

Hanryū and Resident Koreans in Japan

Whilst Japanese audiences flocked to cinemas to enjoy the latest Hong Kong action films, men's magazines and the mass media in general promoted East Asian popular culture to a limited extent and a small communities of aficionados developed (Iwabuchi 2004: 158), few popular cultural products from the East Asia region were offered to or accepted by Japanese audiences. However, the broadcast of *'Fuyu no Sonata'* (also known as 'Winter Ballad', 'Winter Love Song' or 'Winter Sonata'), a Korean *torendī drama* in 2003 this was all to change. Something about 'Winter Sonata' captured viewers' imaginations and it became something of a national phenomenon, sparking a *'hanryū būmu'* ('Korean wave' or 'Korea boom') in which all things South Korean, in particular television dramas, movies and popular music became popular.

This phenomenon can be investigated from various aspects, such as, the media discourse surrounding the Korean wave in Japan, the impact of 'Winter Sonata' on viewers, the experiences of Koreans in Japan (*zainichi Kankoku-jin*) in the midst of the Korean wave and so on.

This paper focuses on and discusses the experiences of resident Koreans in Japan and introduces the opinions of an often overlooked piece of the *'hanryū'* puzzle and those who stand to both gain and lose much from it.

Korean residents of Japan, whether Japanese born or not, face discrimination in many forms. Access to jobs in certain areas of the public service is restricted and until the 1980s *zainichi* Koreans had no access to pension plans, national health care or public-sector housing loans (Chapman 2004, 39). Whilst the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1982 under pressure from the UN has led to some improvements, problems remain. Whether the Korea boom has the ability to overcome discrimination or lead to the welcome of *zainichi* Koreans into Japanese society will be investigated utilizing interview data collected in 2004 ~ 2006.