

Unresolved Ethnicity, History, Dehumanization and Violence: Focused on Ethics Revealed in *Kagenosumika* by Gengetsu

Youngho Lee & Jaemin Shin

Abstract: This article considers Gengetsu's *Kagenosumika* in view of violence and ethics. This novel illuminates the dehumanization and violence resulting from the ills of capitalism, while at the same time noting the historical and ethnic issues of Korean residents in Japan. This study, we have defined two axes of this work to develop the discussion. One axis concerns the ethnic and historical issues of Korean residents in Japan and individuals, whilst the other axis involves the ills of capitalism and the violence in the enclave. The perceived universal ethical issues and ethnic contradiction of Korean residents in Japan are the key-words penetrating the literary world of Gengetsu.

Keywords: Gengetsu; *Kagenosumika*; 1990s Zainichi literature; 2nd generation; Zainichi; Korean residents in Japan

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标题: 悬而未决的种族、历史、非人化和暴力：玄月《荫之栖》中的伦理启示

内容摘要: 本文从暴力与伦理的角度探讨玄月的《荫之栖》。该小说揭示了资本主义弊端所导致的非人化和暴力，以及日本朝鲜族居民所面对的历史和民族问题。本文将从两个轴心来展开讨论：一条轴线涉及在日朝鲜人和个人的民族和历史问题，另一条轴线涉及资本主义弊端和飞地暴力。日本朝鲜族居民所感知到的普遍伦理问题和民族矛盾是贯穿玄月文学世界的关键词。

关键词: 玄月；《荫之栖》；1990年代在日朝鲜人文学；第二代；在日朝鲜人；在日的韩国居民

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Introduction

Korean-Japanese literature has been characterized by generational distinctiveness, since the existing research trend underscored the generation theory centered on a series of authors considered to represent each generation of Korean-Japanese literature. Indeed, there is no denying the fact that the 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-generation Korean-Japanese authors' works substantiate the generational distinctiveness. Also, most of their works revolve around the motherland, ethnicity, contradictions Korean migrants go through in Japan and the criticism of Japanese society for coercing such contradictions. Similarly, research on Korean-Japanese literature has contributed to the body of knowledge, focused on the trend. That said, Korean-Japanese literature has established a broad literary world that is far from converging on the conventional trend in favor of the generation theory. Therefore, Korean-Japanese literature has outgrown the established epistemological frame as a literary whole that has been constructed by virtue of the creative activities and works of authors spanning multiple generations. Their creative literary activities far outstretch the definition in line with the conventional uniform trend including the generation theory, and exist as the substance sustaining Korean-Japanese literature in an extensive sphere. Based on the epistemological shift, the scope of research on Korean-Japanese literature has been broadened. More recently, research on Koreans in Japan has not been limited to Koreans residing in Japan but extended to Korean Diaspora and transnational Diaspora literature/culture transcending the national and ethnic boundaries. In particular, Kim Hwan-gi¹ noted the Korean and Nikkeijin Diaspora literature and cultural activities in Latin America. Kim started off with the historical uniqueness of Korean migrants in Japan, went on to the transnational and trans-ethnic solidarity of Asian Diaspora groups, and underlined the 'universal value and globality' of Diaspora literature. Kim's approach is considered an attempt to push the boundaries of Korean-Japanese literature and relevant research and an effort to seek the universal value of Diaspora based on the historical and ethnic uniqueness of literature and culture. In addition, some of research² approaches dealing with the Korean-Japanese literature from the perspective of the internationalization of Japanese language have been published in these days. In the same vein, this paper is focused on the universality of Diaspora literature and the

1 See Hwan-gi Kim, "Japanese/Korean Descents' Diaspora literature in Latin America and Hybridity," *Bord Crossings* 5 (2017): 11-14.

2 See Yamazaki Nagomi, "The Meaning of the 'Words' of Others: The Theoretical Underpinnings of Yuhi by Yangji Lee," *Bord Crossings* 16 (2023): 135-154.

expansion of the circumference of Korean-Japanese literature, so as to clarify the substance of Korean-Japanese literature and shed light on the diversity thereof.

As a second-generation Korean-Japanese author, Gengetsu of interest here emerged as a mainstream author with his 1999 novel *Kagenosumika* (『蔭の棲みか』) winning the 122nd Akutagawa Prize in 2000. Despite being a second-generation Korean Japanese born in Japan, Gengetsu debuted relatively late in 1999. Given Hoesung Lee, another 2nd-generation Korean-Japanese writer, debuted in the late 1960s, Gengetsu diverged from the established generation-based trend from the start. Therefore, Gengetsu was regarded as a “new-generation author” discussed in line with the third-generation authors. Indeed, his literary world tends to be both convergent upon and divergent from that of the third-generation authors, which perspective however is attributable to the generation-based approach to Gengetsu. In effect, it is contestable to categorize him as a specific new-generation author. Rather, he dwells on the historical and ethnic flows relative to the floating reality of Korean migrants in Japan, and simultaneously illuminates the reality and future of Korean migrants and minorities in Japan as well as the historical faults and indifference of Japanese society. Additionally, as the author himself states, the ‘universal’ ills of minorities and modern society are embodied in his literary world.

Representing his literary world, *Kagenosumika* manifests Gengetsu’s style. A range of events and incidents occur in a fictional ethnic enclave in Osaka, where the presence of a Korean-Japanese man named “Seobang” symbolizes the history of Korean migrants in Japan. The events and incidents occurring in the enclave are symbolically indicative of the reality and historical issues of Japanese society entangled with Korean migrants, as well as the ills of capitalist society. Thus, research on Gengetsu has largely been focused on his *Kagenosumika* and mostly published in Korea, where the scope of research on Korean-Japanese literature has been widened. In addition to the three articles published by Jang An-soon¹, Koo Jae-jin² and Park Jeong-yi³ investigated Gengetsu and *Kagenosumika* in Korea. Also, Lee Hee-won⁴ and Kim Hwan-gi⁵ elved into Gengetsu’s works

1 See An-soon Jang, “*Kagenosumika* by Gengetsu: The Minority of the Ethnic Community,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 32 (2011): 261-278.

2 See Jae-jin Koo, “Outside of the Nation and Korean Diaspora in Japan,” *Literary Criticism* 32 (2009): 260-276.

3 See Jeong-yi Park, “A study of Gengetsu’s ‘Kage no sumika,’” *JALALIDA* 46 (2010): 227-239.

4 See Hee-won Lee, “The Self-Identity Structure of the Nation-state and it’s Possibility of Crack—The Study of Hyonyeol’s ‘A Bad Rumor’ and ‘The House in Shadow,’” *Theses on Korean Literature* 60 (2012): 139-171.

5 See Hwan-gi Kim, “Existential Writing in HYUN WEOL Literature,” *The Korean Journal of Japanology* 61 (2004): 439-455.

including *Kagenosumika*. The foregoing studies attempted to extensively explore *Kagenosumika*, discussed diverse themes such as the ills of capitalism, spatial issues typified by the ethnic enclave and identity and intergenerational conflicts of minorities, and analyzed the characters including Seobang. Jang illuminates the source of Seobang's helplessness, the existence of Saeki and the causes of miscommunication between them. Especially, Jang's study should be noted in terms of its insightful clarification of the character called Saeki. Kim takes note of the "universality" of creative literary works that Gengetsu asserted in putting into perspective Gengetsu's literature and existence, which is a significant attempt to figure out the meaning penetrating Gengetsu's literary world. Moreover, *Kagenosumika* has been dealt with in some thematic studies on Korean-Japanese literature such as Yoon Jeong-hwa's¹ comparative analysis of *Kagenosumika* versus Yang Seok-il's work, Heo Byeong-sik's² study on Korean-Japanese literature focused on Ikaino, and Saseon Jang's³ two studies on violence and nationalism present in Korean-Japanese literature.

As discussed above, *Kagenosumika* has been well-documented, holistically and thematically, based on the diverse messages it conveys. The aforementioned studies propose a wide range of codes for reading the novel anticipatively, lending themselves to better understanding of Gengetsu's literary world in its entirety. Yet, this novel is concerned with dehumanization resulting from capital, which is viewed as the source of the ills of capitalism. Also, it uncovers the historical issues of Japanese society and minority Korean migrants therein and symbolically discloses the "ethical issues" associated with their indifference to and misunderstanding of history. "In the conceptual system of ethical literary criticism, 'ethics' mainly refers to ethical relationships and moral orders that maintain human relations in the world created by literary works" (Nie zhenzhao, "Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory" 190). Still, there is no denying the fact that previous studies underscored the "universality" based on Gengetsu's assertions instead of considering the foregoing issues from historical and ethnic perspectives. Hence, the historical context behind *Kagenosumika* and the resultant "ethical" issues

1 See Jung-hwa Yun, "Identity of Rumors of Korean in Japan and Its Narrative Respons—Focused on novels of Yang Sukil and Hyun Weol," *The Journal of Korean Fiction Research* 51 (2012): 71-94.

2 See Byung-shik Huh, "Ikaino as Invisible Place and Transnational on Cultural Geography of Korean Japaneses," *Journal of Dong-ak Language and Literature (dongak)* 67 (2016): 123-152.

3 See Sa-sun Chang, "Violence in Korean-Japanese novels," *The Journal of Korean Fiction Research* 45 (2010): 327-356; Sa-Sun Chang, "Nationalism in Korean Literature in Japan," *The Journal of Modern Korean Literature* 21 (2007): 407-433.

form the central axis, which however remains contestable. In that sense, this paper examines *Kagenosumika* in light of “ethics” with intent to elucidate the issues of dehumanization against the alienated in the development of capitalist society as well as the ethnic issues of Korean migrants in Japan, both of which have been overshadowed by what Gengetsu asserted, and revisit the Korean-Japanese society and Japan back in the 1990s.

Emergence of Korean-Japanese Author Gengetsu and *Kagenosumika*

Gengetsu (玄月) is a second-generation Korean-Japanese author born in Ikaino Ikuno Ward Osaka City in 1969 as the youngest of three sons and two daughters to his parents who were from Jeju. His original name is Bongho Hyeon. His pen name Gengetsu is the alias of lunar September and implies truth. At the age of 19 in 1984, Gengetsu got his first job at a loan shark business run by a Korean affiliated with the pro-Pyeongyang Federation of Korean Residents in Japan. Later on, he went from job to job including a truck driver, living a life far from literature. Also, he was engaged in the family business after graduating from high school. In 1992, Gengetsu abruptly felt the urge to write and dreamt of becoming a novelist. In 1994 he attended Osaka Literature School to learn and practice writing and formally started the creative writing by publishing the school’s book of children’s poetry *Hakua* (『白鴉』) in 1996. He debuted in 1998 when his *A Stage Actor’s Solitude* (『舞台役者の孤独』) included in the No. 2 issue of *Hakua* was selected as an excellent work by the critics of the December issue of the monthly *Bungakukai* (*Literary World*, 『文学界』). In October 1998, his *Boobs* (『おっぱい』) published in the No.406 issue of the *Jurin* (『樹林』) was short-listed in the 121st Akutagawa Prize but failed to win the prize. With his *Kagenosumika* published in the *Bungakukai* winning the 122nd Akutagawa Prize in November 1999, he started to build a solid reputation as a writer.

Kagenosumika is about affairs taking place in an ethnic enclave of minority migrants in Japan, with a 75-year-old man named Seobang (ソバン) being its protagonist. The enclave located on the east side of Osaka dates back to 70 years ago, when more than 200 barracks (temporary structures) were installed in a 2,500-Pyeong (approx. 8,264m²) wetland. Accommodating marginalized minority groups including Korean migrants, the enclave is segregated from the mainstream of Japanese society. In the past, some 800 Korean migrants used to live here, but now it has become a space of others such as Korean and Chinese migrants as well as other ethnic groups with different skin colors.

Seobang is a symbolic character of the ethnic enclave and a “living fossil.”

Seobang was conscripted into the Japanese army in the war during the Japanese occupation of Korea and lost his right hand and wrist after being shot by an American soldier while siphoning off military supplies on the battlefield. After Korea was liberated from Japan, Seobang lived with his family in the enclave. While working in a factory in the enclave, his wife was killed in an accident that severed her shoulders. His son Kouichi (光一) left him blaming him for having fought for Japan in the war. Six months after Kouichi joined anti-war activists while attending Tokyo University, he was lynched and found dead with his body covered with bruises. Seobang has been living in the enclave for 68 years, now aimlessly surviving on the compensation for his wife's death which includes housing, meals and 20K yen per month.

Seobang is a symbol of the ethnic enclave, whilst Nagayama (永山) is the ruler and king thereof. As an influential capitalist in the community, Nagayama enslaves people to his capital. Since his capital exerts substantial effects on the sustainability of the enclave, Nagayama wields absolute power. Securing power and vested interests by using the capital he has accumulated in the enclave, Nagayama offers bribe to the mainstream of Japanese society.

Socially alienated Seobang interacts with the world only through the community baseball team "Mad Kill" organized by the children or grandchildren of those who were from the enclave. Seobang watches every game of Mad Kill as a way of interacting with the world. Seobang's sole comfort in life is a Japanese female volunteer visitor in her 40s. Her name is Saeki (佐伯). Seobang keeps up day by day waiting for Saeki. One day, when Saeki visits him, Seobang goes watching a baseball game with her. On seeing Saeki in the baseball park, Nagayama casts an uncomfortable eye at her. Saeki averts her eyes from Nagayama's creepy gaze. On her way back from the rest-room, Saeki bumps into Sukja, who stoops to collect recyclable waste. Sukja flashes back to the horrifying past of the enclave.

As the head of a private fund in the community, Sukja was caught trying to abscond with 3 million yen from the fund and 8 million yen from another fund 27 years ago, abandoning her daughter. People in the enclave made her kneel down on icicles and beat her ruthlessly. When she fell unconscious, they drew water from the communal well and pour it on her head. Also, they lynched her by tying her up with a rope with her belly attached to 20-kg icicles. Sukja was punished in accordance with the rules of the enclave, where she has been living in a wretched plight.

For 27 years, the enclave has changed little by little with quite a few Korean migrants replaced by Chinese migrants. With the influx of Chinese migrants, the enclave witnesses unprecedented scenes. For instance, on rainy days, Chinese

migrants get naked to take a shower on the street. New people have made a difference to the face of the enclave. Yet, the mob violence committed against Sukja 27 years ago is repeated. One day when Saeki visits Seobang, 3 Chinese people were caught stealing money from an underground bank. To punish them, Chinese migrants plucked pieces of flesh from the buttocks and thighs of the three offenders with pliers. On being told about the mob violence, Nagayama tries to stop it by paying back the money for fear that the affair will be magnified. However, Chinese migrants in the enclave refuse his offer insisting that losing trust abroad can never be forgiven, and continue to give the offenders mob violence. They repeat the outrage committed on Sukja by Koreans 27 years ago. Irritated by the affair, Nagayama comes across Saeki and rapes her. Seobang belatedly finds Saeki after the incident. Saeki looks at him coldly and disappears. Because of Nagayama, Seobang cannot see Saeki again.

After a while, Japanese police visit the enclave. Somebody has reported the mob violence committed by Chinese migrants. Police forcefully push in to remove the enclave. At that moment, Seobang realizes his identity and resists, biting the thigh of a police officer to keep the enclave from being dismantled. The novel ends as Seobang is beaten up with truncheons.

Kagenosumika juxtaposes minorities with the mainstream of Japanese society via the ethnic enclave or the space of others. In the process, it unfolds how a man finds his identity against the backdrop of the violence and dehumanization attributable to capital.

***Kagenosumika* as Ethnic Issues of Korean Migrants in Japan**

In the conversation with the author inserted in the Korean edition of *Kagenosumika*, Gengetsu talks about his literary world in comparison to other 2nd-generation Korean-Japanese authors Hoesung Lee and Hakyoung Kim:

Is that so? Lee or Kim is unlikely to get away from politics or ideologies because of their ideas that are rooted in the concerns and conflicts related to establishing identities by asking themselves of what ethnicity is. By contrast, I am hardly self-conscious about those aspects. I am not particularly bound by such facets [...] I try to focus on portraying the universality of humans, not the traits of Korean Japanese people. (Gengetsu 227)¹

1 Gengetsu, *Kagenosumika*, Seoul: Munhakdongne Publishing Co. Ltd., 2000. All references are to this edition and will be cited hereafter. Translations are provided by the author unless otherwise noted.

As stated in the excerpt above, instead of clinging to the ethnicity and homeland, Gengetsu portrays the universality of humans in *Kagenosumika*. The dehumanization symbolized by the exploiting structure of capitalism and mob violence articulates the universal issues of modern society as stated by the author. Still, this work does not necessarily deviate from the ethnic issues of Korean migrants in Japan. Certainly, as mentioned in the introduction earlier, from the perspective of generation theory, *Kagenosumika* lacks in the ethnic sentiment in comparison to other 2nd-generation Korean Japanese authors such as Hoesung Lee and Hakyoung Kim. Indeed, the main character Seobang, unlike his parents' generation, perceives his origins vaguely at most, and other characters excluding him do not care much about their 'motherland' and "ethnicity" at the individual level. Yet, at the collective level of Korean migrants in Japan, 'ethnicity' carries different attributes on the grounds that the history of Korean migrants in Japan underlies Seobang's loss of identity, interactions with others including Saeki, generational conflicts and "helplessness" and Nagayama's distorted propensity for violence in *Kagenosumika*. That is, one axis penetrating this work is dehumanization and violence that take place in the ills of capitalist society and are symbolized by the curse and mob violence against Sukja, while the unresolved history of Korean migrants in Japan and resultant ethnic issues constitute the other axis. Thus, this section explicates the historical and ethnic issues of Korean migrants in Japan revealed in *Kagenosumika* and thereby identifies the meanings of the actions and relationships of characters.

As the setting of the novel, the ethnic enclave was first built by the first-generation Korean migrants, who reclaimed a wetland in Osaka and developed small communities. Initially, the enclave was a space of hope for the first-generation Korean migrants who had moved to Japan during the Japanese occupation of Korea. Over time, those who could "not afford to move out" remained in the enclave. Later on, the enclave changed into a "spooky house," where one should not return. The changing atmosphere of the enclave is implied by the fact that the communal well dug by the first-generation migrants including Seobang's father in the square for descendants dried out 20 years ago and by the bleak shady image the vacant enclave carries. To Nagayama the enclave is a place of exploiting the work force. In the flow of history, the enclave has lost its original meaning. Having been in the enclave for over 7 decades, Seobang is a living fossil symbolizing the place and being marginalized even in the perishing community. As a second-generation Korean Japanese born in the enclave, Seobang is a handicapped person having lost his right hand in the war. Seobang's handicap and his status of being a helpless old

man are conditioned to reinforce his “alienation.” In the novel, Seobang has lost his identity, living without knowing who he is, which causes his helplessness to persist. Seobang’s dependence on Nagayama’s support following his wife’s death and his handicap have deprived him of the willingness to work and live. In the opening of the novel, Seobang says, “By the way, I’ve forgotten one important thing here. Who the hell am I?” (Gengetsu 112) at a gathering of the community baseball team (Mad Kill) comprising the 3rd and 4th Korean-Japanese generations. This sounds like a witty response to Dakamoto’s joke but it is not because he has just referred to Mad Kill’s games as “gambling houses known to the entire neighborhood” and Dakamoto as a “hobo boss stuffed with 5 decades’ faecal water”. Therefore, Seobang is jokingly speaking for his inner voice through the remark.

Then, who is Seobang? He is the only character in the novel that continually questions who he is. In that sense, Seobang is not just another old alienated and handicapped Korean Japanese. He is a second-generation Korean Japanese born to Korean migrants and simultaneously a Japanese who has to forgo the Korean nationality. During the Japanese occupation of Korea, he was conscripted by the imperial Japanese army and lost his right hand. After the war, he was sent back to his original status of a Korean residing in Japan, and forgotten by the mainstream of Japanese society. The loss of his right hand in the war takes away from him the “labor” which is a requisite for survival in the post-war capitalist society. During the Japanese occupation of Korea and after the country’s liberation, Seobang’s own choice of life was suppressed. Consequently, he ekes out a precarious living, which is underlain by ethnic and historic issues that he cannot bear as an individual. As a result, deprived of “active and independent choices,” Seobang has come to a state of loss of self. Seobang’s helplessness, or the absence of his independent self, makes his being “un-honourable.” At the start of the novel, Seobang’s recollection of his life void of such opportunities as Nagayama’s results from the absence of his independent self and is also linked to his communication issues. In the novel, Seobang has difficulties communicating with others including not only other generations such as Goichi and Dakamoto but also his generation such as other seniors, Saeki and Nagayama. He fails to understand what others mean to say, pointlessly responds regardless of his own feelings or willingness, or abruptly stops talking, which exposes Seobang’s self-awareness.

Meanwhile, Seobang’s sole comfort in life is the volunteer visitor, Saeki. Her presence enlightens him about something that remains to be seen in the world beyond his “helplessness.” Saeki is the only outsider visiting the enclave, and catalyzes Seobang’s change. She triggers his transformation into an independent

being and his self-awareness amid the contradictions facing Korean migrants coexisting in the enclave. Interestingly, such relationships and communication structures are uni-directional. To Seobang, Saeki is an object of affection and admiration but still he cannot communicate with her. While Seobang himself and his existence symbolize the enclave like a fossil, Saeki symbolizes the middle class in the mainstream of Japanese society. Without appreciating the history of the enclave, she just volunteers to help disadvantaged and alienated senior citizens out of good will. She does not understand the physiology of the enclave or the life of those Koreans who are living and have lived in barracks. She shuns a woman from the enclave whom she encounters in the baseball park and brings up the story of Sukja that is regarded as a taboo in the ethnic enclave, which is also ascribable to her lack of understanding and indifference. Though Saeki is not necessarily a villain, the indifference revealed in her actions significantly symbolizes the indifference of the mainstream toward Korean migrants in Japan. Likewise, the indifference unveils in the dialogue between Seobang and Saeki. Seobang tries to talk about the compensation for his severed right wrist only to fail since Saeki keeps talking about herself without empathizing with him. This failure of communication deters their mutual understanding.

Then, given the failed relationship and communication, what is the meaning of Seobang's sentiment toward Saeki? Before considering the meaning, it is necessary to assume Saeki is a character representing the mainstream of Japanese society. Assuming she is a character symbolizing the mainstream of Japanese society and its "indifference," Nagayama's blind antipathy toward her and Seobang's admiration for her become significant. The contradiction of Korean migrants in Japan originates from exclusion, discrimination and indifference. In tandem with the prevalent indifference of the mainstream, the post-war exclusion of Korean-Japanese enclaves from the boundary of the law by the Japanese government has sustained the discrimination against the minority. The discriminated minority Korean residents in Japan wish to join and be equal to the mainstream of society, which is a matter of course and legitimate, given their discriminated status and from historical and ethnic perspectives. Seobang's right hand and wrist symbolizes the historical contradiction of Korean migrants in Japan. When Seobang admires Saeki and lays bare his compensation mentality relative to his right hand, he exposes his wish as a member of an alienated minority to be equally treated as the members of the mainstream. Similarly, Seobang's monologue at the end of the novel reveals such a wish after Saeki's incident as mentioned in the following excerpt:

The curse against Sukja has been extended even to Saeki. If only this severed right wrist had earned money a bit earlier, the terrifying lynch would not have been repeated and infuriated Nagayama would not have bumped into Saeki, huh?

I wish it was a far-fetched idea and laughed it away, but undeniably it is not entirely irrelevant. (Gengetsu 147)

As suggested in the excerpt, while Seobang is looking for Saeki who was taken by Nagayama, a “random” thought occurs to him: “If only this severed right wrist had earned money a bit earlier”. It is nothing but a far-fetched thought at present as long as the historical issues of Korean migrants in Japan remain unresolved, but it is “not entirely irrelevant.” Had Seobang been treated equally as others wounded in the war, and had Korean residents in Japan not undergone the explicit exclusion and suppression in the post-war history of Japan, the status of Seobang and that of the enclave would be different from what they are now. Unfortunately, his wish does not come true because of the ruptured relationship with Saeki due to Nagayama and the deep-rooted indifference of the mainstream, which is symbolized by Saeki, toward minority migrants. As a result, Seobang goes through the confusion of identity. While watching a baseball game with Saeki, Seobang tries to protect her and at the same time questions himself if it is Saeki that he should protect. “What am I trying to protect here? Which side on earth do I belong to?” (Gengetsu 38) Seobang’s self-deprecation is about ‘where he should be’ and implies Seobang’s self-awareness of being a Korean resident in Japan. Seobang is portrayed as a helpless being who is incognizant of self but conceals a wish to remain connected with the enclave even passively, as demonstrated in his relationship with Mad Kill. Seobang regularly attends the games and gatherings of the community baseball team whose members are two generations younger than he. His lack of communication skills adds up to his alienation from the team but still he does not stop observing the gatherings, taking a seat and joking. Seobang’s affection toward Mad Kill, the enclave and younger generations clearly surfaces. Seobang calls Mad Kill members “grandsons,” bets on Mad Kill regardless of winning or losing, and rants and raves when opponents commit fouls. That is, irrespective of Seobang’s spontaneous self-awareness and his admiration for Saeki, the identity of a Korean resident in Japan symbolized by the enclave lies in his subconsciousness.

Therefore, Seobang’s awakening emerges when he becomes clearly aware of his being and self. Seobang’s self-awareness necessarily accompanies his disconnection from Saeki by the medium of Nagayama, who expresses the blind

antipathy and resentment against Saeki. Though he has discarded his original family and first names, Nagayama struggles to join the mainstream of Japanese society by dint of the capital he has accumulated by exploiting the enclave. Yet, no matter how hard he may try, even Nagayama dominating the enclave like a king finds it impossible to join the mainstream. At best, he becomes a boon companion of the police chief representing the public authority, to the extent that the latter hardly cares about how he exploits the enclave. But their relationship is prone to collapse anytime because the police chief is very capricious. Frustrated in his failure to join the mainstream, Nagayama expresses the blind antipathy and resentment against Saeki, which symbolizes his sentiment toward the mainstream of society. As a result, enraged Nagayama rapes Saeki when they meet again. Seobang struggles to protect Saeki only to fail. Yet, Nagayama's act facilitates Seobang's self-awareness. After being out of touch with Saeki against his will, Seobang realizes that he should be responsible for everything happening in the community because the enclave is like his hometown where he has lived for 68 years and his sons and grandsons live and will live. Therefore, following Saeki's tragic incident, Seobang's intense anger towards Nagayama is not just about Saeki. Though frustrated, Seobang starts to unprecedentedly speak out, saying to himself, "I'd sink a knife right into his heart" (Gengetsu 147). "I'll never forgive you" (Gengetsu 147), he cries to Nagayama at the top of his voice, which indicates his resentment against Nagayama about raping Saeki and fixating the exploitation structure with his capital in the enclave. Being out of touch with Saeki and harboring resentment against Nagayama, Seobang is finally reborn as a being with an independent self, which is suggestive of his self-acceptance as a member of the minority group of Korean residents in Japan.

The next morning following the incident, Seobang 'could not feel more refreshed' when he wakes. He makes breakfast, which he has never done before, and washes his underwear for the first time in 10 years. This scene shows Seobang has turned over a new leaf. His self-awareness as a Korean resident in Japan helps recover his identity, which lays the foundation for addressing the intergenerational conflicts and bridging the intergenerational gap, as described in the following excerpt:

On seeing Dakamoto who looked very grave just like blaming himself for his helplessness rather than his remarks, Seobang felt as if some bitterness stuck in his heart had dissolved away. That's right. Since his right arm has been treated unfairly, he has been with this enclave and will be able to live with it. (Gengetsu 151)

Seobang was happy to see that he as a being full of confidence and Ganemura as another being full of innocence and fear were connected with each other sharing a common sentiment, skipping Dakamoto's generation, which he dismissed superficially. (Gengetsu 152)

The excerpt above is associated with Seobang's conversation with Dakamoto and Ganemura, who symbolize the 3rd and 4th Korean-Japanese generations, respectively. Before Saeki's incident, the point of contact between Seobang and them was limited to fragmentary spheres formed by Seobang's passive effort. By contrast, after the incident, Seobang's conversation with Dakamoto and Ganemura symbolically shows a bond of sympathy has been built among the three. In that the bond is indicative of their surmounting the intergenerational disconnection initiated by his conflict with Goichi, it serves as a momentum for them to share their identity and solidarity as Korean residents in Japan.

Seobang's self-awareness also involves his understanding of the enclave which is a trans-generational living space, forms a simple bond of sympathy and symbolizes himself. To Seobang, the enclave is now a place that he should protect and be accountable for. In the ending scene, Seobang grabs the pants of a police officer and bites his calf. Resisting the intervention of the public authority explicitly demonstrates his desperate will to defend the enclave. The mob violence committed by Chinese migrants justifies the intervention of governmental authority in the extraterritorial enclave. Until now, the enclave's process has autonomously operated outside the country's statutory boundary by means of Nagayama's capital used to win over the public authority, which connection, however, is weak enough to end anytime. The police officer visiting the enclave states he understands the history of Korean migrants in Japan but will not be tolerant of illegal migrant communities and thus the enclave will be dissolved. He sounds as if he understands the presence of Korean residents in Japan but actually will not accept the presence of the enclave which he believes is nothing but a random shelter for illegal migrants. His statement, paradoxically, proves the lack of his understanding of history, which incurs the wrath of Seobang to the extent that he bites the officer's leg. His offence is an expression of his own intention to defend the enclave and of his wrath against the misunderstanding of and indifference to the presence of Korean residents in Japan.

As discussed so far, we have considered the relationship between Saeki and Nagayama based on the affairs and incidents resulting from unresolved historical and ethnic issues of Korean residents in Japan and Seobang's change in

Kagenosumika. The diverse issues raised in the novel are attributable to the process implemented in the enclave and Seobang's contradiction, and simultaneously are the remains of unresolved historical and ethnic issues. Because the ethical choices and moral behaviors result from the contrasting yet interrelated forces¹, Seobang's self-awareness and recovery of identity is triggered by his awareness of ethnic contradiction and self-acceptance as a Korean resident in Japan. Through the process, Seobang eventually transforms into a guardian of the enclave from a symbol thereof.

Ethics of Dehumanization and Violence Relevant to Capital

In *Kagenosumika*, the enclave is seated in an extraterritorial zone and sustained by violence. In the process, dehumanization caused by capital and ethics are exposed. The following excerpt shows how they handle any problem arising in the enclave.

At that time, most residents except children gathered in the square. Sukja was kneeling down on an array of icicles laid next to the well. When Dakamoto and some young men attempted to tie 20kg icicles to her belly with a rope as told by their parents, she cried out they would kill the fetus in her womb [...] Every time Sukja was about to collapse, males poured icy-cold water from the well on her head and females poked and beat her back and shoulders with bamboo swords. Assuming a disinterested attitude, they continued to torture her just like pounding rice into powder. There was no room for insanity. People were doing what they were supposed to do in silence. All were woodenly expressionless. Some rose to their feet, while others cast tired eyes. Still, no one withdrew when it was his/her turn. (Gengetsu 139-140)

Sukja was caught absconding with 3 million yen from a private fund she had organized in the enclave and 8 million yen from another private fund 27 years ago. She was trying to desert her 15-year-old daughter, which indicates the human nature succumbing to capital. They solved any problem not by a lawful procedure but by violence. They brought Sukja to her knees on icicles and tied 20kg icicles to her belly with a rope, which was like stabbing her with a knife. Both men and women beat her with bamboo swords and clubs. When she passed out, they poured water from the well on her face to force her to stay awake. They never felt guilty

1 See Nie Zhenzhao, "Ethical Literary Criticism: Sphinx Factor and Ethical Selection," *Forum for World Literature Studies* 3 (2021): 392; Nie zhenzhao, "The Scientific Turn of Humanities Studies," *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature* 4 (2022): 563-568.

about driving a person nearly to death. Violence is their own way of addressing any challenge to sustain the enclave. The uniqueness of the enclave occupied by others and the dehumanization caused by capital underlie the violence, which characterizes the enclave as an extraterritorial zone outside the boundary of law.

Then, do the violence and dehumanization in the enclave arise from the ethnicity unique to Korean migrants in Japan? Those aspects are attributable to the universal human nature, not a certain ethnicity, nationality and period. See the following excerpt:

Between the human walls, three men fell flat on their face with both hands and feet tied u Their buttocks and thighs were exposed through their pants torn into shreds. Holding their lips tight, other men twisted and plucked their flesh with pliers one after another [...] Wearing a look of excitement and tiredness, each worked his way through the crowd, holding a plier with tiny pieces of flesh, which made me feel a strange sense of *deja vu*. The next moment, I realized the so-called ‘underground bank’ was comparable to the private fund. (Gengetsu 146)

Three Chinese men fall to the ground in the excerpt. They were caught stealing money from the underground bank, which is equivalent to the old private fund. Chinese people holding pliers twist and pluck flesh one after another from the thighs of the three offenders. Pieces of torn flesh are scattered on the ground. This mob violence results from capital. This scene is reminiscent of Sukja’s incident that took place 27 years ago. Violence, not lawful procedures, is the rule to punish people in the enclave as they did to Sukja, who was poked in the belly with icicles and beaten with clubs, and now to the three Chinese men whose flesh is plucked with pliers.

As for how the uniqueness of the enclave has been formed, Koreans migrated to Japan during the Japanese occupation of Korea and remained there even after the liberation. That is the “historical reason” why Korean migrants built a community like the enclave in Japan. Over time, Korean migrants in Japan left the enclave one after another before illegal Chinese migrants occupied the space. Initially formed by others who were outside the boundary of law, the enclave now shelters different kinds of others who are not legally protected, after Korean migrants left. In the space of others, capital is directly linked to survival. Thus, they have adopted their own rules in the form of violence to maintain the enclave and to survive. With the enclave formed outside the boundary of law, it constitutes an extraterritorial zone, where Chinese migrants replicate the violence committed by Korean migrants for

68 years, which manifests the universality of human nature regardless of nationality or ethnicity.

It is capital not law that sustains the enclave and secures the survival of others. The enclave is a space where others who are not entitled for legal protection can exist, whilst capital is a sensitive issue directly linked to survival. In the enclave sustained by the identity and solidarity of members, problems caused by capital threaten their survival and undermine their identity and solidarity. Violence is the solution for any problem that could potentially threaten the identity and survival of the enclave, which is the process of maintaining the community.

If so, how come they resort to violence not law to solve their problems? To those others who are marginalized from the legal protection in the enclave, laws are meaningless rules. Those who are not protected by any law draw upon nothing but capital as a means of survival, which is in turn secured only when they reserve capital. In that context, embezzling capital is a plain act of threatening the community in its entirety and the survival thereof. As any legal punishment is not applicable to the extraterritorial enclave, violence works. That is, the community cannot but be sustained by violence because its members are legally marginalized others and their survival is secured not by law but by capital. Hence, the enclave can exist as an extraterritorial zone, where the unethical violence and dehumanization take place due to capital.

Paradoxically, however, because of the very violence, which serves as the unique means of sustaining the enclave, the community is faced with a risk of dissolution. The mob violence replicated in 27 years causes the secret of the enclave to leak through to the mainstream of society represented by the Japanese police authority. The public authority of the mainstream of society is set to dissolve the enclave, which is on the cusp of vanishing into nothing. Nagayama takes advantage of capital he has accumulated in the enclave to join the mainstream of Japanese society in vain, failing to exert any influence on the historical misunderstanding of the mainstream and its public authority. Even the capitalist dominating the enclave is not admitted to the mainstream of Japanese society. The mainstream exercises its public authority to remove the enclave and others on account of the violent incident. The very rule that has sustained the enclave drives it into catastrophe, and thus the world of others is dissolved by the mainstream power.

Portraying an extraterritorial enclave of others who resort to violence to deal with problems, *Kagenosumika* highlights the dehumanization and ethical issues relevant to capital.

Conclusion

We have discussed Gengetsu's *Kagenosumika* in view of violence and ethics. As mentioned earlier, this novel illuminates the dehumanization and violence resulting from the ills of capitalism, while at the same time noting the historical and ethnic issues of Korean residents in Japan. As Hwangi Kim asserted, Gengetsu's work builds on the uniqueness of diaspora groups in pursuit of the universality and global orientation of diaspora literature.

Hence, in this study, we have defined two axes of this work to develop the discussion. One axis concerns the ethnic and historical issues of Korean residents in Japan and individuals, whilst the other axis involves the ills of capitalism and the violence in the enclave. As the author asserts, *Kagenosumika* exposes the ills of capitalist society while contemplating the universality of human nature. Furthermore, its characters and events revolving around Seobang keenly uncover the historical and ethnic contradictions of Korean migrants in Japan that cannot be explained by the universality of human nature. The distribution and domination of capital, the alienated "minority" represented by old handicapped Seobang in the enclave, their historical transition, and their conflict with the mainstream of society are intricately woven in *Kagenosumika*. In addition, the ethnic contradiction of Korean migrants in Japan underlies the foregoing intricately woven components. The absence of a certain "ideology" or of an inclination to homeland within the category of ethnicity corroborates the void of "politics" in literature as asserted by Gengetsu himself. Paradoxically, the absence is completely entangled with the ethnic issues of Korean migrants in Japan. Such an ethnic contradiction is symbolized by the protagonist Seobang, who was conscripted to the Japanese imperialist war and lost his right arm only to be forgotten by reason of being a Korean resident in the post-war Japanese society. The indifference, ostracism and physical handicap coerce Seobang into losing himself. In a series of events and incidents, Seobang becomes aware of himself as a contradictory being and a Korean resident in Japan, which is underlain by his ethnic contradiction. Indeed, Seobang's self-awareness intricately involves his admiration for Saeki symbolizing the mainstream and his frustration as well as indifference. Also, it coexists with the reality of the minority in the capitalist society conditioned by Nagayama. Seobang accepts himself as a member of the enclave after Saeki's incident. In the process of such "acceptance" and "awareness," Seobang finally gets over his helplessness and vanquishes the disconnection caused by intergenerational conflicts.

Meanwhile, the one axis of this work concerns the ethnic contradiction

while the other axis comprises the violent incident entangled with capital that takes place in the “extraterritorial” zone accommodating the alienated others in the capitalist society. Those residing in the extraterritorial enclave are not legally protected, that is, not recognized as Japanese citizens. The residents in the enclave earn their livelihood as factory workers fitting into the capitalist trend in the post-war mainstream of society. With no legal protection and citizenship, money is synonymous with their survival in the capitalist society. Thus, capital is translated into the survival of the members of the enclave. However, what matters is that they turn to the violence or lynch mob to address any challenge. The residents in the extraterritorial enclave cannot afford the protection by law. Therefore, they rely on the agreed tacit rule to resolve problems arising in the enclave. Yet, when it comes to capital-related problems, in particular, their rule values capital more than human life, which constitutes the inversion of value. That is, the violence committed in the enclave is held up by dehumanization, which is part of the universal ills of capitalism. Moreover, such ethical issues are embodied in repeated violence in the enclave. The blood and flesh scattered on the ground reminds Seobang of the ‘curse against Sukja,’ which implies the unethical violence will be repeated and intensified.

To recap, *Kagenosumika* exposes the ills of capitalist society while contemplating the existence and contradiction of Korean residents in Japan as a minority. The perceived universal ethical issues and ethnic contradiction of Korean residents in Japan are the key-words penetrating the literary world of Gengetsu. A further study is needed to delve into the historical and ethnic contradictions of Korean residents in Japan which underlie the ethics manifested as universal value across Gengetsu’s creative world beyond *Kagenosumika*.

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