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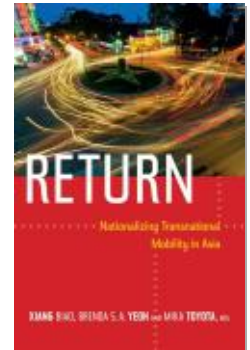
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INTRODUCTION
**Return and the Reordering
of Transnational Mobility in Asia**
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When the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute asked a number of leading migration experts in the world what surprised them most in 2006, Howard Duncan, the executive head of the high-profile International Metropolis Project, identified the return migration of professionals to Asia as the most striking. “Although return migration is a common phenomenon, the number of returnees, especially to Hong Kong, is significantly higher than one would expect,” he commented.¹ The significance of the large-scale return migration from the West to Hong Kong should be understood in the context of the historical return of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Between 1984, when the Chinese and British governments signed the handover agreement, and the handover in 1997, more than half a million left Hong Kong due to their apprehension about the handover (Ritter 2007). By 2005, however, a third of those who had migrated to Canada—the single largest destination country—returned, primarily attracted by the intact or even enhanced prosperity of the former colony.² At least 120,000 returned in 1999 alone.³ The return of Hong Kong to the PRC and the subsequent return of Hong Kongers can be seen as powerful

manifestations of a new global geopolitical order. This order is defined by the rise—or the “return” or “redux”—of Asia.⁴ Indeed, the return of West-based professionals and entrepreneurs to Asia, especially to China and India, is perceived as a “return to the future”—in the rush ahead of global business and technology curves. Return is a project driven by enterprise rather than by nostalgia.⁵

The reverse flows of professionals constitute only a small part of return migrations in Asia. Much larger numbers of “irregular” migrants have been forced to return to their country of citizenship, often from one Asian country to another. This became particularly evident after the financial crisis in 1997. From June 1997, when the crisis broke out, to January 1998, Malaysia sent back more than 10,000 Bangladeshi and Pakistani workers, South Korea expelled between 150,000 and 300,000 migrants, and Thailand repatriated 6,000 Burmese (Varona 1998). Initially an emergency measure, forced return was soon turned into a routine. Malaysia deported tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of migrants in each of the half dozen crackdowns since the end of the 1990s. Japan expelled an average of 54,000 migrants a year in the 1990s and early 2000s.⁶ The scope and density of forced return in Asia are striking when compared to other parts of the world: in the 2000s Australia removed and deported about 10,000 a year, the United Kingdom more than 60,000, and the United States nearly 400,000 in 2011 (compared to just over 30,000 in 1990 and less than 200,000 in 2000).⁷ Indeed, the Malaysian Home Affairs Minister Azmi Khalid called the Ops Tegas (Operation Tough) campaign in March 2005, which expelled 600,000 to 800,000 irregular migrants,⁸ “one of the biggest transmigration programs in the world” (Holst 2009).

Of an even greater scale are compulsory returns of legal labor migrants. The overwhelming majority of the fifteen million workers who migrate from one Asian country to another are on strictly temporary terms and have to return home once their contracts are due (P. Martin 2008). Migrant-receiving countries across the region commonly adopt a “no return, no entry” policy. That is, they determine the number of new arrivals from a particular country according to the returns to that country. This can mean that about three million migrants are returning to various Asian countries from the Gulf alone every year. Apart from professionals and labor migrants, the return of refugees and victims of human trafficking are also major policy concerns in the region.

These diverse return flows are related to each other in that they are encouraged, facilitated, and often enforced by states. They are all part of an

overarching mode of governance that emerged in Asia in the 1990s. This mode of governance seeks to regulate mobility through mobility. The states regulate mobility not by blocking but by facilitating movements. Return migrations not only intensify individual migrants' level of mobility when the migrants move back and forth but also put more people on the move as new recruitments are constantly needed to replace the returned.⁹ But return is a mobility of such a kind that it tames mobility.¹⁰ Constant in-and-out circulations order movements and fit movements into the framework of nation-states. Return thus nationalizes transnational mobility.

Following Georg Simmel's celebration of the "miracle of road" for its "freezing movement in a solid structure" (Simmel 1997, 171), we may liken return programs to roundabouts. Roundabouts do not directly control the movement of each vehicle, but they channel the traffic into certain patterns that can be monitored and regulated from a distance. The movements on the ground do acquire their own momentum, and drivers do break rules from time to time; but the movements are shaped into flows that are governable to nation-states. "Nation-state" here stands for particular operational frameworks and organizational principles, not for closed territorial containers. Nationalization is a way of ordering transnational mobility instead of a means of territorial fixing. In contrast to the common proposition that transnational migrations challenge state sovereignty (e.g., Sassen 1996, 67–74) and defy national policies (e.g., Castles 2004), transnational circulation in Asia serves as a (national) method of migration regulation.

While we follow Lynellyn Long and Ellen Oxfeld's call for developing an "ethnography of return migration" that pays full attention to the diversity, complexity, and instability of return as human experiences (2004, 1–15), this book treats return primarily as a policy subject, as an idea, and as a strategic moment when the intersection between nation-states and transnational mobility is particularly visible.¹¹ For this book, return is not a type of migration—a migration behavior with distinct attributes and patterns like "student migration" or "marriage migration." Empirically, return is essentially ambiguous. The Philippine government, for instance, stages state ceremonies before Christmas every year in the Manila airport to welcome the returnees, but at the same time the government encourages the migrants to go overseas again after the holiday season. We would be missing the point by fixating on whether the return should be seen as real return; what matters is the fact that both the government and the migrants invest an enormous amount of energy in making the journey a kind of return.¹² We ask: why is such fictive return regarded as necessary,

appealing, and productive? Why are returnees sometimes treated very differently from one another, and yet are sometimes lumped together under the rubric of “return”? And what does this tell us about the general socioeconomic developments in Asia and beyond? The heterogeneity of the experiences of return and the ambiguity of its meaning should not be seen as difficulties in studying return; they can be turned into sources of theoretical innovation.

Asia as a Method for Global Studies

“Europe is hard to get in but easy to stay on; Asian countries are easy to get in but hard to stay on.” This was what a would-be migrant in northeast China told me when he compared different options. Asian countries are hard to “stay on” because the migrants have to return.¹³ It is far from accidental that various kinds of return migration in Asia have intensified. This reflects particular articulations between state interventions and the free market, and between national regulation and transnational flows in the region. Most Asian countries strive to globalize their economies, but at the same time the countries jealously guard their national sovereignty and state power. The combination of strong and often authoritarian states with free-market economies was a crucial condition of the East Asian economic miracle of the 1970s and 1980s (Evans 1995). The postdevelopmental states that emerged in the 1990s are even more entrepreneurial and market oriented, but they remain uncompromisingly nationalistic (Ong 2000, 2004). The so-called ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) way of regionalization is driven by the twin objectives of pursuing region-wide economic integration and safeguarding member states’ political autonomy and sovereignty. The ASEAN nations encourage international migration, and precisely for this purpose they make it an explicit rule that each member must consider others’ concerns on sovereignty when determining its own policies.¹⁴ Thus there is no surprise that return migration is commonly encouraged and effectively enforced in the region. Conversely, return migration offers a productive lens to examine how territory-bound sovereignty and flexible transnational mobility can work together instead of exclude each other. As such, examination of return migration helps shed light on the “return” of Asia.

The intensification of return migration is not uniquely Asian. On the contrary, experiences in Asia are analytically important precisely because they cast in relief some general developments across the world. The return

of trafficking victims and refugees has been a common concern in Europe and other parts of the world. In terms of labor mobility, the EU has promoted “circular migration” between Europe and non-EU countries since the late 2000s. Return is a defining feature or even a precondition of migration (see Castles 2006; Commission of European Communities 2007; Martin, Abella, and Kuptsch 2006). The British Parliament member Frank Field advocated a migration scenario of “one man in, one man out,” very similar to how labor migration is managed in Asia (2008). The Nobel laureate economist Paul Krugman dubbed the proposal for permanent guest-worker programs in the United States “the road to Dubai” (2006).

Just as we take return as a conceptual lens, we take Asia as a method for global studies. In his seminal work, “China as Method,” Yuzo Mizoguchi (1989) urged us to reverse the conventional approach in China studies that took the “world” as the method (reference point) to measure China as the subject. Since there is no such thing as a truly global standard, the “world” often means particular European experiences in practice. In contrast, the “China as method” approach examines specific historical developments in China as part of the global history, and thereby rethinks the world as the subject matter from the perspective of Chinese experiences. In this framework, China and the world become dynamic, interentangled processes instead of static entities in isolation. What Yuzo argued for is obviously not specific to China studies. Chen Kuan-Hsing recently extended the proposition into an advocacy for “Asia as method.” The approach of “Asia as method” encourages scholars in Asian countries to take each other as reference points, and by doing so develop a scholarship that is free from Western colonialism and imperialism, and that is both locally rooted and generalizable (Chen 2010). *Return: Nationalizing Transnational Mobility in Asia* takes Asia as a method in both senses as articulated by Yuzo and Chen. Firstly, our subject matter is global conditions, and it is the last agenda of ours to claim Asian uniqueness or exceptionalism. Secondly, we approach the global by juxtaposing a range of Asian cases and examining interactions between Asian countries. We discern the various logics, rationalities, and strategies practiced here as part of a global experimentation. An edited volume provides an ideal form for pursuing such a research strategy.

Taking Asia as a method certainly does not assume that the rest of the world is becoming like Asia or that societies worldwide are adopting “Asian methods” of development. Asia as a method is an analytical strategy. By developing new perspectives based on experiences in Asia,

we hope to discern problematics in the world that are otherwise less obvious or dismissed as aberrations. Modern social research is to a great extent a product of the practice of using Europe as *the* method. The mainstream scholarship on international migration, for instance, has long been overshadowed by the European experiences about refugees, especially the Holocaust, and this explains why certain concerns and concepts (e.g., individual rights and formal citizenship) are prioritized while others are marginalized (e.g., collective orders). It will not take us very far to simply critique this scholarship for being biased; we may instead appreciate its value as well as limiting it more by explicating its relation to the specific historical context. Rather than jettisoning established theories for being Eurocentrism, it may be more productive to develop multipolar, decentered ways of knowledge production. Asia as a method aims at exactly that. We take Asia as a method not because Asia is special or superior, but because it enables an extrication of migration research from Western concerns and at the same time provides a solid ground for developing substantive theories.

Asia is a method instead of a case of global studies because the relation of Asia to the world is not that of a part to the whole. Asia is actively interacting with the world rather than simply reflecting it. More important, Asia for us is not only a physical place to be studied but it also provides a critical epistemological position from where we study the world. As such, geographical coverage per se is of secondary importance in selecting cases. Our chapters instead aim to cover different kinds of return regulated by different political systems at different times.

The book starts with three chapters on the historical role of return migration in nation building in Asia. They are followed by five chapters on return migration in the current globalization era. Before turning to the specific cases, it is necessary to have an overview of returnees' historical relations to nation-states and global orders, and particularly how post-Cold War Asian states form differentiated, partial, selective, unstable, and conditional relations with returnees. The practice of differentiation is accompanied by a tendency of coalescence. That is, states seek interstate agreements and international consensus in order to enforce returns, and the all-embracing, naturalizing notion of "return" in public discourse ascribes particular universalistic meanings to diverse return flows. It is through the dialectic between differentiation and coalescence that an overarching sociopolitical order is constituted from increasingly diverse transnational mobilities.

The Returnee and the Nation

Return has been a norm rather than an exception in human migration.¹⁵ Ernest Ravenstein's (1885) "laws of migration" stipulated that every migration stream is accompanied by a counter flow, and the migration-system theory of the 1970s identified return as an integral part of all migration systems (Mabogunje 1970; see also Nijkamp and Voskuilen 1996). It was historically commonplace that migrants moved back and forth before the erection of national borders.¹⁶ It was precisely when return became more difficult that the figure of the returnee acquired new symbolic and political significance. Contemporary returns are no longer a so-called natural demographic phenomenon that can be predicted by laws. They are inextricably tied to the politics of nation-states. The word *return* itself has now become a vocabulary of the nation: migrants seldom return to their place of birth (Upadhyā, this volume),¹⁷ and what the word *return* actually means is the movement from overseas to any part of one's *nation* of origin. As Wang Gungwu (1981) has established so clearly, overseas Chinese had been either unmarked or thought of as traitors until the Qing court in the late nineteenth century officially named them *huaqiao* (Chinese sojourners)—temporary migrants who waited to return. The overseas Chinese acquired this name not because they suddenly became inclined to return but because the Qing government now perceived China as a nation instead of a civilizational empire potentially covering the entire world, and the government therefore felt compelled to define its relation with its overseas population in explicit terms as a way of defining its relation to the world. The nationalization of the notion of return can thus be seen as a discursive strategy with which the state laid claim to the mobile subjects.

Returnees of the modern times in Asia can be notionally divided into four generations, though the empirical boundaries between them are always blurred. Each group has distinct relations to the nation-states involved. The first generation refers to the large number of circular migrants, primarily traders and laborers, who had, for a long time and particularly from the mid-nineteenth century, been undertaking regular return trips before nation-states broke down transnational mobility and connections in the mid-twentieth century.¹⁸ The second generation is represented by such iconic figures as Mahatma Gandhi, José Rizal, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Lee Kuan Yew, who returned to become founding fathers of their nations in the early twentieth century. Their returns were regarded as so important

that in 2003 the Indian government designated January 9, the date when Gandhi returned from South Africa after a twenty-year sojourn (in 1914), as *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* (Overseas Indians' Day), a day celebrated with great fanfare. This generation of returnees did not invent nationalism; they were pioneering nationalists in Asia because they were most familiar with Western imperialism and were directly exposed to political contestations in various parts of the world, which made them particularly capable of dealing with colonial powers and transforming protonations into the form of the modern state. The nation-building project was a global response to global colonialism and a result of global dialogue and learning (Anderson 1991, 4; Chatterjee 1986). Prasenjit Duara says, "Nations are constructed in a global space premised upon institutional and discursive circulations" (2009, 6). In this process the second generation of returnees served as global mediators by disseminating and modifying the general idea of nation, as well as by bringing their particular nation-building projects into the global public imagination through their consciously declared return.

The third generation returned between the 1950s and 1990s. Their returns were either pulled by the new nation or pushed by heightened ethnic conflicts during the process of nation building in countries of residence (see Sasaki, this volume; Wang, this volume), or both.¹⁹ These returnees were no longer global mediators; they typically cut off overseas connections after return. The return of the fourth generation after the Cold War is different still. Return in the context of escalating globalization once again became part of back-and-forth movements instead of the definite end of a journey (Upadhyaya, this volume).

History seems to have come full circle: the first and the last generations appear to have similar experiences of return. But, while the first generation moved back and forth over long distance because of the nonexistence of nation-states, the fourth group does so because many nation-states in Asia have developed sophisticated mechanisms for engaging with transnational movements. Contemporary returnees simultaneously attach themselves to the nation and participate in global circulations. Their national attachment often serves as a basis for their participation in globalization, and conversely their global positions are leverages in their interactions with national institutions. If the second generation of returnees nationalized their home societies, and the returnees of the third generation were themselves nationalized by becoming full-fledged citizens residing inside of the hardened national border, members of the latest generation remain trans-

national subjects but have their mobility nationalized in the sense of how their mobility is regulated and how their mobility acquires social meaning.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 in the book provide broad historical overviews of how returnees of different generations establish relations with nations amid wars, revolutions, ethnic conflicts, and ideological battles. Koji Sasaki's chapter traces the little-known debates about return—whether one should return and how—among Japanese migrants in Brazil throughout the twentieth century, and how transnational flows are domesticated by national concerns. The migrants, most of whom left Japan at the end of nineteenth century and the early twentieth, yearned to return in the first half of the twentieth century. But at that time Japan was preoccupied with imperialistic expansion and the emigrants' return was discouraged. When the Japanese government reached out and opened special channels for the migrants and their descendants (Nikkeijin) to migrate to Japan to work in the 1990s, permanent return lost its sentimental purchase among the migrants because their lives were deeply nationalized. The Nikkeijin ended up as quasi-returnees in Japan who enjoy more benefits than other foreigners but cannot claim citizenship. This quasi-returnee status reconciles the Japanese public's desire for ethnic homogeneity, the economic need for cheap labor, and the state's tight control over migration. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the Japanese government offered to pay the Nikkeijin for returning to Brazil on the condition of not rereturning to Japan as unskilled workers for three years. Many did return to Brazil.

Mariko Asano Tamanoi's chapter focuses on a special group of returnees—the former soldiers of the Japanese Imperial Army who returned from the battlefields well after the end of the Second World War. By highlighting the awkwardness of the return, the chapter sheds new light on Japan's transformation from a militarist empire to a nation and that transformation's implications for Japan and Asia today. The soldiers' return in the 1950s was awkward because their presence reminded the public of Japan's atrocities overseas in which many ordinary Japanese people were implicated. The return disrupted the dominant narrative that the Japanese nation was a victim of a handful of rightist elites and upset the effort to forget the complicity. A few soldiers who returned in the 1970s triggered little awkwardness in comparison on the part of the Japanese public, and the returnees became celebrities instead. By that time the memory of the war had faded away; the nation was fascinated by the soldiers' experiences of hiding in jungles for nearly three decades as a biological miracle. It was



FIGURE 1.1. “Need assistance to return?” A postcard from the International Organization for (IOM) Migration targeting irregular Chinese migrants in Europe. The postcard promises that the IOM will assist with travel documents, itineraries, and reintegration to the home society. Assisted return has become one of the most important activities of the IOM since the 1990s.

however awkward for the soldiers to be treated as biological miracles. Although they were enthusiastically embraced by the nation, the soldiers felt out of place as such questions as why they had to go to war in the first place and why their fellow soldiers had to die were pushed aside. Underlying this awkwardness of the delayed returns is Japan’s unsettled relation to its past, which remains a source of tensions in Asia today.

Wang Cangbai’s chapter examines even more dramatic experiences of return, specifically on how Indonesian Chinese returnees were nationalized into Mao’s China (1949 to 1979). The returnees, many of whom were fleeing the anti-Chinese sentiment in postcolonial Indonesia, were initially warmly welcomed by the PRC as fellow Chinese. But they were soon subject to harsh policies aimed at reforming them from “classed others” into part of the proletarian People when the basis for the definition of citizenry shifted from ethnic identity to class position. The state invented the special category of *guiqiao* (returned sojourners) and devised a series of institutions and policies in order to accommodate, monitor, and assimilate the returnees. The policies ranged from setting up special preparation schools for returned students, establishing isolated overseas Chinese farms for returned families, honoring the few who fit the party’s line, and imposing close surveillance on the majority of others. Since the end of the Cultural

Revolution, however, the state not only permits but also encourages transnational connections, both old and new. The new approach is primarily rationalized by the notions of modernization and globalization, while the emphasis on ethnic allegiance and socialist rhetoric remains salient. As a result, the relation between returnees and nation-states becomes much more complex.

The Victim, the Ambiguous, and the Desirable

As Wang's chapter demonstrates, whether one was a returnee or not was deeply consequential for one's life in Mao's China. The fact of being a returnee, regardless of what kind and how one returned, invited harassment and even humiliation during the Cultural Revolution. In the post-Cold War era, what matters more is what kind of returnee one is. This is true not only in China but across the region as well. The heterogeneity of returnees should not be taken as a given fact; returnees are made different by various policies and discourses. The differentiation is not meant to reflect returnees' varying experiences; it rather results from states' multiple, and sometimes contradictory, objectives. For instance, states simultaneously seek economic growth (Upadhyaya, this volume), national security (Cowan, this volume), identity allegiance (Lu and Shin, this volume), and political legitimacy (for which rights protection for victims is increasingly important; Lindquist, this volume). These objectives are often at odds with one another in practice. Differentiation enables nation-states to form partial and selective relations with returnees and fit them into multiple state agendas.

According to how they are treated by state policies and how they are presented in public media, returnees can be grouped into three categories: the "victims" (refugees and especially victims of human trafficking), the "desirable" (primarily the highly skilled and investors), and the "ambiguous" (unskilled or irregular migrants who are economically needed but socially undesirable). Nation-states form differentiated relations with each of the three figures.

Refugees were the first target group of state-initiated return programs after the end of the Cold War. Because refugee issues during the Cold War were deeply politicized and were attributed to Communist authoritarian regimes, the decisive victory of capitalist liberal democracy was supposed to reduce the number of refugees dramatically. The UN refugee agency UNHCR identified voluntary repatriation as the optimal durable solution

for refugee problems and designated the 1990s as the “decade of repatriation” (Koser and Black 1999). In Asia, the return of the five million refugees from Pakistan and Iran to Afghanistan between 2002 and 2009 was “the single largest return program” in the history of UNHCR.²⁰ If the provision of protection for refugees during the Cold War was based on apparently universalistic, but deeply politicized, humanitarianism, the return of refugees was predicated on the belief that the nation-state, now supposedly free of ideological struggles, was the natural and neutral institution that every person should belong to. The world was beginning to be imagined as a depoliticized “national order of things” (Malkki 1995b).

The depoliticized perception about the world order also underpins the return of victims of human trafficking. The four Rs—rescue, return, rehabilitation, and reintegration—are recommended by international organizations as well as national governments as the optimal solution to human trafficking (Lindquist, this volume). Return is perceived as such a desired outcome that international organization staff are sometimes reluctant to identify a person as a victim who may not have a place to return to, because where there is no point of return, there is no solution.²¹

Although the return of refugees and victims is supposed to help restore a sense of normalcy, the returnees’ experiences on the ground can be traumatic. Sylvia R. Cowan’s chapter focuses on the relation between the normalizing intention of return policies and traumatizing experiences of return. Some former Cambodian refugees and their children were deported from the United States for committing minor crimes, even after they had served their full prison terms. The repatriation was implemented based on bilateral agreements in a time when negotiation was preferred to military intervention to deal with international affairs, and was thus meant to maintain law and order by peaceful means.²² But on the ground the repatriations were violently disruptive for the deportees and their families. They were typically repatriated suddenly, without warning, and many grew up in the United States and had no knowledge of their home country. The forced return was also historically related to U.S. military interventions in postcolonial Indochina and the refugees’ consequent displacement within the American host society that turned them into gang members. The succession from one type of displacement to another as experienced by the refugees illustrates the changing global order in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The second group of returnees—primarily unskilled labor migrants

whose position is ambiguous for the states—is quickly growing in size. My own chapter describes how compulsory return is central to the control of unskilled labor mobility in East Asia. Compulsory return effectively renders the relations between migrants and the host state nothing more than a labor contract. A number of countries identify pregnant women and sick migrants as primary subjects of repatriation precisely because these “problematic” bodies bear the danger of developing social relations beyond economic contracts with the host nation. Return is enforced through intricate collaborations between states, employers, recruiters, and other institutions across countries. Such connections between the multiple actors constitute an institutional basis for enforced return and making order from migration.

The third group of returnees, the highly skilled and the capital rich, embodies even more complex logics of order making. The return of the highly skilled is supposed to bring the nation into the global circuit of flexible capital accumulation and knowledge production, as evidenced by the rise of the so-called brain-circulation paradigm in the policy thinking of the 1990s (Global Commission of International Migration 2005). But global economic integration is always mediated by specific social institutions and political ideologies. Carol Upadhyā’s chapter on returning technopreneurs in Bangalore, India, suggests that the elite returnees are not only bringing back capital, know-how, and international connections but also generating “neonationalism.” Neonationalism bases national pride on the nation’s position in the global market instead of independence and self-sufficiency, defines national belonging in cultural terms, and considers economic redistribution and political participation less important. In contrast to the nationalism that led India’s independence movement, neonationalism is outward looking, culturalist, and often elitist.

Finally, Melody Chia-Wen Lu and Shin Hyunjoon, whose study is based on returning Korean Chinese from China to South Korea, make a strong case that it is policy differentiation, rather than experiential difference, that matters. The Korean Chinese were in the 1980s regarded as representatives of the global Korean diaspora, and victims who were forced to leave the Korean peninsula by historical injustices such as Japanese colonialization. As such their return visits were welcomed and encouraged as a means to redress these past injustices. The position of the Korean Chinese, however, became much more ambiguous in the late 1990s when South Korea attempted to formalize its relations to Korean diasporas as part of its state-led globalizing agenda. Korean Chinese were privileged compared

to other foreigners due to ethnic connections, but they were treated less favorably compared to the more-recent emigrants to the West. The government changed this policy due to protests from the Korean Chinese in South Korea in 2004 and replaced nation of residence with one's education level and occupation as the central criteria for differentiating the return migrants. In practice the Korean Chinese are still required to submit more documents to prove their education levels than their counterparts returning from developed countries. Thus, the returnees are differentiated, and the criteria and methods of differentiation also vary from time to time.

The case of the Korean Chinese shows that nation-states remain the defining framework that organizes transnational mobility. The concerns about ethnic identity and economic competitiveness are supposed to enhance the national position of South Korea. The South Korean vision of globalization is equally about opening up the nation to the world as it is about nationalizing connections, knowledge, labor, and capital among the dispersed Korean diaspora. And in order to maximize the benefit of return to the South Korean nation, potential returnees were differentiated according to their current nation of residence, especially the nation's position in the global hierarchy. One of the reasons for the 2004 policy change that favored the Korean Chinese was the rise of China. The apparent ethnonationalist stance has not undermined the relationship between migrants to the sending or receiving nations, as defined in civic terms. This international dimension of nationalization leads to the tendency of coalescence, which is an equally important aspect as differentiation in governing mobility through return.

Nationalizing and Naturalizing

What is remarkable about the governmental differentiation of returnees in Asia is that migrant-receiving and -sending states are increasingly in agreement with each other on how the returnees are to be differentiated. The highly skilled are desirable for the country that they return to partly because they are desirable in the country of residence. Unskilled or irregular migrants are unattractive to both the receiving and the sending countries; nevertheless the countries agree that return is a migrant's right that cannot be denied and an obligation that cannot be easily waived. Compulsory return has been a basis for intergovernmental agreements on labor migration in East Asia since the end of the 1970s (Xiang, this volume). As for victims of human trafficking, it is now an obligation for legitimate sov-

ereignities to repatriate the victims and to admit the returned.²³ Sending states are willing to collaborate with receiving states because this enables them to establish closer relations with their overseas citizens and to tap into outmigration for national development. Receiving states also share some authority in regulating immigration with the sending states, for instance, by delegating power to government and private agencies in the sending countries for selecting and screening would-be migrants (see Xiang, this volume). This is because, given that immigration control is being tightened across the world, “the labor-sending state is perhaps the institution most able to effectively resolve the contradictory forces of labor demand and immigration restriction” (Rodriguez 2010, xxiii). Malaysia and Indonesia have developed relatively effective transnational operational systems to enforce return (Lindquist, this volume). Instead of resisting the pressure from Malaysia to receive deportees, Indonesia as the country of origin in fact has used this momentum to tighten its regulations of outmigration.

Such interstate institutional coalescence means that return programs enable nation-states to enhance their sovereign power transnationally and mutually. Both the sending and receiving states become more powerful in relation to migrants. As such, the central tension in international migration is no longer the one between migrants and the receiving society or that between the sending and receiving states, but is rather the one between migrants and alliances of states. An unskilled migrant worker violates regulations of *both* the sending and receiving countries if he or she fails to return as required, which can be punishable by both countries. In contrast, a highly skilled or a successful entrepreneur can make himself or herself more valuable to the multiple countries by moving back and forth between them. It is important to note that such institutional coalescence between states is largely an intra-Asia phenomenon. The repatriation of migrants from Europe and North America to many Asian countries remains cumbersome and is subject to ad hoc bilateral negotiations due to the lack of general consensus.

There is also an ideational coalescence regarding return migration. The fact that the notion of “return” is used to refer to migration journeys of vastly different natures should not be seen as a problem of misnomer. It instead indicates the construction of a hegemonic framework, a good common sense, that gives migration particular meanings. As Johan Lindquist’s chapter suggests, the return discourses deployed by governments, NGOs, and public media on different types of migrants echo each other and collectively naturalize return and home. Since everyone is supposed to love

home and is protected at home, return is assumed to be unproblematic for all migrants. What's wrong with asking someone to go back to where he or she "really" belongs?

The sense of naturalness lends return policies strong legitimacy. The Chinese word for destiny, *guisu*, literally means the "lodge to return to" (see also Wang, this volume, on the meaning of *gui*). The official Japanese term for foreigners taking up Japanese citizenship is *kika* (return and convert).²⁴ The word *return* establishes the directionality of mobility—directionality in ethical terms instead of only in the physical sense. To return is to reach one's destiny.

Apart from the naturalizing and normalizing effects, return can be energizing. The anthropologist Charles Stafford (2001) was puzzled by the Chinese custom of sending off and then receiving deities annually.²⁵ Why don't the Chinese make the gods permanent residents in their houses? This is because, as Stafford argued, alternating departing and returning is crucial to establishing, maintaining, and renewing social relationships. Departure and return make us feel sad and joyful and urge us to reflect on the past and yearn for the future, thus bringing constant dynamics to relationships. In a world where imagined communities reach far beyond the national border (see Appadurai 1996), returnees from overseas are probably more capable than the supposedly quintessential, deep-rooted peasants or tribal populations of energizing nationalism. If the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is one of most arresting emblems of nationalism, as Benedict Anderson (1991, 50–51) pointed out so aptly, in the time of globalization, the returnee is a powerful embodiment of nationalism. If the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier combines the senses of the sacred and the profane that are essential to modern nationalism, the returnee reconciles territoriality and extraterritoriality, which is crucial for neonationalism in the globalizing age.

The naturalizing effect of return is of course nothing natural in itself. Our chapters show that such effect is historically specific. The natural appearance of return is constituted by particular international agreements, and by the participation of NGOs, public media, business associations, and private agencies that specialize in recruitment and transport. It is these institutional arrangements that underpin the dialectics between differentiation and coalescence, between the national and the transnational, and thereby contribute to the ordering of mobility without hindering it.

What does the nationalization of transnational mobility mean for migrants' political agency? On the one hand, migrants face tremendous ob-

stacles in challenging the system of tightly interrelated nation-states. State-facilitated returns curtail the political agency of transnational connections. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's envisaging of the multitude might be too optimistic (2000, 2004). On the other hand, the naturalization of return renders to migrants the appropriate hegemonic discourse to "speak back" to nation-states to demand justice and dignity. As Lu and Shin's chapter shows, the Korean Chinese drew on the state ethno-nationalist discourse to claim return as their right, which must be met with equitable, nondiscriminatory policies. The nationalization of migration may also lead to a nationalization of migrant politics; that is, migrants use nation-states as the central scale in organizing their actions, take national discourses as the main target of critique as well as the main resource for articulating their demand, and identify changing national policies as their primary objective. For instance, the contestation of the meaning of "return" among the former Japanese soldiers and Nikkeijin engendered critical reflections of the hegemonic perceptions about the Japanese nation and its role in the war. For both the highly skilled Indian professionals who circulate freely and voluntarily on the global scale and the forced Cambodian returnees, working with national and local organizations seems to be the most realistic strategy for making changes in their own lives and beyond. But just as the nationalization of mobility does not imply spatial fixing, the nationalization of migrant politics is certainly not territorially closed. The U.S.-originated NGOs play active roles in Cambodia in assisting the returnees, and the Indian returnees' engagement with the local public is to a great extent shaped by their position in the global market. The Chinese migrant workers in Japan, as my chapter demonstrates, contested restrictive regulations of the Japanese and Chinese states by refusing to return to China. Their refusal was meant to ensure that they would be able to seek justice through the Japanese national legal system and government, and at the same time create international pressure on the Chinese government to redress problems on the sending side. The transnational dimension of nationalization will to a great extent condition both how mobility is regulated and how migrant politics evolve in the future.

Notes

1. Migration Information Source, "Migration Experts Size up 2006," December 2006, www.migrationinformation.org, accessed October 10, 2009.
2. The exact number of returnees to Hong Kong is difficult to establish. According

to a survey by Hong Kong Baptist University in 2002, 3 percent of Hong Kong residents chose the category of “returnee” as their cultural identity (Hong Kong Transition Project 2002, 13).

3. This is believed to be discounted due to “substantial under-reporting . . . [o]wing to the rather sensitive nature of the subject” (Census and Statistics Department of HKSAR 2000, 48; see also Ley and Kobayashi 2005, 116).

4. For a representative text of the increasingly popular discourse of the “return” of Asia, see Mahhubani 2008. The notion “Asia redux” was proposed by Prasenjit Duara (2010). While “return” calls attention to Asia’s resumption of its position as a global hegemony, “redux” emphasizes the reactivated connections between different parts of Asia that were weakened due to their subjugation to colonial powers and the Cold War divide.

5. *People’s Daily*, China’s flagship state media, reported that 186,200 Chinese students had returned home throughout 2011, an increase of more than 38 percent compared to 135,000 over 2010. *People’s Daily* (English), “818,400 overseas students return to China,” March 16, 2012, <http://thepienews.com/news/number-of-returning-chinese-students-up-38/>, last accessed February 8, 2013.

6. Ministry of Justice, Japan, *Booklet on Immigration*, Tokyo, 2005, 10.

7. For Australia, see the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Annual Reports for the 2000s, available on <http://www.immi.gov.au/about/reports/annual/>, last accessed February 8, 2013. For the UK, see UK Home Office, “Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom 2008,” 68, August 2009, <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1409.pdf>. For the United States, see U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *2011 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2011, 102, <http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm>.

8. The campaign mobilized up to 500,000 officials and volunteers, and sent 600,000 to 800,000 migrants home, including 400,000 who left voluntarily for fear of harsh punishment and 200,000 to 400,000 who were deported. See “Give Ops Tegas a Chance,” 2005. See also Chin 2008.

9. Martin Ruhs and Philip Martin (2008) have argued that constraints on migrants’ settlements and access to citizenship in the destination country, reinforced through compulsory return, will increase the number of migrants. Conversely, countries that provide more rights to migrants will have to admit fewer migrants.

10. When the Japanese government finally started admitting foreign labor after twenty years of debates, it swiftly introduced a “departure order system” in 2004 as an integral part of the general regulation of mobility (Ministry of Justice, Japan, *Booklet on Immigration*, Tokyo, 2005). Globally, return has also become a crucial method of regulating mobility. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is almost an organization solely for return migration: as much as 70 percent of its budget is allocated to return programs, particularly the Assisted Voluntary Return Program; in 2005 it managed more than one hundred return projects globally and assisted in the return of 3.61 million migrants since the mid-1990s (International Organization for Migration 2006, 409). The German government paid IOM USD 10 million in 2002 alone for repatriating unwanted migrants (International Organization for Migration 2002, 5).

11. Michel-Rolph Trouillot sees forced return as the moment when mobility encounters the state most directly and even violently (2001, 125).

12. Rhacel Salazar Parrenas (2001) documents how return became a major theme of Filipino migrants' literature in Hong Kong, and the preparation for return dominated the life of Filipino entertainers in Japan beginning with their arrival.

13. Li Minghuan (2001) has detailed how EU immigration policies induced the perception among Chinese migrants that once one got to Europe, one could always stay. See also Skrentny et al. 2007 for a similar comparison between Asia and Europe.

14. Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers," <http://www.aseansec.org/19264.htm>, accessed April 14, 2012. Graziano Battistella and Maruja M. B. Asis (2003, 10) conclude that the ASEAN "regional approach [to migration management] remains at the consultative level, with minimal impact on policy process and decision-making in the individual countries."

15. The three ports of Xiamen, Shantou, and Hong Kong in south China, for example, recorded 14.7 million departures between 1869 and 1939, and 11.6 million returns between 1873 and 1939. See Sugihara 2005. On the other side of the world, one-fourth to one-third of transatlantic migrants returned from North America to Europe between 1870 and 1940, amounting to ten million (King 2000, 29). For a careful research on the high level of return migration from the United States to Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, see Wyman 1996. For a recent review of return as a historical phenomenon, see Ley and Kobayashi 2005, 112.

16. For a revealing case study of how Indian seafarers had moved back and forth without the intention of settling in the UK for a long period of time, see Balachandran 2012.

17. Other studies that established this phenomenon include Unger 1986; de Haas 2006; Labrianidis and Kazazi 2006.

18. A recent major publication on this topic is Tagliacozzo and Chang 2011.

19. For the case of the return of scientists to India in the 1950s, see Krishna and Khadria 1997, 353–58.

20. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), "Limited Scope to Absorb More Refugees," March 15, 2009, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/83474/AFGHANISTAN-Limited-scope-to-absorb-more-refugees>, last accessed February 8, 2013.

21. The return of victims as a means of protection is in practice closely related to the return of irregular migrants as a punishment. Diana Wong (2005, 69) traces the current global "rumor of trafficking" to the concern about irregular migration in Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall. In Asia, the "Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration," signed by nineteen governments in Pacific Asia in 1999, made a clear link between irregular migration and human trafficking: "Timely return of those without right to enter and remain is an important strategy to reduce the attractiveness of trafficking." (Article 13 of the Declaration, http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/rcp/APC/BANGKOK_DECLARATION.pdf, accessed May 23, 2013). Commenting on the high-profile Ops Tegas campaign, the then deputy prime minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Razak,

warned that no category of irregular migrants would be spared, including those with documents issued by UNHCR (*Star* 2005). Forced return is now regarded as an effective means to reduce irregular migration and unsuccessful asylum seekers worldwide (see Ghosh 1998; Koser 2000, 69–70; Lakzco 2000).

22. A number of researchers have elaborated on how deportation is related to the Constitution of the United States as an immigrant nation and to social control. See de Genova 2002; Ngai 2004; Peutz 2006.

23. Since the late 1990s, multilateral governmental agreements, such as the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT), have created the infrastructure as well as pressure for national governments to enforce the return of victims of human trafficking.

24. The high-profile Abu Dhabi Dialogue on Temporary Contractual Labor for Cooperation between Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia, attended by ministers from twenty countries in 2008, endorsed the so-called life-cycle approach in managing labor mobility. This approach suggests that migration has a natural life cycle that consists of four stages: recruitment, employment abroad, preparation for return, and reintegration. See P. Martin 2009, 60–61. Return is presented to be “natural” and inevitable with this discourse of “life cycle.”

25. One of the most important Chinese festivals (which is also celebrated in Vietnam) is the sending off of the Kitchen God (Zaoshen or Zaojun) to Heaven on the twenty-third day of the twelfth lunar month, and then welcoming his return four days later.