

## **“Nomad” of Manchukuo: Life and Identity of Koreans in Manchuria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Of the Koreans in Manchuria, the majority were those who moved there out of poverty in Joseon. Owing to their poorer economic condition, they had a lower national status than the Japanese, Chinese, Russians and even the Taiwanese whether self-employed or engaged in commerce and industry in Manchukuo. Moreover, most Koreans yearned to return to Joseon with the money earned during their stay in Manchuria. Hence, they had little sense of belonging to Manchukuo and tried to evade tax payment. In addition, many of them were engaged in smuggling, prostitution, gambling and illicit works, making them easy targets of discrimination and contempt. Apart from those in civil or military service as well as those who managed to amass great fortune, most Koreans in Manchuria were in an abyss of alienation, shame and pessimism. Mired in an unfavorable social environment, Koreans in Manchuria could not feel at home and had no permanent abode, leading an itinerant life at the mercy of other ethnic groups. Belonging to nowhere, they were regarded as ‘nomad (流浪者) of Manchukuo’.

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Ethnic Hierarchy