


## Greetings



# Documenting the Life Stories of Korean Newcomers in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward: Fundamental Research to Create a More United Multiethnic Community

Shinjuku ward is located in the centre of Tokyo's business and commercial district and is one of the most multicultural and multiethnic areas in Japan. It is reported that people from over 110 countries live in the ward and the Korean newcomers have a significant presence in the area.

Yet, we do not see much personal interactions between these new residents and local Japanese.

With this project, we will make 100 interviews with Korean newcomers available to read for all residences in the area as well as for the wider society.

We hope this project will be another step forward for the mutual understanding and a better future for the community.

**November 1<sup>st</sup> 2009**  
**Project leader**  
**WATANABE, Yukinori**

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**To: October 2011**

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## About the Project

Japan, as it becomes increasingly multiethnic, finds itself in a position to create communal relationships among people with different cultural backgrounds, particularly at a local level. Although the number of ethnic Koreans, whether "newcomers" or long-term residents in Japan, has grown in recent years, in Tokyo's Shinjuku district they have few opportunities to interact and build close relationships with the district's Japanese residents. Interpersonal relationships between these two groups, however, are important for establishing a foundation on which to build a strong sense of community.

In this project, interviews will be conducted with 100 Korean newcomers in Shinjuku in order to record their life stories. We will share their narratives with the public, posting them on a website and publishing a periodical. The purpose of this project is twofold: First, to help Korean newcomers shape their identities as local residents through the interview process and second, to raise awareness among members of the local Japanese community of the experiences of their Korean counterparts with whom they share communal space.

The theoretical framework that informs this project is narrative theory, an ontological and epistemological understanding of human beings as storytellers. This theory assumes that human beings make sense of the world and themselves by narrating, reading, and listening to stories. It is expected that all of the people involved in this project will have an opportunity to reflect on their social space and be encouraged to attain a positive sense of self. The ultimate goal of this project is to open a dialogue and bring people together.

## Schedule

### 2009

**November** Preparation starts

**December** Pilot interviews

### 2010

**January** Project interviews

**May** First publication

**September** Second publication

**October** First year report

### 2011

**March** Third publication

**July** Fourth Publication

**October** Final report

## Project Members

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