

Social Dynamism in the Korean Diaspora (*Koryo-saram*) in Contemporary Kazakhstan

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Research background

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan, as a newly independent nation-state, has made great efforts for the national integration of its multiethnic populace. It is the most important issue for the nation, which could pursue two incompatible methods of national integration: multiethnicism or, Kazakh-ethnocentrism.

Research purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Kazakhstan *Koryo-saram* (Koreans), who became Kazakhstani citizens once the nation gained independence, have responded to the two methods of the integration and how their society has changed. In my fieldwork, I conducted interviews with representatives of the main institutions of Kazakhstani Korean society, such as the Association of Koreans in Kazakhstan, the editorial office of the *Koryo Ilbo* (a Korean-language newspaper), the Korean television and Korean radio station, the Korean Cultural Center, and the Almaty branch of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan.

Results/Achievements

My research yielded two findings. The first is that the current activities of the *Koryo-saram* provided insight into the direction of their activities in the past, present, and future. The second is about identity of the Kazakhstan *Koryo-saram*. By examining trends within the community, we can see that the Kazakhstani *Koryo-saram* are building their identity as a part of the Kazakhstani nation, while at the same times as one of the minority groups in a multiethnic Kazakhstan. The community can be compared to *Koryo-saram* societies in other former Soviet areas where Koreans moved to seek a better environment.

Plans for further research

It would be necessary to examine the factors that make up the identity of the Kazakhstani *Koryo-saram* and to compare them to those of the *Koryo-saram* in other former Soviet areas.



Photo 1: The author with Sergey Ogay, President, Association of Koreans in Kazakhstan



Photo 2: The author with Ella Choi, Producer, Korean Department of Kazakhstan-run broadcasting system