi iz srednei azii*)' or, more offensively, 'black faces from Central Asia (*chiornoe litso iz srednei azii*)'. The differences that exist among Korean migrants from Central Asia are often not made explicit, but they are vitally important in the process of settling in the region.⁴ This process can only be fully understood by considering the timing of their migration as it forms not only the basis of their internal differences but also influences cooperation among people who occupy different social and economic positions.

In particular, through ethnographic cases of different social conditions of migration, I draw on the issue of 'inequality and exclusion' in Russia raised by Humphrey (2001). She addresses a peculiar 'inequality' in Russia that cannot be explained in terms of 'economic exploitation,' 'class' or 'race', but is derived from 'exclusionary practices' (334). According to Humphrey, "practices of exclusion' refers to processes such as exile, banishment or limits on residence or employment that radically disadvantage people but do not expel them entirely from

society' (Humphrey 2001, 333). Such inequalities resulting from exclusionary practices cannot be explained in unitary terms, as their boundaries are continually reviewed and reset as historical variants of 'dispossession' (ibid., 348). In addressing such exclusionary practices, she pays attention to the emotional aspect⁵ expressed in 'the nexus of anxiety' of the 'unity (*edinstvo*)' that may extend from the national level right down to a small group of ordinary people in the form of a 'collective (*kollektiv*)'.

Here I argue that changes in the scale of the 'collective' and variations in exclusionary boundaries can be seen in the different treatment extended to Korean migrants in the RFE throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. In the early 1990s, a specific group formed by migration was accepted as an equivalent of the collective within the continuity of Soviet practices. Thus, a clan or an extended family group was admitted into a village or a city, although they were not fully incorporated into local society. Some Koreans, however, preferred to remain 'outside' of the existing system, as this allowed them to enjoy significant economic opportunities by remaining free from the socialist morality embedded in such a locality or collective. In the later 1990s, exclusionary practices shifted their focus from the collective as a socio-economic unit to a national one (ibid., 347). In particular, the change of citizenship law in 2002 signified such a shift and it dramatically disadvantaged those Koreans who migrated from the end of the 1990s onwards.

While Humphrey insightfully charts a subtle and complex difference in the creation of inequality in Russia, it is my intention to supplement her work by means of ethnographic case studies. Put simply, I am wondering how such 'dispossessed' people were able to settle in the RFE and continue living there, despite such exclusionary practices and, in many cases, little economic success. My ethnographic cases show that there were certain tactics and strategies adopted by 'the dispossessed' that enabled them to deal with 'exclusionary practices' and led to the formation of their own social space through interaction in the form of exchange and sociality. I further argue that there is a certain inversion of exclusion amongst the different groups of Koreans in the RFE based on their time of arrival, i.e. amongst older resident Koreans, newcomer Koreans from Central Asia, and Chinese Koreans.

This inversion of exclusion derives from the duality of the collective in Russia. On the one hand, not being part of a collective leads to a considerable loss of entitlement and protection provided by the larger group but, as mentioned previously, it also provides freedom from the morality and loyalty the collective imposes on its members (Humphrey 2001: 345). When operating 'outside' the legitimate social spaces, each of the three groups of Koreans exchange with each other what the other party does not have, such as 'cheap Chinese goods', 'local

connections’, ‘freedom from anxiety about being excluded’, with such transactions often taking place in the context of the market place and commercial agricultural cultivation. However, this excluded ‘outside’ space is also subject to change due to a continuous review of boundary making. In the unstable post-Soviet transitional situation, the two groups of Koreans who came from Central Asia before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union both claim their locality based on the Soviet past and in this way distinguish themselves from Chinese Koreans.

In the following section, I will briefly introduce certain features of each group of Koreans. For ease of explanation, I describe each group according to the time of their migration, although in reality such divisions are not so clearly defined as there is a certain amount of blurring and overlapping of dividing lines in their social interaction.

Early repatriates: returnees from Central Asia in the 1950s

In 1956, Koreans in Central Asia were officially allowed to move from the Soviet republics in which they had been resident since their deportation in 1937.⁶ However, only a small number of Koreans among the whole population of Koreans in Central Asia decided to return to their ‘homeland’ at this time, as the majority of them had been settled in Central Asia for nearly 20 years.

There is a popular story among Koreans about this period. According to this story, Khrushchev visited the most well-known and successful *sovkhos* (Soviet state farm) in Tashkent Oblast in Uzbekistan where a Korean, Hwang Mangeum, was the chairman and many members of the *sovkhos* were also Korean. During his visit, Khrushchev asked Hwang, ‘Don’t you (*ty*) want to return to your homeland (*rodinu*), the Far East? If you wish, I can send you there.’ Hwang replied, ‘No, we don’t want to return there, as this is already our homeland, the USSR.’ We do not know whether this reflected his true feeling or not (cf. Yurchak 1997), but we can safely assume that returning to the RFE entailed certain risks and challenges. Despite the warming in the political climate, there was still antipathy toward any serious political demands by Koreans.⁷

However, there were some who ventured to return to the RFE during the following years. According to the all-Soviet census in 1959, 6,952 Koreans moved from Central Asia to the RFE between 1954 and 1959, out of a total population of 1,381,018 in Primorskii Krai (*Itoki Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda*, cited in Vashchuk et al. 2002: 110). By 1989, the number of Koreans had increased to 8,125 (Troiakova 2004, 5; see Table 2 in Appendix 1).⁸

Many Koreans who repatriated to the RFE in the 1950s migrated to carry out ‘rice cultivation’ (*bejil* in Korean) and wanted to return to ‘the place of their birth’. Nevertheless, their movement needs to be considered not only as part of a post-war population change as explained by Kim and Men (1995),⁹ but also within the context of Soviet migration policy in order to understand their social position after migration.

The central allocation of labour power—‘the regulation of population movement’ (Kotkin 1995, 103)—was a prerequisite of the ‘allocative power’ of the socialist state (Verdery 1991), as the labour force was the ‘means of production’ in the Soviet economy (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003). According to (Verdery 1991), Soviet-type societies operated with the maximization of the state’s allocative powers by keeping the consumer goods in shortage, as it would enable the state to regulate people by monopolizing distribution of goods in demand. Therefore, migration was also regulated or deliberately neglected by the state so that the production level for each sector could be controlled by the state. Within the spectrum of migration practices during Soviet times, there was on the one hand ‘optimal migration according to the perceived needs of the state economy’ with the allocation of work by the state institution (Buckley 1995, 904), while on the other hand there was ‘personal’, ‘voluntary’ and ‘quiet’ migration according to ‘personal needs’. This latter form of migration impeded the ‘distribution network’ of the state and was strongly discouraged during the 1930s, resulting in certain disadvantages for such people. This contrasted sharply with the granting of many state benefits to settlers who were officially encouraged to migrate to underdeveloped marginal regions of the USSR, including the RFE. This social arrangement of the labour force became the basis of rights and duties recognised by the general population. Thus, there was an implicit hegemonic consensus as to the categories of people who were to have access to certain benefits and services and those who were not.

As David G. Anderson (1996, 110) discusses, there was a ‘culturally appropriate triangulation of a person within a position, a kollektiv, and a citizenship regime’. In the ‘bundle of rights’ (ibid) accorded to such a person, their position within the state enterprise was determined according to various criteria such as nationality, gender, length of residence, and educational qualifications rather than by any universal concepts of equality and individual rights as might be implied in a Western liberal-democratic conception of citizenship. Although Anderson explains such social provisions using the concept of ‘citizenship regime’, it was through ‘work’ that a person’s position within a society was defined, and this was itself a function of work allocation (cf. Tomlinson 2002, Chapter 6). In this situation, nationality appears to have been an important factor in defining one’s position, given the fact that most

incomers were ‘Russians’ while existing residents were indigenous people in the case of ethnographic studies by Anderson and others (Anderson 2000; Ssorin-Chaikov 2003).

While the term ‘incomers (*priezzhie*)’ is used in sub-arctic Siberia to describe ‘people who have been sent with a particular project or mission and is often bound up with an accusation of intrusiveness, acquisitiveness and an insensitivity to local ways’ (Anderson 1996, 102), in Primorskii Krai a persistent distinction has traditionally been drawn between ‘old residents (*starozhily*)’ and ‘new residents (*novosely*)’ since the days of Imperial Russia (see Chapter 1). However, this distinction has become blurred due to incoming waves of *more* ‘new residents’.¹⁰ The distinction between the groups weakened and they increasingly became ‘the same’ as the new residents came to understand what the old residents complained about the region’s backwardness and shared their frustration. Complaining about the marginality of the RFE, and by making comparison with the European part of Russia rather than with the wider world, thus became one of the ways of asserting one’s sense of belonging to the locality.

However, despite such complaints, the fear of the RFE becoming separated from the main body of Russia and the USSR has remained prevalent (cf. Humphrey 2001). During Soviet times, many Koreans in the RFE had to put up with the fact that such ‘fear’ was imposed on them as a marker of the marginality of the region as borderland. In the face of such attitudes by residents in the RFE, the ‘old resident’ Koreans themselves responded by becoming deeply localized, embodying such a notion of marginality and bordering of the region in past years. Thus, they sometimes tactically used the words for ‘locals (*mestnye*),’ ‘old residents (*starozhily*),’ and ‘Primorians (*primoritsy*)’ in describing themselves in contrast with the ‘migrants’ (*pereselentsy*), ‘newcomers’ (*novosely* or *priezzhie*), and ‘people from Central Asia’ (Chen 2003: 42).¹¹ These terms are not specifically focused on ethnic identity but draw a division in accordance with the hegemonic discourse of locality. This creates another potential bifurcation among Koreans according to the time of their migration, a topic to which I shall return later.

As a result, many Koreans who repatriated to the RFE without institutional support struggled not only to gain access to social provisions such as housing and employment, but also suffered from anti-Korean sentiment. According to an interview described in Vashchuk et al. (2002, 118), when a Korean family returned to the RFE in the 1950s, the neighbors yelled, ‘Here come negroes! (*ponaekhali siuda negry*)’. Many of this first generation of repatriates were unable to obtain good jobs since they moved to the region ‘spontaneously (*stikhinno*)’ and ‘personally (*lichno*)’, outside the state’s regime of labour allocation. An elderly woman, Anya Vladimirovna (born in 1934) who came to Ussuriisk in the 1950s with a degree in journalism from Yekaterinburg University, was unable to find a permanent job and had to be content with

intermittent and temporary positions. In an interview, she recollected that ‘in the past, local people felt very sorry for the Koreans, as we were not given (*ustroilis*’) proper jobs’. Thus, the first generation of repatriated Koreans mostly worked in private farming, while the second generation was able to acquire stable jobs more suited to their education, in a pattern quite similar to the migration cultivation practitioners discussed in the next chapter. In addition to Anya Vladimirovna, I was able to meet other Korean ‘old residents’ (*starozily*) via personal connections and chance encounters, which was unexpected as this group of Koreans are little known outside of Primorskii Krai. One of these ‘old residents’ was a head teacher of a primary school in a village near Ussuriisk. I was introduced to her by my Russian friend whose mother had ‘a very big circle of acquaintances (*ochen’bolshoi okrug znakomstva*)’, as she had worked for many years in the city administrative offices.¹²

The headmistress told me that she was born in 1955 in Tashkent Oblast and came to Ussuriisk, carried ‘in her father’s bosom’, in 1956. Her father originated from Manchuria in the 1920s and spoke four languages fluently (Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian), but was unable to use his language abilities after his repatriation due to Primorskii Krai being cut off from the outside world. He was one of the ‘cosmopolitans’ of this region in the early 20th century produced by the porous border and the intermingling of peoples, but there were no job opportunities for him in Primorskii Krai apart from rice farming. In our meeting at her home, the headmistress described herself in the following way:

I consider myself a Primorian Korean. I am a very conservative person and still respect Soviet values. In this village, there are about twelve Korean households, most of whom are from Central Asia. I think that I am different from them, as they will do anything for money. My neighbor is a Korean man from Central Asia who lives with his two children. He went to South Korea to earn money, leaving the children alone at home. The elder one is an 11-year-old girl and the younger one is a little boy. I sometimes pop in to see how they are doing. They told me that they are all right and that their father sometimes phones them from South Korea.

I had the impression that she wanted to demonstrate that she was different from ‘newcomer’ Koreans from Central Asia ‘who will do anything for money’, a perception shared by many other ‘old resident’ Russians. She sought to differentiate herself from other Koreans by referring to ‘Soviet values’ and her long residency. However, it would be a misconception to see this case as typical of all ‘old resident’ Koreans.¹³ On the contrary, most ‘old resident’ Koreans do not make this differentiation but view the increase in the number of Koreans in Primorskii Krai in a

positive way, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the old residents feel that the influx has made the position of Koreans as a group less vulnerable, and secondly, ‘old resident’ Koreans often mention that the arrival of Koreans from Central Asia has helped to relieve the shortage of marriage partners of the same ethnicity, thus increasing the opportunities for ethnic endogamy.

The other impression I had from my meetings with ‘old resident’ Koreans was that they wished to avoid talking about the ‘national question’ in the RFE. This was certainly the case in my interview with Anya Vladimirovna. When she mentioned discrimination against Koreans in the region during Soviet times, I showed interest in pursuing the topic, but from that moment onwards, the atmosphere became awkward, her hospitality suddenly changed, and she appeared in a hurry to finish talking with me. Similarly, in the Chinese market, without being aware of the sensitiveness of this topic, I asked a Korean woman, who also turned out to be an ‘old resident’, about the ‘national question’ in the past. She became cross and replied: ‘During Soviet times, we all lived here very well. Everybody had a job and there was no inequality whatsoever. You are disturbing me, so please go away.’ Until that moment, I had not fully realised the sensitiveness of the issue, as many newcomer Koreans talked freely about the subject in a casual way or were not particularly interested in it. I shall return to this topic later in the chapter, but prior to that, I would like to consider the overall situation for migration by newcomer Koreans in the early 1990s.

Newcomer Koreans in the early 1990s: ‘organized’ migration in chaos

As a result of violent conflict in the Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan, in 1989 and the civil war in Tadzhikistan in 1991, the number of Koreans arriving in the RFE increased dramatically in the early 1990s (see Table 1.). Although public discourse about these refugees highlights the chaotic nature of their displacement, the narratives that I collected illustrate that many refugees organised their own travel in large groups, usually as extended families. Let me describe a few cases of extended families in order to provide a better picture of the situation in the early 1990s.

The first case is based on my conversations in the Chinese market in Ussuriisk with a clothing trader called Roza Kim, who was in her late 50s in 2004. She moved to the city in 1992 from Dushanbe along with her mother, her four sisters and their families including their children. They held a family meeting (*semmonyi sovet*) and decided to move when civil war broke out. At the meeting, they looked at a map and decided on Ussuriisk as their destination in a fairly random way, although they thought it should have a good climate as it was ‘on the same latitude

as the Cream Peninsula', having excluded Vladivostok on the basis that it was too big and windy. Following this joint decision to move to Ussuriisk, two men from the five families obtained leave (*otpusk*) from their work and visited Ussuriisk to see whether the city was suitable or not. On this reconnaissance visit, the men bought two houses for the five families. Roza Kim's husband subsequently moved to one of these houses and 'received (*poluchili*)' work and was allocated an apartment from his workplace after 3 months. Then, the families sold their houses in Dushanbe and loaded all their belongings into a 20-ton container that could be transported by train. They flew to Ussuriisk but Roza Kim's two nephews, who were in their early 20s, travelled by train in order to guard the container. Immediately after the families arrived, Roza Kim was able to get a job as an accountant at a grocery distribution centre in the city without being asked by the director for any documents. Since then, the extended families of her mother's two sisters have also followed them to the RFE.

This case shows the typical pattern of migration to an urban area as a direct result of the outbreak of civil war in Dushanbe in the early 1990s. Although they were 'refugees', to my knowledge very few people registered as such. This was partly due to the fact that the official migration service was only organized in Primorskii Krai in 1995 (Vashchuk et al. 2002, 161),¹⁴ but also because there was little practical need for such registration, given the acceptance of these people by the local authorities. People from Dushanbe during this period seem to have been able to find work easily and even received housing from their workplace.¹⁵ In short, even though they were escaping from civil war in Dushanbe, their migration appears to have been well organized and supported by the receiving local authorities. However, such generalizations only apply to people who had the financial means to purchase houses in urban areas, and migrants in rural areas experienced a somewhat different situation. To illustrate this, let me give an overview of a village where many Korean migrants settled in the early 1990s. I came to know this village through a friend of Roza Kim's nephew, who was the daughter of Georg Kim and Marta Ivanovna Ten.

The village of Novoselovo in Spassk Raion was a stopping-off point for many Korean migrants from Central Asia in the mid-1990s. In 1994, a communal apartment (*obshezhitie*) accommodated around 50 families, increasing to around 100 families by 1995 (*Newspaper Vondong*, No 5, 1994, No 2 1995). By 2003, there were 56 Korean households in the village and a total of 108 households if we include the neighboring villages as counted by Marta Ivanovna at my request.

Marta Ivanovna's household was the first to move to Novoselovo in 1990 from Dushanbe, where they had lived next door to Roza Kim's sister. At my first meeting with Marta Ivanovna,

she told me that ‘we moved here not only because this place is the birthplace of our ancestors, but also because Korea and Japan are next door (*riadom*)’. However, a friend of the husband of Marta Ivanovna, Georg Kim, provided a different explanation. Georg Kim used to be an agriculturalist in Dushanbe and already knew Novoselovo from his army service in this area in his youth. With his specialised knowledge of cultivation, he knew that the village was good for watermelon production, being located in a geographical basin and enjoying sunshine and higher temperatures in the summer months. When Marta Ivanovna’s family moved to Novoselovo, the *sovkhos* provided them with a wooden house for free and offered Georg Kim work in the *sovkhos* as an agriculturalist, although he declined the offer.¹⁶ Marta Ivanovna was also offered a teaching job at the secondary school in the village, which she accepted. She retired as the director of ‘House of Culture (*Dom Kulturyi*)’. She is the only Korean in the village working in a state institution. Many other households from Dushanbe are directly or indirectly related to Marta Ivanovna’s household. Some of them are childhood friends of Georg Kim who were at school together in the same village in Kazakhstan in the late 1950s and who moved together with him to Dushanbe. Many of them were subsequently joined by their relatives and families.

Roughly, half of the Korean residents of Novoselovo came from Dushanbe and the other half from Uzbekistan, in particular from the area of the Fergana Valley where violent conflicts occurred in 1993. Whereas many of the households from Dushanbe share childhood friendship connections, households from Uzbekistan consist of several extended families. In particular, the extended families of six brothers moved to this village and their affine families also joined them (see Appendix 2). Each extended family of these elderly brothers includes a number of their children’s households and they usually refer to this kinship group as a ‘clan (*klan*)’.

Although they are now working in informal agriculture (see Chapter 4) rather than as members of the enterprises that succeeded the old *sovkhos*, they were able to settle in this village with the permission of the *sovkhos*.¹⁷ As in this and Roza Kim’s case, migration during the early 1990s shows that there was muted consent in accepting a certain group of people within the boundary of a state enterprise or village. This arrangement was not quite the same as ‘the citizenship regime’ discussed by (1996)Anderson (1996), but I understand his conceptualization of a wider context that is not limited to a single enterprise but encompasses a region. In that sense, the ‘collective’ was still a meaningful category in Primorskii Krai for defining one’s position in the local context until the mid-1990s, and thus there were no problems with the legal status of an individual as part of the collective at this stage or for obtaining tacit consent for a group of people to take up residence.¹⁸ This trend appeared to

change around the late 1990s when there was a slowdown in the number of so-called ‘political migrants’ from Central Asia, but an increase in ‘economic migration’. This resulted in the invocation of ‘migration politics’ by the state in an attempt to regulate what was viewed as the ‘chaotic’ movement of people driven by arbitrary, economic and personalized motivation. It also sought to establish standards to define the status of ‘refugees’ and ‘forced migrants (*vynudzhennyi migranty*)’.

While ‘migration politics’ was devised to regulate the movement of people that had resulted from the surge in ethnic conflicts, the situation on the ground during this period was one step ahead of the state’s legislation, with the formation of commercial (though not capital) links with the growing entrepreneurial activities of migrant Koreans. In the next section, I shall examine the economic changes brought about by Koreans who settled in urban areas.

[Place Figure 4,5,6 around here]

Figure 4. Women Vegetable Sellers in Market Place

Figure 5. Salad Selling Stall in Marketplace Run by a Korean Woman

Figure 6. A Salad Factory Run by Lena Yugai

Year \ Nationality	1990-1991	1992-1993	1994-1995	1996-1997	1998
Ethnic Russians	+13276	- 3552	-6680	-11110	-6290
Ukrainians	+805	- 6796	-966	-1645	-721
Belarusian	915	-1311	-678	-452	-238
Azerbaijan	-29	47	276	391	187
Armenian	46	260	854	283	192
Tatar	166	-256	-128	-365	-161
Koreans	1049	2482	2746	1362	1147
Chinese	2172	1503	2191
Sum of population change	+20082	-9117	-3137	-10695	-4184

Table 1. The change of population in Primorskii Krai according to nationality in 1990-1998

(Source : Vashchuk et al. 2002, 157)

From migrants to traders in the mid-1990s

In contrast with the three cases described above, many people began to arrive in the RFE from the mid-1990s onwards as ‘guests’ on an individual and temporary basis shuttling between two regions in order to carry out trading activities. Though kin connections remained crucial in motivating them to ‘visit’ this region, what often encouraged them to settle was the unexpected success of their entrepreneurial activities.

One such example is a woman called Larisa who owns a fur-coat stall in the Chinese market in Ussuriisk. She first came to Ussuriisk in 1992 as a guest of her cousin. She had no intention of settling in the RFE, but came in order to escape personal financial hardship. She used to teach history at secondary school in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, but in the early 1990s, along with many other school teachers, she tried shuttle trading during her vacations to supplement her income. She borrowed 2,000 dollars from an acquaintance and imported some angora shirts

from China, but the venture was unsuccessful and she lost money. She was in trouble, as there did not seem to be any way to pay back the debt. Then, her cousin in Ussuriisk suggested that she visit him, so she came with her husband as ‘guests’ during the school vacation. She bought vegetables from Chinese Koreans and sold them in the market. This proved to be very successful with a long queue of customers every day. After only one visit, she was able to pay back her debt when she returned to Tashkent. She continued this seasonal activity for another a couple of years, which enabled her to buy a flat in Ussuriisk and move there permanently with her two children in 1995.

Such success stories usually feature the common elements of having a relative already in the RFE and collaborating with Chinese Koreans. Over and above this, it is the skill of the individual entrepreneur and the items that they trade which determines the scale of their success. Another woman called Lena Yugai, who came from Kazakhstan in 1992 and now owns a flourishing food-production factory in Ussuriisk presents us with an even more successful story. Before she decided to move, she visited her sister who was living in Vladivostok, to find out whether it would be a good idea to move there with her family. She returned home and told her mother-in-law, ‘It should be all right to move there. I would be able to sell *kimchi* in the market even if things go wrong’. During the first year, Lena and her family carried out migration cultivation near Ussuriisk producing watermelons and cucumbers. During the winter of that year when there was no agricultural work, she had the opportunity of working with Chinese Koreans as an interpreter as she was good at the Korean language, and she began selling clothes that she bought from them. In the following two years, she travelled around Russia to Moscow, Magadan, and Novosibirsk selling clothes, while her husband stayed at home looking after the children and the house.¹⁹ When trading clothes became less profitable, she began selling vegetables in the central market of Ussuriisk.²⁰ As in Larisa’s case above, she was very successful with ‘a long queue of customers’. However, she lost interest in simply selling goods and embarked on producing and selling prepared meals in the market for the next few years. One day, a civil servant from the city administration gathered all the food sellers (around 50 women) in the market²¹ and told them that without a licensed factory to supply them they would be forbidden to continue trading. Lena responded to this challenge by renting a building near the central market in 1999 and opening a food-production factory, subsequently buying a building with a friend in 2003 and expanding production (see Fig. 6).²² By this time, she employed about 70 workers, with many of her relatives in administrative and financial positions. She allowed her license to be used by her in-laws (*sadon* in Korean), her cousin, and her sister (even though they produce their food in their kitchens at home) and she began supplying products to most of

the supermarket stores and kiosks not only in Ussuriisk but also in other cities in Primorskii Krai, while receiving orders for family banquets as well. Despite her proven record and being chosen as 'Business Woman of the City' in 2003, she continues to experiment with developing new dishes and has a strong belief that she understands 'Russian consumers' tastes' very well.

In both these cases above, opportunities for economic gain arose from connections with Chinese Koreans, who came to the RFE at a similar time as the influx of Koreans from Central Asia. In post-Soviet Russia, with the crumbling of the old state enterprises, economic wealth is limited to natural resources such as oil and gas, which is controlled by oligarchs and does not benefit ordinary people.²³ In this situation, opportunities for ordinary people to acquire wealth come from trading foreign products, given the weakness of the domestic production sector. During my fieldwork, it was almost impossible to buy consumer goods produced locally in the RFE apart from grey toilet paper and basic foodstuffs. Some consumer goods came from the European part of Russia but most were imported from neighbouring countries, with 'Chinese products' and 'Japanese second-hand cars' playing a particularly important role.²⁴ Migrant Koreans were in a good position to benefit from cooperating with Chinese Korean traders in these areas for two main reasons.

Firstly, Russian and Chinese Koreans are usually able to communicate together in Korean dialect, as their common ancestors came from the northern part of the Korean peninsula (see Chapter 1) and they interacted together until the Russian Koreans were displaced in 1937. While I was unable to communicate properly with Russian Koreans in the Korean language due to strong vernacular differences with my South Korean dialect, they continuously emphasised their ease of communication with Chinese Koreans.²⁵ Despite much lament about the loss of native language ability since perestroika, many Koreans of the second generation of those who experienced the 1937 displacement were capable of understanding the vernacular language of the Chinese Koreans, as their parents used to speak Korean at home.²⁶ Typically, they say, 'At home our parents spoke in Korean and we answered in Russian'. Thus, their Korean language ability was a great asset in obtaining Chinese products to sell on the streets in the mid-1990s.²⁷ This situation changed somewhat from the mid-1990s onwards, however, as many Chinese Koreans began to establish their own connections with local Koreans. As a result, newcomer Koreans from Central Asia from the end of the 1990s began to work as hired traders on the stalls in the Chinese market and I shall discuss this later in the chapter.

The second reason that migrant Koreans were able to benefit from their connections with Chinese Koreans was their personal skills and networks. As in the case of Lena Yugai, many Korean women began catering businesses with their cooking skills. Another woman I met who

had worked in a garment factory in the city until the early 1990s was able to use her skills to rescue a shipment of angora clothes that had been imported by a Chinese Korean but damaged in transit. Such skills acquired during the Soviet period could be even more effective when combined with connections with local power brokers— both legitimate and not— in addition to the ‘Chinese’ connection. Mikhail Kim, who was killed in a shooting in 1995²⁸ and was still fondly remembered by many people as ‘a great man’ during my fieldwork in 2003-4, provides a good example. He is remembered by some as a famous ‘Korean Mafioso’, but by others as ‘a great businessman and leader’ as he owned several businesses in the city including an upmarket Italian restaurant, an agricultural enterprise, and a large share of the vegetable wholesale market.²⁹ He originally worked as an engineer for a state enterprise in Kazakhstan, but following the rise of autochthonous nationalism he formed his own business, as there was no longer any hope of advancement within the state system, ‘as a person was not evaluated by his activities, but by nationality (*po natsional’nomu priznaku*)’ (Chen 2003). When the Soviet Union disintegrated, he migrated to Ussuriisk in 1991 and registered as a ‘private enterprise’ (*chastnoe predpriiatie*) on the city executive committee (*gorispolkome*). He set up a business making and repairing footwear, but with the opening of the border and the influx of cheap shoes from China, he transformed his enterprise into a trading company in cooperation with Chinese Koreans.³⁰ Crucial to his success in expanding his business were his links not only with the Chinese Koreans, but also with the old resident Korean mafia who had influence with the local authorities.

Thus, the formation and expansion of corporate enterprises by Koreans were enabled by connections with Chinese Koreans, personal skills that had often been acquired during the Soviet period, and ‘protection’ provided by the local authorities and the physical power of mafia groups. Hence the success of one’s trading activity was highly dependent upon these three factors.

Late newcomers and problems with documents

Many Koreans who came to the RFE before the mid-1990s had achieved a relatively stable way of life, both economically and politically, by the time I arrived to conduct my fieldwork in 2003-4. As in the cases of Roza Kim and Marta Ivanovna, they had been helped by being admitted as ‘a collective’ by the villages or by state enterprises in the city, and they also benefitted from the opening of borders and the influx of Chinese goods and trade. In contrast,

many of those who arrived in the late 1990s onwards were struggling and experiencing hardship. What had happened to bring about this change?

One factor was that Chinese Korean traders did not need any new connections as they had already secured their place in the region by the late 1990s with the establishment of the Chinese market at the outskirts of Ussuriisk. A second and more important factor was the amendment of Russian citizenship law in July 2002, which not only disadvantaged migrants who arrived after this time but also earlier arrivals who had not gained citizenship. This amendment aimed to restrict the unregulated inflow of migrants to Russia and made it harder to obtain Russian citizenship. According to the previous citizenship law that was passed in February 1992, a citizen of the former Soviet Union could change their old Soviet passport to a Russian one simply by attaching a slip to it, or it was even possible to buy a Russian passport. Hence, migrants from the 'near abroad' (CIS countries)³¹ did not have any difficulty in obtaining citizenship. Rather, the more difficult issue was the residence permit (*propiska*), which formed the basis of many other documents and rights. Once one had a residence permit, citizenship could be obtained after three years' residence in Russia.

However, the new amendment of 2002 meant that even with a residence permit there were many other obstacles to surmount in order to obtain Russian citizenship. Firstly, it required at least seven years consisting of two years' temporary residence (*vremennoe prozhivanie*) when registration had to be renewed every three months followed by five years permanent residence (*vid na zhitel'stvo*). Secondly, the citizens of CIS countries had to nullify their old citizenship to gain Russian citizenship; this was a matter beyond the control of the individual and was rather a diplomatic matter between Russia and the country in question. This became a serious problem for people who arrived from Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan, as these countries did not want their citizens to move freely to Russia, although Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan reached agreement with Russia in 1999 and 2001 respectively not to hamper changes in citizenship. Thirdly, in addition to the many documents that had to be handed in and the fees that had to be paid, migrants were required to have HIV and other medical tests carried out every three months and to pass a Russian language exam. As a result in the first half of 2003, only 213 people were able to obtain Russian citizenship throughout the whole of Russia (14 November 2003, *Rossiskaia Gazetta*).³²

I met many people who suffered hardship as a result of this change in the Russian citizenship law and I would like to describe a couple of representative cases. Vera Tsoi was born in 1967 and I met her in the Chinese market where she had a fur-coat stall. She used to be a music teacher in Uzbekistan but stopped work in 1996 because she no longer received a salary. She was involved in migration cultivation for three years in a southern region of Russia but was

not successful. During 1998-99, there was violent conflict in Uzbekistan and her mother urged her to take her children and go to Russia, as there was 'no future for the children' at home (cf. Pilkington 1998). She moved to Saratov near Moscow in 2000 and worked as a sales assistant at a Korean deli there. In 2002, her cousin urged her to come to Far East and she moved to Ussuriisk with the promise of his help.³³ He arranged a stall in the market for her and guaranteed to pay the rent of 7,000 rubles a month if she was unable. However, her greatest worry was citizenship for her children, as without this she would have to pay foreign student fees for their higher education, which was beyond her means. Her husband went to South Korea as a migrant worker a couple months before I interviewed her, but she had received a call to say that he had been unable to find a job there.

Another woman called Valya Chen (born in 1948) came to Ussuriisk from Samarkand, Uzbekistan in 1999, thanks to her sister. She works as a hired trader at a clothes stall for the Chinese Korean owner with a daily wage of 200 rubles (slightly less than seven US dollars). When I asked her about citizenship issues, she complained a lot about her legal status, saying that she was fed up with going to the police station. When I met her, she was applying for permanent residence, but she was worried about getting citizenship even after five years' permanent residency, as the Uzbekistan government was forbidding its citizens to renounce their previous citizenship. Thanks to her sister, she had been able to obtain a residence permit by registering herself and her daughter at her sister's flat. She had not sold her house in Samarkand so she still had the possibility of returning home, but this would also be complicated, as she had already withdrawn her residency permit (*vypisala*) from registration in Samarkand.

What is ironical about the citizenship law concerns the immobility people had to face due to the lack of Russian citizenship which is more urgent problem for those who intend to go overseas. Ira Hegai (born in 1956) came from Bishkek, Kirgiz, and used to work as a school teacher. She moved to Ussuriisk with her two sons in 2001 'for personal reasons (*po lichnoi prichnoi*)' related to her divorce and to be close to her sister who was living here. For the first two years, she engaged in vegetable cultivation with the help of her sister and her sister's husband but disliked the insecurity resulting from the weather and changes in product prices. From 2003, she began to work for a Chinese Korean stall owner, as this guaranteed a daily wage of 200 rubles. She hoped to go to South Korea for migration work with her elder son once she obtained her Russian passport. To achieve this, she had to 'stand in the queue' at the police station every day. She would finish work in the market at five o'clock, go home for a quick dinner with her children and then sleep before getting up at midnight to take her place in the queue.³⁴ In the morning, she would record her place in the queue in the 'queue notebook' before

returning home and going to work again. Sometimes, if she was lucky, she would be granted an interview with a police officer, but he would usually return her documents and tell her to come back later. This would mean joining the end of the queue again. Those without residence permits are in an even worse situation than the cases above, as they live in fear of deportation and are unable to even begin the application process for citizenship. They have little or no financial means to buy a house, and are unable to call on a relative to sort out the problem of *propiska* by registering them at their address, a practice that is common amongst Koreans in the RFE.

During Soviet times, residence permits and other welfare benefits were granted as ‘a bundle of rights’ connected with one’s job (cf. Anderson 1996). This system was devised to control where people lived and worked, but at the same time guaranteed a basic level of welfare provision. It did not encompass the entire population, with some people such as Korean migration cultivation practitioners and Korean repatriates to the RFE in the 1950s remaining outside of the system. One might even say that such ‘outsiders’ were tolerated and included on the margins of society as they served to fill in gaps in the official Soviet economic system. As Humphrey (2001, 333) noted, the system did not ‘expel’ these people ‘entirely from society’, but left them in an unstable position with certain disadvantages.

The new citizenship law in practice since 2002 represented the disintegration of such ‘a bundle of rights’. As Buckley (1995, 915–916) points out, while the *propiska* and the passport system³⁵ were ‘a transmitter between collective and individual interests in the distribution of the population’ during Soviet times, they also seem to have acted as ‘a vehicle’ in the privatisation and capitalisation process in contemporary Russia by requiring people to be private homeowners and individual workers in order to conform to its directives. It is now no longer possible to ‘receive housing (*poluchit’ zhilo*)’ and ‘allocated work (*ustroit’ na rabotu*)’ in Russia; instead one needs to buy a house and find employment. However, employment seems neither to be conceived as it was during the days of the Soviet system, nor conceptualised in a Western capitalist way. Instead most people work in a private family business or are employed as day labourers, as in the case of Koreans who work in the Chinese market as hired staff. Reflecting this difference, people use the verb ‘hire (*nanimat’*)’ which highlights the temporary and interpersonal aspect of the work contract, which is arranged between two private persons (*chastnoe litso*) rather than between an economic body and an individual. Thus, although the citizenship law and migration regulation was modeled after the Western European system, it has resulted in a very different situation on the ground.

The citizenship law change also affected people who moved to the RFE long before July

2002, as many Koreans failed to change their citizenship ‘in time (*vo vremia*)’. There were two reasons for this delay. Firstly, if one had a residence permit, many Koreans could not see that Russian citizenship provided any further benefits. Pensioners processed their citizenship change quickly in order to receive a pension, albeit a minimal one,³⁶ but many people of working age, especially men, did not bother with the process. This created problems with freedom of movement, especially outside of the Russian Federation, as in the case of Katya and Sasha, a couple living in the village of Novoselovo. Katya and her sons changed their Soviet citizenship to a Russian one in Tashkent before their departure by simply going to the Russian consulate, but her husband Sasha did not bother.³⁷ Even after coming to Novoselovo, he made no attempt to apply for citizenship as he was working ‘in the field for himself (*rabotat’ na pole na sebya*)’ and could see no benefit from it. However, in the winter of 2003, when he wanted to go to South Korea for migration work,³⁸ he discovered that his ‘green passport’ from Uzbekistan could not be used to apply for a visa for South Korea.

Another reason for failing to apply for citizenship stemmed from a deep sense of belonging to the former Soviet Union. Despite the declaration of independence by the CIS countries, people did not think of them as separate countries— although this sense of belonging became somewhat ambiguous when my Korean interlocutors were faced with various disadvantages and problems after their migration, especially with the restrictions imposed by the new citizenship law. Despite such problems, an interesting attitude displayed by newcomer Koreans is their persistent optimism. Although Sasha was quite upset by the fact that he could not go to South Korea, he was not overly concerned about the matter, saying: ‘It will be sorted out soon. I heard that President Putin will announce something to solve the problem’.³⁹ His optimism was based on the awareness that ethnic Russians from CIS countries shared the same problem and that ordinary Russians had complained that the new law put ‘our compatriots (*sootchestveniki*)’ from CIS countries in a difficult position. As we shall see in the next Chapter, Koreans in Central Asia never viewed themselves as inferior to the autochthonous people and believed themselves to be playing the same role as Russians in developing Central Asia. This notion of affiliation with the ethnic Russians in Central Asia influenced their perception of their position in the RFE, in contrast with the perception held by old resident Koreans. Newcomer Koreans often said to me: ‘Russians are the cleverest, most beautiful and good-natured people among the many nations’. However, they also told me that ‘Russians in Central Asia are totally different from those in the RFE’, reflecting their negative experiences since migration. What is interesting about this perception of Russians in two different regions is how it creates a dynamic notion of ‘Russian-ness’. Newcomer Koreans are also aware of how the attitudes of old resident

Koreans towards them are influenced by the atmosphere created by the Russians in the RFE. Reflecting this mimetic relationship, my interlocutors often told me: 'The old resident Koreans are quite similar to Russians in the RFE.' However, this does not mean that the Korean minority is merely mimicking the attitude of the Russian majority but is indicative of more active change in the affective atmosphere among Koreans in the RFE.

The notion of 'locality' for newcomer and old resident Koreans

So far, I have presented various cases of migration by Koreans as if there were a clear division based on the time of their migration. This explanation of different economic and social positions according to the temporal flow of Koreans makes the notion of 'ethnic migration' somewhat ambiguous. However, in the emplacement process, this difference is downplayed, and instead their social interaction brings about changes in the inter-ethnic relationship which is then incorporated into the notion of locality in the RFE.

Firstly, in order to illuminate the changes that have taken place in the inter-ethnic relationship among Koreans in the RFE, I would like to compare the different perceptions of 'national discrimination' related by old resident and newcomer Koreans using the juxtaposition of 'before' and 'now'. Because the old residents experienced displacement in 1937 and lived in Central Asia for a significant period until their repatriation in the late 1950s, they share a common ground of experience with newcomer Koreans. Moreover, many of them share kinship relationships across the two regions, these being the basis for the decision by many Koreans to move from Central Asia to the RFE during the early and mid-1990s. Hence the difference in their experience due to the time of their migration does not appear to produce any immediately apparent division between the two groups. However, as I had more interaction with these early repatriates, I noticed on various occasions a subtle difference in their perception of their position in the RFE, a difference that shows the complexity of ethnicity and region-making in the politics of inclusion and exclusion in the post-Soviet era.

I believe it will suffice to describe two episodes that portray the different experience of these two groups. The first involves a young couple where the husband Leonid moved from Kazakhstan to the RFE in 1970 at the age of 8, whereas his wife Rita moved from Uzbekistan in 1995. I was invited to their house for a barbecue (*shashlik*) dinner in early summer in 2004 and I asked Leonid for his opinion about 'the nationality question (*natsional'nyi vopros*)'.

Leonid: The nationality question didn't exist officially (*ofitsial'no*) during the Soviet socialist period, but in reality (*v samom dele*) it was there .

Rita: No, there wasn't a nationality question in the past – even in reality. It was only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union that the nationality question arose.

HP: I've heard that it was difficult for Koreans around the time of the border conflict between China and the USSR at the end of the sixties.⁴⁰

Leonid: It's true. Koreans went through a very difficult time. At school, I was bullied and beaten up by the other children, as I looked Chinese. But I can understand it, as their fathers and brothers were killed in the conflict.⁴⁷

He added that even though such unfortunate incidents took place, 'We Koreans cannot live in a mono-ethnic country like South Korea as we are accustomed to living in a multi-ethnic country like Russia'.

I had a similar conversation with an elderly couple who were born in a village in Khasanskii Raion near the border with North Korea and who had returned to live in Ussuriisk in 1957. I was accompanied on this visit by two elderly women—Sveta Sergeevna, who moved from Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 1992 and Lee Ok Sun, who came from Sakhalin Island in the 1960s and was the treasurer of *Noindan* (the elderly Koreans' club). At the end of my interview with this couple, Sveta Sergeevna complained that people criticise Koreans for 'standing around in the marketplace even though it's not just Koreans but Russians who do the same thing'. Lee Ok Sun responded by saying, 'There was strong ethnic discrimination in the past, but it is less so now.' The elderly couple agreed, but Sveta Sergeevna strongly disagreed saying, 'No, we lived together harmoniously in the past, and it's only since the collapse of the USSR that national discrimination has appeared.' As shown in both episodes, there was a clear different view about the time when 'national discrimination' arose between old residents and new comers.

What exactly do people mean when they talk about 'national discrimination'? The feeling that Koreans are discriminated against appears to be ontological rather than epistemological. Many of my interlocutors described their experience of discrimination in a somewhat tautological manner: 'They criticise (*rugaiut*) us for standing around in the marketplace, because we are Koreans', and 'The policeman pushes (*tolkaiut*) us around and doesn't accept our papers, because we are Koreans'.⁴¹ The stated reason for such discrimination is 'because we are Koreans', but at the same time many Koreans recognise that other non-Slavic

⁴⁷ It refers to 'Damanskii conflict' which happened in 1969 between Chinese and Soviet border guards on the island of Ussurii river.

national groups of migrants share similar experiences. Or, as one of my interlocutors said to me, ‘I think the problem we have here is not a national question; it is just that Russians here are different from those in Central Asia.’ Another expressed the opinion: ‘Wise (*umnye*) Russians know how capable (*sposovnye*) we Koreans are.’ In other words, rather than a question of nationality *per se*, it was attributed to the fact that Russians in the RFE had not yet fully appreciated Koreans and their worth.

However, despite their apparently disadvantaged position, their sense of self-confidence and of belonging to Russia was reinforced by the presence of Chinese Koreans. As described previously, the presence of Chinese Koreans provided economic opportunities for earlier migrants and employment for later arrivals. At the same time, their presence served to obscure the dividing line between the ‘old residents’ and ‘newcomer’ Koreans. Claims for the legitimacy of one’s presence in a region are often founded on the notion of ‘locality’ by alienating ‘similar others’.⁴² In other words, with the arrival of Koreans from China, the meaning of ‘local’ expanded to encompass the former Soviet Union. ‘Newcomer’ Koreans repeatedly corrected my usage of the word ‘migrants’ (*pereselentsy*)’ during our conversations.⁴³ If I used it to refer to them, I was immediately corrected: ‘We are not migrants, we are locals (*mestnye*).’

To explain the position of Koreans from Central Asia in the RFE, I draw on the notion of ‘the stranger’⁴⁴ formulated by Simmel (1971b). According to Simmel(1971b, 144), ‘the stranger is an element of the group itself, not unlike the poor and sundry “inner enemies”—an element whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it.’ Also, ‘the distance within this relation indicates that one who is close by is remote, but his strangeness indicates that one who is remote is near’ and ‘it is a specific form of interaction’ (Simmel 1971b, 143). However, what is interesting in the case of Koreans in RFE is that the locality of Koreans is reinforced by the presence of *more* strangers. In other words, Koreans are ‘the strangers’ as defined by Simmel but are differentiated by the presence of other Korean strangers.

In this context, my interlocutor Anya referred me to a conversation she had with a train conductor during a journey from Novoselovo village to Ussuriisk, in order to provide me with an example of how Koreans from Central Asia like herself had become ‘second grade (*vtoroi sort*)’ citizens since their migration to Primorskii Krai. The conductor on the train asked her and the other passengers for identity documents for inspection. This is a frequent occurrence in Russia and the conversation went as follows:

Conductor: Who are you? (*Kto vy*)⁴⁵

Anya: We are Koreans (*My koreitsy*).

Conductor: What kind? Chinese or some other? (*Kakiye? Kitaiskiye, chto li?*)

Anya: We are locals, Soviet Koreans (*My mestnyiye, sovetskiye koreitsy*)

As soon as the conductor heard this, he asked no more questions and went away. In this way, Soviet 'localness' can be seen to weld together 'old resident' and 'newcomer' Koreans by virtue of the emergence of other Koreans, i.e. Chinese, South and North Koreans, and their legitimacy of residence as 'locals' is manifested and validated by the presence of these other 'strangers.'⁴⁶

In this chapter, I have tried to show the complexity of ethnicity in the migration process in the context of post-Soviet change in the RFE through ethnographic examples of Korean migrants from Central Asia. Different perceptions of the 'nationality question' are not necessarily based on the length of time spent in Primorskii Krai, but incorporate a temporal dimension that suggests a strong connection with the historical space of 'the former Soviet Union'. By imposing a temporal dimension in evaluating the nationality question, time can be shown to 'serve to separate more than to connect' (Casey 1996, 30). In other words, my interlocutors expressed their different views based on their experience of migration and emplacement, not in terms of the spatial 'there' and 'here', but in terms of the temporality of 'before' and 'now' in relation to the collapse of the Soviet Union and their migration from Central Asia. However, it is the place that 'gathers' (Casey 1996) their opinions and experience, as is clear from the fact that both groups experienced 'discrimination' in the course of their emplacement in Primorskii Krai, regardless of the time of their migration. Casey adds that this 'place gathering' is to 'hold in and out.'

To gather placewise is to have a peculiar hold on what is presented (as well as represented) in a given place. Not just the contents but also the very mode of containment is held by a place. "The hold is held." The hold of place, its gathering action, is held in quite special ways. First, it is a holding *together* in a particular configuration: hence our sense of an ordered arrangement of things in a place even when those things are radically disparate and quite conflictual. . . . Second, the hold is a holding *in* and a holding *out*. It retains the occupants of a place within its boundaries: if they were utterly to vanish and the place to be permanently empty, it would be no place at all but a void. But, equally, a place holds out, beckoning to its inhabitants and, assembling them, making them manifest. . . . It can move place-holders toward the margins of its own presentation while, nevertheless, holding them within its own ambiance (Casey 1996, 25, his emphasis).

As I mentioned previously, Koreans often refer to the exclusion they experience in terms of ‘friendship’ or ‘socialising’ (*obchshenie*), rather than in terms of racism or inequality. When describing ethnic relations and the social atmosphere in Central Asia and the RFE, the most prevalent metaphor they employ is that of ‘tea hospitality’. Typically, they would say: ‘In the past we put on the kettle as soon as we heard the sound of steps at our door. Now our neighbours don’t even exchange greetings’. Since their migration to the RFE, systematic exclusion has been made more apparent by the change in the Russian citizenship law, but what Koreans feel most keenly in their everyday life is the denial of sociability by local Russians.

With regard to the question of ‘the nature of society’, Simmel (1971a) suggests that society exists in a double sense. On the one hand, there is a form-oriented association of individuals that Simmel refers to as a ‘sociability’ embodying a ‘pure essence of association, of the associative process as a value and a satisfaction’ (ibid. 1971a), in which social interaction and being together are an end in themselves, rather than the means toward a further goal. Conversation in this type of sociability may be ‘pure play form’ and consist of a plethora of ‘useless things’ (cf. Nafus 2006). As association itself is the aim of this sociability rather than the pursuit of one’s own interests, individuals are treated as being equal; indeed, ‘it is a game in which one “acts” as though all were equal’, and as though everyone is especially esteemed (Simmel 1971a, 133–134). On the other hand, society also exists in a form often referred to as ‘civil society’ where the content and the specific basis for social interaction may be religious, political, or economic etc. Simmel takes sociability as an ideal of ‘the freedom of bondage’ motivating social interactions together with the aim or content of association. What is interesting in Simmel’s discussion is that he posits a certain type of interpersonal relationship that appears to lie outside the dominant concept of ‘society’ in the West that is made up of contracts based on the interests of ‘individuals’. He understands this sociability as ‘the residuum of a society determined by content’ and sees modern society as developing from such a division between content and form in social association. Particularly in Russia, Simmel’s concept (1971a) of sociability is useful in understanding the centrality of such forms of social association which determine the content of social relations, in contrast to that of the West. In other words, sociability is not only an end in itself but is also a very effective means of defining one’s position in a social context shaped by post-Soviet change.

Despite the dismantling of state institutions and collectives in the workplace, friendship is still a dominant factor in defining one’s social world in Russia, and can be seen as a continuation of the social unity of the collective during the period of socialism (cf. Markowitz 1991; Shlapentokh 2004). At the core of the ‘de-territorialized milieu of social space’ (Yurchak

2006) and the ‘diffuse group’ (Kharkhordin 1996) of collectives, it was friendship that was able to ‘provide individuals with the emotional and material support that the state apparatus constrains or lacks and, most importantly, with a stage for displaying true personality’ (Markowitz 1991, 638). As Yurchak (2006) and Kharkhordin (1996) note, the emotional closeness and solidarity within small circles of friends produce an intense intimacy that is ‘kinship-like’ for those within the group.

Despite the centrality of friendship in sociality in the Soviet Union and in post-Soviet Russia, many Koreans, and particularly the vast majority who operate in the informal economy, say, ‘We don’t have any connections (*sviaz*’) here’ when they describe their situation. ‘Back in Central Asia,’ they say, ‘I would have asked my friend to give me a job.’ Although it was kinship that played a vital role in their migration decision, for many of my interlocutors it is friendship and the future of their children that are their vital concerns. In both Pilkington’s study (1998) and my own, the recurrent phrase that people use to describe their migration is ‘for the sake of the children’. Koreans recognise the important role that friendship played in the former USSR and continues to play in the post-Soviet period; although they experience exclusion from this sociality, they hope for better things for the next generation.

Friendship is an attachment that includes and also excludes. As Carrier (1999) explains, in order for there to be friendship, there must also be categories of people who are not friends, just as there are kin and non-kin in the delineation of what constitutes kinship. The difference, of course, is that one is born and inherently positioned as kin in specific relationships, whereas friendship can be changed according to the criteria of the individuals involved or as a function of a given political and economic situation. This chapter has shown how kinship connections played a key role in the migration of Koreans from Central Asia to the RFE, but it has also illustrated the importance of friendship and its absence. This has allowed us to move beyond the traditional rigid categorisation of migration (e.g. political vs. economic, forced vs. voluntary) and unitary notions of ethnicity.

1 It is known that Kim Jong-Il, the son of Kim Il-Sung of North Korea, was born in a village near Khabarovsk in 1941 and was called Yuri Kim, although his official biography published in North Korea records that he was born at Baekdu mountain. The guerilla army led by Kim Il-Sung crossed the China-Soviet border in the late 1930s and was active in the RFE, pursued by the Japanese Kwangtung army during the Second World War. There are some reports of the presence of Korean partisans as part of an ‘eastern force’ of border guards or as interpreters for NKPD even after the deportation of Koreans. See Shin, Pak and Tsoi (2011).

2 The rise of autochthonous nationalism in CIS countries was one of the most hotly debated issues in the 1990s and it has been extensively addressed in relation to Soviet nationality policies (see Smith 1996; Suny and Martin 2001).

3 See Pilkington (1998) for a discussion of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors in relation to migration in Russia.

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- 4 In another paper (H. G. Park 2013), I used the notion of ‘cosmopolitan ethnicity’, a term borrowed from Richard Werbner (2002), to illustrate differences among Korean migrants.
- 5 I prefer to use the term ‘socia(bi)lity’ (Simmel 1971a) rather than emotion in explaining such practices, as emotion can only be observed in practices in society. As I shall discuss later, many Koreans use the example of ‘tea hospitality’ in describing changes in attitude towards other people.
- 6 In fact, a small number of Koreans in Central Asia moved to the RFE in the 1940s on state-assigned missions. Some were assigned to supervise North Korean workers who came to Russia in the late 1940s as contract workers and to teach their children. Others were dispatched to teach Korean to the children of Sakhalin Koreans who had been left on the island at the end of WWII. A famous novelist, Anatoli Kim, recalls his family’s move to the RFE in the late 1940s, as his father was assigned to teach Korean in Kamchatka. See (Anatolii Kim 1998).
- 7 A Korean intellectual, Pak Il who demanded the return of Koreans to the RFE after the death of Stalin, was quietly removed from his official position after making such a claim; he had obviously overestimated the degree of political relaxation (G. Kim and Men 1995).
- 8 Between 1959 and 1989, around 1,500 Koreans repatriated to Primorskii Krai. Most of this migration was the result of job allocation or entrance to higher education and was thus in accordance with the norms of Soviet migration policy. Indeed, many Koreans who migrated during this period occupied secure positions in state enterprises during Soviet times. In a book which is a kind of ‘Who’s Who’ for Koreans in the RFE, there are many biographies of such Koreans who migrated during this period (see Chen 2003).
- 9 See also Chapter **Fout! Verwijzingsbron niet gevonden.** in this book.
- 10 Rybakovskii (1990) suggests that one of the features of population movement in the RFE is that ‘newcomers’ are people from Siberia who also moved from the western part of Russia. Thus ‘the wave’ of migration begins from the western part of Russia and ebbs in the RFE.
- 11 Chen (2003) noted that this locality in terms of time of migration became the ‘circumstances’ (*obstoiatel’stvo*) when Koreans met for the first time and exchanged introductions.
- 12 For personal connections and introductions in Russia, see Ledeneva (1998). My acquaintance’s mother came to Ussuriisk in the early 1960s after graduating from university and worked in the city administration until 2002. Her mother continually complained about the RFE, comparing it to the suburbs of Moscow (*pod-Moskve*) where she grew up. I did not meet her or hear her complaints in person but I felt as though I knew her, due to the fact that her daughter continually made the same complaints and comparisons just as if she too had grown up near Moscow.
- 13 The case of this headmistress is interesting as she was the only ‘Primorian’ Korean I met who worked in a state institution. Also, she drew a clearer distinction between herself and newcomer Koreans than most other ‘old residents’. This may be due to the fact that most ‘old resident’ Koreans work in the informal economy and form active partnerships with newcomers in both business and marriage alliances.
- 14 The Federal Migration Service of Russia was organised in 1992 and implemented in the provinces in 1995. For more discussion on this subject including the local situation in Primorskii Krai, see Vashchuk et al. (2002, 158–168).
- 15 Not everyone was lucky in this respect, as many had to buy their own houses. That is why many people settled in rural areas where accommodation was cheaper than in the cities.
- 16 Other families that migrated later than the Marta Ivanovna’s family had to purchase their own houses. In 2008, Marta Ivanovna sold the house she had been given by the local authority and moved to another house provided by a South Korean NGO, taking the role of village representative for the NGO’s activities.
- 17 In contrast, the neighbouring village did not allow Koreans to settle there.
- 18 At this time, house prices in Central Asia were comparable with those in the RFE. In the late 1990s, however, house prices in Central Asia collapsed, while those in the RFE began to rise dramatically. This made it harder for migrants in later years to settle in the RFE. For example, when I arrived in Ussuriisk in September 2002, a one-bedroom flat in the city centre cost about 7,000 US dollars, while a cheaper one on the outskirts was around 4-5,000 US dollars. One year later, these prices had nearly doubled.
- 19 I witnessed many similar cases of the division of labour between husband and wife in the early 1990s, many of which ended in divorce, as while their wives were away working as traders, the husbands often

indulged in drinking at home. Drinking appeared to be the main means by which men could assert their masculinity in an economic situation in which men had more difficulty in earning money than their wives. For more discussion on gender relations, see Chapter 4.

20 While Larisa sold vegetables on the outskirts of the city where the Chinese market was located, Lena Yugai sold vegetables in the central 'Russian market'. The different regulations that were later imposed by the authorities on these two markets influenced the different routes followed by their businesses. When I visited Larisa in 2009 and again in 2013, she had sold her stall to a Chinese Korean, as trade had declined to the extent that she could no longer pay the rent. Instead, she was working as a sales person for Chinese traders. In contrast, Lena Yugai's business was still getting stronger, opening a Korean restaurant in the city centre directly run by her company.

21 In 2003, there were fewer than ten side dishes trading stalls in the central market, most of them run by Korean women. Some of these women owned their stalls and some were hired workers.

22 The salads produced in her factory are different from those consumed in Western countries. They are closer to side dishes made by pickling, frying, or seasoning with spices. She entered into an agreement with Ussuriisk Balzam, an influential distribution company, to supply her salads to its kiosks all over the city.

23 One of my interlocutors explained this situation as follows: 'Previously, Russia lived on us, but now she lives on oil ... I don't know what Russia will live on if the oil comes to an end.'

24 According to my Russian friend, nearly half of the men in Ussuriisk were making a living in the Japanese second-hand-car industry by importing, retailing, and repairing second-hand cars and their parts. I discuss the connection between cars and the Korean sense of masculinity in Chapter 4.

25 The vernacular Korean language used in the northern part of Korea is called 'Yukchin' Korean. 'Yukchin' means 'six settlements' and refers to the fortress towns which were established in the 15th century by the Chosun Kingdom, not only to protect it from invasion by various groups of 'alien people' in the present North-East Asia beyond the Korean Peninsula but also to assimilate them by settling them in these towns.

26 For a discussion of the status of native language as the 'domestic language' among Buryats in Russia and its political connotations, see Humphrey (1989). Grant (n.d.) discusses 'language as an object' in the context of post-socialist ethnic politics amongst Nivkhs. In this chapter, however, I am more concerned with language as a medium in transactions between Korean ethnic groups, rather than as part of their 'ethnic identity.'

27 The Chinese market operated as an open market on the outskirts of Ussuriisk until it was established on a site at the boundary of the city in 1996.

28 Violence involving beatings and shootings among local 'mafia' were common in Primorskii Krai during the 1990s. For a detailed description of the power struggle among local mafia in Vladivostok, see Holzlehner (2007) and Alexseev (2002).

29 I was told that he was killed in the battle for control of this wholesale market, but I was not able to verify this. The following information about Mikhail Kim is taken from Chen (2003, 57-63).

30 He was also involved in the national revival movement and was the first chairman of the 'National and Cultural Autonomy of Koreans'. See my discussion of Korean ethnic politics in Chapter 5.

31 Despite the geographical remoteness of the RFE and Central Asia, it is described as the 'near abroad'. Aware of this incongruence, Vashchuk et al(2002) suggest that we use 'new abroad' for CIS countries and 'traditional abroad' for other foreign countries.

32 Available at <http://www.rg.ru/2003/11/14/grazhdanstvo.html>, last accessed on 20 November 20015.

33 I often heard the statement from my interlocutors: 'I would not have come to Ussuriisk if my sister (brother, daughter, cousin etc.) had not been living there'.

34 The 'queue notebook (*tetrad' ocheredi*)', in which the names of those waiting are written down, is not issued by the authorities, but is made by people in the queue when it becomes long. It enables people to go away and return later without losing their place in the queue. I once experienced standing in such a queue in order to register our car in accordance with the terms of our visa renewal and had to go to the police station at around 5 o'clock in the morning for several days to get a stamp. If one does not wish to stand in a queue, it is possible to pay a large amount of money to an agency (*agenstvo uslogi*) that is officially connected to the police. During Soviet times, 'jumping the queue (*cherez ocheredi*)' was only possible for people who had connections; now, at least in theory, everyone can jump the queue provided they have enough money.

35 See Zaslavsky(1979) and the introduction of passport system in the RFE, see Chernolutskaia(2013).

36 Many elderly Koreans were unable to claim their full pension, as they did not bring the necessary documents from Central Asia. They received the minimum amount, generally around 600 roubles per month.

37 Katya and her children may have been motivated to apply for citizenship due to the fact that the Soviet state, and subsequently the Russian Federation, provided welfare benefits for each child in a family.

38 In addition to earning money, Sasha told me that he wanted to see a country where Koreans lived as the majority rather than as a minority.

39 In fact, Putin announced various measures to simplify the citizenship application process for migrants from CIS countries in 2003 and early 2006.

40 This refers to a conflict between the Chinese and Russian border armies on an island in the Ussuri River in March 1969, which is called the 'Daman/Zhenbao incident'. After this conflict, public rallies were organised with anti-Chinese slogans and, as Koreans were 'East-Asian', they also became the target of such anti-Chinese sentiment. Another old resident Korean told me that his daughter often came home crying at this time, as other children spat in her face at school.

41 A Korean wrote in his recollection of his childhood, 'We were deported to Central Asia in 1937. Why? Because we were Koreans'(Chen 2003).

42 Richard Werbner (2002) uses the metaphor of an 'umbrella' when describing this type of relationship between the Kalanga and the Tswana in Botswana. In such a relationship between two similar 'others', ethnicity takes on a subjective meaning, which can open and close like an umbrella 'according to the climate' (735).

43 After being corrected a few times, I became more careful when using this word.

44 Many Koreans are aware of their marginal position of not fully belonging to the mainstream while not being fully excluded from it. In Russian, there are two words to describe 'aliens': one is *inostrantsy* ('foreigners') and the other is *inorodtsy* ('alien by birth') (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003, Introduction). As Li (2000) notes, Koreans are not perceived as foreigners (*inostrantsy*) but are often viewed as *inorodtsy*, despite their loyalty and 'hard-work' for Soviet socialism. In the post-Soviet context, the word *inorodtsy* is sometimes replaced by 'second grade' (*vtoroi sort*).

45 For minorities in Russia, the question, 'Who are you?' implies that one is asking about nationality, whereas for Russians, this question tends to be understood in terms of one's profession.

46 When I visited a village in Spassk raion, a policeman stopped me before I was allowed to pass without further incident. When hearing of this, my acquaintance Sasha Kim was amused and commented, 'The police don't stop us, as we are locals.'

Chapter 3 Living Soviet Socialism the Korean Way: Mobile Agriculture at the Border of Socialism

The collective farm is the school of communism for the peasants

(Catchphrase displayed in a Siberian collective farm in Soviet times, cited from Humphrey (1998))

“*Gobonji*” was, is and will continue to be, where Koreans learn and live. We should not forget that precisely this method, “*gobonji*”, appeared as a school of education and study for numbers of Korean businessmen, industrialists, bankers, and scholars in the former USSR.

Yan (2000, 7)

During my fieldwork, I noticed that Russian Koreans were constantly described as ‘hard-working people’ (*trudoliubitel’nyi or trudoliubivyi narod*) not only by themselves but also by non-Korean people. The characterization ‘hard working people’ seemed to provide a concept versatile enough to explain various things, especially how they can manage to survive despite all the hardship caused by their sudden displacement in the 1990s. Thus, ‘hard-working’ seemed to acquire almost the status of ‘national character’ (*natsional’nyi kharakter*), which has been a powerful trope in Soviet and Russian understanding of the nation and culture, with its essentialist tone.¹ Indeed, my interlocutors spoke to me as if this trait had passed from generation to generation, sometimes mobilizing the metaphor of ‘blood’ (*krov*), as in the saying ‘We Koreans are hard-working in blood’². Indeed, in the early 2000s, they worked long hours and it was rare to find anybody who was doing nothing, unless the person was alcoholic, disabled, or ill. Thus, this attribute was presented as a strong cultural trait of Koreans to the extent of being naturalized as the definition of a ‘normal’ Korean. In other words, hard-working was the normative criterion of behaviour or approach to life in defining average Koreans in conventional terms in the early 2000s.

However, this cultural norm was not formed suddenly, nor was it innate in Koreans. From a historical perspective, it is interesting to note that the excessive emphasis on the

hard-work ethic by Koreans themselves was replicated in two historical periods: one in the post-deportation period from 1937 and the other in the post-socialist transition from 1991. It was during these two periods that the Koreans experienced massive upheavals through their spatial displacement, to an extent that threatened the stable socio-economic life that they had earlier achieved. Their emphasis on this work ethic, which emerged at a time of crisis, highlights their subjective transformation vis-à-vis an external force, which put their social life in a suddenly precarious state. Therefore, the ethic of hard-work was always paired with 'survival', leading to a transformation of the moral economy of the Koreans. In particular, it is also a narrative pertaining to the emplacement processes, since the Koreans in the RFE had to experience these two periods of upheavals through their displacements, from the RFE to Central Asia in 1937 and from Central Asia to the RFE in the 1990s.

In this chapter, I am going to explore how this trait connected with the work ethic was naturalized within the historical specificity of Soviet socialism, which was interwoven with the Koreans' emplacement process in Central Asia. In particular, I shall focus on their agricultural activities, which constituted the livelihood of many ordinary Koreans, and later shall discuss the demise of rice cultivation followed by the expansion of mobile vegetable cultivation. In doing so, we can observe that the hard-work ethic can not only be attributed to Koreans, but is widely imbued in ordinary people, reflecting the Soviet socialist propaganda, epitomized in Stakhanovism, that was designed to extract more hours of labor from working people.³ What is interesting is the ethnic dimension of Stakhanovism, whereby the hard-work ethic was more strongly emphasized for the diaspora peoples in Central Asia who had been forcibly relocated from their usual residence, and also for Russians who had been dispatched by the state to carry out the mission of 'Sovietization' of Central Asia. At the beginning, the hard-work ideology worked to assert their identity in a negative way, i.e. by negating, through their excessively long hours of work, the stigmatizing image of 'enemy nation' imposed on them.

In order to understand how this hard-work ethic was successfully rooted in the self-identification of people during the Soviet era, we would need to locate the working life of Koreans within the Soviet political economy. With the absence of commodity in the official socialist economy, the value of labor, i.e. the wage, was not measured by the price of commodities to reproduce the labor force as in the Marxist understanding of capitalist political economy; rather the state assigned a quota to myriad economic entities, ranging

from administrative regions, industries, economic institutions, and collective work units, to individual workers, in which economy and politics were interwoven. Thus, in this political economy, the aim and context of work was highly politicized and the repetitive manual jobs which people usually avoid were assigned to people along with socialist ideological reinforcement, based on the hierarchy in educational and work organizations. In other words, the cultural perception of certain types of physical labor must be understood within the labor hierarchy, taking into account myriad cultural and political evaluations of labor (cf. Humphrey 1998; Humphrey 2002b).

According to Humphrey's discussion of the division of labor in the Buryat collective farm in Siberia, praise for 'hard-working' people was not followed with any substantial political rewards, but was an ideological device to get people to engage in drudge work (Humphrey 1998, 356–357). In this sense, the self-description of 'hard-working' can be understood as the internalization of this socialist propaganda. Nevertheless, while Humphrey's attention to 'hard-working' as part of socialist ideology concerns the division of labor within a collective farm, the question arises of how to understand the translation and internalization of this 'hard-working' ideology by Koreans as an ethnic characterization. In addressing this question, I think we need to note that this state ideology of hard-work was not injected directly into people's minds, but drew on their own cultural devices to define the right form of work, thus enabling them to believe in hard-work as their own characteristic, rather than an ideology imposed by the state. Furthermore, this traditional cultural device deflected the projection of the state labor ideology, producing particular forms of socialism which were unexpected within the state socialist outlook.

In the case of Soviet Central Asia, the hierarchy of work was inscribed not only among individual workers but also among various ethnic groups, many of whom were relocated by the state in the 1930s and 1940s. In regard to this collective division of labor, it is important to explain what it meant for the Koreans that they were not a titular nationality in Central Asia but held an ambiguous position (as deportees and colonizers), which led to further displacement of their position during the institutionalization process. As I will show in this chapter, there was a double dislocation in the social life of Koreans through being deported to Central Asia, which can be seen from two perspectives: on the one hand, there was the dislocation of 'the body social' from the soil following their deportation (cf. Polanyi 2001, 76)⁴. Although Polanyi discussed dis-embedding the body social from the land in examining how

the market economy was formed in England in the 18th century, the issue he focused on could be meaningful in the context of Stalinist social mobilization, especially in relation to the massive relocation of people, as it produced the proletarianization of land-bounded peasants. The dis-embedding process that allowed the creation of employable people included two co-evolving processes: the separation of peasants from the land and also the subsequent disruption of traditional community life. As Kotkin (1995) and Hoffmann (1994) argued, the Stalinist relocation of the rural population to industrial urban areas was a part of the modernization process, making it possible to set up the base for state-run industrialism. Therefore, the relocation of the Koreans to Central Asia could also be understood as their dislocation from the land they used to work (see Chapter 1); at the same time, there was the dislocation of their generic economic life, i.e. rice cultivation, to be replaced by mobile vegetable cultivation which took place during late Soviet socialism.⁵

Secondly, the dis-embedding process did not happen naturally, but with the forceful imposition of political power and in the case of Koreans it was the yield of Soviet sovereign power through relocation. The political and ideological consequence of the hard work was the transformation of the deported Koreans' animal-like condition to the human condition, as it was presented to them as the matter of life or death, going without citing Agamben (1998). Furthermore, the Koreans worked hard to prove that they were not 'the enemy of the nation', but a useful element of Soviet socialism. I suggest that these two subjective motivations for hard-work have been interwoven with the ideology upholding the Soviet socialist political economy. In particular, I examine how their traditional work of rice cultivation, based on the institutionalized collective farms, changed to migratory cultivation of vegetables in the context of late Soviet socialism and the Koreans' subjectivity within the Soviet system. By cleansing the border area through forcible relocation of diaspora groups, but also by closing the border to capitalist countries, the Soviet Union appeared to have succeeded in sealing off the border to become the center of a closed socialist cosmos, forming a de-territorialized milieu.

To be sure, there were myriad factors defining the position of the Koreans settled in Central Asia, which did not permanently guarantee the reward for the Koreans' work to be located in the legitimate state's institutional context. Rather, the dislocation of the state enterprises in relation to their traditional livelihood (rice cultivation) was the result of the separation between the legitimate context of work and their subjective emphasis on hard-

work. In other words, their achievement in relocating rice cultivation to a steppe region was no longer protected and legitimized as part of the socialist transformation of Central Asia. Therefore, the displacement was a double process of dislocation in geographical and socio-economic terms. To the same extent as the Koreans incorporated geographical displacement into their socio-economic life, we might say that the policies of Soviet socialism also changed its focus, from the territorial boundary to a tighter state-planned economic model. Interestingly enough, the new tight control of the state economy became loose and created many lacunae. In this chapter, I explore how the closing and cleansing of the Soviet geographic border was transferred to the border of socialism, by examining the social and economic life of Koreans in Central Asia.

Rice cultivation: socialist peasants in Soviet Central Asia

German Kim (G. Kim 2000), an ethnic Korean historian in Kazakhstan, highlights the continuity of Koreans' life, or the transformation of Koreans into Soviets (*Homo Sovieticus*) through their displacement to Central Asia in terms of Soviet nationality policy, refuting a tendency in public discourse and academic research to see deportation as a rupture and discontinuation. Indeed, in their collective memory, the Koreans emphasized how they developed Central Asia through their agricultural skills, especially of rice cultivation, regarding this not only as their achievement in overcoming hardship but also as their unique contribution to Soviet socialism within the rhetoric of the development of Central Asia.

The majority of Koreans were rice farmers and rice was their staple crop when they were deported in 1937. Given the 'bare life' (Agamben 1998) shortly after the deportation, craving for rice was paramount; it was a matter of survival. In the people's memory, rice is thus central to their narrative of suffering. The condition of eating a 'rice' meal was expressed as a threshold of moving from a 'bare life' to a 'normal' life. When people speak of a specific time, they tend to say 'then, we could eat rice'. A rice meal was a barometer of 'normal life' amongst elderly people who experienced hard times shortly after the deportation. While escape from a 'bare life' was attested by the consumption of freshly cooked rice by a woman, ideally a wife or mother, in more personalized narratives, the success of rice cultivation in the

Central Asian desert was spoken of in terms of a collective achievement or national pride.

With rice as the metaphor for improved living conditions, turning wasteland into arable land with an irrigation system was remarked on as a victory over their harsh condition of hunger and hard times after deportation (Han and Han 1999; G. Li 2000). My elderly interlocutors also often pointed to how they cleared marshland with their bare hands and constructed collective farms for rice cultivation. One elderly woman, now passed away, told me in 2003 that they worked so hard as to leave their fingers bleeding and nails worn down. Altogether, rice cultivation was described as a great achievement of the Koreans in the Soviet Union not only by themselves but also by the Soviet authorities. This accord was seen when they sang the praises of Korean socialist labor heroes. Many Korean workers who had produced a larger yield of rice were awarded the title of socialist labor heroes. 'Since the 1950s the Soviet Union' proceeded to 'concentrate on rice cultivation in order to increase cereal production' (Kho 1987, 72). Numerous kolkhozes were encouraged to produce more rice and to develop new varieties of rice.⁶ The Koreans' official newspaper *Lenin Gichi* (The Flag of Lenin) was filled with the heroic achievements of Korean rice farming brigades, workers, and kolkhozes as well as information about rice cultivation techniques, damage to rice paddies by unfavorable weather, know-how etc. Sand desert was filled with earth carried from other places, an irrigation system was constructed, and pumping facilities for re-using water in rice paddies were devised. It was a great transformation of the environment; and, just as the Koreans were transformed from 'the enemy nation' to 'great Soviet rice cultivators', so their achievement provided another reason for their deportation. The establishment of rice cultivation in Central Asia was interpreted upside down, with rice cultivation adduced as a reason for the deportation: 'Koreans were deported to Central Asia to develop virgin lands and raise rice there' (Kho 1987, 26).⁷

However, this seemingly inherent 'rice culture' of the Koreans, based on their traditional staple food and rice farming, was not mobilized as the national identity of Koreans in the former Soviet Union in the language of ethnic nationalism, as for the Japanese in Japan (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993) or the Koreans in Korea (Bak 1997). According to Ohnuki-Tierney (1993), 'rice has been a dominant metaphor of the Japanese *not* because rice was *the* food to fill the stomach' but because 'it has always been of crucial symbolic significance for them' (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993, 3-4, emphasis in the original). Her main argument is that 'some food is "symbolic" and "naturalized"' like rice in Japan and such generic food is linked with the

territory of the country, as the land on which the generic food is cultivated.

The case of Soviet Koreans could showcase de-naturalisation of the generic food (rice) and in consequence weakening of its symbolic power among the Koreans in Central Asia. In other words, for the Soviet Koreans, the political symbolic power of rice cultivation and eating was not naturalised not only in terms of exclusive territory but also more importantly in terms of the traditional work organization of Koreans within the modernization process in Central Asia, which could have been the basis of the cultural infrastructure for the production of symbolic and cultural meaning, gathering land-people-culture into a coherent whole. At least, until the RFE period, the collectivization was carried out in the villages where the majority of Koreans were living, thus maintaining a 'traditional' way of dealing with things. According to Boris Pak (2004), this delegated administration was implemented in the first settlement village of Koreans in Pos'etskii raion, following the conventions of colonization of indigenous peoples in Siberia. As I already noted in Chapter 1, in the RFE, the traditional intellectual who was formerly the representative became the chairman of the Soviet village during collectivization. This seemed to be what happened in the Sovietization in Central Asia as well, but only for the titular national groups on permanent basis. According to Kandiyoti (2002, 244), 'social engineering' of the Soviet projects was 'translated into a re-composition of solidarity groups' which represented 'regional factionalism'. Thus, Kandiyoti suggests (2002, 244), 'we have to entertain the possibility that the concrete institutions of the planned economy and collectivization might have had certain intrinsic properties which furthered the "re-composition" of traditional society in Central Asia'. Though many 'Korean' kolkhozes were transferred from the RFE, still many people were dispersed to various places, and this circumstance affected the process of re-composition of displaced groups, mainly through a second or third internal movement. Before going into the topic of internal displacements, let me briefly outline some difficulties involved in rice cultivation, which are also relevant to the change in the agricultural activities of Koreans towards migratory cultivation of vegetables.

The staple food is not merely a consumable, edible item to fill the stomach, but is also closely linked with the holistic way of life for a certain group of people who gain their livelihood in close conjunction with the natural environment. However, the natural environment is not necessarily purely natural, but always in hybridity with human activity. I argue that the mere physical dislocation did not mean a sudden cultural change for the Koreans, though there must have been political change caused by the displacement. It was

much later that the more enduring cultural change took place, together with the urbanization and modernization promoted by the Soviet Union, and not directly from the deportation in 1937. As long as rice was the staple food to 'fill their stomach', despite not possessing symbolic meaning, Koreans in Central Asia maintained a 'rice culture'. This means that rice did not gain any culturally orthodox meaning as the national food, and that all the other conditions, except for their 'taste' for the staple food, were inimical to rice cultivation in Central Asia. Given the natural steppe environment in Central Asia together with the lack of rainfall, adherence to rice cultivation was cost-inefficient for Koreans as well, as shown in the failure of mono-crop agricultures for other deportees and for Soviet agricultural policy (cf. Brown 2005, 187–188).⁸

The demise of the rice crop in Central Asia was furthered by an increase in rice production in other regions, such as Ukraine's black soil area (G. Li 2000). It was easily noted that even Koreans' rice cultivation *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes* cultivated a larger proportion of cotton than of rice in the mid-1960s. The decrease in rice cultivation was due not only to the lack of assigned territory for the Koreans, but more importantly to the condition of their subjectivity through displacement in the context of the building of Soviet modernity. Rather than the fixation on rice itself as the national identity of 'a group of people', the labor force of the Koreans growing rice in the desert of the steppe region was reified as 'rice paddies' which could be replaced with other crops such as cotton; in other words, rice and rice paddies did not function as 'a signifier' with which the Koreans could ground 'the self', or in Oushakine(2004)'s formulation, they were not the basis of Koreans' 'second nature'. According to Oushakine (2004, 395), the peculiar construction of Soviet modernity, which was quite distinct from the Western version, lay in 'the void subject of Soviet modernity', hence becoming 'flexible and pliant', rather than fixed as a permanent basis of society, in correspondence with radical political and economic changes. He pays attention to the near replication of subjectivity between the Stalinist period and post-Soviet times, as being 'devoid of all previous attachments' and only viable through the metaphor of 'survival'. This reveals a process of reducing the complexity of one's identity as 'bare life' to the 'bio-political body' (Agamben 1998, 171), so that one's dependence on the protective shield of 'second nature' – that is, state institutions – becomes all the more crucial.

While factories, *kolkhozes*, labor camps and institutions became 'the protective shield' of 'second nature' in Oushakine's discussion, for the Koreans, 'second nature' did not seem to

lie in institutions like rice cultivation kolkhozes, given the later disappearance of those. Rather, Koreans seemed to search for a way to practice Soviet socialism which did not depend on such 'second nature', since it did not protect them. An elderly woman, one of my interlocutors who lived all her life on a collective farm in Ushtobe, Kazakhstan, said to me, 'We Koreans founded the kolkhoz with bare hands. We changed wasteland to fields, removing all the weeds and reeds. But later Germans came and many Koreans left. And then Kazakhs came after the collapse of the Union, thus, Germans and Koreans had to leave. This is because we don't have our own land (*chebi ttang* in Korean). That is why Koreans are driven out from here and there, having to wander around.'

The displacement of traditional work was also related to internal migration of the Koreans. German Kim and Dmitrii Men (1995, 15–19) discuss the internal movement of Koreans in Central Asia after the deportation. According to them, the first wave of movement took place between 1937 and 1940. The characteristic of the movement during this period was their struggle to cope with 'natural-climate difference' between the RFE and Central Asia in search of a way to carry out 'traditional rice cultivation and vegetables'. Many Koreans moved from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan with that objective. In this movement, Koreans were also looking for close relatives and family members who were relocated in different places in the course of their displacement in 1937. For example, my interlocutor who was born in 1940 in Kazakhstan said, 'One day when I was five years old, my uncle came to us. He brought some rice and my parents boiled 2 cups of rice and fed me. He said that there [Uzbekistan] it is possible to do cultivation (*nong-sa jil*) and to eat rice meal. So in 1945 our family moved to Uzbekistan.'

The second wave of internal movement in Central Asia occurred in the latter half of the 1950s. The movement in this period was not only facilitated by the cancellation of residence limits and restoration of citizenship rights made possible by the rehabilitation in 1956, following the death of Stalin in 1953, but was also motivated by the Koreans' search for 'making a living' by their cultivation activity. In the course of this internal migration, what they experienced was their unchanged status, similar to that of tenant farmers when they lived in the RFE. One of the repeated experiences was the absence of stable cultivation rights for them. Just as they were expelled from cultivated land due to the lack of land ownership during the RFE period, many Koreans had to be evacuated from land they had transformed to arable land; in those cases it was the territory of collective farms of which they did not

have full collective membership (G. Li 2000). This situation led them to perceive Soviet socialism in the light of their continuing status as land developers, rather than landowners, in which the products of their labor could not be legitimately claimed as their own.

According to (G. Li 2000), Koreans became 'wise' owing to their ability to draw a comparison, derived from their displacement, between pre-Revolutionary times and the socialist period.⁹ The 'wisdom (*mudrost'*)' came from acknowledgement of the difference between a tenancy fee to the landlords in the RFE under the tenant farming (*sodzhakgil* in Korean) system, compared to the quota (*plan*) for the kolkhoz and sovkhos that they had to work for under the socialist regime. In the RFE, most tenant farmers tended to give half the harvest produce to the landowners. In Central Asia, they found that the conditions of cultivation became lighter, as the portion assigned to give to the state farm or collective farm was only a tenth of the harvest. The recognition of this condition formed their unique perception of Soviet socialism, whereby the state is perceived as the benign landlord, and personified as the director of the kolkhoz. This perception of the socialist agricultural system and their continuously unstable position in Central Asia provided the background for the development of migration cultivation from the late 1950s.

Work 'outside' (*vnye*) the system: *Gobonjil* during Soviet times

Geron Li (2000, 203) describes in his book an occasion which confirms the widespread practice of migration cultivation, called '*gobonjil*'¹⁰ (hereafter not italicized), during Soviet times. In a Korean gathering of 137 participants in Bishkek in Kirgizstan in the late 1990s, he conducted an improvised survey among the attendees. He asked people to raise their hands if they had no experience of *gobonjil*; only three of the attendees raised their hands. Li (ibid.) added that even those three people would have benefited from their parents' *gobonjil* in finishing their education, or in hard times from relatives who had practiced *gobonjil*. Similarly, the people who were born before the 1950s whom I met during my fieldwork had almost all had *gobonjil* experience; some Koreans had had longer periods, and some others only a few years, in some cases occasionally pursuing their primary occupation. Furthermore, even in contemporary RFE, many Koreans were still engaged in cultivation activities, though the

migration element was weaker than in the past. So, what led these people to continue to cultivate in this particular way, when they were repeatedly forced to leave the land they cultivated? Why and how did they continue with their agricultural activities, despite their forcible displacement from the land they cultivated? In what conditions did this economic activity become quite prevalent as an occupation for Koreans in Soviet Central Asia?

Nomadic Socialist Peasants in the lacunae of Soviet socialism

Gobonjil is a native term for the Soviet Koreans' practice of seasonal migration agriculture, conducted from the end of WWII up to now. This term is contrasted with tenant farming, which was called '*sodzhakgil*' during the Far Eastern period, placing more emphasis on its equal and communal way of cultivation. Although Koreans usually speak Russian, there are some Korean words which are hard to translate into the Russian language, and gobonjil is one of these. This word is not used in contemporary South Korea either, but has only been used by Koreans in the former Soviet Union. The meaning of *gobon* is 'each portion of investment of an individual participant when several people do enterprise together in old times' (Min-Jung Korean Language Dictionary); but in the case of gobonjil, *gobon* (the closest word in English would be 'portion') is generally accepted to mean a plot of land of no predetermined size, cultivated by a household in a gobonjil brigade. The size of the plot varies depending on how many households participate in a cultivation brigade and how much land is rented. If a gobonjil brigade composed of 15 households rents 30 hectares of land from a collective farm, one *gobon* would be two hectares (Baek 2002, 142; G. Li 2000, 143–144). *Jil* is a suffix referring to repetitive activities or with reference to a profession or occupation.

Gobonjil was born not as an official system, but as an *adjunct* to the official Soviet agricultural system, a half-legal but 'not illegal' or 'underground (*podpol'nye*)' practice (Li 2000). Thus, there is no 'official' record of exactly when and how this practice started. It is widely accepted that 'this form of farming at first appeared in Tashkent Oblast in Uzbekistan at the end of WWII, between 1941 and 1945' (G. Li 2000; Baek 2002, 154–155). The main motive for the creation of gobonjil seems to lie in the economic difficulties experienced during wartime.

Partly because of lack of men due to mobilization of males in work camps supplying the front, and partly because of problems in delivery of collective farm produce to the war front, the critical issue was how to 'survive,' not only for the Koreans but also for other nationalities in the Soviet Union during WWII. At first, gobonjil came about as a way of cultivating rice on the virgin marshy land in the territory of kolkhozes by Koreans who were not members of the kolkhoz, in order to avoid starving to death. In addition, the state paid a very low price for farm products and Koreans could earn more by independent work, leading to the increasing number of Koreans who left collective farms and undertook gobonjil (Han and Han 1999, 114; G. Li 2000, 153).

It was after the first rehabilitation in 1956 that the character of gobonji significantly changed and long-distance migration cultivation became a significant feature of the practice. Until then, Koreans were restricted to living within the republic where they had been located since the 1937 deportation¹¹. Thus, gobonjil was practiced near the place of residence. From 1954 after the death of Stalin in 1953, Koreans were allowed to move to other republics. At that time around 3,000 Koreans returned to the RFE for various reasons, rice cultivation among others (Vashchuk et al. 2002, Chapter 3).

The lifting of the ban on residence also accelerated the commercialization of the products of their cultivation, which meant that their productive economic activity was aimed at producing food not for their own consumption, but for exchange. More specifically, the crop changed from rice to vegetables (mainly onions and beets) and melons (*bakhchevye kultury*), and long-distance migration farming, crossing the boundaries of republics, became popular. While rice cultivation requires a certain irrigation system and foundation of rice paddies, vegetable growing is much simpler in terms of preparing the land. In addition to the abolition of the ban on residence, the merger of smaller kolkhozes with the removal of MTS (Machine Tractor Station) in the late 1950s discouraged the socialist competition of agricultural enterprises under the control of the local authority, and transferred agricultural machinery to kolkhozes with a consequent increase of autonomy for each kolkhoz. The mixing of successful kolkhozes with other, poor-performing ones to form *sovkhoses* was accelerated in the late 1960s. 'Korean' kolkhozes, which were mostly successful, were disadvantaged in this integration process, as they not only had to acquire the debts of other kolkhozes but also to see administrative positions taken by autochthonous people (Baek 2002, 156).

Verdery(1993, 175) notes that 'ethno-national mobilization was the *only* form of political interest-group activity that could be engaged in with some legitimacy in socialist period, even if within certain strict limits' in the state-led 'supply constrained' economy. Indeed, in Soviet Central Asia, traditional solidarity groups such as the extended family, neighborhood, and lineage segments were 'reincarnated as sub-divisions of kolkhoz' and it was 'the individual's entry point into the system' (Kandiyoti 2002, 244, cited source omitted). In Central Asia, Koreans as a group were located in less advantageous positions than autochthonous people in political terms, but they never considered themselves to occupy a lower position than the colonized Central Asians. Instead, in a sense, many Koreans seemed to identify themselves with the position of Russian settlers there, who were sent to Central Asia with the mission of development and enlightenment.¹² It was not rare to hear from my interlocutors low evaluations, in terms of an evolutionary hierarchy, of peoples in Central Asia, such as 'they are not enlightened,' 'they are in the dark, not enlightened' or 'they are not civilized people'. Therefore, the Koreans actively incorporated Soviet modernist values, accompanied by urbanization, and individual aspirations were encouraged in the hope that the offspring of the first generation of deportees would reach higher managerial positions through education.¹³ Rapid urbanization was the background of gobonjil at its inception period, and zeal to send the children to higher education was the motivation for long-distance gobonjil practices later when the residence ban was lifted.

Trading cultivators or cultivating traders; trading political status with economic wealth

Gobonjil can be understood as similar to the temporary brigades (*sabashka* in Russian, meaning 'moonlight brigades'), which were widespread in the late Soviet period (see Yurchak 2002) and were formed due to the shortage of labor in the state-planned economy. Or more precisely, according to Ssorin-Chaikov (2003, 119), there was a shortage of motivation for laborers to work in the state institutions; hence the flourishing of temporary brigades met the need to fulfill the plan assigned to each enterprise in the Soviet Union. However, the Koreans persist with the use of the word 'gobonjil', which is replaceable with other Korean

words such as '*nong-sa-jil* (cultivation work)', '*be-jil* (rice cultivation work)', '*su-bak jil* (watermelon work)' or '*luk-jil* (onion cultivation work)' and I have not heard the term, *sabashka* brigade, used in referring to gobonjil. The distinctiveness of the Koreans' gobonjil brigade lies in its permanent temporariness when compared to the state-run agricultural corporations. In other words, the Korean brigades mainly engaged in vegetable growing and hardly settled in the collective farms with which they contracted for work.

Let me describe gobonjil practice briefly. In early spring, the gobonjil brigade is organized. The brigade was not composed of people from the same residential area, but included people from other places who were connected via kinship, alliance or acquaintance. In a sense, a gobonjil brigade seemed to act as an information network and a quite stable organization irrespective of the participants' place of residence. In reverse, this also produced competition amongst the Koreans. Given the shared information, more Korean cultivators flocked to some regions, leading to the rise of contract arrangements with the collective farms. One of my interlocutors related such a development. When he worked as a brigadier in the 1970s, there were occasions when he had to withdraw from the contract because another Korean brigadier offered better contract terms, leaving him in jeopardy in that year. This also led to competition over trading as well. The same person told me that in one year he could not get any pitch in the marketplace, as another Korean brigadier had already paid for the whole marketplace in order to monopolize it. Angered by this, he set up his trading stall on the way to the market and in revenge sold his melons at half the price of the other Korean brigade's.

The basic work unit within each brigade mostly consists of husband and wife, but many single mothers also joined the brigade as an individual household with some help from other participants, usually male relatives. If the children did not go to school, they usually brought them as well (see also Baek 2002, 167). In the *Lenin Kichi* newspaper during the 1970s and 1980s, this was noted as a serious social problem, as the children left at home got into trouble by, for example, not going to school or drinking alcohol. During the summer vacation many teenaged children joined their parents to help with work in the fields if the gobonjil site was close enough for the children to travel to on their own. In addition, the widespread gambling¹⁴ during the winter season with money earned from gobonjil farming was often deplored in newspaper articles.

Maintaining two houses at long distances simultaneously has become a certain

feature of the economic activities of Koreans up to the present time (see the next chapter). At the gobonjil site, they erected temporary settlement camps with materials supplied from kolkhozes, where they lived during the cultivation season (Baek 2002, 172-175). The camps contained many amenities including bath/shower facilities and toilets. Many Korean migrants to RFE complained that living conditions in the RFE were even worse than their temporary gobonjil camp residences in the Soviet era.

This peculiarity of gobonjil farming – mobile agriculture – produced a stereotype of Koreans in public discourse surrounding ‘the nomadic (*kochevoi*) character of the work’, given their frequent change of collective farms (G. Li 2000, 191). This public image reflects the limits placed on this type of economic activity. For example, in relations with the collective farm, they were vulnerable to breach of contract by local authorities. Therefore, as the contract with an individual collective farm was outside the law until 1986 (when the legislation on land lease and corporation was introduced by Gorbachev), approval – or at least a blind eye being turned – by a higher level of authority, such as local administration, was a prerequisite of the contract. ‘Unlucky’ things occasionally happened to gobonjil participants, because of the nature of this contract, which meant that Koreans were subject to arbitrary decisions by the ‘officials’ of the kolkhozes. For example, although they cultivated produce and provided a plan by contract to the collective farm, the kolkhoz could violate the terms of the contract for no reason, especially by not allowing surplus products to be taken outside the raion [county]. This was one of the main reasons why Koreans changed kolkhozes frequently.

The most crucial element of gobonjil was the right to sell harvested products in the marketplace. Though Li (2000) stated that the ‘nomadic character’ of gobonjil was the basis of antipathy toward this practice, in fact, the antipathy was rooted in antagonism toward the trading activities of Korean vegetable growers. Their disposal of surplus products in the marketplace was considered to weaken the ‘allocative power’ of the state (cf. Verdery 1991). Gobonjil practice was frowned upon by the public, as it was considered to be based on ‘self-interest’, not ‘social and common interest’. However, gobonjil and other informal economic activities were a part of the state system as a buffer to alleviate the deficiencies caused by a rigid state-planned economy. Therefore, though it was not encouraged, it was tolerated by the state, being located in the lacunae of the state institutions.

Firstly, let me briefly outline the work organization of a gobonjil brigade in order to explain how they managed not only to supply goods, according to the assigned plan, to the

collective farm but also to obtain surplus products for themselves to trade in marketplaces. A gobonjil brigade is not very different from the collective work unit in state enterprises in terms of organization of labor. The authority and control over the members by the brigadier are no less critical than those of the collective farm chairman. Like the chairman or brigadier of a kolkhoz, the gobonjil brigadier is in charge of accomplishing the 'plan' agreed to in the contract, usually by more than 2-3 times the original volume assigned by the state to the kolkhoz in question (G. Li 2000). To accomplish the 'plan' and produce surplus products to sell, the brigadier of the gobonjil sets some regulations such as a prohibition on alcohol and leaving the work camp (*lageri*) during the summer season when labor demand soars (G. Li 2000). Each household is allotted a plot with a minimum production quota assigned per hectare. The remaining products become an individual household's own surplus and are at its own disposal. Usually the brigadier assigns to each member a higher quota than the farm requires and the difference between the whole quota of the brigade and the plan delivered becomes his income. The brigadier might also cultivate his portion. In this case, he is privileged to choose the best plot if he likes, as it is wholly up to the brigadier's decision (Baek 2002). The success of gobonjil was believed to be very much in the hands of the brigadier. The controlling power of the brigadier was on the one hand moral – he was seen as the head of an extended family in the patriarchy, but this morality was derived from the shared interest and mutuality among the participants in a team. On the other hand, the administrative and technological capability of the brigade was also critical – requiring skill in dealing with local authorities and officials of the collective farm as well as specialist agricultural knowledge and technology.

Thus, there did not seem to be a significant conflict of interest between the brigadier and the members, in contrast to the situation within collective farms, where the socialist ideology of agricultural production and the group/private interest or real circumstances compete and require tedious negotiation between higher and lower levels, ranging from the central government to the production teams and individual households (Humphrey 1998, Chapter 4 and 7). Within the official Soviet agricultural system, there were always tensions concerning division of labor: who is going to work in better conditions or with more reward, in other words, who is not going to do the unskilled or undesirable work? (ibid.). In collective farms, labor was not considered 'undifferentiated' and people used withdrawal from work as 'their weapon' in bargaining with the brigadier and the chairman of the collective farm (ibid.,

304-307). In this bargaining process, at the lowest level in the Soviet system, laypeople were more interested in economic gain for their household, utilizing their kolkhoznik status in an effort to increase hours of work on their private plots and to carry out their private production for cash or inalienable goods. Nonetheless, the kolkhoznik had a certain social status, tied to the work within the kolkhoz as part of an intricate hierarchy linked to its structure and division of labor (ibid., Conclusion), meaning that the bargaining process was not solely an economic one and as long as one remained a kolkhoznik there were numerous possibilities to employ minor tactics for positioning oneself with better status in the division of labor within a collective farm, even for a trivial benefit involving political matters. In other words, so long as a kolkhoznik does not leave the kolkhoz, s/he needs to be tied to the game revolving around 'rights over people'.¹⁵ Here, 'manipulable resources' were transformed into rights over people by means of gift exchange amongst kolkhozniks, while the management used the resources to get people to work or to meet the plan (ibid.).

In the case of the Koreans' temporary farming brigades, their careers or positions in the division of labor within the kolkhoz did not matter, since they were a temporary part of the state enterprise and did not have official membership. Therefore, their economic interests were not directly interwoven with the division of labor hierarchy within an individual kolkhoz. Here, the position of the Koreans' gobonjil brigade in relation to the state institution presents some issues concerning the control of people. At first, they *had* to be located 'outside (*vnye*)' the state institution so that the brigade could produce surplus products to realize their capacity to the fullest extent and sell them in the kolkhoz market as their own. Secondly, in reverse, this 'outside' location enabled their social organization to sustain and reproduce in a similar fashion that the kolkhozniks used 'manipulable' products in gift exchange within the kolkhoz in order to keep themselves in a better position. Thus, it is possible to say that the temporariness of their kolkhoznik status allowed the conversion of their surplus products into profit among the members of the gobonjil brigade, and this profit was used in different contexts from those of the state enterprise. I might say that they traded their political prospects as permanent residents tied to the state enterprise for economic gain, displacing themselves from place to place, and from one kolkhoz (or sovkhov) to another kolkhoz (or sovkhov) across the Soviet Union. How, then, were the surplus products used in the case of Korean mobile agriculturalists, compared to the use of 'manipulable resources' in the state enterprise discussed by Humphrey (1998)?

While initially gobonjil was engaged in for the sustenance of each household, from the 1960s the surplus gained from gobonjil farming increased for many Koreans. The first few years of successful gobonjil working, up to the 1980s¹⁶, usually enabled them to buy some expensive things such as houses or cars.¹⁷ The other significant expenditure was on the education of children and the cost of familial ceremonies (see Chapter 4). It is often stated that education is the most important motive for undertaking gobonjil farming and provision of the familial ceremonies are pre-requisite condition and barometer for people to have a proper life course.

In Soviet society, education was the essential requirement for upgrading one's social status. Obtaining a place in higher education was very competitive, depending not only on a child's academic performance but also on other factors entangled in the selection and recommendation process (Humphrey 1998, 363). It is repeatedly emphasized by the Koreans themselves and in the literature of the Soviet Koreans that 'Koreans rank in second place next to Jews in the proportion of those obtaining higher education among the whole population of each nationality in Central Asia. In other words, the promotion of social status seemed to rest on an individual family's concern with giving the children higher education, using the money gained from gobonjil farming. Indeed, it is known that many Koreans in Central Asia occupied higher positions and specialized occupations after graduating from higher education, at least up to the collapse of the Soviet Union. This education fever was furthered by their sense of cultural superiority in comparison with the Central Asian native people, perceiving themselves in almost equal status with the settler/coloniser Russians. Thus, many educated Koreans regarded themselves as occupying a position equivalent to that of the Russians in Central Asia¹⁸, rather than to that of the autochthonous people; this usually appears to be Russification.

However, the conversion of an education or degree into political capital was another matter for the Koreans. On the one hand, some individuals' success through the educational ladder remained 'personal' achievements in the context of the official workplace. In other words, this personal success was not connected to the individual's consideration for 'his/her own people', leading to 'ethnic mobilization' as discussed by Verdery (1993), since it was not considered 'proper', but was viewed with suspicion. There was subtle and cautionary anxiety about harm to Soviet-type multiculturalism, often praised as 'friendship of peoples'. Thus, many Koreans pointed out that people were cautious as to whether they were motivated by

nationality criteria in their career activities, unless the workplace was mainly composed of Koreans such as Korean's rice collective farms. For example, if a Korean man was in a higher position and there were two candidates for recruitment or promotion, one being Korean and the other non-Korean, the person in the higher position tended to select the non-Korean if other qualities were not very differentiated, which was usually the case (cf. Chen 2003). On the other hand, while this 'personal' achievement was maintained in the official workplace by allowing oneself to appear non-biased toward their 'own compatriots (*sootchestveniki*)', the same personal achievement also had symbolic value in relations with 'their own people (*svoie*)' in other informal contexts. This meant that the achievement had to be transferred to and recognized in the extended domestic domain. Individuals with prestigious status were highly praised and displayed in family ceremonies as if they were 'yams' or 'necklaces or bracelets' in the Trobriand Islands. At a first birthday party for my interlocutor's grandson, one of the guests was a police officer in a higher position in Khabarovsk. Even though the birthday party was held at the weekend and he had to stay one night in the house, he wore his smart uniform at my interlocutor's house, clearly showing his occupation and status, and the host repeatedly summarized his profile for other guests.

Another case was of an elderly couple who had practiced gobonjil for more than 20 years and had three sons and one daughter, all of whom had higher education; a typical generational story of poor parents who successfully educated their children through their hard work. One of their sons graduated from Leningrad University in the late 1980s and now works as a lawyer in St. Petersburg, while other children were engaged in trading and the catering business in Siberia and the RFE. The lawyer was married to a Russian woman and did not seem to maintain interaction with his parents and other relatives. They talked about him uneasily, saying that they had not gone to his wedding, which is very rare. Indeed, until then I had not realized that they had such a son; they had not talked about this 'successful son'. His success was confined to himself, given his disconnection from his parents and other relatives.¹⁹ Therefore, even though an individual might gain high status, if s/he did not try to maintain the relationship 'with their own people (*s svoimi*)', the success did not have any symbolic value in a certain context; in this case, the lack of sociality between parents and son also deprived the parents of opportunities for the son's high status to confer symbolic value on the family. In other words, for many Koreans, 'a person' is constituted by his/her acts amongst themselves (*sredi svoikh*). Then, who are these 'own' people?

One's own people in/outside the Soviet system

Yurchak (2006, 127–128)²⁰ provides an analysis of the notion of *vnye* as 'de-territorialized milieu', formed in late socialism as a displacement of the authoritative Soviet socialist ideology of the Stalinist period. According to him, it is hard to translate *vnye* into other languages. It is usually translated to 'outside' in English; however, it is not necessarily outside the system, but is '*simultaneously* inside and outside' it (ibid., my emphasis). As noted by him, this *vnye* space was also enabled by the state, and was thus inseparable from the state institutions. For example, in his ethnographic examples, university students form their own social groups based on the sociality of friendship, finding this more interesting and meaningful in their lives, and feeling indifferent to the regime's authoritative discourse, though they still attended lectures and public rituals. This 'de-territorialized milieu' around informal sociality among friends became a part of almost every state institution, profoundly displacing the authoritative socialist discourse (Yurchak 2006, 114-115).

In tandem with the notion of *vnye*, Yurchak pays attention to another central notion about the relationship of the subject to the system, namely the centrality of '*svoi*' outside the system. The word '*svoi*' is a possessive pronoun (for example, *svoi dom* means one's own house) and as a pronoun means 'one's own', thus changing its meaning according to the adjoining word.²¹ In Yurchak's discussion, in the de-territorialized milieu, the weight placed on '*svoi* (our own)' by lay people represented their assertion of normality through distancing themselves from the other 'abnormal people' who were 'too passionate supporters of authoritative regime' or who were overtly 'dissident-like people critical against the state'; he called it 'cynical reason' (Yurchak 2006, 107). In addition, the notion is grounded in interpersonal sociality. Thus, though Yurchak devoted most of his analysis to the way authoritative discourse was displaced in the everyday lives of people during late socialism, he also explores the constitution and continuity of '*svoi*' through sociality (*obshchenie*) alongside Soviet socialism. There were numerous 'tightly knit networks of friends and strangers who shared some interest, occupation, or discourse' (Yurchak 2006, 131). This sociality was based on 'inter-subjective spatio-temporality' (cf. Munn 1986) through

exchanges of shared interests, talks, songs, dance, bottles, food, tea, hobbies, etc. In short, people see the self through acts in the shared spatio-temporality.

However, Yurchak's study and other studies on this 'informal', 'diffuse group' (Kharkhordin 1999), or 'private sphere' (Shlapentokh 1989), note that the core value of this sociality is emotional attachment, or 'kinship-like' friendship. The mediated goods, talks, interests, hobbies, and activities are based on seeming non-interest in economic gain. Compared to these studies, the sociality of Koreans centered around *gobonjil* farming basically constituted an economic social group based on kinship. However, given the openness to new members and flexible inclusion of kin, this social group also created friendship-like kinship. While people eager to secure their time for these 'numerous knit networks' during Soviet times, minimizing the energy and time demanded by their 'official' occupations, Koreans gathered themselves in a certain place and organized their labor. By working longer, they tried to secure more products, which were transformed into money, then changed into many different things and relationships.

Living on the border of Soviet socialism

In research on 'the really existing socialism' conducted by anthropologists (Verdery 1996; Hann 2002), in contrast with the totalitarian approaches to socialism as a regime, special attention was given to the way social lives were organized by interwoven processes in 'informal' 'domestic' 'private' spheres and the state, public, official, and institutionalized realms (Kharkhordin 1999; Shlapentokh 1989; Yurchak 2003; Ledeneva 1998). In other words, there was no clear-cut division between the private and the public or the formal and the informal; rather, they were muddled in everyday lives. For example, in studies of collective farms (Humphrey 1998; Ssorin-Chaikov 2003; Anderson 2000) or of social groups (Yurchak 2003; Yurchak 2006), the state ideology or institution is approached with various conceptions of the relationship between the people and the state in this space: for example, 'diffuse group' (Kharkhordin 1999), '*blat*' [connection] (Ledeneva 1998), 'parallel culture' (Yurchak 2003), '*svoi*' [one's own] or 'de-territorialized milieu' (Yurchak 2006), 'border of socialism' (Siegelbaum 2006), and 'private sphere' (Shlapentokh 1989). The common feature seems to be the intermingling of one's positions within the state institution and in other personal

relationships. Thus, personhood in Soviet-style societies seems always to be constituted with the duality of this arrangement at the intersection of public and private spheres.

Against the background of these approaches, the case of the Koreans provides us with a very distinctive arrangement of their relationship with the state. First of all, while other ethnographic cases testify to the intermingling of public and domestic spheres, there appears to be priority given to kinship relations, which were not only the means but also the ends of migratory cultivation for the Koreans. This moral emphasis on their own people based on kinship logic is accompanied by the rhetoric of success and the excessive motivation to work, which seem to be a counterpoint to that of 'failure' and 'the lack of intention to work' for the state enterprise discussed by Ssorin-Chaikov (2003, 7, 119). In his study of the Evenki people in sub-arctic Siberia, he investigates the question of labor shortage, drawing on the concept of the state as a relationship across myriad hierarchies. Addressing the issue of 'labor shortage' as a 'signification framework', not a reality, which was accrued through the agency of the Evenki reindeer hunters and herders in the bargaining process around the allocation of labor and resources, he draws on the notion of 'allocative power' formulated by Verdery (1991; 1996) in studying socialist political economy and the 'political uses of labor' in Humphrey's (1998) study of the Buryat collective farm. He further discusses the 'expansion of labor shortage', explaining how this labor shortage was covered by mobilization of young students and temporary work brigades (*shabashiki*) for drudge jobs, 'while collective farmers attend to their own affairs' (2003, 126). Certainly, 'labor shortage' and 'the excess of labor' fall within the same frame for a picture of Soviet political economy. While his study focuses on the effect of such avoidance on the collective farm, the case of the Koreans is inevitably located on the edge of this institutionalized economic form, due to their displacement to Central Asia, and this position seems to provide a different version of the same picture. In this regard, the temporal and spatial disjuncture in the relationship between mobile agricultural brigades and the state agricultural institutions is notable for understanding the accommodation to Soviet socialism among Koreans in Central Asia.

1 The theory of national character was at its peak in the 1980s in celebration of Soviet nationality policy, as national character is the only form of difference remaining among nationalities after the successful implementation of the nationality policy in the Soviet Union which was based on Stalin's famous formula, 'national in form and socialist in content'. National character was seen as 'national identity', which Soviet nationality policy promoted in a de-politicizing manner (Martin 2001, 12–13).

2 Although diligence was portrayed and perceived as a natural character, as expressed by the phrase 'in blood', this statement needs verification as to whether it is really a universal 'Korean' feature. When an English woman, Isobel B. Bishop, travelled to Korea and the neighbouring area in the late 19th century, she drew an interesting

comparison between Koreans in the Korean peninsular and Koreans who moved to the RFE, in terms of economic conditions and industriousness. Bishop was impressed and surprised by the changed attitude towards work of Koreans in the RFE, who achieved economic prosperity, compared to the ‘lazy, poor and unhelpful’ Koreans in the Korean Peninsula. She concluded that Koreans could be enlightened once they had a more just and proper ruler and had converted to Christianity, as the Koreans in the RFE had done.

3 In 1935, a miner called Aleksei Stakhanov fulfilled his quota fourteen times over that year by working long hours and became a role model of a socialist worker, and thereafter, the source of a public phenomenon called ‘Stakhanovism’ (see Siegelbaum 1988).

4 Polanyi (2001) examines the proletarianization of English peasants in the 18th century.

5 ‘The late Soviet socialism’ refers to the period from the death of Stalin to the collapse of the Soviet Union, following Yurchak (2006).

6 For example, ushtobinskiy, Alakul’sky, Uzros-59, Uzros 7-13, Krymysala. Kuban 3, Dubovskiy-129, Avangard, Magister and etc. (Kho 1987, 26). The Uzbek Rice Science Research Institute and Kazakh Rice Cultivation Science Research Institute were established to develop better varieties of rice and to do research in rice cultivation methodology, a field in which many Korean researchers worked (Kho 1987, Chapter 3).

7 Note that Mesketian Turks, who were deported in 1944 under Stalinism from Georgia to Central Asia, also appropriated the self-image of ‘developers of Central Asia’ in describing their life in Uzbekistan. Tomlinson’s (2002, 44) informant said that she ‘taught the Uzbeks how to grow sweet corn and other things’, since ‘when we arrived they [autochthonous people] ate grass’. This is exactly the same as the narrative of the Koreans, only replacing rice with sweet corn. Kate Brown’s study also notes the deportees’ transformation to ‘colonizers’ in Central Asia (2005, 176–191).

8 According to Stepan Kim’s testimony, some Koreans were already transferred to Central Asia in 1935, two years before the 1937 deportation. ‘These Koreans arrived in 1935 founded “Korean kolkhozes” in 2-3 years and they “blossomed” in the 1940s and earlier half of 1950s. The following years began “intensive supplant” of rice cultivation to replace it with cotton production. Many Koreans couldn’t bear “the offence of cotton”, throwing away land, cultivating in sweat on face, ran away in search of a place, where raising rice-basic staple product for Koreans’ (1989, 193).

9 The perception of continuity between before- and after- revolution provided by their forced displacement is contrasted with the total stripping of old attachments and negation of the past by people during the Stalinist period, as discussed by Oushakine(2003) and Ssorin-Chaikov (2000).

10 Instead of gobonjil, gobonji is just as widely used, especially in material written by Koreans in the former USSR, such as Geron Li’s monograph (2000). It was very hard to discern whether or not the consonant ‘l’ is pronounced in speech. However, given other synonymous variants of this word such as ‘nong-sa-jil’, ‘subak-jil’, ‘luk-jil’ and the perception that ‘nongsajil’ and ‘gobonjil’ are the same activities, as attested by my interlocutors, I decided to use the term ‘gobonjil’ instead of ‘gobonji’. Apart from this, there is a linguistic tendency to end nouns with the vowel i in the colloquial Korean language of Russian Koreans: for example, babi, jangmuri, guduri, etc. which are bab, jangmul, gudur in the South Korean version.

11 However, this ban might have been only nominal, consisting of a stamp on their passports. The actual movements have not been so stringently controlled. As I discussed earlier, given the large migration of Koreans from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan between 1937 and 1941, Koreans still seemed to be able to change their residence despite the ban. Following Kim and Men (1995), it is safe to say that the regulation of residence and migration was carried out by the chairman of the village soviet, so it was very likely that there were many loopholes to move around in.

12 The deportees’ perceptions of themselves as ‘colonizers’ together with Russian migrants in Central Asia were very popular with nearly all the deported nationalities such as Germans, Poles, Greeks, Turks etc. This also partly explains the ‘russification’ of these deported nationalities including Koreans.

13 According to Kim and Men(1995, 15), in 1970 already 73.2 % of Koreans in Kazakhstan were living in cities, compared to 80 % of the rural population in 1937-40. Therefore, the proportions of rural and urban population among the Koreans in Central Asia were reversed during the Soviet period.

14 The gambling is a card game called *hwatu*, deemed to have originated in the Japanese colonial period. After their migration to Central Asia, there was no way to get hold of factory-produced cards for this game, but people still continued to play it, making their own cards. As each card (one set is composed of 48 cards) is a picture of very colourful patterns, we can imagine their passion for this game. It is still popular among Koreans in the former Soviet Union and in South Korea as well. Thus, nowadays they play with cards brought from South Korea which are made of plastic. For an interesting ethnographic study of card games in Greece, focusing on the transformation of money into sociable exchange through gambling, see Papataxiarchis (1999). In addition to gambling, singing and dancing were popular forms of socializing in winter seasons during the Soviet era. While the Japanese colonial legacy in South Korea was condemned in the post-colonial period, for the Soviet Koreans such a legacy was rather actively enjoyed in informal everyday life, as a marker of their

cultural distinctiveness.

¹⁵ Rogers (2006) suggests ‘wealth in people’ instead of Humphrey’s term, ‘right over people’ in explaining working logic of former Soviet-type societies, though we have to take into account that his work concerns post-Soviet period.

¹⁶ Gobonjil practice since the collapse of state socialism tends to be closer to subsistence farming. The ‘best times’ to do gobonjil was during the Brezhnev era (1962-82), ‘given large investment in agricultural infrastructure and widespread corruption of administration in state enterprises’ (Baek 2002, 157). For the historical context of gobonjil, see Baek (2002, 152–166).

¹⁷ Car owning made gobonjil easier. Many Koreans bought cars during Soviet times with the money earned from gobonjil. It was also like a temporary moving house. An elderly couple whom I met in the RFE owned a car from the mid 1960s and they recollected that they commuted to Ukraine for nearly a month for gobonjil, stopping to cook at the roadside and sleeping in the car.

¹⁸ Such a view is expressed by the term ‘Russian-speaking people’ in the post-Soviet context.

¹⁹ Pnina Werbner(1999) also discusses different cultural evaluations and notions of ‘success’ among diasporic ethnic groups in relation to the ‘ethnic economy’.

²⁰ In parallel with Yurchak’s conceptualization of ‘*vnye*’, Oushakine (2004) also addresses the notion of ‘outsidedness (*vnenakhodmost*)’ during the 1930s in Russia, and both draw on Mikhail Bakhtin’s conceptualization of it. In Oushakine’s discussion, this notion refers to external conditions, which were worked upon by the subjects to articulate the internal self.

²¹ The close translation would be ‘one’s own’ in English, in my view, though Yurchak translated it into ‘us/ours’. Compared to ‘our (*nashi*)’ which denotes ‘commonness’, ‘*svoi*’ implies ‘property right (*sobstvennosti*)’, but differs from the Western concept of that. For comparison with ‘*nashi*’, see Yurchak(2006, 103).

Chapter 4 Greenhouse society: subsistence economy and the house-holding

We are surviving, as one somehow does (*vyzhivaem, kto kak mozhet*). We are the only nation (*ezhinstvennyi narod*) that does not ask for and does not count on the help of the state. We've just got used to it (*privykli*) – only relying on ourselves (*tol'ko na sebja*). In summer, we grow vegetables in the *sovkhos*,¹ and at the beginning of winter we make a living by standing in the market and trading.

Marta Ivanovna's interview with a newspaper reporter, 'Eleven months passed, Feb. 1995 No 2(13), *Wondong Newspaper*

In the post-soviet transition, economic turbulence led many people to turn to the land, mostly to their backyard kitchen garden (*ogorod*), for the sustenance for everyday life. This is a well-known pattern and Russian Koreans were no exception, although their cultivation activity appears to have been more successful than many, as some have managed to develop their cultivation into commercial ventures beyond mere subsistence farming.

In a study of post-socialist economic change in Siberia, Humphrey (2002a) critically examines the applicability of the concept of 'domestic mode of production' (DMS, hereafter) proposed by Sahlins (1974) by taking an example from Buryats in a collective farm in Siberia. Humphrey criticizes Sahlins' notion of subsistence economy in two aspects. Firstly, given the dependence of each household on the state enterprise for material and equipment such as fodders and agricultural machinery on a Siberian collective farm in the early 1990s, the application of the presumed self-sufficiency of a household in DMS is problematic.² In other words, the fact that the domestic economy is forced to retain its connection with its outside world is not given ample consideration. Secondly, she criticizes Sahlins's *a priori* presumption of equality within a household and his analytical neglect of internal differences such as gender and age that lead to different obligations and rewards within a household. Sahlins' notion of DMS that is largely based on the concept of the natural economy leads to a very functionalist interpretation, which Donham (1981) categorizes as neoclassical theory.

While I agree with such critiques of Sahlins' (1974) work, in this chapter I want to

address the issue of the ‘subsistence’ or ‘independence’ of the Korean household as a moral construction, rather than as an economic reality. I argue that the independence of the household is an illusion in the sense that it obscures reality, but at the same time an illusion with a certain power to shape reality. It is also an illusion that is indispensable for the realization of Korean moral values. Theoretically, I consider this illusion as ‘objectification of a relation’ in material form, drawing on Lévi-Strauss’ concept of ‘house society’, which was provided as a critique on substantive approach to kinship. According to him, kinship theories, especially descent and lineage theories assume substratum of relationship, as if those groups exist as objective entities (Lévi-Strauss 1987, 155).

Lévi-Strauss (1987, 151–152) conceptualized ‘societies made up of units which cannot be defined either as families or as clans or lineages’ but as ‘house societies’. On the one hand, he proposed seeing a house as ‘a moral person...perpetuated by transmission of its name, wealth and titles through a real or fictitious descent line’. On the other hand, he criticizes the Anglo-American anthropological notion of ‘corporate group’ which rejects ‘the criteria of descent, residence, and property...but, considering it ‘only subject to rights and obligations’’. Lévi-Strauss notes that the ‘conjugal couple constitutes the true kernel of the family, more generally, of the kindred’ and continue to make a hypothesis on the fragile alliance in the house society represented through the conjugal couple, as the relationship between the couple and the belonging of their children to either wife’s family or husband’s family shows the tension between descent and alliance. He contends that this fragility is obscured in the illusion of the material form of the house (ibid., 156). What Lévi-Strauss meant by illusory form is borrowed from Marx’s notion of ‘commodity fetishism’ in which the commodity (as relationship between things represented by its price, i.e. exchange value), is considered to obscure a social relationship between the capitalist and wage workers in capitalist production. As much as Marx de-mystified the capitalist production system and analyzed the core working logic of capitalist production, Lévi-Strauss attempted to expose the hidden logic of reproduction and the very elementary kinship institutions in societies lacking any criteria for defining a kinship group such as ‘descent, residency, or property’.

Indeed, the Koreans in the RFE, especially engaging in domestic cultivation, do not form any lineage, clan, or corporate group, but still not only their social relationships but also livelihood activities are kinship-based; for them, families and relatives compose the core social relationship, but the relationship among the relatives are so amorphous that it is hard to pin down a rule in defining kin. Therefore, I found the notion of ‘house societies’ by Lévi-Strauss is useful in analyzing social relationship in the case of Koreans engaging with domestic

cultivation. In discussing the ethnographic details of social life, I focus on the greenhouse, constructed and utilized by Korean vegetable growers, taking it as the ‘moral person’, and my discussion develops this notion by exploring gender relations in its relationship with the interior house. I highlight two points as I address the morality embedded in the greenhouse. Firstly, I consider the disposability of the greenhouse, which enables Korean vegetable growers to assert their economic capability. With little resources to invest in the construction of a permanent type of greenhouse (usually made of glass in Russia), Korean vegetable growers in the village of Novoselovo construct greenhouses from whatever materials are at hand and by enlisting a larger labor force.³ This capability is realized via a commercial relationship with the market and day laborers, which is itself a result of the post-socialist condition. Although Korean vegetable growers are dependent on the market and the labor of non-Korean villagers, I will show how they absorb this reality through their moral emphasis on the ‘sacrifice’ of fathers for their children by making an analogy between the disposability of the body and materials used for greenhouse cultivation. Secondly, by looking at the changing meaning of the greenhouse in gender terms and the distinctive spatial use of its interior and exterior, I aim to demonstrate that the relational character of the greenhouse is the projection of a male-gendered person, which is an objectified form of the moral values of ‘independence (*samostoiatel’nost’*)’ for each household. Furthermore, I intend to show that this production-centered male-gendered person is only meaningful when connected to the female-centered indoor space of the house.

The greenhouse as an index of Korean households and economic conditions for greenhouse cultivation

The houses occupied by Koreans in the RFE do not embody any particularly distinct architectural features of ‘Korean-ness’; you cannot pick out Koreans’ houses from those of other people, particularly in urban areas. Koreans tended to buy empty houses,⁴ rather than constructing new ones, when they migrated to Primorskii Krai.⁵ As a result, most of their houses are typical Russian wooden houses or multi-story flats.

However, it is the presence of a greenhouse in the yard that often indicates that a house belongs to Koreans. Almost houses dwelt in by Koreans have a greenhouse (*teplitsia*) and/or a kitchen garden (*ogorod* or *uchastok*)⁶ (see Figure 7) and this is the indicator that commercial cultivation is the main means of living for the household. Conversely, the absence of a greenhouse indicates that the members of the household are making a living by other means –

they might operate a trading stall in the markets or work as employees in the Chinese market, run some other kind of private business, work as migrants in South Korea or, more rarely, be employed as salaried workers in state institutions in urban areas.⁷ According to an elderly woman, ‘Koreans constructed greenhouses, because they had ‘good-working brains (*kori il charhanŭn* in Korean)’’.⁸ I was told that people who had previously worked together as brigadiers in migration cultivation (*gobonjil*, see previous chapter) constructed greenhouse ‘straight away’ when they arrived here.⁹ Many others, however, had worked for state institutions or enterprises in Central Asia, so cultivation was a new experience for them. Nevertheless, everyone agreed that it was the greenhouse that allowed them to escape from extreme poverty. When they arrived in Novoselovo,¹⁰ those who did not construct greenhouses began to cultivate potatoes and cabbages in their yard or in fields rented from the ‘sovkhoz’¹¹ just ‘like Russians’. The results were devastating. Sudden floods caused cabbages to rot and spring snow froze young plants. One woman explained that they had to live on ‘grandmother’s pension for bread’ at that time. The greenhouse provided a way for them to escape from such dire poverty through the cultivation of cash crops.

A distinctive aspect of cultivation activity by Koreans seems to be a certain non-attachment to the land. They do not attribute any meaning to land such as power, or a sense of belonging and identity commonly found amongst peasants (cf. Gudeman and Rivera 1990). Rather, their identification with cultivation work tends to be somewhat negative; they say, ‘in practice, we don’t work anywhere (*v samom dele, my ne gde ne rabotaem*)’, meaning they are not affiliated with any state institution.¹² While many Koreans positively evaluate their ability to produce good results in cultivation, they often regard their work as an inevitable last option due to their migration. At first, I thought this attitude came from the lack of proprietorship of the land, as Koreans in Novoselovo rent land for cultivation from Raikom¹³ and change the field plot they use nearly every year. Rents were between 2,000 and 4,000 rubles per hectare in 2003 (one US dollar = approx. 30 rubles at this time) depending on the quality of soil, the location, and the negotiation process. Unlike Eastern Europe, where the privatization of land was aimed at restoring previous ownership from before the socialist period, Russia privatized land according to people’s residency and contribution to the state or collective farm at the time of the local implementation of land reform around the mid-1990s.¹⁴

However, residency alone was not enough for land acquisition.¹⁵ One had to have an affiliation with the state enterprises, and one also had to have the courage to deal with the bureaucratic process. Generally speaking, many Korean villagers showed no interest in land ownership. I asked one man, Vitali, why he paid rent every year rather than buying land. He

replied, 'For what use? There is a lot of land here.' In other words, for these rural residents, especially for the peasants, land is not linked to concepts of territory, identity and rights of ownership, but is seen merely as soil in which to plant crops and this tendency becomes obvious in actual labor process I will describe later.¹⁶

The relationship with the local authority is not perceived by Koreans as a relation of dependence signified by the obligation to pay rent. Rather, many Korean villagers consider this to be their unique contribution to the local economy, as it is obvious to them that the land would have lain idle without them. The Korean cultivators know that their rent provides a significant income for the former *sovkhos* which became dysfunctional following the collapse of Soviet socialism. My interlocutors complained that 'the *sovkhos* does not do anything for them', only taking rent from them. In addition to paying rent for land, they also pay a daily rate for renting tractors for the tilling of the fields before planting vegetables, if one does not own a tractor which was general tendency among the Korean households.¹⁷

Obtaining the material for greenhouse construction such as plastic cups and vinyl sheeting does not seem to present any significant obstacles. Koreans can easily buy such materials imported from China in a nearby city or from the Chinese market in Ussuriisk at cheap prices. I never heard them complain about the price of these items or about difficulty in buying them. As many Korean households have a car or a lorry, transportation is also not a big problem. Some households without cars ask others who go to the city by car to buy some materials for them or ask to share the transportation to carry products to market in the cities. It was the high price of good quality seeds necessary to produce a good harvest that concerned them more.

The most crucial investment for cultivation is the purchase of transportation and wages for day laborers. These two significant investments are a potent index of the position of Koreans in the village. At first, cars symbolized the wealth of Koreans in a very negative way from the perspective of non-Korean villagers. One evening, I had a talk with my hostess, an elderly Russian woman, about alcoholics, which in the end led to a story about a car.

HGP: Bab Masha, what do you think of people who don't work but drink and hang around all day? I have seen many such people in this village.

Bab Masha: I don't know [very grumpily].

HGP: In the past were there many people like that?

Bab Masha: Before perestroika, the *kolkhoz* and *sovkhos* allocated work for people. If they conducted their work as assigned by the *kolkhoz*, they were all right. But after perestroika, we were given our freedom. People are now free and they don't want to work. That's all.

HGP: But Koreans work very hard here.

Bab Masha: You can see that, because they have got money! So they can buy a car, pay for workers and cultivate. But poor people don't have any money. They don't have work to do. What can they do? They have to be employed by the Koreans. Before the revolution, rich people had a lot of land and it was passed on to their offspring. But after the revolution, the state confiscated all the land and allocated it to poor people, and then the state collectivized. After perestroika, the present situation is like the one before the revolution. Look at Marta Ivanovna. She will give all she owns to her son when she dies and he will become rich. ... Marta Ivanovna brought money when she came here from South Korea, so she could buy a lorry.

HP: Wait a minute! She didn't come from South Korea. She came from Central Asia, Tajikistan! There was a war and she fled from it.

Bab Masha: Really? I thought she is from South Korea like you and that is why you knew her.

Though many other villagers knew that Koreans came from Central Asia, the idea that they brought money with them when they came to the village was widespread. Because cars are seen as an object symbolizing wealth and capitalist possessions, my elderly female host assumed that Marta Ivanovna had come from a capitalist country, South Korea.

Conditions that forced Koreans to move to a rural area rather than an urban one are an indicator of their economic status of inferiority, as the cost of housing in cities was beyond their financial means. Many Korean villagers told me that they bought a car with the money earned from watermelon cultivation a few years after they arrived in the village. Ironically, Bab Masha was able to witness the same process in her son's case. In 2003, Bab Masha's son and daughter-in-law cultivated her backyard, while they themselves lived a 'civilized lifestyle' in a flat in the village. Her son was able to use the car from the local branch of a state-run telecommunications enterprise where he worked as a driver; the minivan was at his disposal out of work hours as well. In that year, they took a long holiday in summer and took all the harvested vegetables to Bolshoi Kamen', a city several hours' drive from the village. They stayed there until they had sold all their produce. In September, with the money they earned they were able to buy a lorry¹⁸.

The process of purchasing vehicles by Koreans was similar to that for Baba Masha's son, i.e., with the money from the sale of harvested vegetables. Yet, what differentiated Koreans was the way that they shared transportation and raised finance for purchases among close kin, instead of taking advantage of connections in the state institutions, as Baba Masha's son had

done. Generally speaking, Koreans started out sharing transportation and then purchased a vehicle with credit from close relatives such as siblings and cousins. My acquaintance, Sasha Kim, was able to buy his first lorry with money borrowed from his wife's siblings and he paid back the money after a few years' work in the fields. This demonstrates Koreans' reliance on extensive kinship network, as discussed in the previous chapter. Another case concerned a woman who bought a car with money she earned by migration work in South Korea. Although the means that different people employ to buy a car seem to be fairly diverse, the unifying principle is that the car is the first and foremost object next to the house to buy, not only for cultivation work and trading, but also to facilitate other consumption-related activities and visits to relatives.

The main crop that Koreans in Novoselovo cultivate for sale is watermelons.¹⁹ Besides this, they also grow peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, and aubergines. The clustering of many Korean households in this village and a neighboring village seem to make it easier to sell their products, most of which are sold wholesale. There is great demand and a reliable market for the agricultural goods that Koreans in Novoselovo produce. The wholesalers send the watermelons and vegetables to other regions of Russia such as Sakhalin Island, Kamchatka, Sakha Republic and Magadan. Some are sold at the roadside of the main junction near the village in summer to passing drivers, and some people take produce to the markets in bigger cities such as Vladivostok and Ussuriisk to get a better price. Imported Chinese agricultural products and Chinese cultivators who grow similar vegetables in the RFE are significant competitors, as they sell at very low prices. Some Koreans think that the Chinese influence is the decisive factor that determines the price of their products each year, while others think that the weather and technical machinery are more important.²⁰ For example, in 2003, because of the outbreak of the SARS epidemic in China, the inflow of Chinese migrants and Chinese agricultural products was restricted and this resulted in higher income for Korean vegetable growers. However, in general, urban consumers prefer watermelon cultivated in Russia, so their products can be priced higher than those of the Chinese. In fact, where the food has been grown is not enough to assure consumers that the products are 'our (*nashe*) ones', but the growers and sellers also must be 'our people'.²¹ This is where the Koreans' sense of belonging to Russia is highlighted in their cultivating and trading activities: my interlocutor convinced customers to buy his watermelons, saying, 'We grow them for ourselves, using just a small amount of chemicals, but not nearly as much as the Chinese do.'

Let me present the example of a couple in their early forties with two unmarried sons to help us better understand the Koreans' cultivation work in Novoselovo. The couple harvested

about 20-30 tons of watermelon per hectare in 2003. The wholesale price was about 2-3 rubles per kilogram ‘depending on the size of the watermelon’ and so they were able to make between 60,000 – 90,000 rubles (2,000-3,000 US dollars) per hectare according to my calculations. As they cultivated three hectares of watermelon in 2003, the annual income of the household was roughly between 6,000 – 9,000 US dollars, though they do not know exactly how much net profit they made and the money they earned was dispersed (*raskhoziat*) in various directions, which are not recorded or calculated. As Gudeman and Riviera (1990, 118–119) also noted in their study on peasants in Panama, this income is far from ‘profit’, as a significant portion must be spent on next year’s cultivation to pay for ‘the replacement of the base’.

The relatively high income of Koreans from commercial cultivation in Novoselovo is the basis of their sense of independence, especially in relation to the state. This sense of independence is evident from their monetary exchange with local authorities. Some cultivators who had experience of *gobonji* practice which I discussed in the previous chapter, made a contrast between the provision of all the materials, land, and tilling service by the state farms in Soviet times and their payment for such provisions in Novoselovo. Therefore, the notion of independence reflects on the disappearance of the social protection provided by the state and a corresponding increase in dependence on market relations which center on the sale of harvested products and the employment of day laborers, as cultivators have to pay rent to the quasi-limited company which is the successor of the state farm and wages to day laborers.

There are deeply ambivalent feelings about the dismantling of the old Soviet system and the increasing influence of market forces. The feeling that they have been deprived of their ‘right (*praba*)’ to demand or claim something from the state derives from the tacit assumption that this is due to their position as migrants. For example, my acquaintance told me that the local Raikom began to charge Korean households about 1,000 rubles a year in the name of ‘nature preservation’, saying that it was because Korean vegetable growers left plastic vinyl in the fields after cultivation. According to her, other Russians carrying out similar greenhouse cultivation were not charged,²² as ‘they would write to complain (*zhalovat*) about it’, but Koreans pay up in order to avoid trouble. Because of this, ‘Koreans are seen as stupid (*tupye*) by the villagers’, she said. Yet, the status of migrants also enabled them to employ day laborers without hesitation, free from socialist morality which tended to regard such monetary transactions negatively (also see chapter 2).

[Near here figures 7,8,9,10]

Figure 7. A Greenhouse in the Backyard of Marta Ivanovna's House

Figure 8. Inside a Greenhouse Seen from the Entrance

Figure 9. Day Labourers

Figure 10. Seedlings Indoors

Greenhouse construction and the preparation of young plants indoors

Greenhouses are built in the yard beside or behind the house wherever there is space for them. The construction of a greenhouse is carried out exclusively by male members of the household, or by means of cooperative work among close male kin in related households. In that sense, the greenhouse symbolizes masculinity and male creativity. Greenhouses constructed by Korean villagers are temporarily and spontaneously improvised. The construction is more a work of bricolage combining materials that happen to be at hand rather than an engineer's (Lévi-Strauss 1962). They are constructed every two or three years, and the frame is not very sturdy. Many Korean cultivators have been expanding the size of their greenhouses in the last few years. Rather than constructing an additional greenhouse, they sometimes prefer to construct a larger one for the sake of convenience of maintenance and to save on the cost of heating. The frame of the greenhouse is made of wooden poles and it is covered with plastic vinyl (*plionki*) (see Figure 7 and 8).

As can be seen in the pictures, many wooden poles are recycled ones that previously may have been old pillars of houses or long logs that escaped being chopped into firewood. Indeed, when I first arrived in the village in spring, the scene that greeted me of greenhouse construction with long logs by Korean men was in stark contrast with Russian men chopping logs for firewood and stacking them neatly alongside the house wall. The other important structural element of the greenhouses is a chimney for heating. These are recycled pipes (*truby*) taken from heating networks across the village. In Stephen Collier's study (2011) of a town in the European region of Russia closer to the border with Ukraine, he notes the enduring nature of the Soviet social infrastructure in which pipelines and cable networks and the local administration of public services remained functional despite the dismantling of the socialist state, which he refers to as 'post-Soviet social'. However, dismantled pipes from the network for public services which are fitted in the greenhouses as chimneys in Novoselovo illustrate the different way in which the socialist state has been dismantled on this periphery. The interior of

the greenhouse presents an assemblage of recycled wooden poles, chimneys made of a portion of pipe taken from the old network of pipelines, and cheap plastic cups and vinyl imported from China for growing the seedlings. It exemplifies the local variant of post-Soviet transition in which natural gas was never supplied for domestic use in this Far Eastern region and coal or wooden logs were the main natural resources for heating: the pipeline networks in the village carry heated water from regional power generating station to flats and other communal buildings and the pipes were taken away and sold when some of these buildings became vacant. The lack of infrastructural facilities is something to which Koreans continually made a reference in comparison with the more convenient facilities and modern lifestyle that they experienced in Central Asia.

In addition to greenhouse construction, processing the soil and making wooden boxes for young plants is also male work. They do not use the soil in its natural state, but sieve it to make it fine and to remove small stones. Plants are never planted directly in the ground until they are strong and tall enough to be transported to the fields, but are instead planted in soil in indoor containers or in wooden boxes which can be moved later. Therefore, a large number of containers are required. There are two types of containers. One type is a rectangular box made up of wooden panels, and the other is a small disposable cup or a very narrow cylinder-shaped plastic vinyl tube that is cut to the height of a young plant (about 5-6 cm). Usually, as small plastic vinyl cups are not self-standing, they are put into a wooden box, which makes transport for transplantation easier (see Figure 10). Also, any used yogurt containers or plastic beverage bottles are not thrown away as these can also be used as plant containers. For example, Marta Ivanova often bought yogurt for her grandchildren and used the containers as plant pots. I was also impressed by the beautiful roses that were growing in soil contained in old tires near the gate of her house.

The greenhouse as threshold

The greenhouse not only connects the house with the outside world but also marks a boundary. In this section, I explore the spatial use of the greenhouse in relation to the market and the house. To begin with, let us examine how the boundary of a household is made visible in the daily lives of Korean villagers. The clearest boundary-keeper for each house is a barking dog. Usually dogs are tethered close to the gate and bark madly at ‘strangers’. Sometimes, the dog mediates the changing relationship between the host and the visitor. If the dog still barks fiercely even after

several visits and increasing closeness with the visitor, the host tells off the dog for not knowing 'our guests' from the strangers in a way that is audible to the guest. Or a close friend or relative who visits frequently might themselves tell off the dog in a way that expresses their sense of intimacy with the host. However, people who ignore the fierce behavior of the dog are considered outsiders or even potential dog thieves as they attempt to pass through the gate of the house without regard to the prohibition represented by the dog.²³ Dogs are not pets, but guards, and I have not seen a single household that does not keep a dog. According to Korean custom, the dog may be slaughtered and cooked on special occasions such as a birthday party.²⁴

Apart from dogs, Koreans rarely keep any domestic livestock, although many Russians raised chickens or cows in the early 2000s when all their resources and labor were dedicated to agriculture. Chickens sometimes cause arguments between Koreans and their Russian neighbors, especially in spring when young plants are taken out of the greenhouses to get more sunshine in the yard. Chickens ranging free often pick at the plants and this may lead to heated exchanges. Usually the Koreans ask their neighbors to keep their chickens on their own property and not allow them to cross the boundary between them.²⁵

As the vegetables grow, interaction between Koreans and Russians increases, particularly in employment terms. Once the seedlings have begun to grow in greenhouse, the workload increases and extra hands are needed in addition to the family members when it is time to transplant them. Nevertheless, Korean cultivators' 'hard work' cannot be presented in quantifiable labor hours. Their hard-work is constructed and highlighted in specific spatio-temporal dimension, usually in contrast with the comfort indoors and laziness in winter season. Yet, comfort at home is very hard to achieve in the RFE due to its poor social infrastructure, which is the main reason for the depopulation of the region. Many people from Central Asia remember that they were surprised at the 'horrible' living conditions in the RFE upon their arrival. They were particularly concerned about the lack of plumbing and the wood fired stoves for heating the house. But even more striking for them was that the Russians did not appear to view these things as inconvenient.

The experience that Koreans have of living in different places creates the desire to improve their living circumstances, while the older residents of this region seem to be content to be stuck with the 'inconveniences'.²⁶ In reverse, their statement that they also got used to inconvenient life-style testifies their emplacement. This pursuit of comfort inside the home is in stark contrast with the hard work that takes place outside and this spatial arrangement involves clearly defined gendered practices. In the greenhouse, cultivators need to keep up with the growth of the vegetables. This involves transplanting the seedlings from wooden boxes to

disposable cups and finally to the field. This is very intensive work, as if the space between plants becomes too small, their growth will be inhibited. At least 7,000 seedlings per hectare need transplanting from a box filled with soil, each into its own small cup, and then to the field in late May or early June. After that, watering, weeding and harvesting increases the demand for labor. The average-sized plot for a household composed of a couple with young children is three hectares, so that results in over 20,000 seedlings to care for. It is difficult to describe the intensity of their work simply with figures or to convey the physical pain and bodily exhaustion that it involves. Dripping sweat in the hot greenhouse and back pain are seen as necessary to help the vegetables grow. Marta Ivanovna talked of her body as if it were elastic: ‘I am skinny in summer [pushing her cheeks with both hands to make them smaller] because of the work, but I become fat again in winter.’

Given the amount of work involved in the transplantation process and subsequent work in the fields, the hiring of Russian villagers as day laborers (*rabochii*, *ssakguni* in Korean meaning ‘workers for money’) is unavoidable. The Koreans’ ostensible identity as migrants appears to enable them to hire day laborers, something that might otherwise be difficult given that ‘working for money’ in Russian rural areas was a largely alien concept, with the traditional notion of ‘help’ preferred at least until the mid-1990s (cf. Humphrey 1998, Epilogue). In other words, the Koreans’ position as strangers (cf. Simmel 1971b)²⁷ in the village was one factor that enabled wage and labor exchange between Korean villagers and poor Russian villagers in what I consider to be an alliance of ‘the dispossessed’ (Humphrey 1997; Harvey 2005, 168–171).²⁸ These two groups of the ‘dispossessed’ occupy the lowest positions in the hierarchy of rural Russia. While Korean cultivators suffer a certain lack of social legitimacy due to their status as migrants, Russian day laborers have been left economically destitute with the crumbling of state economic enterprises. Many poor non-Korean villagers do not have any salary from their old state enterprise and the daily wage that they earn by working for the Koreans is their only source of cash income. Given the social exclusion in terms of sociality discussed in Chapter 2, this commercial labor exchange is an effective conduit which enables Korean cultivators to connect with the world outside of their domestic domain through the money they pay to laborers and the money they earn by the sale of their products.

The interwoven positions between these two groups of private cultivators and daily waged workers can be seen as ‘an elaboration of a sense of peripherality’ of these two groups ‘in changing and mutually constituting relations with each other’ (cf. Stewart 1997). Although they are socially mixing together through work, Korean vegetable growers make a distinction between themselves and Russian day laborers who follow their bodily desires ‘to drink and

hang around (*guliat*’). The most common remark that Koreans make about Russian day laborers is that they often buy vodka as soon as they get their wages, without regard to whether their children are starving or not at home.²⁹ However, despite this distinction the Korean vegetable growers highlight, the relationship between them is symbiotic or interdependent, as their work is essential for successful commercial cultivation.³⁰ Indeed, the dependence on day laborers is acutely acknowledged by the Koreans, as the only alternatives to greenhouse cultivation is heading to South Korea as labor migrants or selling seedlings in spring season, only relying on the labor of family members.

It is interesting that people occupying a disadvantageous position in a given society represent their cultural world through making a distinction between themselves and ‘other’ people who are in a similar or poorer position. The most salient distance-making often seems to be found in the practice of non-commensality between these two groups. Some ethnographic studies report that group boundaries are marked by the absence of sharing food from the same table (for example, Stewart 1997; Lemon 1996; Carsten 1989) and this can be seen in the case of Koreans and Russian day laborers. Though Korean cultivators work together amicably with Russian day laborers and often exchange jokes, they rarely eat together. Lunch is brought to the greenhouse on a tray and day laborers eat in the greenhouse, while Korean men go inside the house and eat lunch.³¹

Particularly, Carsten provides an interesting interpretation of two different spheres of economic activities concerning household and kinship in a fishing village, Lankawi, in Malaysia: commercialized fishing by men and self-subsistent rice cultivation by women. She notes the non-commensality among fishermen who are related by commercial wages in Lankawi, Malaysia. In the striking phrase ‘cooking money’, she suggests that this non-commensality is a symbolic construction of communal kinship value in contrast with commercial and monetary value. She interrogates the concept of community by interpreting cooking by women as a transformational act and re-examines the concept of ‘society’, centered on the household rather than on males’ commercial economic activity of fishing. Cooking ‘transforms one kind of community, based on differentiation, exchange and alliance, and primarily male, into the other, based on the notion of a collection of similar female-dominated houses’ (Carsten 1989, 138). After discussing how the greenhouse represents male autonomy in the next section, I will return to the meaning of Korean women’s cooking in the following section in terms of nurturing and extending the household, not only in the sense of raising the next generation but also in the formation of an extensive network beyond the individual household.

The greenhouse as male capacity in gender terms

The appearance of the greenhouse in quantifiable terms can be viewed as representing the male capacity³² of the household. One can say that if there are many young men in the household, they tend to make bigger greenhouse such as in the case of brothers who cooperate together. Nevertheless, there are cases that contravene this equation between the size of greenhouse and the number of men in the household. Even if there are men in the household, the size of the greenhouse is proportional to the number of 'dependent members' in the household and to what kind of relationship is manifested through the greenhouse. This seems to certify the theory of Chayanov (1966) who discussed the Russian peasant economy in the 1920s. He analyzed the domestic economy in terms of economic cost and gains in accordance with the available labor force and the number of dependents in the household. Rather than seeing dependency as a cost, however, I am going to highlight the moral force of dependency as creating the motivation to work. I will begin by describing some cases that illustrate the relationship between male capacity and the greenhouse.

The first case is that of a household composed of an elderly mother and two grown-up sons, one disabled and the other divorced. Here, male capacity was limited to feeding themselves and their mother, so the small size of the greenhouse reflected this relational capacity. This household was one of the poorest households among Koreans in the village. A similar situation is that of a bachelor in his forties living at home with his elderly mother. To feed just himself and his mother, he did not need exert himself to work hard. He maintained a small greenhouse for around one hectare of plot cultivation and indulged himself in drinking vodka in his spare time.³³ A contrasting case is that of an elderly woman called Olya, who lived on her own, but had the burden of paying for the court case for her younger son who was in jail and of supporting her disabled elder son's family who were living in Uzbekistan. As a result, she mobilized her nephews (her late husband's younger sister's sons) and managed to cultivate one hectare on her own (see Appendix 2). In these examples, the size of the household and its potential for growth is also worth noting. In the case of the bachelor, there were no other family member for him to feed apart from his mother and no prospect of the household increasing. As a result, his greenhouse did not grow either. Most Korean families in the village, however, were struggling to keep up with the increasing size of their greenhouses and the land that they cultivated, which reflected the changing size of their households. The size of a greenhouse can be said to be proportionate to the way in which the relationship in which the male capacity is

manifested, rather than being based on the desire of the individual to maximize profit as assumed in neoclassical economics.

When I visited the village again in 2004, many households had increased the size of their plot by two or three hectares and, as a result, the size of their greenhouse had also increased. This required the input of more resources, mainly in the form of wages for a greater number of Russian day laborers. However, this expansion in the scale of cultivation could be characterized as ‘house-holding’, as defined by Karl Polanyi (2001, 55–56). In other words, domestic cultivation did not develop into corporate businesses involved in industrial agriculture, but instead the day laborers were incorporated into a household overseen by Korean men. These temporary households of seasonal workers are set up as camps in the fields in the summer and are where the day laborers work, eat and sleep. They can be viewed as a type of ‘transposed greenhouse’ alongside the transplantation of the watermelon seedlings to the field. The Korean men who run these camps are usually addressed as ‘host’ (*khoziain*) (cf. Rogers 2006) by the workers and they are judged not only by their ability to produce profits, but also by their overall management skills that enable them to run the enterprise smoothly. This includes recruiting laborers, negotiating with wholesalers, obtaining credit, purchasing good quality seed, making sure that the workers have everything they need to perform their roles, and sorting out unexpected trouble. These Korean hosts and other socially active members of society in the village are usually called by their nicknames, such as ‘Kapitan Kolia’ (Captain Nikolai), ‘Banzai’ (nobody in the village knows the meaning of this word, but my guess is that it may originate from the Japanese word meaning ‘Hooray!’), ‘Tsentr Sasha’ (Sasha living in the center), ‘Apteka Kolia’ (Nikolai who lives opposite the chemist) etc., and such appellations affirm their public persona.³⁴ However, becoming a *khoziain* is difficult without the consent and cooperation of one’s wife. In 2010, when I returned to the village, I found that many men had given up expanding the scale of their cultivation, and they told me it was mainly due to their wives’ objections or a decision on their own part to prioritize ‘female values’³⁵ such as a clean house, more time to spend relaxing at home with the family, and a clear division between work and leisure time.

The gendered nature of the greenhouse can be clearly illustrated by the case of two single sisters, Galya and Anya, who were both divorced (see Appendix 2). Galya had one daughter and Anya was raising three sons but, as single women, they struggled to cultivate land. Galya used to cultivate a half hectare with the help of her brother and brother-in-law, who would construct the greenhouse, plough the field and provide transportation. The situation was the same for Anya, as her sons were still young children when they came to the village. In 2004, Galya gave

up cultivation and as she was able to get a temporary secretarial job in the village school earning 100 US dollars a month. Anya, however, continued cultivation and expanded the plot of land as her sons grew. In 2003, her household had been one of the poorest amongst the Koreans in the village as she was living in a very small one-bedroom house with her three sons, but by the following year, things seemed to have improved. She had been able to buy a bigger house for herself and her two unmarried sons, and had given her old house to her eldest son, who had married just before my visit in 2004.³⁶ As soon as the eldest son graduated from vocational school in the village, he and his younger brother (aged 17) worked together and were able to earn enough money to buy another house.

According to Galya, 'Cultivation needs a man and a car at home. Otherwise, it is almost impossible.' I asked her whether she could hire laborers if she had more money to invest, but she went on to explain:

It's not enough just having money to hire laborers. There needs to be a male around the house, even if it is just a small boy. It's because laborers don't want to come to work in a house where there are only women.

Managing a greenhouse symbolizes the male autonomy of a household and taking over that male capacity in the household appeared to be a burden for Galya. Although Anya as a single mother had to depend on her male relatives' help for the construction of a greenhouse, now that her eldest son was married he no longer needed 'help' from his relatives, but was able to 'cooperate' with them. Interestingly, although Korean men quite clearly help each other's households and rely on labor from Russian workers, they always emphasized that they work only for themselves (*sam*) whenever I showed curiosity about who cooperates with whom. Thus, the autonomy of a household is represented by its male members, but as shown in the case of Anya's eldest son, the male is not necessarily an adult, but may be a growing presence nurtured by his mother, who contains within himself the potential for producing the next generation of male children, just as a greenhouse contains wooden boxes holding seedlings.

This case of the two single mothers also illustrates that the autonomy of a household is something that is valued and actively pursued. Help and support is not taken for granted, and although a household may have to rely heavily on siblings, great efforts will be made not to be indebted to others. This can be seen in the sacrifices that Anya was willing to make to provide her eldest son with a car once he was grown up (which she did), something that is indispensable for anyone seeking to engage in commercial cultivation. Anya told me that she had saved up her

state benefit for single mothers for seven years to the extent of only feeding her children with potatoes from the garden and bread bought with her pension.

The extended space of the house

As discussed in the previous section, the relationship between the greenhouse and the house is exclusive in terms of meals. People coming to the greenhouse to work are classified as ‘others’ and thus do not eat food inside the house, whereas people visiting the house are guests who are ‘our own people’ (*svoi*). They come to ‘socialize (*so-obshchatsia*)’ and hospitality is shown by offering them food. The house is viewed as a place for consumption rather than production and its unproductive character is expressed in phrases related to immobility, such as ‘sitting at home (*sigit doma*)’ which denotes a boring, lazy, motionless, and aimless state,³⁷ in contrast to ‘working’ or ‘running’. These verbal phrases also have gendered connotations related to activities in certain spaces. For example, women are rarely described using the phrase, ‘sitting at home’, presumably because home is considered to be the ‘natural’ environment for women, whereas men who stay at home ‘not working’ are often described with this phrase. By contrast, if a wife moves around on her own outside the house, her actions are generally not evaluated positively.

However, this seemingly confined domestic space of the house expands on certain occasions to make the household the center of Korean social interaction. On such occasions, the interior space of the house is transformed into extra-household space by the presence of guests. Thus, the house has a double orientation in relation to the greenhouse and to guests: inward and outward (cf. Hirschon 1989, 13). The exclusive and closed nature of the household is seen in relation to outsiders in the greenhouse, and its inclusive and open nature is seen in the wider social interaction that takes place in the presence of guests. In both cases, food becomes the main medium for defining the intra- and extra-household.

Concerning this, Hirschon’s study (1989; 1993) is illuminating in its discussion of the use and organization of domestic space by the descendants of Greek refugees who were displaced from their Asia Minor homeland in the early 1920s by population exchange between Greece and Turkey. In an urban refugee quarter in Athens, Greece, the ‘independence of each nuclear family’ or ‘household’ ‘is manifested in the creation of separate kitchens as the realm of each housewife’ (Hirschon 1993, 70). Thus, even though mother and married daughter live

together in the same house, they form separate households by creating their own kitchens, and hence there can be as many kitchens as the number of married daughters in a house. In this case, the autonomy of each household is based on uxorilocal residence and the provision of living space as a dowry for the couple by the bride's parents.

Notable in Hirschon's ethnography is that women's activities are 'vital in maintaining social life' (Hirschon 1993, 84) and that households are connected through two spatial objects: the kitchen and the chair. The kitchen represents the autonomy of a household by providing a table of food for guests who 'bridge the "inside" and "outside" worlds by their presence in the home' (80). In the longer version of her ethnography (1989, 145), Hirschon also mentions that 'a woman's position in society, her attainment of full adulthood as mistress of the house depends upon marriage, and thus upon her husband.' In other words, the separate kitchen can be seen to symbolize the autonomy of a household in so far as there is a man who supplies products or money to buy products to be cooked and served. Hirschon(1993) also refers to the large number of chairs that are often moved out from a household to the street, thereby forming a community of 'neighborhood', given the geographical proximity of the refugees' houses. In comparison, Korean households are spaced further apart, so an object of similar significance as the chairs of Greek refugees is the car. In addition to being necessary for transporting materials to the fields or vegetables to retail locations, a car also serves as an essential item for enabling social interaction between Korean households, such as for visiting relatives in various locations. The image of Koreans is tightly linked with their cars in the village, usually in a negative way as shown by Baba Masha's comments described earlier.³⁸ Therefore, the formation of sociality through the object is not limited to the space-making of a household, but also by the body itself becoming a mobile somatic space in a vehicle (cf. Munn 1986; Casey 1996).³⁹

Visitors from far away often stay overnight or for a longer period of time. Floor space in the house is maximized by the Korean tradition of sitting and sleeping on the floor. Many households possess one or more home-made low tables, about the height of a coffee table, with folding legs that can be set up when guests come and small home-made wooden stools that can be offered as seats. The height of the stool is only about 10-20 cm and can be easily moved around the house; they are highly versatile and are used not only as chairs for guests but also for moving young plants in the greenhouse or by women when preparing food. Another notable use of space that allows for the accommodation of guests is the wooden raised platform that is found in many houses, usually in a corner of the kitchen or hallway.⁴⁰ This platform is not found in Russian homes but is common in Central Asia, where it is used extensively for eating and sleeping.

Food: everyday meals and ceremonial banquets

The transformation of domestic space from that for a closed family to open sociality is marked by different amounts and types of food. In this respect, I discuss two types of food: everyday (sometimes referred to as ‘quotidian’) and ceremonial.⁴¹ I consider these two kinds of meals to be related to each other in that everyday meals enable bodily growth but such growth is objectified and acknowledged by ceremonial meals in the presence of guests from outside the household. This follows Strathern (1988)’s proposition for understanding the relationship between feeding and growth. According to her (1988, 251), ‘feeding and growing relationships do indeed have to be distinguished’.⁴² In other words, she criticizes the direct connection between ‘food’ and ‘bodily substance’ in the ‘Eurocentric image’. Strathern (1988) continues that ‘it is not the food as such that must be analyzed, but the feeding relationship, the question of whether food is ‘given’ (mediated exchange)’ or ‘shared’(unmediated)’ (ibid., 251, citation omitted).

At first, repetitive acts in the process of everyday labor and eating do not appear to be related to growth; the calories provided by daily meals are burnt up by working and everyday activities. These meals are taken for granted and this is shown by the absence of any expressions of thanks or gratitude at the moment of eating. The purpose of everyday meals is to replace what has been lost in the body and to assuage hunger, hence no great consideration is given to the taste or the type of food prepared. Staple foods form the center of such meals, and they act as an indicator of living conditions and the ability of a father to provide basic sustenance for his family (cf. Strathern 1988, 182–187).

‘I don’t want to cook anything today,’ tired Korean wives will say before suppertime after a long day of labor. This means that they will make an evening meal of bread, sliced smoked ham, tomatoes, cucumbers and in summer whatever is available from the kitchen garden.⁴³ In winter, they eat better quality meat, and people tend to put on weight (*tolsty*). Many people told me that their main staples were bread and potatoes, as after rice meals they became ‘hungry very soon’. People often asked me whether there was bread in South Korea, and those who had worked there as migrants complained that there had been ‘no Russian bread’ and that they had got ‘fed up with three rice meals a day.’ In this usage, ‘Russian bread’ is a generic term for their everyday food in the RFE. In a similar way when people reflected on the hardships they experienced in the early days after their migration from Central Asia in the early 1990s, they said, ‘We didn’t even have enough money to buy bread.’ Or when they complained

about inflation, they cited the rising price of a loaf of bread as increasing by one ruble every year. This is reminiscent of the recollections by elderly people on their life shortly after the deportation in 1937 except that the focus was then on rice instead of bread, with 'rice' being the generic term for food at that time.

A rice meal is considered to be a more authentic and traditional Korean meal than one with bread or potatoes. One young man jokingly told me, 'I am a pure Korean (*chistyi koreets*), as I prefer rice to potatoes.' Although the generic term for food has changed from rice to bread, the staple food consumed by each household often depends on the age of the women in the house. If there are elderly women in the household, they tend to cook rice meals more often than households composed of younger people.

The composition of everyday meals also depends on the economic conditions prevalent at the time, with a distinction drawn between 'normal' and 'poor'. Here, for Koreans, normal/poor life condition corresponds to Lévi-Strauss's Nature/Culture transformation in his discussion on food which was symbolized as 'raw' and 'cooked' in his 'culinary triangle' (Leach 1976, 40–41; Lévi-Strauss 1966). My elderly interlocutors often talked how being able to eat a proper rice meal is viewed as a normal life, after passing through the conditions for 'bare life' (cf. Agamben 1998). Mary Douglas (1972, cited in Sutton 2001, 104) notes that the composition of meals is governed by certain rules. Employing her analysis to this ethnography, the basic schema for a rice meal is rice, soup, and side dishes, which are served on the table at the same time rather than as a series of courses. If this schema of the traditional meal (rice, soup and side dishes) collapses, it indicates an abnormally poor life, which is considered to be 'pure being' or 'just existing' (Agamben 1998, 182). Elderly Koreans describe such a life as 'humiliating' when the three elements of a normal meal are mixed and boiled in one pot with a tiny portion of grains (such as barley instead of rice), water (a replacement for soup) and edible weeds (a replacement for side dishes). Such meals are often mentioned when people reminisce about their state of destitution after the deportation and during WWII.

In addition to economic conditions, the other crucial aspect of a proper meal is the relationships involved in the preparation and consumption of the meal. A proper meal entails a specific gender relationship and, in general, it is the women in the household who are expected to cook. However, if there is more than one woman in the household, this general hypothesis must be reconsidered according to a specific context and in this case regulating kinship rules defining obligations.

In this gender relation concerning feeding and eating, a notable aspect is the change of women's location in domestic sphere by age, and in particular concerning their sexuality, while

men seems to remain unchanged or only change according to a relationship men have with women in the household. In the course of man's life, the most significant male property is an ability to feed, or in more conventional terms, 'economic capability' or 'hard work'. However, such property is not innate in men, but must be drawn out by the change of women's location within a household. In other words, men are always considered to represent the independent and autonomous, but these male properties become visible in his gender relation with his mother and wife.

The work of men (growth by feeding) can be only recognized with the work of women (cooking) in ceremonial meals. It is in the context of ceremonial meals that cooking takes on a meaning beyond daily basic sustenance and become a means of expanding social relationships in the Korean community beyond the individual household. Ceremonial meals are more concerned with the taste of food and the number of side dishes served; the host's generosity must be manifested in the food and also in the entertainment provided, if possible. Here, bread and potatoes, the staples of everyday meals, are not important and are left out. The number of guests and the number of side dishes and their content indicates the wealth of the household, which is the combined result of both the man and the woman's work.⁴⁴ While quotidian meals are prepared according to a daily cycle, celebratory meals are usually focused on life-cycle events.⁴⁵ Given the cost and work involved in the preparation of ceremonial food, it may be considered similar to the giving of gifts (Strathern 1988, 238).⁴⁶ For example, for her son's wedding, my acquaintance, Larisa, invited about 250 guests,⁴⁷ who were mostly relatives and friends from the Chinese market (all of them Koreans). She is a middle-aged woman who owns a fur-coat trading stall in the Chinese market and is economically better-off than average. The wedding was held on a grand scale and included entertainment by two professional dance teams and singers. On each table for six people there were two kinds of rice cakes (*chŭngp'yŏn* and *ch'alltŏk*), soup-based noodles, dumplings made from potato starch, boiled pork, deep-fried rice cakes tossed in puffed rice, sweets and chocolates, a plate of fruit, sliced ham and cheese, caviar (*ikra*), smoked salmon, several kinds of salad, *samsa* (triangle-shaped pastry filled with minced meat and onion), as well as drinks including spirits. All these were prepared by Larisa and her friends, except for the cutlet and potato which was provided by the restaurant (see Figure).⁴⁸ It is notable that the foods provided by Larisa and her friends are those that are not commercially available. Therefore, the meaning of 'Korean' food can be differently articulated, depending on the context. For example, the most famous carrot salad which is widely commodified as 'Korean' cuisine in Russia is not on the table. Nevertheless, the most important aspect of family ritual lies in the assertion of hospitality by the host in the form of lavish banquet. Indeed, Larisa

told me it was ‘not easy here [in the RFE] to have a very good wedding, compared with Tashkent in Uzbekistan.’ There one could have a more luxurious wedding costing less. Despite this slight grumble, she spent more than 2,000 US dollars on the wedding.⁴⁹

[Around here Figures 11, 12, 13, 14]

Figure 11. A quotidian meal

Figure 12. Banquet Table at the Wedding Party for Larisa's Son

Figure 13. Banquet Table at a Wealthy Businessman's Wedding Party for His Daughter

Figure 14. A Table for the 84th Birthday of a Woman in Novoselovo

For Koreans in the former Soviet Union, there are four significant family ceremonies that are held during a lifetime: the first birthday (*dor(i)*, in Korean), wedding, 60th birthday, and funeral,⁵⁰ and these are described using the metaphor of ‘table’ (*stol*, *sang* in Korean). L. V. Min(1992, 15) states that the ‘custom of receiving four tables is very important for contemporary Koreans [in the former Soviet Union]’(cited in G. Li 1998, 116). The principle of this custom lies in the exchange of ‘tables’ between generations in the passage of life. The tables also symbolize the relations between the generations; giving, receiving and distributing food is reified in the relationship between tables involving three consecutive generations. Thus, the temporal flow of tables forms a cycle rather than a linear development with a beginning and an end. In this cycle, a child’s first birthday table presupposes the wedding table of its parents, and the 60th birthday table presupposes the wedding table of the person’s offspring. The salient image of these tables (except for the mortuary ceremony) is the richness of the food and the emphasis on the social side of providing fun and enjoyment. In contrast with everyday meals where women’s work is not emphasized significantly and is usually taken for granted, women’s efforts are clearly visible in these ceremonial feasts, as shown in the case of Larisa above.⁵¹ Furthermore, the food provided for family ceremonies is usually Korean food, so it is not commercially available; women must prepare the food themselves or mobilize their own network of female relatives and friends.⁵² It is the elicitation of values created by the productive activities collaboratively performed by the family members and its recognition and display reaffirms the continuity and proliferation of the vitality of life.

The transformation of women in the continuity and extension of the house

In this section, I consider the autonomy of male members of the household from a female perspective, and I examine how dependent wives become independent (or, in a sense, ‘male-like’) in relation to their husbands and sons. Though the autonomy of Korean men in terms of work morality is widely viewed as an innate characteristic (‘working hard is in the Korean blood’), or at best as something that distinguishes them from Russian day laborers, I would also like to show that this autonomy is established through changes in their relationship with two women (their mother and wife) in the household.

At the beginning of this chapter, I drew on the concept of ‘house society’ by Lévi-Strauss (1987) in analyzing the fetish of the house as a moral person, focusing on the illusion of ‘disposability’ embedded in their greenhouse. Here, I address the ‘illusion’ of the continuity of the house addressed by Lévi-Strauss as a descent rule, whereby the house as a material form obscures the fragility of the balance of ‘dominance, status and power’ (ibid., 162) entailed in the ‘house society’. Thus, the power relation between wife-givers and wife-takers is manifested in a wife’s relationship with her natal family and her location within her husband’s house. The concept of ‘house society’ is proposed in understanding societies where there is no descent group or lineage, but only a descent rule, which is observed in filial relations. In a house society, the ‘conjugal couple constitutes the true kernel of the family and, more generally, of the kindred’ (Lévi-Strauss 1987, 155). Thus, ‘what really happens in societies with ‘houses’’ is ‘the hypostatisation of the opposition between descent and alliance that has to be transcended’ (ibid., 158). Then, how does this happen?

Firstly, let me introduce some kinship rules regarding generational succession and marriage amongst Russian Koreans. The axiomatic descent rule among Koreans in the RFE is patrilineal with an increasing bilateral tendency, and the residence rule is virilocal/patrilocal or neolocal, depending on the circumstances of each family.⁵³ This implies an expectation from the parents that one of their sons will look after them when they are old and weak, and that the inheritance of their belongings and their family name will be passed on from father to son. This patrilateral filial succession can be observed ethnographically in the case of Marta Ivanovna’s family, when her son-in-law came to live with them for cultivation work in 2003 between March and September. Although he slept and ate together with his parents-in-law and used his father-in-law’s greenhouse in order to raise *his* young plants, Marta Ivanovna told me that he did not ‘work together with them’. Instead, he cooperated with other men in the village, forming

a brigade and renting a plot of land on his own. More than anything else, what made him independent from his parents-in-law was having his own autonomy to make his own decisions. In fall that year, Marta Ivanovna told me that her son-in-law did not listen to their advice to plant more watermelons, but instead he planted mostly peppers. As a result, he did not earn a lot, as the price of watermelons was very good that year, due to restrictions on the influx of Chinese agricultural migrants and Chinese products after the SARS epidemic, whereas the price of peppers, which are mostly supplied by local production rather than being imported, did not rise.

In contrast, Marta Ivanovna's son worked in the greenhouse and in the field with his father, and the continuity between them was demonstrated in their sharing of possessions. In the spring of 2003, when their son-in-law came to live with them, the son's family moved to Ussuriisk. When I visited Marta's house, her son was busy loading household goods into the car, which was shared by all the members of the extended family. He loaded as much as he could, including a new kettle, pots, plates, utensils, duvets etc., most of them relatively newly purchased. After he left, they brought out an old spare Soviet-style kettle in place of the new white kettle, and shabby plastic stools instead of their sturdy wooden ones.

Thus, the continuity in the relationship between father and son is in contrast to the distance in the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law. However, unlike the otherness of the son-in-law, the son's wife (also from 'outside') is expected to be incorporated into the extended family. While the son-in-law remains separate from Marta Ivanovna's family even though he lives in the same house, how does the daughter-in-law who came to live with her husband's parents become incorporated into the family?

To answer this question, I will begin by reviewing restrictions on the conduct of young women in order to show their position in the domestic sphere. For young women, there are more restrictions on their conduct in the domestic sphere than for men. One example concerns restrictions on smoking and drinking by young women. While older women condemn drinking and smoking as 'a male thing', younger women enjoy socializing with their peers from various backgrounds, and I have seen many young Korean women drink and smoke outside their homes. When I visited Marta Ivanovna's house in April 2004, her daughter-in-law, Sonia, returned from Ussuriisk as her husband had gone to South Korea for migration work. At night, Sonia did not come inside the house but happily volunteered to feed the fire to the dug for the *guduri* where she slept with her young children. When she came inside the house, I asked why it took her so long, and she told me that she enjoyed a cigarette while feeding the fire. She told me that she did not want her parents-in-law to know that she smokes, although her husband did not mind it. The implication of this restriction on women's 'male' behavior seems to be related to their

sociality with men. As smoking and drinking usually take place in male society, the concern about such 'male behavior' in young women is related to the need to protect young women from unregulated socializing with men.

This same sense of protection is even more conspicuous in restraints on freedom of movement that are usually imposed by older women within the household. For example, it is frowned upon for young women to go away on their own to other places such as South Korea. Migration work in South Korea became very popular in the early 2000s and, in theory, young unmarried women are good candidates as they are physically healthy and are not tied by any obligations such as looking after children. However, this rationale is not always followed by older family members or by the young women themselves. I have met some young women who are reluctant to go to South Korea on their own. In other words, for young women a place without 'anyone' is a non-place.⁵⁴

The limitations placed on young women's mobility contrast with the freedom that young men enjoy. This is especially true in regard to sexuality, as male sexual desire is considered to be natural.⁵⁵ Such surveillance of women's sexuality is also related to the marriage preference for ethnic endogamy, while trying to keep the rule of exogamy and avoid marrying someone with the same *bon*.⁵⁶ Even though the freedom to choose one's own marriage partner based on love and romance is now dominant, parents still try to influence their children's choice, sometimes by expressing their disapproval. The prevailing preference is that young people should marry an ethnic Korean who does not share the same *bon*. Marta Ivanovna's daughter, Natasha, in her mid-thirties in 2004 (born in 1967) recollected being pressured by other Koreans' 'vigilant eyes' when she was unmarried in Dushanbe, Tadjikistan: It was 'scary (*strashno*)' to feel other Koreans' eyes watching with whom Korean girls dated. If a young woman danced with a man of a different nationality at a party, she would suffer a lot of pressure and rumors afterwards.⁵⁷ However, this does not mean that ethnic endogamy is an absolute norm. In fact, there are numerous inter-racial marriages, and harmony and conflict in marriage are usually considered to be dependent on the efforts and behavior of the individuals involved.

Sex outside marriage is strongly discouraged for women, but if it happens, it is the women who are blamed regardless of the circumstances. Usually people say, 'It is surprising that a Korean woman does such a thing'. Controls on young Korean women, both married and unmarried, are carried out in specific ways. Firstly, the control is not exercised by men, but rather by same-sex kin, usually the older female members of the family. Therefore, it appears that age is a more crucial factor than sexuality in the patriarchal control of young women. In a sense, older women are not female in terms of gender relations, but represent their son's interest

in their relationship with their daughter-in-law. This impression is reinforced by the high status of ‘grandmothers’ who are respected by both younger women and men and actively socialize among themselves. In other words, women who have raised their children are respected and enjoy a similar autonomy to men, while women who have the potential to become future mothers or are mothers of young children are treated as incomplete and in need of protection by older women or male kin. While women’s authority increases as their children grow, a father’s authority decreases in the household. This increase in women’s authority in the household is in accordance with the passage of male authority from father to son. However, the autonomy of the male head of the household is only passed onto the son when his young bride has been transformed into a mother who can look after the well-being of her husband and their children with the support and direction of her mother-in-law. Up to the first birthday of her grandchildren, it is the mother-in-law who is fully responsible for organizing familial ceremonies. Once the mother-in-law has seen her daughter-in-law gave birth to children and become accustomed to her husband’s house, she passes on more initiative and responsibility to her. In the next section, I am going to show how this relationship is represented and linked to the concept of personhood in familial ceremonies.

Becoming persons

In this section, I examine the metaphor of eating as central in the perception of personhood in a familial ceremony, taking the first birthday of a child as an example. Here, I am exploring how close and distant consanguinity and friendship are manifested through the dual structure of familial ceremonies and the meaning imposed on the concept of personhood through the exchange of food and money gifts.

On the occasion of a first birthday, the child is dressed in new clothes in the morning and brought in front of a table at home where basic items are displayed such as money, a bowl of uncooked rice, a notebook and a bunch of threads. According to a South Korean anthropologist who observed a first birthday during fieldwork in Kazakhstan (Chun 2002, 249; cf. G. N. Li 2003), there were ‘three bowls of sticky rice cakes, a bowl of white beans, a bowl of uncooked rice, a pair of scissors, money, a notebook and a pencil.’ If the child picks up the thread, they will have a long life; if they pick up the money, they will be wealthy; a book and pencil means success in study; and the scissors mean that a girl will be good with her hands. However, the

rice does not signify anything good.⁵⁸ Although people do not seriously believe in the prophetic meaning of each object, it is crucial that the child is surrounded by close kindred and is the center of attention during this ritual. On the day that I observed the first birthday of Marta Ivanovna's grandson, the child did not seem to be very enthusiastic or interested in any of the objects on the table. The grown-ups began to encourage him to pick up something by clapping and encouraging words. When he finally picked up a roll of thread, people exclaimed with joy, 'He will live long!' Then when he was about to pick up the rice, the guests gasped but were relieved when he touched the red beans instead. A guest commented, 'He will get through the chicken pox easily.' This ceremony is performed in the morning at home with very close kindred and friends. The child is the connecting point of all those people in attendance, and their connection and alliance makes this child present. So the child represents the transcendence of 'the hypostization of the opposition between descent and alliance' in the house (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1987, 158). The child becomes a person by *moving* according to the anticipation and expectation of those in attendance. This ceremony marks the beginning of the life of a person who is the focus of expectation of close kindred and also in debt to them. This ontological indebtedness is contrasted with the simultaneous transactions in the exchange of food and money gifts in the party that follows afterwards.

In other words, Koreans make a distinction between intra- and extra-domestic celebrations for a first birthday. Following the table ritual, in the evening or on another day depending on circumstances, they throw a big banquet for more people, usually hiring a venue such as a restaurant, or a House of Culture in the case of Marta Ivanovna. All of the invited guests hand in a gift of money at some point in this wider celebration. Here the intriguing aspect lies in the centrality of money and the perishable nature of the gift item of food. In a gift economy, our understanding is preoccupied with the notion of reciprocity which is created through the indebtedness of the receiver, who repays the gift in some form at a later point in time. This creates interdependence and the need for further transactions between actors. However, the presentation of food by the host and the immediate 'representation' (Mauss 1969) by the guests creates an impression of equilibrium. Indeed, most Koreans I met were very aware of the provider of the food they were eating, and their gratefulness is represented by their money gift in return. This desire not to be in debt to others can be fulfilled by means of the almost simultaneous exchange of food and money gifts, yet there is no way to avoid the 'debt' in the parent-child relationship, though 'debt' may not be the correct word in this context. I think the difference in obligations may be represented in this contrast - food is shared between parents and children, but it is exchanged between the host and guests. In the same way, the act of giving

money by the guests is contrasted with the debt of the person at the center of the celebration, who cannot repay by means of such a medium, but only by their ongoing existence.

Nurturing is not only a matter of physical growth but also of moral growth in continuity with the transformation of relationships as one grows up in the family. The center of morality lies in acknowledging the other's mind toward the self and to display his/her recognition. A child must recognize the work of those who have enabled them to grow and must return a part of themselves in that relationship. I am not here intending to reiterate the lessons or tenacity of 'filial piety' amongst the Russian Koreans which has been described as a central notion in the morality of East Asian kinship relationships. Rather, I wanted to address 'filial piety' not only in terms of the line of descent, but also in terms of gender relations, specifically focusing on two women (the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law) in familial relationship.

In extending Lévi-Strauss's discussion on 'house society' to the Koreans' greenhouse and house, I wanted to interrogate the continuity of 'house as building itself', given the disposability and temporality of the greenhouse and Koreans' multiple displacements. Lévi-Strauss suggested two concepts of the house: 'house as a moral person', and 'the illusion of the house' (Carsten 2004). The house as 'a moral person' holds 'an estate made up of material and immaterial wealth which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity, and more often, of both' (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995, 6-7). I suggest that the Korean greenhouses manifest an independent person in terms of morality in a distinction with an Other. This Other is embodied specifically by Russian day laborers who are seen to lack the all-important concept of making 'sacrifice for their children'. This morality is deeply rooted in the sacrifice which is expressed in the disposability of Korean cultivators' bodies, embodied in the greenhouse and the disposable containers within it. As I showed earlier in this chapter by means of various ethnographic cases, the independent person can serve to be a cause for another person. Yet at the same time, it becomes clear that the growth of the vegetables is manifested only by the disposal of the protection afforded by the greenhouse. It can be built in a short time and can easily be dismantled. It is a moral person which contains containers for vegetables and disposes of itself following the growth of the vegetables, just as the plastic vinyl of the greenhouse is removed and disposed of when the vegetables have fully grown and the weather is warm. The continuity and tenacity of life lies in the disposability of something, which is transposed with the growth of the valuables. The wealth or name to transmit is not a tangible wealth or vegetables themselves, but the sacrifice of the self, embodied in the disposal of the body for the continuity or the will to sacrifice oneself for the other

contained by the self.

Furthermore, I suggest that there is double fetishism of the house for the Koreans, just as there are two houses in the household: the greenhouse and the house. I already discussed the illusion of temporariness of the greenhouse above. I argue further that the hidden face of the seemingly rigorous independence of the greenhouse is the inter-dependence represented by the house, as many related people come to stay and eat together, people that are not limited to the nuclear family of the household. This forms inter-domestic space as manifested by acts of exchange in hospitality—a hospitality that takes place in the domestic sphere where women occupy the central position and is mediated through money and food. In the next chapter, I will explore the political situation which enabled Koreans in Ussuriisk to have their own public space in a building called ‘Korean House’. I will examine how the cultural logic rooted in the domestic sphere has expanded to the political sphere in this newly formed public space.

¹ *Sovietskii Khozhaistov*, meaning State Farm.

² For another critique of Sahlins’ subsistence economy, focusing on the concept of the household and its relationship with other economic entities such as the market and the state, see Olivia Harris (1981). Harris criticizes the way that Sahlins ‘naturalizes’ the household in his term ‘natural economy’ whereby the household is the basic economic unit. This implies that households are located outside of the realm of the market and the state, whereas many ethnographic studies have shown that this is not the case. Also see Donham (1981) which locates Sahlins’ work in neoclassical economic theory.

³ The material in this chapter largely comes from my fieldwork in a village called Novoselovo, located at the middle point between Khabarovsk and Vladivostok (see Map 3). I stayed in this village for spring season in 2003 with short follow-up visits in 2004. Later, I stayed for two months in 2009 and made short follow-up visits in 2013 and 2014 whenever I had a chance to visit the RFE.

⁴ Since the early the 1990s, outward migration from Primorskii Krai has left many houses available to be purchased by in-migrants such as Koreans, particularly in rural areas.

⁵ This contrasts with Pilkington’s study (1998) in which many Russians in southern Russia migrated from Central Asia and constructed their own houses.

⁶ *Uchastok* (pl. *uchastka*) is a more formal word meaning ‘allotment’.

⁷ This description applies to Ussuriisk as well as to Novoselovo, as urban Koreans also engage in greenhouse cultivation. In Novoselovo, it is usually people who do not have a greenhouse that go to South Korea as labor migrants, but their number is few.

⁸ This woman told me that greenhouse cultivation began after they migrated to this region. Literature on Koreans’ migration cultivation during Soviet times states that plastic vinyl was already being utilized in the 1970s (G. Li 2000).

⁹ In a village not far from Novoselovo, around 21 households had worked together in a brigade for migration cultivation in past and had migrated together to the village. These households are also related by kinship and marriage. They call their village ‘*sadoni* (meaning ‘affinity’ in Korean) village’.

¹⁰ For specific migration processes, see Chapter 2.

11 Sovkhoz were state-run collective farms during Soviet times and Novoselovo used to be centered around a sovkhoz. Even though it has been privatized, Koreans continue to call the local authority which administers land-use a sovkhoz.

12 The background reason for the negation of identification of the ‘peasant’ with cultivation can be found in the peculiar Soviet ideology of ‘work’, discussed by Humphrey (Humphrey 2002b).

13 RaiKom is the abbreviation of *Raionnye Komunal'nyie Uslogi*, meaning District Communal Service, but during Soviet times, it stood for *Raionnyi Komitet KPSS (Kommunisticheskaia Partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, meaning District Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party)*. However, I have not been able to check the connection between these two terms.

14 Land privatization in Russia began with a presidential decree at the end of 1991. Local implementation followed from the end of 1993 according to constitutional law with regional variances (Barnes 1998; and for a brief description of the situation in the RFE see Duncan and Ruetschle 2001) For local responses to agricultural land privatization in Russia, see Perrotta (1998), Hivon(1998) and Humphrey (1998).

15 In fact, the land privatization law categorized land and people in a complicated way. I do not intend to explore this topic further here, but suffice it to say that in general Koreans did not obtain any land during the land reforms and it was not a subject of great interest for them. This cannot be viewed as solely due to their migration, as older residents of the village also showed little interest in land ownership at the time of privatization. This was the situation that I observed in the early 2000s, although there may have been changes since then.

16 This is illuminating in terms of historical change. During the building of socialism in this region in the 1930s, land allocation for Korean peasants was the most crucial question and was considered to be one of the reasons for their forced displacement (see Chapter 1). Two or three generations later, even though they still cultivate, the meaning of the land has changed significantly. Related to this, Hivon's (1998) study shows that there is no concept of ‘private ownership’ for land shares in collective farms among villagers in the southern part of Russia.

17 In April, 2004, Martha Ivanovna bought a tractor from a young man in the neighbouring village who was about to leave for Chechnya to join the army during the war there.

18 Lorries and cars are mostly second-hand imports from Japan. The price of a 10-year-old 2.5 ton pick-up lorry was around 2,000 US dollars in 2003. Cars are more expensive. For example, a 10-year-old Toyota Corolla cost between 3,500 and 4,000 US dollars. The price changes depending on how much customs the Krai government imposes when they are imported. According to a man who was trading in second-hand cars from Japan, they buy a car that is around 10 years old at less than 500 US dollars and the tax is twice or even three times more than the price they paid in Japan.

19 The village is located near the Khanka Lake (see Map 3.) and its climate makes it suitable to cultivate watermelons, which require a certain minimum number of sunny days in summer. Marta Ivanovna told me that her husband has done army service near the village, so he knew that it was suitable to cultivate watermelons. Also, the famous traveller Przhevalskii commented on the watermelon and melon cultivation near the Khanka Lake during his travels in 1865-7 (1947, 68).

20 When Korean villagers gather for social occasions such as for birthday parties, they talk endlessly about their cultivation work. The talk usually leads to a discussion of some important economic issues such as the prices and purchasing routes for the materials and seeds, and who is doing well or poorly in cultivation, etc.

21 Chinese farmers come to the RFE in spring and rent fields to cultivate watermelons and these are considered to be invaders to the market of watermelons for Russian Koreans, because they keep the price of watermelons lower down and Russian Korean cultivators try to take advantage of anti-Chinese sentiments in this context. In fact, however, some of these migrant cultivators are ethnic Koreans in northeast China, but this ethnic aspect of the Chinese migrant farmers is never mentioned by Russian Koreans when they talk about competition with Chinese products in market. Watermelons produced locally were sold between 5 and 7 roubles per kilogram in Ussuriisk in 2003 and the seller put a big note saying, ‘Watermelons from Spassk (the name of the raion that the village belongs to)’, while the Chinese ones were sold for approximately half the price. Compared to ‘food nationalism’ in Moscow where ‘our’ and ‘not-our’ food is the main criteria in nationalistic consumption (Caldwell 2002), the ‘local’ and the ‘Chinese’ is the central criterion in the RFE in categorizing food between good/healthy and bad/unhealthy, at least for agricultural products.

22 Some Russian villagers also began to engage in greenhouse cultivation, as shown in the case of Baba Masha's son.

23 Baba Masha complained about these kinds of people. According to her, some alcoholics steal dogs in the village. During my stay there, my interlocutor who ‘drinks vodka too much’ came inside Baba Masha's house, despite the dog's fierce barking, to take me to his cousin's birthday party. At that moment, Baba Masha returned home and told me off for ‘bringing a stranger to her house’. The fierce disposition of the dogs in particular period of the early 2000s reflected the social atmosphere in the RFE then, as when I returned to the village in 2010, the dogs were less fierce and some were even set free, going around the village which did not

happen in fear of dog-thieves at my first visit.

24 Koreans are notorious for eating dogs in Russia as it was occasionally reported in the nation-wide newspaper during the Soviet time. An interesting essay on this custom was written by a Russian woman married to a Korean man. She confesses how she came to love this food with the addition of hot spaces (Akisheva 2002).

25 There are not usually any walls separating the land between houses. At best, a ditch for the disposal of dirty water marks the boundary.

26 My hostess, Baba Marsha, showed me her skill in economizing by using the minimum amount of water possible. She used to go to the public bath every week, paying 10 roubles for the entry fee, but this public bath was shut when I returned to the village in 2010.

27 See also Chapter 2 in this book.

28 In 2004, day labourers working from 9am to 6pm were paid 60 roubles (about 2 USD) for greenhouse work and 80 roubles (about 3.5 USD) for work in the fields. In addition, they were provided with lunch, a packet of cigarettes, and transportation to and from their house (usually by a Korean with a car or a lorry). However, wages and the cost of living have dramatically increased since then, owing to Russia's burgeoning economy based on the sale of its natural resources. When I revisited the village in 2010, daily wages had risen to 200-300 roubles. As a result, many Korean households had given up the cultivation of watermelons, due to the large investment required.

29 Some children neglected by their parents also worked at the Koreans' household at lower rate of 50 roubles and this rose the accusation of 'slavery labour' by the villagers against the Koreans.

30 According to one interlocutor, each Korean household employs an average of six day labourers in Novoselovo. Given the number of households of Koreans in the village (57), Korean cultivators could not find day labourers in the same village, but have to find more workers in the neighbouring village. In 2010, when I return to the village, the shortage of labourers became more salient. Some households recruited labourers from distant cities and some other households to stop cultivation of watermelons, living on the sale of seedlings in spring season and trading vegetables on the roadside of the main road.

31 Lemon (1996) also describes a similar case of incommensurability between Moscow Roma actors and the Russian crew who were shooting a film together.

32 I follow Strathern's notion of 'gendered capacity', which is 'the capabilities of people's bodies and minds, what they contain within themselves and their effects on others' (Strathern 1988, 182).

33 The elderly mother did not depend on her son's cultivation, but lived on a monthly pension, which had been set at the national minimum rate (for most people about 600 roubles (20 USD) in 2003 and a little more for others depending on their circumstances). While there are many alcoholics in the village who do not work at all, at least it can be said that Korean alcoholics work for their old mothers. During my fieldwork, I did not see any households where a single man lived alone, although there were several composed of single elderly women.

34 Rubie Watson (1986) discusses the relationship between the named and the nameless by gender in a Chinese lineage village. According to her research, the more names men acquire, the more they are socialized and individuated, whereas women remain 'nameless' during their entire lifetime, confined within the domestic household.

35 By 'female values', I refer to the values that resulted in wives' objecting to the expansion of cultivation. Gendered values and gendered persons are not always isomorphic; in other words, women can advocate 'male values' and the other way around.

36 The couple were not able to have a proper wedding party due to lack of money.

37 Munn (1986) discusses bodily speed in terms of 'expansive spatiotemporal control' in her study on Gawan Island in Melanesia. Halting or slow body movement is evaluated negatively, as it 'entails... a contradiction or negative transformation of the body to a level of spatiotemporal integration in which it does not form a dynamic interrelationship with the external, physical world.' In a similar way, my hostess, Baba Masha, referred to the period of unemployment of her son in the early 1990s by saying, 'He was sitting at home for six months.'

38 One reason for the negative image of cars owned by Koreans comes from the sexual intercourse that takes place in cars between Korean men and Russian women for the exchange of money. Concerning this practice, villagers blame Korean men for 'buying sex' and Koreans blame Russian women for being promiscuous. Such views, however, tend to be expressed in private rather than being voiced openly.

39 Casey (1996) provides fresh insight into our understanding of place by adopting Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. He says, 'place integrates with body as much as body with place... we need to recognize the crucial interaction between body, place and motion. ... Part of the power of place, its very dynamism, is found in its encouragement of motion ...' (Casey 1996, 22-23, emphasis removed). Though I find his discussion helpful as an alternative perspective for the understanding of the relationship between subject and place which was assumed to be separable in structuralism, I am not convinced by his suggestion of 'the intentionality of place'. Rather, I would suggest that we need to understand 'place' as an agency embodying human relationships. In

other words, it is the ‘inter-subjectivity’ between persons in places which moves the mind and body of the person, rather than the place itself. This also applies to vehicles of transportation. Casey continues: ‘an unmoving body may still move if it is transported by another moving body: the driver of a car, the rider on horseback’. I think rather than focusing on whether the body is moving or not, we need to consider how the unmoving bodies allow the moving body to act. As Munn explains, the body or vehicle can be understood as ‘a spatial field and spatial field as a bodily field’ (Munn 1996, 94), which means that the vehicle can be moved in so far as there is an agency embodied in the body held by the vehicle.

40 Tomlinson (2002: 64-7) also notes the presence of this platform in the Meskhetian Turk’s houses. In Marta Ivanovna’s house, instead of a wooden platform, her husband had transformed one room into a traditional Korean-style room with an under-floor heating system (called *guduri* in Korean) (see Dzharlygasinova 1977; Chun 2002). He installed a log-fire pit outside the house that in the evenings fed heat to the floor. This was the favourite room for the household members and Marta’s son slept there with his wife and two children. One of the most popular items brought back by people visiting South Korea was an electric blanket to use when sleeping or sitting on the floor.

41 Chun (2002) categorizes Korean food in Kazakhstan into three categories: everyday, ritual, and preserving for future use. In this paper, I focus on the first two of these categories.

42 Her suggestion was elaborated in the review of ethnographic material on Trobriand Island, where the act of nurturing and the nurtured were not directly related, but were mediated via another relation.

43 Usually, wives keep their own kitchen garden for providing food for household members, whereas the field is for cash crops.

44 For a discussion of food as a gift, see Sutton (Sutton 2001, 43–53). He contends that ‘the perishable food’ becomes ‘gift’ in creating a memory of the hospitality and the impression given by the host.

45 Traditional Korean seasonal rituals are not widely celebrated by Koreans in the RFE, though a large banquet is organized by the Korean ethnic organisation in Ussuriisk to celebrate the harvest and the lunar New Year. However, other anthropologists report that *hansik* (a day for looking after the graves of one’s ancestors, in April in the lunar calendar), *ch’usŏk* (Harvest Thanksgiving Day, 15 August in the lunar calendar), and the lunar New Year are widely celebrated in Central Asia (Jang 1998; Chun 2002). Despite the disappearance of traditional seasonal ceremonies, some of my Korean acquaintances show great interest in the lunar calendar. For example, a mother arranged a date for her son’s wedding ceremony according to the lunar calendar after consulting a Chinese Korean fortune teller.

46 Strathern (1988, 238) writes, ‘food should be treated to the same range of objectifying operations as indicated for wealth items and persona...But I signal that we cannot know from inspection alone if feeding and growing relationships are analogous or being contrasted with one another.’ She distinguishes ‘feeding’ and ‘growing’ in Melanesia by re-examining the conflated materials on these two acts provided by Malinowski on Trobriand Island (1988, 375 f.10).

47 Koreans usually invite more guests than is customary than at Russian weddings.

48 There are several testimonies of ‘legendary’ family ceremonies in terms of the amount and items of food served: ‘I went to a 60th birthday party in Tashkent ten years ago [1988] and I saw a room filled with clean dishes at the end of the party stacked five high. There were around 600 guests and food was prepared for about 1,200 people’ (G. Li 1998, 114) and ‘At one wedding, I saw 25 different kinds of salad laid out for the guests on the table as well as meat, soup, and noodles’ (G. N. Li 2003). In another example, at a Korean wedding in 1965 in Ushatobe, Kazakhstan, ‘*ttok* (traditional steamed Korean rice cake) 200 kg, vodka 250 bottles, 2 pigs, a half cow, 50 chickens, 10 turkeys, 500 eggs’ were prepared to serve the guests. 11 houses were rented to accommodate these guests, and a well was drilled to prepare the food, but the water still ran short owing to the enormous quantity required. In addition to the food, they hired a band so that everyone could dance and sing together (Chun 2002, 274).

49 The cost of wedding parties can be partially met with the money that guests give to the parents of the wedding couple. These gifts of money for family ceremonies (*bujo* in Korean) form a significant portion of household expenditure. Elderly women often say that their pension is spent on such gifts. In addition to the cost of the wedding, Larisa also bought a flat for newly wedded couple.

50 Besides these, birthdays are also celebrated by inviting close friends and relatives. For Russians, birthday parties are a core symbol of their sociality and involve a wider and more diffuse group of people (*kollektiv*) (Kharkhordin 1999, 335–336).

51 At the funeral ceremony, weeping is considered a female act. An elderly woman, who had been bereaved of her husband a year previously, told me that she had never regretted not having a daughter (she had two sons). It was only when her husband died that she felt her lack of a daughter, as there was no one to weep with her.

52 Commercial catering services run by Korean women are now available and are increasing in Ussuriisk and in other cities where the number of Koreans is sufficient to provide a customer base .

53 Of course, this is not a rigid rule, but is still dominant among Koreans in Primorskii Krai. Chun (2002, 278), however, reports an increasing bilateral tendency among Koreans in Kazakhstan.

54 This is in contrast with the large number of female migratory workers from Southeast Asia, where family ideology dictates that young unmarried women should contribute to the family economy (see Ong 1987).

55 Similarly, Hirschon(1989, 149) observes among Minor Asian refugees in Greece: 'A man's sexual drive was held to be physiologically imperative, uncontrollable, and diverted only with dire consequences...However, a woman's sexual drive as believed to be subject to her conscious control...These views make women responsible for maintaining the moral code: since women have the power to control their sexual urges, they are at fault when transgressions occur.' While I acknowledge her observation and interpretation, I am more interested in how the asymmetry between male and female sexuality is constructed through the control of older women.

56 The word, *bon*, originates from the Chinese character meaning 'root', but for Russian Koreans it is more like 'a rhizome' (Deleuz and Guattari 1987). *Bon* is a crucial social category among Russian Koreans in establishing social relationships on the first encounter, and it is not unusual for people to call themselves 'relatives' half-jokingly at their first meeting when they discover that they share the same *bon*. This is different from South Korea, where the same *bon* is rarely viewed as a basis for kinship. *Bon* refers to the geographical origin of a branch of a family name i.e., usually a place where one's proto-ancestors formed a lineage group. Each family name is divided into branches with different *bon*. According to the principle of *bon*, all the people in the world can be divided into the two groups of relatives and non-relatives, and these equate to 'people not to marry' and 'people to marry'.

57 However, Chun(2002) notes the popularity of inter-ethnic marriage amongst Koreans in Kazakhstan.

58 While other objects have mnemonic meanings such as scissors for dexterity, it is curious why rice carries a negative connotation.

Chapter 5 Recalling History: Koreiskii Dom, Transnational Connections and Diaspora Politics

Yuri Slezkine's seminal article (1994a) employed an analogy between a political system and a building in explicating the core logic of the Soviet Union's nationality policy. In a similar vein, Bruce Grant (1995) titled his book 'In the Soviet House of Culture', illustrating how the Soviet Union pursued its policy of enlightening 'backward' people groups by incorporating various nationalities into a single socialist 'house of culture'. In addition to academic research, the metaphor of the house to describe the Soviet Union (and Russia in more recent years) has been widely used in catchphrases by ordinary citizens as in '*Rossiiā-nash obchshii dom* (Russia - our common house)'. Given the strong symbolic meaning of 'house' in describing one's sense of communality and also the long tradition of 'Houses of Culture (*Dom Kul'tury*)' to encourage cultural life in Soviet villages and towns (including ethnic minority communities (cf. Donahoe and Habeck 2011)), it is not surprising that a two-storey building at 35 Kalinina Street, Ussuriisk was widely referred to as *Koreiskii Dom* ('Korean House', hereafter *Koreiskii Dom* without italicisation). The official owner of this building is an ethnic Korean organisation called 'The Fund of Koreans in Primorskii Krai' (*Vozrozhdenie, Fond Primorskikh Koreitsev Kraevoi*, hereafter 'the Fund').⁵⁰ As discussed in earlier chapters, the social world of Koreans in the RFE is centred on their individual households, with wider social interaction based on inter-household exchange via kinship and alliance networks. In this context, *Koreiskii Dom* is a newly created public space that provides Koreans with a social arena beyond their households.

The creation of such a public space for Koreans reflects political changes that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union. Whereas in Soviet times any discussion of the 1937 deportation of Koreans had been prohibited, *perestroika* and *glasnost'* brought new freedom to bring such topics into the public arena of debate, and this new political environment provided a legal basis for the 'rehabilitation (*reabilitatsiia*)' of Russian Koreans through being recognised as one of the 'repressed peoples (*narody repressirovannye*)'. This internal change in the political atmosphere coincided with the opening up of the Soviet

⁵⁰ In Korean, *Koryŏ Chaesaeng Gigŭm*.

Union to the rest of the world, including capitalist countries, thus providing Koreans with the opportunity to reconnect with what was presumed by many Russians to be their 'historical homeland (*istoricheskaiia rodina*)' of South Korea. This presumption disregarded the fact that the majority of Russian Koreans had originated from the northern part of the Korean peninsula and had no sense of affinity with South Korea due to the long period of separation during the Cold War, but the newly constructed 'historical homeland' gained potency amongst Russian Koreans through the proliferation of the word 'diaspora' (*diaspora* in Russian as well) in public discourse. Thus, the new public space for Koreans in the RFE was created at a time of dramatic change when new transnational connections were being forged with South Korea that disregarded and negated their experience of the Soviet past.

In this chapter, I explore how this new public group identity was enacted through nationwide legislation at the regional level, and how it was further articulated and implemented by means of social relationships. In particular, I focus on the activities of Korean ethnic political organisations in Ussuriisk in the post-Soviet space. Against the background of the Russian Federation providing an institutional and legal basis for the Korean revival and the provision of funding by South Korean NGOs, an increasing number of Koreans in the RFE began to participate in ethnic political activities. In this context, resources that were provided for use by the 'public (*obshchestvennyi*)' required individuals to imagine themselves as 'groups', a process which was accompanied by debates and conflicts amongst the participants in the local political arena.

Post-Soviet political space is characterised by uncertainty and the absence of the institutional security provided by the former state socialist system; in this new environment, the central notion to which people turn is 'help (*pomoshch*)'. This concept acts as a metaphor for the networking threads among Russian Koreans and their connections with local authorities and sometimes South Korean organisations. In defining the 'proper' way for an ethnic organisation to work, the management of 'help' and its concomitant resources becomes the locus of conflict and the justification of each party's claim. In this process, the categorisation of people presented in the early ethnic politics in the post-Soviet space – from 'repressed people' to 'diaspora' – has been re-evaluated and contested. The experience of receiving 'free help' from South Korean NGOs or Christian missionaries was new and unfamiliar for most Russian Koreans, due to their historical relationship with the state; in short, Koreans have very few expectations of the central authorities, a stance that was

reaffirmed by the lack of basic provision in provinces such as Primorskii Krai after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Martin (2001) states that the Soviet Union was 'an affirmative action empire' that assigned certain benefits to minority peoples in a practice aimed at consolidating and reinforcing the ethnicity of 'small peoples' in place of traditional forms of communities such as lineages. Koreans, along with other ethnic groups which were collectively deported because of their cross-border ethnic ties, were excluded from such affirmative action.⁵¹ Therefore, Koreans were not able to rely on any help from the state during the Soviet era; instead, they tried to prove their value to the state by working hard, as discussed in Chapter 3. Initially, they did this to erase the stigma of their label as an 'enemy nation', but later to excel in the socialist competition among nations, which was promoted by the Soviet Union to motivate increased productivity under the planned economy. The irony of Soviet affirmative action lies in the increasing dependence on the state of a small number of indigenous peoples (cf. Gray 2005). As I shall discuss later, this focus on indigenous peoples and neglect of diasporas in Soviet times forced the latter into the informal economic sphere, a move which somewhat ironically led some of them to adapt better to the rapid privatisation of state assets and property and the withdrawal of public support and state funding for various spheres of social life, especially in the provinces.

It is in this historical context that I examine how political changes in post-Soviet space were manifested through conflicts and contestation over the meaning of Korean collectivity and interpretation of their history in the public space among the actors involved in ethnic politics. Political and social change does not happen in a vacuum; it is articulated in social processes embedded in human relationships through the re-interpretation and enactment of certain ideas and concepts. In order to demonstrate this process, I analyse the political conflicts surrounding Koreiskii Dom that resulted in a change of leadership among Koreans in Ussuriisk.

Figure 15. Old Koreiskii Dom

⁵¹ Neglect by the state is embedded in the everyday life and perceptions of Koreans in the RFE. To illustrate this point, a young Korean man told me: 'When I was at school, if a child from a "small peoples [indigenous peoples]" group got beaten up, the KGB would come to school to investigate the matter. But when Korean children were beaten up, nobody cared.'

Koreiskii Dom as a stage for diasporic politics

During my fieldwork, when I stopped Koreans in the street to ask a question, they often told me to go to Koreiskii Dom. In one sense, this building has provided Koreans with a collective form as a representative entity.⁵² In the early 2000s, it housed two organisations: the Fund⁵³ and the 'National Cultural Autonomy of Koreans in Ussuriisk' (*Natsional'naia Kulturnaia Avtonomiia Koreitsev Ussuriiska*, hereafter the NKA). Although they were separate organisations, they cooperated in many activities with a wide overlap in their participants. In addition, parts of the building were rented by two South Korean NGOs, a restaurant serving South Korean cuisine, the office of the local branch of a broadcasting company (TVS), an agency for 'documentation services' (*uslogi oforomleniia dokumentykh*)⁵⁴ and an agricultural seed retailing company. At the back of the premises, there was a garage for car repairs. The Korean Culture Centre, with its computers and internet access, library, Korean language school and traditional Korean dance team, also had its premises in the building.

Changes in ownership of the building reflect post-socialist political and economic changes in the region. In Soviet times, it had been owned by the state bank (*gosbank*), but in the privatisation process of the early 1990s it was acquired by Roberto Son, a local Korean 'businessman',⁵⁵ who was known as one of the most powerful members of the 'mafia' in the city. On 1 December 1994, a South Korean company owner, Jang Chihyok, bought the building from Roberto Son for \$100,000 and donated it to the Fund.⁵⁶ As the official owner of the building, the Fund became responsible for its maintenance, thus creating the need for

⁵² A picture of this building features on a series of postcards of Ussuriisk printed by the city administration in the early 2000s, but it is not clear how it obtained its name. It is interesting that people do not refer to the ethnic organisations housed in the building by their names, but simply as 'Koreiskii Dom'. This may be related to Soviet cultural politics surrounding the 'House of Culture', the traditional communal centre in local municipalities. For a detailed study on changes in the 'House of Culture' after the collapse of the Soviet Union, see Donahoe and Habeck (2011).

⁵³ The Fund was founded in February 1993 under the provisions of the 1991 law 'On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples' and the NKA in 1996 under the law 'On National-Cultural Autonomy'.

⁵⁴ In Russia, the preparation of documents to apply for identity papers is a complicated task because of the large number of documents required. Hence, there are many agencies providing such services. The agency in Koreiskii Dom specialised in South Korean visa applications, temporary residence permits, permanent residence permits and Russian citizenship. The owner of the agency used to work for the Fund helping Korean migrants with their documents, but since the change of leadership in 2000, she had been running the agency as her own 'private' business, renting one office in the building. This change reflected the commercialisation of public services in Russia in the 2000s.

⁵⁵ In Russia, 'businessman' (*biznesmen*) had a negative meaning at the time of my fieldwork in the early 2000s, as businesses are often connected with mafia-type groups.

⁵⁶ His donation was made in memory of his father, who was a historian and lived in the RFE during the Japanese colonial period. Jang also contributed funds towards the establishment of the Institute of Korean Studies (*Institut koreevedeniia*) at the Far Eastern State University in Vladivostok.

additional finance to cover heating costs, taxes and the salaries of caretakers and cleaners.⁵⁷ Its acquisition by the Fund also opened up a complicated series of issues and debates about the role of ethnic organisations, the management of the building as a 'corporate' property and the evaluation of people as political leaders.

In this regard, it is helpful to gain some insights from Humphrey's research, which examines actual practices in 'the Soviet communal apartment' and how the built environment of the communal apartment affected relationships between the state and the residents, rather than in the metaphorical sense (Humphrey 2005, 43). Soviet communal hostels were initially built by the state with the aim of creating an environment in which Soviet socialist ideology could permeate into every nook and cranny of people's day-to-day lives. Humphrey (2005), however, suggests that the material structure of communal hostels failed to generate the socialist values envisioned by the state, due to the sociality produced by communal living and the shared usage of interior space by the residents; in this sense, the built environment can be thought of as a prism that deflects socialist ideology from its intended course. The image of Koreiskii Dom as a prism that refracts and deflects the wider political changes surrounding it seems to be applicable to my research. In the following sections, I will analyse social interactions in the space provided by Koreiskii Dom, paying particular attention to the conflicts and the apportionment of blame in the leadership changes in the Korean ethnic organisations and what these reveal about perceptions of the history and collective identity of Russian Koreans.

The establishment of the Fund enabled the voice of Koreans to be heard in the public sphere and also created a formal channel between Russian Koreans and South Koreans who were carrying out humanitarian activities. However, it also became the stage where material resources and conflicting views of the Korean community were contested. Initially, the Fund was founded as a charitable organisation (*blagotvoritel'naia organizatsiia*) in addition to its political aim of 'rehabilitating the Korean people'. Since the mid-1990s, many Koreans experienced hardship following their migration from Central Asia to the RFE, and along with the gift of Koreiskii Dom, South Korean NGOs donated food, medicine, clothes, blankets, heaters, agricultural equipment etc. for distribution via the Fund.⁵⁸ In this way, Koreiskii Dom

⁵⁷The NKA had an office in the building, but did not pay rent; instead they allowed the Fund to register some of the NKA's activities as the Fund's in the report to the Krai authorities. An NKA staff member commented to me, 'The Fund doesn't do anything. It just exists in name only.'

⁵⁸Christian missionary organisations from South Korea were also active in 'helping' Russian Koreans.

acted as a conduit for the flow of assistance stemming from the transnational connection, but the actual distribution process was also influenced by previous connections of kinship and friendship. For example, an elderly couple told me that they stopped attending the Noindan (a club for elderly Koreans), as they were excluded from receiving assistance in the distribution. The wife's comment was that 'they only give things to their own (*svoim*)', and she described how a quantity of wallpaper that had been donated to the Noindan had been given to the relatives and friends of the person in charge of the distribution. Similarly, when Peace Asia⁵⁹ distributed a couple of hundred sacks of rice in the village where I conducted part of my fieldwork, people who received them discovered that the rice was rotten and inedible. One of my acquaintances there, who ended up feeding the rice to her dogs, suspected that the contents of the sacks had been changed in transit. Thus, it was a common experience for people to hear about 'help' from South Korean donors but fail to receive any actual benefit; somehow, the 'help' would disappear in the course of its delivery. Basically, this feeling of aggravation about unfair distribution arose because the financial support from South Korean NGOs was not enough to alleviate the economic difficulties of people in need. Indeed, many interlocutors commented that such help could not substantially improve their lives in the RFE. Instead, the conflicts and divided interests created by the transnational connection with South Korea, although often avoided as a subject of discussion at the personal level, led to a leadership change in Korean diasporic politics that was linked with regional change brought about by the Putin government.

Leadership change and its implications

In December 2000, a vote of no confidence was passed against Tel'mir Kim, the inaugural president, at the annual conference of the Fund. Usually, this conference was little more than an opportunity to report to delegates on the work of the Fund during the past year and to outline plans for the coming year. In many ways, it resembled the public ritual of Soviet times, as discussed by Yurchak (2003), in which meetings consisted of pre-arranged decisions and planned contributions from delegates rather than being decision-making forums. Tel'mir Kim

⁵⁹ Peace Asia is a South Korea NGO aimed at helping refugee Koreans to settle in the RFE and promoting peace and mutual understanding among different nationalities there. This organisation also engages with Chinese Koreans and Japanese Koreans.

gave an interview in the *Wondong* newspaper before the conference that gave no indication of knowledge about the planned impeachment, a fact which he later confirmed in an interview with me. As this happened before I began my fieldwork, my sources of information about the event were lingering accusations about Tel'mir Kim and the special issue of the *Wondong* newspaper that was produced after the conference. According to these sources, the main charges against Tel'mir Kim can be summarised in terms of the way he managed the Fund and the finances donated from South Korea. In short, the common charge was that he wasted the donations, which could have been used more effectively to improve the lives of Koreans migrants.

The accusations specifically focused on a project which Tel'mir Kim initiated in 1998. In order to understand the context of these accusations, I would like to briefly overview the changes that took place in the political activity of the Fund before the conference in question, focusing on the settlement project for migrant Koreans from Central Asia. The Fund's activity during the presidency of Tel'mir Kim can be divided into two phases (*Wondong*, September–November 1999, No 9-10(49-50)). During the first period (1993-1997), the activities of the Fund focused on activities aimed at 'cultural revival', such as the founding of the *Wondong* newspaper, teaching the Korean language, establishing the historical-ethnological archive and forming the Korean dance team. Such activities closely resembled the way that Houses of Culture had operated in the Soviet period, and Koreiskii Dom provided the local residents of Ussuriisk with a public space for cultural activities and leisure facilities that had been lost in the 'post-Soviet chaos' (Nazpary 2002). During this period, no political issues arose concerning the building or the activities of the Fund.

The second period (1998-2000) was significantly influenced by two factors: the Fund was granted 'transfer of the deserted army settlements free of charge'⁶⁰ with the help of Nazdratenko, the governor of Primorskii Krai and a former colleague of Tel'mir Kim from the fishing industry.⁶¹ At the same time, the Fund signed a contract with the Association of House Building Companies from South Korea for their investment in the building and refurbishment of housing and agricultural developments. This agreement appeared to offer mutual benefits for the project organisers and the Korean migrants with the former

⁶⁰ These were the settlements abandoned by army officers and their families when they moved to western Russia in the early 1990s. See Bugai (2002, 216–217) for official letters granting the use of these former army settlements in response to Tel'mir Kim's request.

⁶¹ According to Tel'mir Kim, this personal connection enabled him to talk with Nazdratenko openly (*okrytno*) and he was told 'to get hold of any land before the Japanese do.'

acquiring a labour force and the latter gaining an improvement in housing conditions. In 1998, the Fund established six camps for Korean migrants and allowed them to work in the fields, renting land from former state farms (*sovkhoses*). However, a conflict of interests soon arose between the two parties. According to Tel'mir Kim, the South Korean Association of House Building Companies viewed the project primarily as an investment, whereas the main aim of the Fund was to secure historical justice for the migrants. The first year's harvest was so bad that the residents in the camps had difficulty in feeding themselves and in August 1999, the South Korean company withdrew financial support and nullified the contract. This resulted in grave financial problems for the Fund and severe hardship for the camp residents, with the electricity supply to the camps disconnected on some occasions because the Fund could not pay the bill. Tel'mir Kim desperately sought other financial sponsors, but was unsuccessful. This failure led to criticism of the settlement project and of Tel'mir Kim's leadership abilities, as can be seen in the passage below, which heaps praise upon Evgenii Sergeivich Kang, his successor as president of the Fund.

He [Tel'mir Kim] was not able to produce good results; he didn't use the charity investment as assigned (*po naznacheniiu*), but for his own *personal use* (*na lichnye nuzdy*). The Fund ceased to function [after a fire at the Koreiskii Dom]. ... The decision to invite Evgenii Sergeivich, an able organizer and successful businessman, to head the Fund was accepted ... In this role, he stands to receive no personal benefit, and he has even had to spend a significant amount of his own money (*sobstvennykh sredstv*). It is necessary to emphasise this fact for our readers, as amongst Koreans in Primor'e there are many who talk about Koreiskii Dom's supposedly huge income. The former director of the Fund received plentiful charity donations but used them very foolish and ineptly. People who had never worked in agriculture were apportioned part of the finance to grow vegetables This and other foolish mistakes brought the Fund close to bankruptcy. Hundreds of Primorskii Koreans from Central Asia were disappointed, leading them to sometimes criticise the leadership. ... Evgenii Sergeivich came to the realisation that the complete ruin of the Fund would discredit the image of our compatriots (*sootchestvenniki*) in the eyes of other residents of Primor'e, the local authorities and the Krai administration. Without a doubt, the actions of Evgenii Sergeivich have gained respect ... and he has managed to rehabilitate the Fund (Chen 2003, 65, my emphasis).

The reasons given for Tel'mir Kim's dismissal and the praise heaped upon his successor provide some indication of the kinds of qualities that the Korean community were seeking at this time from their leadership, along with how donated resources should be administered and delivered; the mode of leadership they are suggesting also alludes to the collective identity they are aiming to uphold. In understanding this 'critical moment' of conflict (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999), I believe it is important to consider the Korean concept of personhood, as exemplified in the charge of 'personal use'. In the accusation that Tel'mir Kim used resources 'for his own personal use,' 'personal' does not necessarily mean that he used them for his own interest. The word for 'private' in Russian is *chastnyi*, but it does not appear here; rather, the sense seems to be closer to 'individual' as opposed to 'the collective.'⁶² In essence, I argue that this accusation aims to downgrade Tel'mir Kim's nationalistic aspiration to the level of the personal and individual rather than that of the national community.

In discussing situations of conflict, Boltanski and Thévenot (1999) observe that we need to focus on the 'critical capacity' of actors. When people familiar with each other think that something is going wrong, they distance themselves from the situation and consider past actions and their own involvement. It is usually at this moment that a dispute develops, in which 'criticisms, blames, and grievances are exchanged' (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999, 360). However, this dispute or 'transitory' phase cannot become a permanent state, but must somehow be brought to an end, usually 'as an agreement or compromise'. This dispute process is not only 'a matter of language' but also involves 'human persons' and 'a large number of objects,' 'bringing together different items or different facts' in order to justify an agreement 'with reference to a principle of equivalence which clarifies what they have in common' (ibid.). This analysis is helpful when applied to conflicts surrounding *Koreiskii Dom*, as parties justified their claims based on tangible objects such as 'rice sacks,' 'rolls of wallpaper' and most importantly '*Koreiskii Dom*'; Tel'mir Kim is also criticised for using the settlement project to forward his own 'personal (*lichnyi*)' mission of directly confronting Slavic nationalistic discourse in the public sphere. In other words, Tel'mir Kim's opponents downgraded his mission of seeking historical justice and improving the position of Russian Koreans in the RFE to 'personal (*lichnyi*)' in an attempt to deflect growing public discontent about the surging number of Korean migrants and their increasing influence in the private economic sector by making a scapegoat of him through impeachment.

⁶² For a discussion of 'individual' and 'collective' based on a Foucauldian approach, see Kharkhordin (1999).

Different visions for a Russian Korean collective identity

The establishment of settlements for Korean refugees from Central Asia based on Tel'mir Kim's vision of creating concentrated areas of residence for Koreans in the RFE such as had existed before the 1937 deportation appears to be an ideal Western form of 'diasporic discourse', similar to the Zionist yearning for the recovery of a lost homeland. When I visited Tel'mir Kim in the summer of 2004, I was surprised to discover the extent of his personal archive that he kept in his summer flat in Khasan Raion, an area bordering North Korea that had a Korean population approaching 90% before 1937. The archive contained a large number of documents, including all the records of the Fund, newspaper cuttings and journal articles about Koreans and the nationality question, as well as other documents from state archives. Based on these materials, he often wrote articles for the *Wondong* newspaper concerning the 'Korean question' (see Chapter 1) and conducted research in the same way as academics studying diasporas within the framework of 'the context of diasporas' (Axel 2004).⁶³ He based his claim for the legitimacy of a 'homeland' in the RFE on these historical materials and attributed the present migration and suffering of Koreans to injustices caused by misguided Soviet socialist policy concerning Korean nationality. Looking ahead, he based his hopes for the fulfilment of his diasporic vision on links with South Korea.

Tel'mir Kim's vision is based on his unique 'personal' life history, which had the potential to be promoted as 'collective history' in the early 1990s when the rehabilitation movement was at its peak. He was born in 1933 in Khasan Raion, which today borders North Korea. His father, Afanasii A. Kim, was Secretary of the Communist Party of the district then known as Pos'etskii Raion during 1935-6 and was widely known as the 'Korean Lenin'. He was an ardent socialist, an anti-Japanese partisan, a journalist and a Communist Party cadre, who met Lenin in person while working as an interpreter for Korean socialist delegates in 1926 (cf. Afanasii Kim 1979). Despite this (or because of this), he was purged along with 2,500 other Koreans in local administrative posts and was executed during Stalin's Great Terror in 1938. At this time, Tel'mir Kim was a child and had been deported with his mother and grandmothers to Central Asia the previous year. His mother was unaware of her husband's fate and, despite many letters and petitions to various authorities throughout her remaining years, she died in

⁶³ He was invited to give lectures at the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnology of Far Eastern Peoples in Vladivostok but declined.

1986 without knowing the details of his death. Tel'mir Kim's upbringing in Central Asia was dominated by the shadow of his father and his political activities so, after completing his secondary education, he decided on a career at sea to try and discover a new freedom for his life. However, he was unable to escape the influence of his father's past. Due to a stamp on his passport stating that he was the son of 'an enemy of the nation', he was prohibited from leaving the ship when it anchored at foreign harbours and, to his chagrin, was unable to accompany the other crew members on their trips ashore.

In the 1960s, he moved to the RFE while his mother remained in Central Asia and he eventually retired as the captain of a fishing fleet. His entire life at sea had been spent among Russians and he had married a Russian woman, yet he never forgot his identity as a Korean. For this reason, he became an active member of the ethnic revival movement following perestroika and, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, travelled to Moscow nearly every month to take part in rallies in Red Square demanding justice for Koreans. This meant working long hours and sleeping in his office on a camp bed for two weeks every month in order to spend the remaining two weeks in Moscow. Following the enactment of the law on 'rehabilitation', he read the relevant articles and specific laws related to setting up charitable groups and embarked on organising the Fund along with other Koreans. It is clear to see how the legacy of his father and his own personal experience of displacement lay at the heart of his political activity for a Korean national collectivity based on historical consciousness.

For many of his critics, however, the important thing was 'business' rather than 'historical justice'. Evgenii Kang, who succeeded him as president of the Fund, acquired his wealth from scratch 'selling tomatoes in a bazaar'. Compared with Tel'mir Kim, his life history was neither unique nor remarkable; in fact, it so closely resembles the stories of other successful Korean businessmen that the same information could be used in their biographies with only a few changes to minor details. The important point is that Evgenii Kang knew how to create and increase his wealth, rather than wasting it on an 'absurd ideal' or 'personal vision'. Another supporter of the movement to dismiss Tel'mir Kim was Olga Pak, the chairperson of the Korean dance team. The principal motive for her action was that Tel'mir Kim had refused to grant funds for the dance team's travel expenses to perform in Moscow. She criticised him on this point at a conference, and this was later generalised as an example of Tel'mir Kim's 'personal' use of the Fund, with 'personal' encompassing his political activities for Koreans. From Tel'mir Kim's point of view, this incident occurred when the Fund

was in financial crisis, and it would have seemed absurd to reimburse travel expenses for a dance performance when both the Fund and the residents of the settlement camps were struggling for survival.

Disagreement regarding the correct usage of funds from South Korea can be seen as resulting from different views of Korean history and Korean identity. In general, Koreans tend to view themselves as self-confident, able and independent people, rather than as victims. The free provision of support for poor migrants and settlement residents could be viewed as 'spoiling' them (Chen 2003); instead, they should be 'taught how to fish, rather than given a fish', according to a Korean proverb which is often cited by Russian Koreans.⁶⁴ Those ascribing to this view that free resources spoil people by making them irresponsible believe that the link with South Korea should primarily be used to enable business people to expand their enterprises, which will in turn lead to an improvement in their compatriots' (*sootchestvenniki*) lives by generating more employment and income.

Facing charges of using the Fund for his own 'personal' purposes, Tel'mir Kim attributed the failure of the settlement project to the 'individualisation' (*individualizatsiia*) of Korean migrants resulting from their experience of deportation. In the course of several interviews that I conducted with him, he expounded his position, not only in the matter of ethnic politics but also in regard to Russian nationalism and Korean attitudes. The following interview took place in Ussuriisk in April 2004 after his successor as president of the Fund died suddenly of a heart attack.

HP: Did you know that Evgenii Kang had passed away?

Tel'mir Kim(TK): Yes, I know. It is fate.

HP: Are you still interested in the Fund?

TK: No, not any more. My biggest mistake was in failing to get people to understand what I was doing. That is why I still manage the *Wondong* newspaper. ...⁶⁵ I was very disappointed by the individualism of the people who sought their own survival through making use of their own connections. Koreans don't know how to demand their rights collectively; instead they have learned how to lie and play games (*khitriiat*) to get by, as their experience of deportation has left

⁶⁴ This view represents the 'patriarchal' mode of thinking, as discussed by Ferguson (2015)(2014).

⁶⁵ He also expressed regret at not having paid his interpreters well enough to retain their services, as they often left for better-paid jobs with private companies and missionary organisations. This led to frequent changes of staff and mutual misunderstandings between him and the South Korean sponsors as a result of the language barrier.

them with a fear of the state. Once they have been struck on the right cheek, they offer the left cheek as well. I hoped that Koreans would settle in the settlement camps and live together in close proximity as they did before the deportation, but they dispersed, searching for a way to live by relying on their own connections. Koreans have become individualised because of the deportation and subsequent scattering. They avoid each other. For example, even when a Korean is elected to the Duma, he cannot work for the benefit of Koreans, as he has been elected by the voters, the majority of whom are Russian. When I was working for the Fund, the [South Korean] consul in Vladivostok wanted to install satellite dishes to allow Koreans to watch South Korean television. To save money, they wanted to find buildings that housed several Korean households, but they couldn't find any.

HP: I agree with you. I also find it very difficult to find places where Koreans are living together for my fieldwork.

Li: When I was living in Kremovo [one of settlement camps],⁶⁶ I came across a Korean; I was so glad and approached him, but he avoided me. Koreans fear socialising with other Koreans. They just get together with their relatives. A Korean manager (*nachal'nik*) is afraid to select Koreans for promotion or for working together. ... Koreans don't think about living together, but just talk about which is better, to live with Russians, Uzbeks or Kazakhs. Russians don't have any problem with one Korean house in a village, but they begin to hate Koreans if many Korean households appear there.⁶⁷

Tel'mir Kim was not the only one who recognised Russian nationalism and the Korean fear of it. In April 2004, I accompanied Natasha Kim, who was working as a reporter for the Korean newspaper *Koryo Sinmun*, to meet Vladimir Yugai, a businessman who had created an 'Association of Koreans' in Spassk in 2003. At the interview, Natasha suggested that the Association of Koreans in Spassk might like to stage an event (*meropriiatie*), such as a street parade, to commemorate the 140th anniversary of the Korean migration to Russia. Vladimir Yugai replied: 'Koreans can hold such events in Ussuriisk, as many Koreans live there and the Korean organisations are very active, but it's different here. Spassk used to be an army town

⁶⁶ Tel'mir Kim dreamed of creating communities of Koreans who would live and work alongside each other. He wished to be part of such a community himself; hence his decision to live in one of the camps and work in the fields with the other residents. His ideals were based on the communities that had existed in Khasan Raion when his late father was the secretary of the local administration. Noting that his activities were based on communist ideals, I asked him whether he was still a communist; he replied, 'I am a Korean nationalist and a communist; these are two sides of the same face.'

⁶⁷ Conversation reproduced from field notes, 27 April 2004.

(*voennyi gorod*). Ukrainians might be able to hold such events, but we can't. Here, there are ethnic tensions. I am not afraid (*ne boius*), but I want to be careful (*ostorozhno*).

In fact, increased antagonism toward Koreans had also been evident in Ussuriisk. This came to a head in 2000 when the Association of House Building Companies began to construct an estate of around 30 red-brick houses using Korean migrant labour from Central Asia in a small town near Ussuriisk after breaking their contract with the Fund (see Figure 16). The houses, known as 'Friendship Village', could be seen from far away in the flat landscape and were all the more conspicuous for their 'cottage' (*kottedzhi*) style, which was a symbol of the Russian nouveau riche. These houses had neither plumbing nor central heating due to financial problems and disagreements among the South Korean participants in the project,⁶⁸ but they still provoked widespread anti-Korean sentiment among local residents, who believed that special privileges had been extended to the Koreans for their construction. Such sentiments can be seen in the following letter to the local authorities and President Putin, which was written and signed by 'Primorians' and published in the local newspaper:

... Talks are currently taking place with Korean migrants (*pereselentsy*) from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. We could have understood if they had settled and mixed together with us on a common basis (*obshikh osnovaniakh*) in accordance with the actual legislation ... The fundamental reason for their migration [from the Korean Peninsula] was hunger.... they were emigrants and foreigners (*inostrantsy*) and came to Russia by virtue of the goodwill of the Russian authorities (*po dobroj vole russkikh vlastei*). And their subsequent long residence in our territory of Krai is thanks to the goodwill of our nation – nothing more (*kak dobraia volia nashego naroda, ne bolee*). It was the evil orders of Stalin that forced Koreans to change their residence against their will, but we note that, although they had been living in the territory of Primorskii Krai, they did not leave behind any cultural or religious buildings or well-engineered structures. It is possible to conclude from this that they did not intend to live in Primor'e permanently (*postoianno*).... Primorskii Krai borders North Korea and is not far from South Korea. Would it not have been a more reasonable decision for Korean migrants to return to their original homeland (*iskonnuiu rodinu*)? ... If Koreans do not want to live on a common basis with us but desire instead to live as their own separate ethnic group, we need to

68 In addition to the split between the Association and the Fund, there was also conflict between the building companies in the Association, which was an ongoing legal case in South Korea at the time of my fieldwork in 2003.

help them return to their original homeland. And their homeland is next door ...

A. Anokhin and 70 signatories (3 August 2000, *Kommunar*)

The common charge against the ethnic revival movement concerns a threat to the 'integrity (*tselostnost*)' of the Russian Federation.⁶⁹ In Primorskii Krai, this threat was embodied by the settlement project and the construction of collective residences for Koreans, which were perceived by some Slavic nationalists as a move that could potentially lead to the separation (*otrozeniye*) of Primorskii Krai from Russia. The accusatory letter also used the term, 'proto-state', presumably in reference to the settlement project. Such anti-Korean sentiment was a significant factor in the change of leadership in the Fund, as criticism was levelled at Tel'mir Kim for supposedly stoking antagonism with his settlement projects and his confrontational attitude towards Krai officials, publicly accusing them of 'discrimination towards Korean migrants' (Chen 2003). The concept of 'fear' (*strakh*) is a prevailing trope amongst Korean intellectuals and, as Tel'mir Kim noted, is linked to the 1937 deportation. It is interesting to note, however, that Tel'mir Kim did not display any fear in his dealings with the authorities, despite his personal history having been so strongly affected by 'state terror'.

I suggest that the criticism of Tel'mir Kim's perception of history underlines its nationalised logic homologous to the anti-Korean Slavic nationalist narrative. In other words, from the perspective of the critics of Tel'mir Kim, his historical consciousness establishes the direct link between the suffering of the Korean refugees in present and political trauma in past in unilineal timeline. According to him, the death of his father by Stalinist purge prevails his whole life and his unique family history was the basis for him to interpret the collective history of Koreans in the former Soviet Union. However, what mattered in this context was not that the opponents refuted his historical view itself, because there was not any criticism against him in the 1990s. It means that 'rehabilitation' politics in the early period represented by Tel'mir Kim was supported by colleagues in ethnic organisations in so far as it was in accordance with Russian 'ethnopolitics'[sic] discussed by Oushakine (2010), a popular discourse which also draws on Russians' trauma in past in the 1990s. To paraphrase, any political claim which would position Russian Koreans in a path different from that of the ethnic Russians is *internally* refuted by the Koreans themselves. The people who impeached Tel'mir Kim saw that Tel'mir Kim's way of dealing with the anti-Korean sentiment draws a boundary for moral community of the Koreans against the hegemonic discourse in the early

⁶⁹ See Zorin (2003) for a more detailed discussion.

2000s. In other words, the opponents of Tel'mir Kim criticised his intact morality which would position the Koreans as victimised people despite changes in political atmosphere. On the contrary, they wanted to blur such moral boundary in national terms not only in order to maintain *Koreiskii Dom* but also in order to prevent anti-Korean sentiments from exacerbating.

This rivalry over the meaning of Russian Korean collectivity within Russian identity politics at the turn of twenty-first century echoes the situation described by Liisa Malkki in the context of Hutu identity. In an ethnographic study of Hutu refugees who had fled from Burundi to Tanzania, Liisa Malkki (1995) compares two groups of 'camp' refugees and 'town' refugees and their different notions of collective history and nationhood. These two localised notions of history and the nation seem to correspond to the two divergent visions asserted by Tel'mir Kim and his critics. She found that the camp was 'a fertile ground for producing historicity and categorical nation-ness' whereas the township had 'instead given form to 'cosmopolitanism' (Malkki 1995, 233). She explains this difference by describing how the 'camp' refugees sought to fit into 'the overarching national order of things'⁷⁰ and maintain their sense of nationhood despite the absence of territoriality and their own state apparatus. This sense of national community was strengthened by recounting stories of the genocide by the Tutsi-dominated Burundi government in their homeland, thus creating a clear moral boundary between 'them' and 'us' (Malkki 1995, 253-254). She further argues that the way the camp was administered reinforced the category of 'Hutu refugees'; in other words, it was not only the historical events of the past but also the contemporary local conditions (i.e. the camp situation) and the national order of things at a transnational level that led these displaced people to turn to historical consciousness and nation-making. In contrast, the 'town' refugees sought 'another order of liminality' in an attempt 'to elude national categorization' in order to be able to live side by side with Tanzanians in a mixed environment in the town; they denied any moral or essentialist sense of the Hutu nation, and instead employed their existential condition as Hutus in a strategic manner for specific purposes. In examining these two types of refugees' residency (camp and town), Malkki (1995) emphasises that national consciousness does not have a single origin in an

⁷⁰ This term has been suggested by Malkki (1992, 137) instead of 'nationalism' which is a political ideology. By using this term, she intends to 'describe a class of phenomena that is deeply cultural and yet global in its significance'.

essentialist sense, but is contingent, as it appears in certain moments of local, supra-local and transnational changes.

In a similar way to the Hutu refugees' responses to their displaced condition, the ethnographic study of Koreans in Ussuriisk also appears to reveal two different constructs of Russian Korean history. While Malkki (1995) sees the contemporary local context (camp vs. town) as the major factor influencing the refugees' sense of identity and their history (nationalistic vs. cosmopolitan), the ethnographic case I have discussed so far in this chapter shows how different views emerged from the political and historical shifts that occurred in Russia in the early 2000s. As Malkki (1995, 17) argues, it is important to represent 'an ethnography of the contingent sociohistorical processes of making and unmaking categorical identities and moral communities'. Therefore, we need to examine more carefully how the change of leadership in Korean diasporic politics was influenced by these changes in Russia in the early 2000s and the implication of such transformations.

The most significant factor which affected the Korean political scene lay in the change in the relationship between the federal government and the provinces. After Putin became president, the relationship between Moscow and the periphery quickly returned to a vertical one, with the scrapping of some autonomous political movements in the provinces which had grown in the post-socialist space of democratisation and liberalisation (N. Petrov 2011, 82–86). In the 1990s, the rehabilitation movement by Koreans had been supported by both the federal and the provincial government; specifically, it had been made possible due to the personal connection between Tel'mir Kim and the governor of Primorskii Kai. However, this personal alliance and the provincial power regime were fragile and subject to change imposed by the central government. As Putin once again took up the reins of control over the provinces, this was accompanied by changes in policy relating to the political and cultural activities of ethnic minorities on the peripheries of the Russian Federation.

In the case of Primorskii Krai, Moscow succeeded after a couple of failed attempts in replacing the provincial administration with one that would not oppose the central government (see Alexseev 2002). As part of this process, Nazdratenko's resignation from the post of the governor appeared to be directly linked with the impeachment of Tel'mir Kim. At the same time, the rehabilitation-focused nationality policies of the early 1990s that had raised the possibility of 'territorial rehabilitation' and encouraged some regional and ethnic leaders to pursue territorial autonomy, even to the extent of 'sovereign status', became

increasingly to be regarded as a 'serious threat to the integrity and sovereignty' of the Russian Federation (Zorin 2003, 127). The central authorities responded to this crisis by shifting to a cultural autonomy-focused nationality policy, which resulted in the passing of the Federal Law on National-Cultural Autonomy and the setting up of branches of 'national cultural autonomies' (*natsional'no-kul'turnaia avtonomia*) in many cities for various nationalities. The NKA of Koreans in Ussuriisk was formed swiftly after this law was passed in 1996. According to a council member, 'a decree came from Moscow to organise a NKA and the city administration ordered us to form such an organisation for Koreans.'⁷¹ One of Ussuriisk's wealthiest businessmen became the first NKA president, and, after his murder in the late 1990s, was succeeded by his younger brother (Chen 2003). However, the Korean NKA in Ussuriisk remained no more than a nominal organisation under the umbrella of the Fund until the early 2000s.

Figure 16. Friendship Village

Figure 17. Korean Cultural Centre in Ussuriisk (New Koreiskii Dom)

After 2001, changes took place in the relationship between the Fund and the NKA, and in the type of activities carried out by these organisations. In contrast with the situation in the late 1990s, the NKA began to play a leading role in ethnic politics, while the Fund became an inactive nominal organisation. Whereas the Fund had focused on the distribution of donated resources and settlement projects during Tel'mir Kim's presidency, the NKA placed more emphasis on obtaining recognition for Koreans, for example, by sending representatives to the All-Russian Association of NKAs for Koreans,⁷² celebrating national commemoration days such as Victory Day, and organising events to mark the first settlement of Koreans in Russia. Although they received some funding from local businessmen, it was Peace Asia, a South Korean NGO active in humanitarian aid work for Korean refugees in the RFE which chiefly financed these activities.⁷³ Peace Asia appealed to South Korean donors by

⁷¹ Interview with a member of the Korean NKA in Ussuriisk, 18 December 2003.

⁷² It is worth noting that the Fund is a local organisation (*kraievoi fond*) without any other branches, though it collaborated with Korean associations in other cities in Primorskii Krai. In contrast, NKA is part of an extensive national network, making it a more useful platform for businessmen to connect with influential people beyond the RFE.

⁷³ For further information about Peace Asia, see their website at <http://www.peaceasia.or.kr/>

presenting the tragic history of Russian Koreans and featuring pictures of their activities in their pamphlets and on their website.

In spring 2004, Evgenii Kang, the second president of the Fund, died suddenly and Roberto Son, the businessman who had originally acquired the building from the state, was elected as the next president at a meeting in summer 2004 which I attended. I listened to his acceptance speech in which he stated, 'I will make sure that Koreiskii Dom earns money for itself (*zarabotat' dlia sebja*). Under Roberto Son's presidency, the Fund increasingly came to resemble a privately run company rather than a public organisation, and when I visited Koreiskii Dom in 2010 the whole building had been refurbished and rented out to private firms. It was no longer being used as a centre for social activities, the NKA had moved out of the building and I was unable to make contact with any representatives of the Fund.⁷⁴ On my visit to Ussuriisk in 2013, I heard the rumour that Roberto Son had sold the former Koreiskii Dom for USD 2 million and was on the run for tax evasion.⁷⁵

In response to this commercialisation of the communal space, Peace Asia launched a campaign in 2004, in commemoration of the 140th anniversary of the first Korean migration to Russia, to raise funds for the construction of a new building for the NKA and the Koreans in Ussuriisk. The building was opened in 2009.⁷⁶ It is this building that is now widely referred to by Koreans in Ussuriisk as Koreiskii Dom rather than the original one associated with the Fund (see Figure 15 and 17). The new building is bigger and has many more facilities than the previous one; some space is rented out but it is chiefly used for language classes, dance and martial arts teams, the Korean newspaper, and also as a library and museum. Commercial rents for the privately rented rooms keep the public space within Koreiskii Dom financially sustainable and independent of the need for other funding from the Russian state or NGOs from South Korea.

This ethnographic study of the diasporic politics of Koreans in Ussuriisk with its focus on Koreiskii Dom enables us to appreciate how extra-domestic space for Koreans was formed and subsequently transformed in recent decades due to wider political and historical

⁷⁴ The privatisation of public space in Russia has also been reported in ethnographic studies of the 'Houses of Culture' that were established as community halls in many towns and villages during the Soviet period (see Donahoe and Habeck 2011).

⁷⁵ I have been unable to confirm the veracity of this rumour.

⁷⁶ The official name of the new building is the 'Korean Cultural Centre in Ussuriisk', and in the media it is also known as the 'Memorial Complex'. The final stage of construction was financed by the president of the NKA and the building is now owned by the NKA.

changes in the RFE. The public space for Koreans in Ussuriisk was originally created in the 1990s for the rehabilitation of their culture and the recovery of historical justice. After the leadership change, Koreiskii Dom as political public space became divided into commercial and social space represented by two buildings, the original Koreiskii Dom and a new Korean Cultural Centre. Despite these changes and the involvement of various political entities on regional, national and transnational levels, the hegemonic political and cultural logic underlying the public space for Koreans in Ussuriisk remained unchanged in the invisible but separate presence of Korean public space *within* the Russian order of things.⁷⁷ My examination of the conflicts surrounding Koreiskii Dom leads me to conclude that 'Korean space within the Russian order of things' is a better and more accurate description of their process of adaptation than Russification, a rather simplistic term which is frequently used to describe the assimilation of Koreans into Russian culture. In my view, the term Russification not only obscures the degree of autonomy that Russian Koreans instinctively try to preserve in the face of Slavic nationalism but also prevents us from understanding the flexible and multiple forms of identification adopted by Koreans in Ussuriisk and exemplified in their strategic approach to changes in social and political conditions.

Throughout the period of conflict over leadership, the priority for Koreans in Ussuriisk was preserving the social space provided by Koreiskii Dom that was threatened by commercial and political forces. In this way, rehabilitation politics, which led to Koreans being conspicuously visible in public discourse in the 1990s and early 2000s, has been relegated to the realm of social space in the newly constructed Korean Cultural Centre, which is now an important part of the urban landscape of Ussuriisk thanks to its architectural size and contemporary style (see Figure 17). Its visibility asserts that the Korean community in Ussuriisk is an important constituent and collective member of the city, yet the actual social activities that take place within its walls, such as the large hall being hired out for family ceremonies, the choir practice by Noindan (the club for elderly Koreans) and traditional Korean dance lessons, remain largely invisible to the outside world.

⁷⁷ By 'the Russian order of things', I mean certain unspoken and underlying assumptions that define what is acceptable or unacceptable in the construction of 'Russian-ness', following Foucault's work (1970). This Russian order of things usually only becomes apparent when it is violated, such as in the opposition that emerged to the construction of 'Friendship Village', a group of new houses for Russian Koreans near Ussuriisk, and the settlement project pursued by Tel'mir Kim. In addition, anti-Korean sentiment may also have been stoked by the growing number of successful Korean businesses in Ussuriisk, resulting in increasing complaints about the number of Korean-owned shops in the city and about Koreans 'standing around in market places' (behaviour which had been viewed as a violation of socialist morality in Soviet times).

In this regard, Melissa Caldwell (2015) provides us with an interesting observation about 'Korean' food in the Russian foodscape.⁷⁸ According to Caldwell, there is a certain ambivalence about the way that Korean cuisine is consumed in Russia: although there is a marked lack of proper Korean restaurants in the public space of Moscow, Korean cuisine is regularly consumed in 'ordinary', 'intimate', and 'domestic' space, and has become 'a part of Russian food habits' (Caldwell 2015, 135). She describes the process that has led to this somewhat peculiar situation as 'domestication' in which 'Korean foods are thus imbued with qualities of "normalcy" in Russia' (ibid., 137). One result of the domestication of Korean food items is their apparent invisibility, 'both because they are so ordinary and taken for granted and because they have been so seamlessly incorporated into the most intimate spaces of Russians' daily life' (ibid, citation omitted). One representative example is carrot salad which is often called 'Korean salad' (see Fig. 6). It is made with carrots in a spicy sauce of oil, chilli powder, salt, vinegar and garlic and is widely consumed in Russia and Central Asia. Both the salad and the spice mix for making it are readily available at most supermarkets and grocery shops throughout the country. As Caldwell (2015) notes, carrot salad is considered to be 'ours (*nash*)' by Russians, despite the recipe being well recognised as Korean. Caldwell (2015)'s thoughtful discussion of the domestication and invisibility of Korean food in the Russian foodscape led me to discern a common core cultural logic in the origin of carrot salad and in the representation of *Koreiskii Dom* that illustrates the centrality of domesticity in the representation of Russian Koreans, even in the public sphere. In the same way that carrot salad is basically 'home-cooked food' for family consumption that has become widely available to all and sundry as part of Russian cuisine, *Koreiskii Dom* can be viewed as an extension of domestic space beyond individual households. I argue that it is this value placed on domesticity which not only connects Russian Koreans with wider society but also ensures the sustainability of their own community.

While Caldwell (2015) focuses on Korean cuisine in Russia as an example of consumption of 'the East' in Russia, I would like to highlight how and why carrot salad became popular in terms of its origin, production and distribution. Firstly, it should be noted that it was

⁷⁸ Caldwell (2015) does not view the difference between South Korean and Russian Korean cuisine as significant for the purpose of her discussion. I believe it is important, however, as Russian Koreans frequently highlight the uniqueness of their cuisine in comparison with that of South Korea.

a creative and resourceful invention by Korean women in the Soviet Union.⁷⁹ As discussed in Chapter 3, the commercialisation of carrot salad and other Korean-style salads occurred from the 1960s onwards when migration agriculture (*gobonjil*) became popular among Soviet Koreans. Working far away from home, workers often lacked sufficient funds to return home to spend the winter months if cultivation had not been successful. It was the sale of carrot salads by their wives at the end of unsuccessful cultivation seasons that enabled them to return home. In this way, carrot salad and other Korean-style vegetable salads are frequently referred to as a 'last resort' at times of crisis and have come to symbolise the creative capacity and resourcefulness of Korean women, with the variety of salads on festive tables representing female wealth, as discussed in Chapter 4. This gendered response to crisis can also be seen in the accusations levelled at Tel'mir Kim cited earlier in this chapter: in response to the crisis surrounding *Koreiskii Dom*, the narrative turns to the ideal type of 'male person' embodied in the second president of the Fund, whose capability (*sposobnost'*) of 'rehabilitating *Koreiskii Dom*' has already been proved by his successful business career, which began from selling vegetables in the bazaar (Chen 2003, 65)(Chen 2003: 65).

Both the domestic Korean household and carrot salad represent the importance of 'being normal and ordinary', which is constituted through a combination of male and female performances. As I have discussed previously, the greenhouse for the cultivation of vegetables by Russian Koreans not only objectifies male capacity but is also a space which connects the individual household with the wider market. Thus, to reiterate my previous point, in order to interpret the crisis in diasporic politics, we need to understand *Koreiskii Dom* as a 'house society' in gendered terms that combines the economic autonomy of the household provided by male capacity and social events centred around the consumption of food in the domestic space enabled by female capacity. Yet, the notion of 'house society' proposed by Lévi-Strauss focuses on the lineal continuity of family and kinship through the house, by which a new member is born into the house and the family name and the physical building is passed from generation to generation. If we can say that maintaining the house as a building and a container of social relationships enables people to maintain their 'culture' (i.e. a particular style and mode of human dwelling), then I suggest that the basic logic in the Russian Korean culture manifests itself in the gendered capabilities demonstrated in dealing with any crisis in the

⁷⁹ The archetype of carrot salad is *mooli* (a type of radish) salad in Korea; as *mooli* was not available in the Soviet Union, carrots were used instead and oil was added to suit Russian tastes.

house. For Russian Koreans, maintaining a 'normal and ordinary' life is not something to be taken for granted, due to their recurring history of displacement across the generations, but the house and domestic space are central in their efforts to preserve 'normality' in the midst of external change.

Hannah Arendt (1973, 301–302) writes that the stateless minorities in Europe in the inter-war period 'belong to the human race in much the same way as animals belong to a specific animal species'. In other words, they became 'men of an animal species, called man' and were 'thrown back ... on their natural given-ness, on their mere differentiation' (ibid.). Those who survived labour camps and other forms of incarceration 'insisted on their nationality, the last sign of their former citizenship, as their only remaining and recognized tie with humanity', rather than being defined with 'their natural rights of being humans, as savages are also considered to have natural rights' (ibid., 300). However, Arendt (1973) rightly points out that this tenacious clinging to nationality by stateless minorities was only meaningful on the individual level, as they had already lost their place in a community defined as a territorial nation-state. In Chapter 1, we saw how the older generation often used words referring to animals when they talked about their experience of the 1937 deportation; they drew attention to the fact that they had to live in 'burrows (*ttang-gul* in Korean)', which they dug after being unloaded from the cow carriages in Central Asia in the late autumn. Emerging from these burrows and building temporary houses using reeds, mud and any other available material was the first step they took in the spring of 1938. The deportation deprived them not only of their community, which had functioned in the form of a traditional agricultural village, but also of any individual status and position; all that remained was their Korean identity, a token of 'enemy nation'. Because they were unable to fully reconstruct their community and gain a secure position with the political opinion in the Soviet Union, the cultural logic that connected scattered groups of Koreans centred on the house as the container of family and kinship relationships. This cultural logic centred on domesticity was replicated in the conflicts and debates surrounding *Koreiskii Dom* and the role of its leader and *Koreiskii Dom* with the opponents of Tel'mir Kim insisting upon the sovereignty of the house and rejecting the politicised language which focused on the question of state sovereignty. Such language and nationalistic sentiments raised the time-old question of the loyalty of Russian Koreans towards the Russian state and laid them open to accusations of violating 'the Russian order of things.'

As we have seen, the central value of Koreiskii Dom for Russian Koreans lay in its provision of indoor space for family ceremonies such as wedding parties and birthday celebrations; particularly in the case of the older generation, such ceremonies reached beyond the family to the wider Korean community. The old Koreiskii Dom lost its fundamental representative nature when 'people stopped going there' as a result of its owner organisation working too closely with the local authorities or South Korean companies, the building being neglected and the renting out of rooms leaving no space for communal activities.

I would like to end this chapter with my experience of a New Year party for elderly Koreans that was held in one of the large halls of the old Koreiskii Dom in 2004. It was an annual event organised by Noindan and made possible by the financial donations of wealthy Korean businessmen and the hard work of middle-aged women in preparing the food. It was an opportunity for the older generation to dress up and enjoy a fun night out with singing and dancing. I was busy videotaping the event and enjoying the jolly atmosphere when suddenly, without any instruction from the conductor, all of the elderly people began to spontaneously sing with one voice. It was a song called 'Mountains and Rivers of my Homeland' (*koguksanch'ön* in Korean) and the lyrics translated from Korean into English are as follows:

Being in a foreign land thousands of miles distant from my homeland,

Sending my regards from another country where the mountains and rivers are unfamiliar,

My sad heart longs for my homeland,

And all I can think of is my parents and brothers and sisters.

Despite the nostalgia of the lyrics, I was moved by the joyful and uplifting way in which they combined their voices together in song. It was in stark contrast to my own reflections on their history. Many of the attendees had experienced great hardship as a result of displacement and the war, and they had laboured all their lives in accordance with the ideals of Soviet socialism. The roughness of their hands and the knuckles of their fingers that looked like knots of wood bore witness to such a history. It was this contrast between the positive energy of their singing and their gnarled fingers that created a strong and lasting impression in my memory and

reminded me of the careful path they had trodden as an ethnic minority through the minefield of nationalisms (whether Slavic or Central Asian autochthonous) to preserve a small space of their own to hold such a feast.

Epilogue

One day in May 2004, I was travelling by car from Ussuriisk to an archive in Vladivostok, where I was carrying out my research on the history of Koreans in the RFE. I noticed that there were many more police cars by the roadside than usual and even helicopters patrolling the road from the air. Later on that evening, I found out from the television news that President Putin was visiting Vladivostok to see the annual training exercises for the Far Eastern navy fleet. In local newspapers, one popular topic of discussion was whether or not Putin would be dining on local salmon during his visit. To widespread disappointment, Putin had salmon flown in from Moscow (called *semga*) and did not touch the local Primorian salmon (called *losos*). The residents of Primorskii Krai were disappointed that the president did not avail himself of the opportunity to taste their local salmon, a product in which they take great pride. Perhaps they hoped that the superior quality of their local product compared to that of Moscow might remind Putin of the worth of the periphery and help to disprove the perceived marginality of their region. However, concern for the wellbeing and security of the president in the light of Primorskii Krai's status as a special military region that had been closed to outsiders during the Soviet period may have deprived Putin of the chance to sample this local delicacy due to fear of poisoning or contamination.

While in this episode salmon can be seen as symbolising the relationship between the centre and periphery, it also carries special meaning for many elderly Koreans and occupies an important place in their childhood memories. They remember the RFE as a place rich with fresh fish from both the rivers and the sea, in contrast with the inland steppe of Central Asia cut off from the ocean. Salmon need both river and sea for their lifecycle and thus they came to symbolise the Far East that these elderly Koreans had to leave. Just as salmon return to the river where they were born in order to die, some Koreans told me that they always hoped to return to the place of their birth and be buried in the Far East during their time of residence in Central Asia. Thus, salmon came to represent memories of the Far East for many Koreans who experienced displacement from their homeland.

However, such memories were often replaced by disappointment and disillusionment in the face of harsh reality when people eventually returned to the Far East. Like a fortress, the region had been closed to the outside world for several decades until the 1990s, so the social structure of everyday life had stagnated at the level of the late Soviet period; it suffered

further significant degradation and deterioration in the post-socialist period. Many of my interlocutors who had been born here or had heard about this place from their parents expressed their sense of disappointment: 'My parents told me that there were plentiful fresh fish from the sea in the Far East, but here there are only frozen fish and we can't afford even those'; and, 'My mother always talked about the Far East and how she missed it. She always said how beautiful it was, but it's not beautiful at all. It's cold and dirty and the streets are full of rubbish.' Many narratives of their migration to the RFE also referred to expectations of an improvement in their physical health, such as 'I moved to the Far East as my heart was not good in the steppe climate of Central Asia', and 'My son had continuous blisters on his ears there [in Central Asia], and we thought the change of climate might be helpful.'

The body was the centre of place-making (cf. Casey 1996), not only in terms of people's survival after the deportation in 1937 but also in locating themselves in the RFE after their migration from Central Asia. In this book I have shown how such bodily emplacement, in terms of their hard-work during Soviet times and their cultivation work in the changed economic conditions following the collapse of Soviet socialism after their migration, has affected Koreans. The body is central not only in their labour and everyday practices but also in their memory (Connerton 1989). The bodily experience which became the basis of their memory about places, however, was not always compatible with the official 'facts' relating to the past. This discrepancy between embodied memory and the bureaucracy of the verification process became apparent when returnees to the RFE attempted to access rehabilitation procedures.

During the ethnic revival movement of the 1990s, Koreans who returned to the RFE could apply for rehabilitation in accordance with the law 'On the rehabilitation of the repressed peoples'. Eligible applicants were those born before 1953 who could prove that they or their parents were born in the RFE. For many, however, the problem was how to prove their eligibility. Applicants had to submit an enquiry (*spravka*) about their date and place of birth with supporting documents; this enquiry was passed on to the Krai archive and if the staff were unable to find the information corresponding to the applicant's claim, then the application was rejected. Very few applicants possessed documents certifying the birthplace of their parents; such births were only recognised as legal facts when 'backed by papers' but most Korean families had lost any such documents in the course of deportation and migration across the generations (cf. Yngvesson 2006). The following personal testimony by Galina Ugai

(born in 1930) in the Korean newspaper *Wondong* illustrates how the legal process often negated and disembodied people's memory of the past.

My husband's sister, Raisa Denisobna, who was born in 1925, is now living in Tashkent but she remembers clearly about where they used to live [in Primorskii Krai]. She explained to us that in the village there were three roads and that she could clearly picture her father's house and her own house. I also clearly remember my parents' house. It stood right by the road and next to a kitchen garden, which was full of trees. But now no traces remain of these houses. We made an application to the commissioner for rehabilitation in Ussuriisk. We went to the Krai authorities, to the Krai commissioner and the director of customs three times. They told us that we needed to make an application to the procurator (*prokuratura*) of Krai. We went there twice but with no success. After 60 years, no archive documents could be found anywhere. That is how it was explained to us. We were very disappointed. ("How to return to the place of your childhood", August 1994, *Wondong*, No7(7))

As Paul Connerton (2008, 55) argues, 'to say that something [a historical record] has been stored ... is tantamount to saying that ... we can afford to forget it.' In other words, the information available in the state archives negates the validity of memory based on bodily topology. Nevertheless, Koreans continue to perceive their bodies not only as the corporeal medium for memory but also as the centre of their social relationships, in which bodies are conceived, nourished and expended in a cycle of labour, daily transactions and familial rituals. In this book, I have shown that Koreans in the RFE are not merely objects of political and social change but that they deflect the changes that lie outside of their control and absorb them into their subjective world.

Although this book focuses on the Korean minority, many of their experiences are shared with other local residents who are in a similar disadvantaged position in the RFE. It is notable that Bliakher (2014, 54) also discusses 'invisible people (*nevidnye liudi*)' in 'an invisible region' from the viewpoint of Moscow, thus echoing my observations of Koreans in the RFE. Bliakher (2014) notes that an increase in 'shadow' economic activities centred on exchanges among relatives and friends, often across borders, was the main means of survival for such

people during the post-Soviet period. During these two decades, the everyday life of residents in the RFE was 'non-administered (*neupravlenaia*)', evoking James Scott's (2009) research on anarchism in the borderland of Southeast Asia (Bliakher 2014)

If anything remains of the socialist legacy in the post-socialist period, it is this morality and obligation towards relatives and friends and the social network that was created to fill the vacuum created by the lack of state welfare provision. It was not only the Koreans but the majority of the population of the RFE who had to resort to such social networks when the state ceased functioning and industries and institutions ran out of finance. In recent years, however, this strategy for survival has come increasingly under the control of the central government as Putin actively pursues policies to develop Eastern Siberia and the Far Eastern region.

When I was carrying out my fieldwork research for my doctoral degree in the early 2000s, I did not fully realise the implications for the RFE of Putin's election as president of the Russian Federation, as the influence of his government in the region had not yet become clearly visible. By the end of 2007, however, I began to read local newspaper articles on the Internet about legislation prohibiting foreign citizens from engaging in selling, which particularly affected the Chinese market in Ussuriisk. This legislation was accompanied by police raids on the Chinese market and the deportation of many Chinese citizens whose documents were not in order. When I visited the market in 2009, I discovered that a significant number of Chinese Koreans had been affected by this law, returning to northeast China with 'black stamps' on their passports that prohibited them from re-entering Russia for at least the next five years. Moscow's policies also targeted other parts of the local border economy in the region, as illustrated by the proposed law 'On the Safety of Road Mobility' concerning the import of second-hand Japanese cars to Primorskii Krai, which was due to be implemented soon after the restrictions on Chinese traders had been imposed. The ostensible reason for banning the import of these right-hand-drive Japanese cars was to improve road safety, but many people in Primorskii Krai believed that the government's true intention was to curb transnationalism in this border area and purge the RFE of some of the East Asian influences that had become an important part of the everyday lives of its residents. In the end, this law was not introduced due to widespread objections and large-scale public demonstrations.

The revived interest in the Far East by Moscow since the late 2000s showed itself not only in a crackdown on East Asian traders but also in constructive policies and a series of large-scale state investments in the region. One example was the 2012 APEC summit in Vladivostok;

this had been planned in 2007 and was the most expensive summit in APEC history, costing the central government an enormous amount of money. In addition to the APEC summit, a series of development programmes for the people and regions of Eastern Siberia and the Far East resulted in the establishment of the Ministry of Development of the Far East in 2012. The recent Ukrainian crisis, the European financial crisis and the West's economic sanctions on Russia have also contributed towards a more proactive 'turn to the East (*povorot na vostok*)', not only in search of new markets for Russia's natural resources but also in strategically positioning Russia as a great power on the Asia-Pacific frontier.

This recent 'turn to the East' can be seen as replicating Tsarist Russia's colonisation of the Far East in the late nineteenth century when it turned the direction of its imperial expansion eastwards after losing the Crimean War in 1856. This 'colonisation (*kolonizatsiia*)' was only replaced by 'development (*razvitie*)' in the twenty-first century. Of course, these two 'turns to the East' are not identical, yet they share some similarities despite the one and a half century gap between them. They both exhibit a state-centred and Western-driven approach to the region, despite the emphasis on 'East' in their slogans; ever since imperial Russia acquired this region, the Far East has attracted the interest of the state as a consequence of a crisis in the western part of Russia, rather than stemming from a desire to understand and develop the region for its own sake. Also, both turns have focused on the 'peopling' (Breyfogle, Schrader, and Sunderland 2007) of this peripheral borderland by granting state benefits such as free land allocation and tax relief for settlers and investors in the region. Thus, both attempts to 'colonise' and 'develop' the Far East share the common threads of the subjugation of the region to the centre and a desire to increase the population. Despite the coherency of this approach, it involves a chicken-and-egg dilemma: the state wishes to colonise/develop the region to establish its claim over it but lacks the necessary population to achieve this, and the region lacks population because it is undeveloped. This dilemma has been exacerbated by the fact that interventionist policies in the region have often failed to produce the intended improvements in living conditions and, in many cases, have had the opposite effect.

Both the withdrawal of Moscow's engagement from this peripheral region in the 1990s and the rekindling of interest and development of state projects in the 2010s resulted in radical changes in people's lives. Such sudden changes in state policy, including re-engagement, often have a negative impact on local people as their way of life cannot respond to change as swiftly as policy demands. The discourse of failure resulting from the gap

between the state's lofty ambitions and the reality of life on the ground has tended to make a scapegoat of Russian Far Eastern culture, viewing it as something which impedes development and modernisation. Ssorin-Chaikov (2016, 692) describes how such discourse around the failure of state projects, which contrasts the benevolent intent of the central government with the indolence and backwardness of the periphery, 'works as a device of naming otherness' and becomes a part of the sociocultural reality of the periphery. In Putin's 'turn to the East', the 'otherness' of the East in this border region appears in two forms: the locally embedded border economy of the Far East which developed during the post-socialist period is viewed as something that should be dismantled and replaced by a somewhat fetishised form of an 'Eastern' economy represented by the high-tech industries and advanced economic development of East Asian countries; and the idea that this region of East Asia has never been truly part of the Russian Empire or of the Soviet Union despite its geographic proximity.

Against this background of Russia's intransigent view of East Asian people and their culture, this book has tried to show how Russian Koreans, who originated from a neighbouring East Asian country, transformed themselves first into 'Soviet people' and later into 'Russian-speaking people (*russkoiazychannyi narod*)' following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Displaying great resilience and perseverance, those Koreans who migrated from Central Asia to Primorskii Krai two decades ago are now settled and have become 'Primorians', believing that the future for their children lies in the RFE. We might say that they are now well and truly located on the internal side of the Russian border with East Asia.

Appendix 1

Year/number of population by nationality	Koreans	Russians	Ukrainians	Tatars	Chinese	Whole population
1897	21448	55220	31962	547	20130	144492
1914	61694	307751	N/a	287	32580	408070
1923	101938	203627	163067	N/a	37680	525770
1926	145511	209740	148768	N/a	43513	572031
1931	159100	330000	222300	N/a	32100	836900
1939	0	676866	168761	11016	0	906805
1959	3748	787944	85827	13968	N/a	1379100
1970	8003	1472322	162767	18254	N/a	1721285
1979	8125	1721606	163116	19459	N/a	1976600
1989	8454	1960554	185091	20211	200	2256072
1999*	30000	1018766	N/a	N/a	25000	2167300
2002	17899	1861808	94058	14549	3840	2071210
2010**	18824	1675992	49953	10640	2857	1956497

Table 2. The change of Korean population in comparison with other nationalities between 1897 and 2010 in Primorskii Krai, Russia

(Source: Vachshuk et al 2002: 220, I converted the original graph to a table form and data for 2002 came from 'all-Russia population census in 2002 (*Vserossiiskaia perepis' naseleniia 2002 goda*)', available at <http://collectivization.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=87>, last accessed on 28th January 2016)

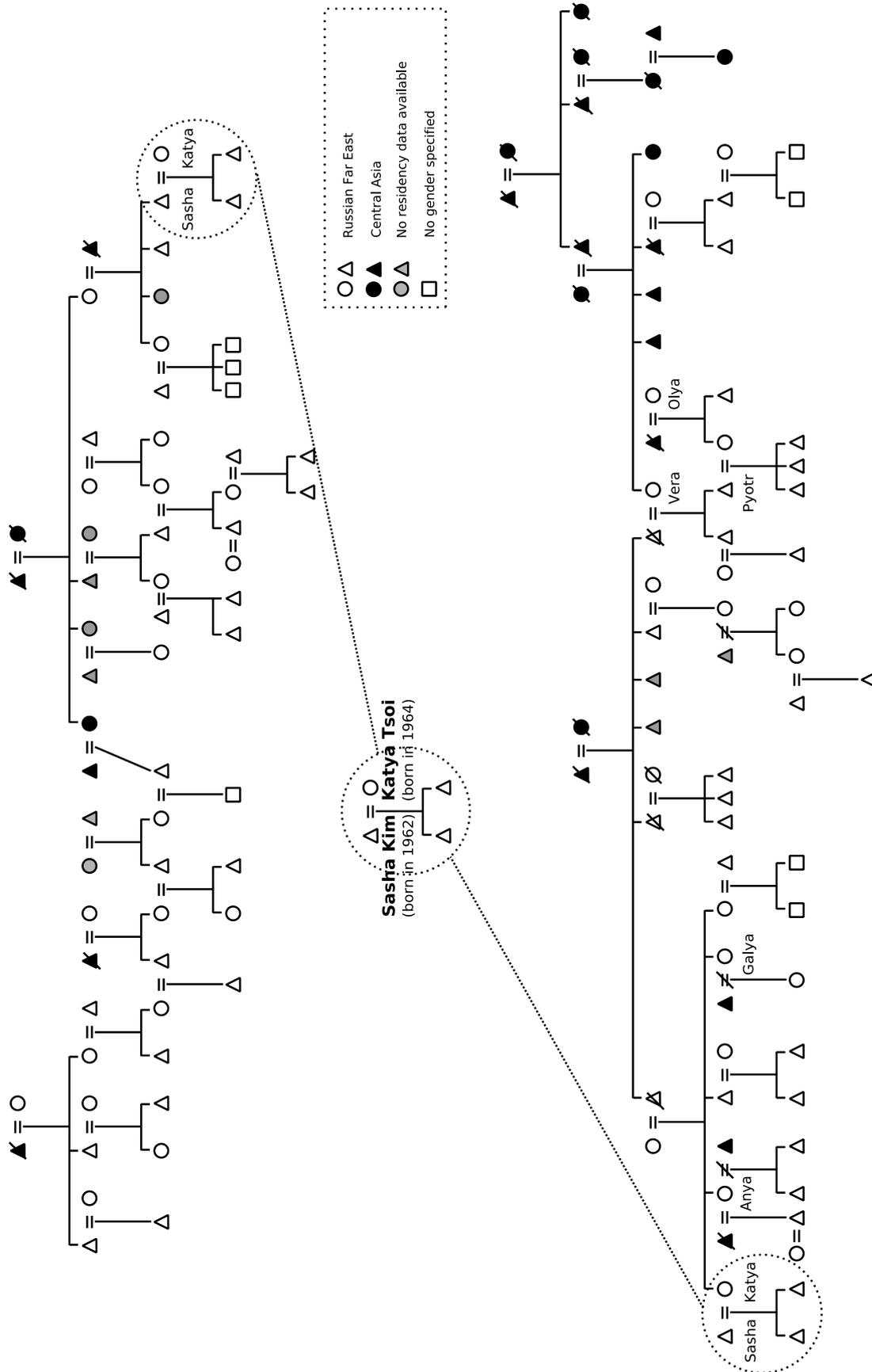
* Data for this year was not based on official census, but made by the regional government

using various sources. Therefore, there is a remarkable discrepancy between the whole population and the sum of populations of specified nationalities. The number of Koreans and Chinese is unreliable, especially in comparison with the number in official census in 2002.

**One of the most remarkable changes in demography of Primorskii from 2010 census can be attributed to the steep increase of migrants from Central Asia. The number of Uzbeks increased from 1,634 in 2002 to 8993 in 2010, the number of Kirgiz increased from 453 to 1,412, and the number of Tadzhiks increased from 743 to 1885. More information available at https://primorsky.ru/upload/iblock/0c0/1621_1_.doc. Accessed 4 August 2016.

Appendix 2

Figure 18. Diagram of relatedness in Novoselovo



Appendix 2 Diagram of relatedness in Novoselovo

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