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Hearing the Voiceless Voices: Literary Historiography of Post – war Zainichi Korean literature

In this presentation, I will discuss perspectives required for a historiography of minority literature, focusing on the Post WWII Zainichi Korean (Korean residents in Japan) literature. In my book *Towards a Zainichi Korean Literary History: The Polyphony of Voiceless Voices* (2014 in Japan, 2019 in Korea), I presented early Zainichi literary history from 1945 to 1970 as an element of the cultural decolonisation of Zainichi Koreans. That was the first attempt to write a history of Zainichi literature, shaped by intercultural and interliterary processes.

The bilingual nature of this history was the main characteristic of this study, breaking with the conventional academic approach wherein Zainichi literature is only recognised as a monolingual literature written in Japanese. Beginning with the acquisition of literacy in Korean by Zainichi women in the immediate post – war period, the book depicts literary history chronologically on a strategic basis by revealing this long – neglected blank period. This was an attempt to overcome the weaknesses of the generational approach adopted by previous studies. Beyond bilingualism and women's illiteracy, this literary history highlights the hitherto overlooked issues of North – South conflict amid the Cold War, influences from North and South Korean literature, and migration or self – exile between Japan, South Korea, and North Korea. Taking these formerly overlooked points into account enabled the voices of Zainichi Koreans who have long been muted to be heard. Having clarified the above – mentioned aporias, including male – centrism, authoritarianism in literature, monolingualism, and Cold War conflict, the next step will be to argue for the necessity of expanding the concept of literary works themselves. That is, an examination of ego – documents such as memoirs, diaries, letters, and travelogues is essential. Another major task is to unearth, collect, and preserve the related materials.