

**Making sense of experiences of Japanese Diaspora in postwar Taiwan,  
Or Colonial Legacy and Contemporary Multiculturalism, Comparatively Speaking**

**Profile of Allen Chun**

Research Fellow, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan  
University of Chicago

PhD, Anthropology (1977 – 1985)

**Summary of the seminar**

The main gist of the lecture of Allen Chun was to narrate the experiences and understanding the underlying social, political and cultural conditions that have affected the phenomena of the life of Japanese in postwar Taiwan. He compared the British era and Hong Kong and Japanese era Taiwan. He started the project as to find out the different experiences of Japanese colonialism in Korea and Taiwan as well as their ramifications in the postwar era in the cultural dimension.

The research is related to his wife, Chun's RA, whose father is Taiwanese once educated in Japan, got married to a Japanese woman before WW2 ended. He rose up his mother in law as the example to show life of Japanese in postwar Taiwan. The story of her was fascinating because the time era was about the time when KMT rule was in control; therefore, almost anything related to Japan was banned. The story of her was the example portraying the life or back ground of Japanese Diaspora in Taiwan.

Another example he brought up was a life of Mr. Takeyabu, a son of the colonial era policeman. His life is delineated as a miserable example of Japanese in postwar Taiwan. And another example was Chun's student Nobuo, whose biological father was Japanese, married to Taiwanese woman. Chun questioned the audience, definition of identity might be different in terms of own acceptance and cultural background.

Chun defined Taiwan as the strangest place, having a lot of paradoxes like economic miracle and multiculturalism. What had happened and happening is easily compared and contrasted with the phenomena of Korea. However, the two are completely different because of different memories and reactions towards Japan after war. Unlike Korea, ethnic people in Taiwan have never conflicted between their national identities and cultural identities. Yet, determining one's identity is based on one's perception and other's perceptions, social but rooted in politics.

### Discussions and QnA session

1. IJS Faculty

Question: a) sentiment towards Taiwanese ethnic minorities e.g. Japanese in Taiwan?

Ans- Once they were isolated and out casted, nowadays identification do not conflict in Taiwan

b) Ethnic equality in Taiwan?

Ans-Ethnic equality is hard to discuss; yet, inequality is diminishing

2. SNU GSIS PhD

Question: a) immigrant women for marriage?

Ans-Considered as taboos to reveal the marriage because of discrimination

b) Definition of "Identity"?

Ans- All people have different experiences and understandings. The definition is not decisive.

3. SNU GSIS M.A.

Question: the examples brought up, are they not different and not relevant to the Diaspora?

Ans-Diaspora is not ethnic; it is rather social and biological. We do not have to ask the identities of people because how define themselves is their choice based on the perceptions they have.

4. SNU GSIS PhD

Question: a) What did you mean there are no conflixtions for being both Japanese and Taiwanese at the same time?

Ans-It is hard to define how the people are exactly like. Unless we need to discuss political issues, not particularly in need of identifying oneself being one or another.

b) Relationship between the mainland and Taiwan.

Ans- Honestly, a lot of foreigners in Taiwan are taught mandarin Chinese. It is quite complicated to discuss. As I mentioned, Taiwan is full of paradoxes which can never be well explained from the reality. Taiwan is not facing an issue of ethnicity. If Taiwan were, Taiwan must have had been successful in declaring its independence.