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The Korean Diaspora

Korea is one of the most important countries of the world which has the history of diaspora. It is not limited to the migration of the Korean nationals to the developed parts of the world in search of better life opportunities, however, dates back to the initial years of the nineteenth century when the Koreans were forced to leave their land. There were multiple reasons for their movement which includes imperial aggression, economic transformation, political confusion, war and colonization. The movement of the Koreans which started in the nineteenth century continued till the end of the twentieth century and the major countries in which they settled included Japan, China, Soviet Union and the United States of America. There is no doubt in the fact that the experiences of the Korean diaspora are varied as well as deeply intertwined with the historical and political development of Korea. The immigrant countries treated the Korean diaspora according to the political and strategic relations of the country with the Korean government. The comparison of the experiences of the Korean diasporic community in Japan, China and the United States of America will be discussed in this paper, along with highlighting the role of globalization on this influenced experience.

Korea has the oldest history with Japan. Till the eighteen century, before the era of modernization, Korea was a self-governed county, which was ruled by different dynasties. Japan emerged as a greater political force during the later years of the nineteenth century which attracted the Korean nationals to migrate to Japan and study the imperial culture, in addition to the well-established political structure of Japan and implement the same in Korea. The gunboat diplomacy of Japan also motivated a great number of Koreans who migrated to the country. The number of Korean migrants kept rising until the earthquake of September 1923. The Japanese people believed the rumours that the Koreans had poisoned the wells which were the main reason for the destruction of the earth and the killing of the Japanese. Hundreds and thousands of people had lost their lives in the earthquake and blinded by the rumours, the Japanese started the riots against the Korean migrants, killing more than half of them. The remaining community of Korean was treated quite poorly. The rise of the depression era and the world wars era gave rise to even more adverse conditions for the Koreans as the Japanese brought the poor peasant communities from Korea to work on their farms as indentured labor. When Japan attacked Korea and established the imperial rule over there, the Korean men were recruited in the military and the Korean women were forced to become the comfort women, who had the responsibility of providing the sexual services to the Japanese forces during the war. The situation continued until the independence of Korea and its division into north and South Korea. The pro-Japanese, who were mostly North Koreans migrated to Japan and lived there as one of the lowest class of the society, due to the history of Korea's relations with Japan (Armstrong, 105).

On the contrary, the Korean diaspora was provided with better opportunities for living in China. The Korean diaspora moved toward China during 1945, at the time of the Korean cold war. China was also in favor of the establishment of communism in the region but the South Korean leaders were strictly against it. Koreans from the northeast region migrated to China and were provided with the opportunity of becoming a part of the rich ethnic culture of the country. Although the Korean diaspora was a minority group, it was acted in the rich culture of China and was allowed to practice their culture and belief system. The welcoming attitude of the Chinese government and the general public motivated more and more Koreans to migrate to the region and within a short time period, China became the only region where the Korean diaspora was settled in a greater number, although it was only a minority in the region. The generations of Korean migrants developed in China and became a significant part of the Chinese community (Kim, 659).

The comparison of the experiences of the Korean diaspora in the United States of America highlights a significant contrast before and after the Korean War. In the first half of the twentieth century, the United States of America had banned the immigration of the Asian population, which was the main reason that Korean diaspora moved to the Soviet Union at that time. However, when the Soviet Union imposed the war on South Korea, through North Korea, the American forces supported South Korea and actively took part in the war. Due to the destruction of war, the United States opened the doors of immigration for the Korean diaspora who were provided with the opportunity of farming in Hawaii. The Korean families of the American soldiers, who had married in Korea, were also brought to the United States of America. One of the kindest humanitarian gestures was shared by the Caucasian community which adopted the Korean orphans of war and provided them with the better opportunities of life. Korean diaspora has now become a part of the American community. Globalization has impacted these communities greatly as the major reason for their movement was the war in the region, which was an attempt towards modernization (Armstrong, 125).

Korean diaspora is the community which moved out of Korea and settled in other countries of the world, in search of better opportunities of living. Korean diaspora had the worst experience in Japan, where the community was treated as low-class citizens, while the Chinese government accepted them as a significant minority in their ethnic structure and the United States of America accepted them in the humanitarian grounds and provided them with the opportunities of progress.

Works Cited

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