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UNAUTHORIZED ARRIVALS:
RETHINKING BORDER CONTROLS IN EAST ASIA

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In May of 2002, TV viewers in Japan and around the world were shocked by video images of struggling and screaming North Korean refugees being dragged by Chinese police out of the Japanese Consular compound in the northern Chinese city of Shenyang. The family of five North Koreans had entered the compound of the Japanese consulate to seek asylum but, for reasons which became a matter of international controversy, Chinese police were able to pursue them into the compound and forcibly remove them. After some negotiation, the asylum-seekers were released and allowed to leave for South Korea via the Philippines, and the issue faded from public consciousness.

The Shenyang Incident, however, was just one of a number of recent controversial events (the 2001 “Tampa crisis” and SIEV X tragedy in Australia being other striking examples) which have provoked intense controversy over the question of border controls. In an age of a globalized economy, growing cross-border movements of people and heightened anxieties about national security, such controversies seem certain to continue for the foreseeable future.

One of the striking aspects of debates around the Shenyang Incident was the way in which brief and dramatic segments of video footage (released to the media by a refugee support group) were turned into the kernel of several quite different narratives about borders. For some sections of the Japanese media, the story was all about an illegal incursion into Japanese territorial space – the Consular compound – by people whom the press unvaryingly referred to as Chinese “armed police” (as though they had taken up arms specifically for the occasion). For other Japanese observers, on the contrary, the story was one about the failure of the Japanese government to respond adequately to the needs and rights of asylum-seekers: indeed, about possible collusion between Japanese consular staff and Chinese police in the removal of the refugees. Some commentators linked the event to a recent refusal by

the Japanese embassy in Prague to grant assistance to Roma asylum seekers, or to the repressive attitude of the Japanese state to claims by Afghans in Japan for refugee status. (see for example Isozaki 2002) Finally, as controversy about the incident began to die down, a few journalists gave a further twist to the story by revealing that the NGO which had taken and released the video of the asylum seekers had close links to right-wing political groups in the United States, suggesting that the incident might also have been to some degree used by US interests to further the American campaign against the North Korean corner of George W. Bush's "Axis of Evil". (*Mainichi Shinbun*, 22 July 2002)

The Politics of Border Controls

Over the past two decades or so, the rise of cultural studies has gone hand in hand with growing scholarly interest in the issue of frontiers. The boom in research on diasporas, identities and cultural hybridity has encouraged much discussion about border-crossings and about the construction of the boundaries of nationhood and ethnicity. In all of this, however, less has been written about the frontier as a physical place at which individuals encounter the power of the nation state, sometimes in the most naked form. In anthropological terms, it is true that borders are "zones wherein the negotiations of international and transnational culture take place". (See Donnen and Wilson 1994, 7-8) But (as in the case of the gateway to the Shenyang Consular compound) they are also physical barriers which may slam shut in people's faces, or across which they may be dragged kicking and screaming by police.

This paper is a preliminary exploration of some historical aspects of physically-experienced national borders. Rather than viewing these borders as the geographical outer limits of the nation's sovereignty, I want to consider them primarily as places where a *particular form of politics* takes place: a form of politics that deserves more attention than it has received to date. Political life is normally perceived as occurring within the polity – that is, within the bounds of the nation state. In East Asia particularly, for at least three-and-a-half decades after the end of the Pacific War, national frontiers were reinforced by the fissures in global society created by the Cold War. The frontiers between China and Russia, China and Taiwan, North and South Korea, Japan and Russia, Japan and China etc. became almost impassable barriers, intensifying the perception of the border as the natural outer limit of national

sovereignty. Hence the entrenched images of Japan and Korea (in particular) as racially homogeneous, self-contained societies where migration and minorities have played an insignificant role in modern history.

In a longer-term perspective, though, the Cold War decades can be seen as a rather exceptional period in a modern world where multidirectional cross-border flows of people have been a recurring feature of nation-building and empire-building. To evoke some sense of this history of movement, one need only recall the million-odd Japanese living in the colonial territories of Korea, Taiwan and Karafuto by the early 1930s; the 300,000 or more Japanese migrants to “Manchukuo”; the estimated 500,000 Koreans who had migrated to Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and the Tumen region by the early 1920s; the several thousand Chinese workers recruited to labour on construction projects in Japan during the First World War, and the thousands more brought in to work in the colonies of Taiwan and Karafuto during the 1920s; the smaller numbers of nonetheless economically important Chinese merchants who travelled across the face of interwar East Asia, from Fujien in the south to Sakhalin and the Amur region in the north; and the two-million or so Koreans and Chinese working in Japan at the end of the Pacific War.

The state was not a passive observer of these movements of people. Throughout, nation states and empires (in the early twentieth-century East Asian case, particularly the Japanese empire) have played an active role: at times promoting or forcing cross-border movements, at other times acquiescing in their occurrence, at others again seeking to regulate or limit flows. The state’s role as gatekeeper of human movement involves a distinctive form of politics. Unlike conventional “international relations”, the politics of border controls is not centred on negotiations between governments, nor on the participation of governments in international organizations; unlike domestic politics, it cannot be imagined as the unfolding of some form of “social contract” between the government and the governed. Rather, border controls involve an entirely non-contractual relationship between states and individuals – a relationship whereby states separate those who possess freedom of movement from those who do not. “Freedom of movement” in this context is the right to choose the geographical space in which one lives one’s life: the right, in other words, to move across international boundaries, but equally importantly, the right to choose to stay put. The politics of border controls also sets the terms of a profoundly important act of unequal exchange: an exchange through which people who cross international boundaries

either gain new rights and privileges, or are required to surrender some part of the civic rights, at the moment when they step across the line.

Even in the most formally democratic of societies, decisions on who passes through the gate and on what terms are not usually made according to transparent rules. Although the law may provide general guidelines as to who may be let in (and sometimes, who may be let out), the practical politics of border controls remains an area in which the officials on the spot generally possess immense power to issue rulings which are rarely subject to public accountability. Even today, the practical politics of border controls is, in this sense, far closer to the politics of colonial domination than to the processes of constitutional democracy. Understanding this everyday politics of border controls is thus profoundly important to understanding the meaning and limitations of democracy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Generally speaking, over the past century, we can trace two underlying trends in the politics of border controls. The first has been a gradual shift away from the use of rather simple categories of exclusion and inclusion – categories based for example, on race or nationality – and towards the creation of increasingly complex hierarchies of inequality: the emergence, in other words, of what Etienne Balibar and others call “differential racism”. (Balibar 1991) Within the hierarchy of differential racism, each individual’s freedom of movement is determined by officials on the basis of a compound equation of nationality, ethnicity, occupation, education and status. But the way in which the equation is calculated is often obscure, subjective, and influenced by temporary fluctuations in domestic public opinion or international politics.

The second trend is that there has been a growing disjuncture between the geographical frontiers of nation states – the lines on the map surrounding national territory – and border as social reality – that is, the point at which individuals are selected for admission to or exclusion from the national territory. In the age of train and boat, travellers normally encountered border controls (if controls existed at all) at or near the geographical perimeter of the nation. But since the rise of air-travel, the creation of international refugee conventions etc., border controls are often encountered either outside or in the very heart of national territory. For the Shenyang asylum seekers, the frontier of Japan was not the invisible line demarcating the outer limits of Japanese territorial waters in the Eastern Sea, but the very visible and heavily guarded gateway to a Japanese consulate in China. For most of us who travel back and forth to Japan in the course of our work, the border is similarly far removed from

the geographical outer limits of Japanese territory. It is generally, in fact, a thick red line painted on the floor in front of the immigration counters at Narita or Kansai International Airports, and marked with words “wait here”.

Changing Rites of Passage

In an age of obsessive concern about national security and border controls, it is easy to assume that the machinery of passport checks and immigration procedures is an inevitable part of the nation state system. But it is worth recalling how recently this machinery was invented. Think back, for example, to experience of the well-to-do European or American traveller arriving in Japan at the beginning of the twentieth century. Here is an account by Walter del Mar, a British traveller whose *Around the World via Japan* was first published in 1903. Del Mar arrived in Nagasaki by ship from Shanghai. His ship anchored opposite the Mitsubishi dockyards in the port of Nagasaki to take on coal for the remainder of its journey. Del Mar makes some unsympathetic comments about the women coal-loaders who are responsible for fuelling the ship, and then describes going on a rikisha trip to the village of Mogi, a Shinto shrine and other local sights, before rejoining the ship for the journey to Yokohama. (del Mar 1904, 128-129) What is missing from this account is any reference at all to official inspection of the arriving passengers.

Of course, it is difficult to be sure when silences in a travel account mean that something did not in fact happen, and when they simply mean that an event is not described because the author considered it uninteresting. However, there are good reasons for thinking that in this case del Mar’s failure to say anything about immigration procedures means that there were none. Other early twentieth century accounts of arrivals in Nagasaki follow the same patterns. And del Mar himself does comment on various sorts of official inspection which he encountered elsewhere in Japan. When his ship reaches Yokohama, for example, “passengers from China are subject to rather a searching customs examination, and duties are levied on all Chinese goods”. (del Mar 1904, 131-132) This rigorous inspection, however, evidently did not include a passport check. We know this because del Mar at that point did not possess a passport: he acquired one (as he tells us) only some time later, after several days of sightseeing in Yokohama and a trip to Tokyo by train. “Our official letters of introduction were duly presented at Tōkyō, and we procured through

our respective Legations, in due course, our passports (*ryokô-menjo*) and special permits to visit the palaces at Kyôto, the castle at Nagoya, and the arsenal at Tôkyô”. (del Mar 1904, 142)

For del Mar, as for most travellers at that time, passports were not a requirement for foreign travel. They were a privilege attainable by those who had the necessary “letters of introduction”, and their function was to smooth relations with local officials encountered in the course of the journey. Throughout the course of the nineteenth century, indeed, the general tendency around the world was for restrictions on travel to be loosened. In agrarian societies in Europe and elsewhere, a central concern of the state had been to prevent the movement of rural populations from country to city, and to restrict the flow of farm or skilled labour into neighbouring states. Border controls were therefore often directed more at inter-regional than at international migration, and more at emigration than at immigration. The legacy of this fear of emigration was still evident in East Asia in the late nineteenth century. For example, (according to one Russian source) when landless farmers began to move in large numbers across the border from Korea into Manchuria and Eastern Siberia in the 1860s, they travelled at night above all to avoid the Korean guards who were charged with preventing their flight, and were liable to shoot them on sight. The soldiers on the Manchurian side of the frontier were a danger, not because they were interested in stopping the entry of the Koreans, but because they saw them as a source of booty, and regularly robbed them of their possessions or even abducted and raped women migrants. (Quoted in Kuzin 1993, 12-13)

The nineteenth century process of empire building stimulated massive international movements of people (both voluntary and forced), and traditional restrictions on domestic and international migration gradually broke down. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, some politicians and sections of the media in various countries were starting to express alarm at large-scale movements of people, particularly emigrants from China and Jewish refugees from Russia. After the outbreak of the First World War, this fear of human mobility combined with fears of foreign subversion to encourage the creation of formal systems of border control in many nations. In imposing these systems, countries were able to use relatively new technologies, including the techniques of mass photography and of fingerprinting (developed by the British scientist Frances Galton in the 1880s) as part of the armory of surveillance. (Torpey 2000, 107)

As John Torpey writes:

Mobilization for war stiffens the backs of states and, like the threat of a hanging, concentrates their minds; administration becomes focused on a single overriding aim. The achievement of that aim during the First World War led to the consolidation of views about foreigners and methods for restricting their movement that would prove to be an enduring part of our world... At first, reflecting the persistence of the view that such controls were acceptable only during time of war, the newly instituted passport requirements were typically thought to be provisional measures, responses to a state of emergency. That the war would ultimately have the effect of bringing an end to the *laissez faire* era in migration would not have been predicted by many contemporaries. (Torpey 2000, 111-112)

Japan followed other countries in introducing, in January 1918, a directive on the “entry of aliens”, which empowered local authorities (including those in the colonies) to prohibit the landing of a rather long list of categories of foreigners: people who lacked a passport or other evidence of citizenship [*ryoken mata wa kokuseki shômeisho*]; those suspected of working for interests of an enemy nation or against the interests of Japan; people liable to disturb public order or subvert morality; people suspected of being vagrants or beggars; anyone suffering from an infectious disease or thought to be a risk to public health; and the mentally ill, poor people and others deemed likely to require public assistance. (Hômushô Nyûkoku Kanrikyoku 1964, 8; Naimushô Keibôkyoku 1979, 1-2)

Since the implementation of the directive was left to local authorities, though, there seems to have considerable variation in border controls from place to place. Travellers arriving in Nagasaki in the 1920s, for example, apparently continued to encounter few checks. On the other hand, the authorities in colonial Korea quickly implemented a tough regime of controls on the Korean-Chinese border. The British traveller Gilbert Collins gives a rather vivid account of this border in the early 1920s (one of the few interesting moments in his narrative, which mainly notable for its stunning cultural insensitivity and grating attempts at jocularly). The inspection of travellers by Japanese officials took place, he notes at Antung [Dandong], which was actually on the Chinese side of the frontier: “here we were desired to rise and lay all our luggage on the platform while certain small officials of the Japanese Government conned our passports and ransacked our trunks for dutiable goods”. The reasons

behind these rigorous checks can be imagined, and are confirmed by Collins' subsequent reference to a diplomatic incident which occurred shortly before he entered the Japanese empire: "this river frontier between China and Korea blazed into a fleeting notoriety in 1920 by reason of the arrest of Mr. George Shaw, a British merchant, nominally for entering Japanese territory without a passport, in actual fact for having aided and abetted the malcontent nationalists of Korea". (Collins 1924: 17)

Even after the First World War, however, exceptions to the passport requirement remained. The most important of these was that travellers from China did not need passports, just as Japanese did not need passports to travel to China. Rather remarkably, passport-free travel between the two countries continued even for some time after the outbreak of war between Japan and China, and was abolished only in 1939.

This raises an interesting question related to the image of Japan as a country with isolationist immigration policies. In 1899, with the abolition of the Unequal Treaties and the introduction of Japan's first nationality law, the Japanese government introduced its first official measures to regulate immigrant labour, Imperial Ordinance No. 352, which allowed foreign migrants to Japan to travel and live outside bounds of the "open ports", but only on condition that they refrained from working in a wide range of "low skilled" labouring occupations. This was followed up by a more detailed directive from the Ministry of the Interior (Directive no 42 of 1899), which specified that people engaged in various trades were not to "pursue their callings in Japan outside the former foreign settlements" unless they had the "express permission of the administrative authorities". An apparently comprehensive, but in fact somewhat confusing, list of these occupations was provided. They included "farming, fishing, mining, construction, building, manufacturing, transport, hauling, longshore work and other miscellaneous trades". On the other hand, foreign immigrants were allowed to work as cloth merchants, tailors, cooks, household servants, knife grinders, and in various other specified occupations. (Niki 1993, 133; see also Elliot 1921) As I have argued elsewhere, the restrictions on labour immigration were influenced by widespread and sometimes rather hysterical fears of an influx of cheap Chinese labour – the same fears that motivated the introduction of the White Australia policy and the US Chinese Exclusion Acts. (Morris-Suzuki 2002, 164) The 1899 immigration restrictions are generally assumed to have effectively prevented labour migration to Japan from anywhere other than the colonial empire during the prewar period. But, if

Chinese people were able to travel to and from Japan without passports, how were these restrictions enforced, and how do we know for sure how many Chinese people there were in Japan at any given time?

Policing the Boundaries

The wonderful thing about the bureaucratic mind is that it requires precedents. Confronted with an unfamiliar problem, the first thing any self-respecting official will do is to discover whether any other official has confronted a similar problem before, and if so, what the solution was. From time to time, therefore, various ministries in Japan produced helpful compendia of precedents [*zenrei*] to guide the bewildered bureaucrats on the front line of border controls. From these, we can obtain some rather interesting glimpses of the way in which the control of immigration worked in prewar Japan.

The first thing to notice is that the implementation of border controls was in the hands of local government and local police forces, and all the evidence suggests that they applied the rules with great variability, in the light of what they saw as their own region's economic and social interests. Referring to the ruling which required foreign labourers to obtain the "express permission of the authorities", one British lawyer working in 1920s Japan observed "it would appear that the permission of an administrative office must be given with some freedom from the fact that a number of American and Canadian labourers are at present engaged upon construction work (building) in Tokyo under the auspices of the George A. Fuller Company of the Orient" (Elliot 1921) At the height of the First World War boom, indeed, Yamaguchi Prefecture manage to bring in up to 3,000 Chinese labourers to construct dockyards, and the 1919-1920 Japan Year Book acknowledged that "it is believed that pretty large numbers of Chinese labourers must be employed in factories in the Kwansai district including Osaka and Kobe" (Quoted in Elliot 1921; see also Niki 1993: 134; Vasishth 1997: 128)

Secondly, problems of implementing border controls seemed to come to a head in moments of economic crisis. The Interior Ministry's handbook of precedents, published in 1932, consists mainly of letters from worried prefectural officials to the Ministry, asking for guidance in deciding tricky immigration cases. The majority of the letters about labour migration were written either in the period in the early 1920s

(ie at the time of the post-First World War slump and the Kanto earthquake) or between 1929 and 1931 (ie at the height of the depression which followed the Wall Street Crash). In between, it seems, local officials were resolving awkward cases in the light of their own judgment, but at times of crisis they tended to face pressure clamp down on “foreigners” who seemed to be competing with local business, and it was at these times that they turned to a higher authority for guidance.

Here we encounter travellers whose circumstances were very different from those of Walter del Mar and Gilbert Collins. On 26 August 1931, for example, 14-year old Yang Baoxiang and 26 year old Yuan Guiqing arrived in Kobe from Shanghai to work as assistants for an Osaka company called Wahô Yôko. As they stepped off the boat, they can have had no idea what a flurry of official anxiety their arrival was about to cause. Wahô Yôko was a family-run company based in Shanghai, which had set up a branch in Osaka to sell cotton textiles. Soon after its arrival in Japan, however, the company had been hit by the effects of the recession, and had decided to switch to the more lucrative business of manufacturing mahjong tiles. On the recommendation of the Shanghai office, Yang and Yuan were sent over to help with the new business and (at the same time) to learn Japanese.

Though Chinese travellers to Japan did not need passports, they were liable to be stopped by police on the docks if they were suspected to being illegal migrant labourers or subversives, and in 1931 the police were particularly vigilant in their pursuit of both. Yang and Yuan, when questioned, produced letters of invitation from Yano Ryûsaku, the Osaka branch manager, but the police decided that Yuan had come to Japan to perform “miscellaneous labour”, and put him back on the boat to Shanghai. Yang on the other hand (either because of his youth or because of the content of the letter he was carrying) was judged to have come to work as a servant in the Yano household, and was allowed in. (Naimushô Keibôkyoku 1979, 374-376)

As this case suggests, the line surrounding “miscellaneous labour” was in fact quite vague, and could be interpreted in different ways, depending on the place, time and individuals involved. A good deal of official stationary was consumed in determining (for example) whether people who made noodles for sale were cooks or manufacturing workers, and in dealing with other anomalous groups like the Chinese repair workers, hundreds of whom travelled around Japan in the late Taishô mending broken glass and crockery. (Naimushô Keibôkyoku 1979, 366-367) This was apparently a skill specific to a small region of Northeastern China, whose economy

relied so heavily on remittances from itinerant workers in Japan that efforts by the Japanese government to expel the workers provoked protests from the Chinese embassy, and were abandoned. (Naimushô Keibôkyoku 1979, 55-56 and 382-385)

Meanwhile, as Japanese police were aware, considerable numbers of Chinese migrants came to Japan ostensibly as merchants, and then took up labouring jobs or set up small manufacturing businesses after they arrived. A report from the mid-1920s points out that it was common for migrants from North China to travel down the Korean peninsula and cross over to Japan from Pusan or Chejudo. Some borrowed money from firms in China, which helped them to obtain admission when they arrived in Japan. Other, in the words of frustrated police (whose cultural and linguistic competence was clearly stretched to the limit), “go to the trouble of doing such things as disguising themselves as Koreans”. (Naimushô Keibôkyoku 1979, 58) The Interior Ministry intermittently issued stern directives to prefectural and metropolitan authorities, who (it claimed) were lax in policing the entry of Chinese migrants, and who failed to control the movement of migrants from one occupation to another. Particular concern was expressed at cases like that of two Chinese migrants who were refused entry in Fukuoka, on the grounds that they were not genuine merchants, and then travelled to Kobe, where local officials took a more lenient view of things, and allowed them to go to work as drapers in Osaka. (Naimushô Keibôkyoku 1979, 57)

The treatment of border-crossers depended, of course, not just on their point of arrival, but also on their nationality and social class. In March 1925, for example – a little over a year after the Kanto Earthquake, when hundreds of Chinese workers, as well as thousands of migrants from Korea, were massacred by mobs that included police and soldiers – the Ministry of the Interior found it necessary to circulate a revealing memo to local governments. It read, in part, as follows:

When foreigners arrive in Japan and have their passports and other documents examined, they should be treated with cordial politeness and there should be no difference in their treatment based on nationality. Particularly in relation to the arrival of nationals from China, since people frequently come and go between China and Japan, we have from time to time heard numerous groundless rumours of misunderstandings or emotional antagonisms in contacts between these nationals and our country’s officials, and even of notable figures from that country experiencing discomfort in this regard. This is regrettable in terms of the friendship between Japan and China and should be prevented. Thus, to ensure

that great care is taken to treat Chinese notables with cordiality, we are enclosing a list of Chinese names for the reference of officials...” (Naimushô Keibôkyoku. 1979, 59-60)

The attached document turns out to be a list of members of the Chinese elite who travelled regularly to Japan, and the subtext of this convoluted prose is startlingly clear. The list was intended to help local border-control officials refine their techniques for distinguishing those entrants whom they were supposed to treat with respect from those whom they could safely go on treating with contempt. The issue was not, the Interior Ministry’s memo implied, *simply* one of race or nationality. There were also questions of class to be taken into consideration here. The complex hierarchy of “differential racism” was already starting to take formal shape.

Cross-Border Movement in East Asia

Several points emerge from these stories. One is that, at least until the 1930s (when checks on foreigners became increasingly rigorous) official statistics on the entry of people from China were probably quite unreliable. Second, despite Japan’s highly centralized political system, the policing of the border varied considerably from region to region. Third, out of a gradual process of trial and error, some of the key features of the modern border control regime were starting to emerge in 1920s Japan. Most importantly, while great power was entrusted to the individual official on the spot to make decisions in specific cases, these decisions were informed by a shared vision of social and ethnic hierarchies, propagated in part by the flow of directives from central government to local officialdom.

But there is also a fourth point that I also want to highlight as an issue for further study. That is, the question of our spatial framework for understanding borders, border controls and cross-border migrations in modern East Asia. In recent years, there has been growing academic interest in migration to and from Japan. Particularly from the 1980s onwards, an increasing number of studies have looked at immigrant communities in Japan, and at émigré Japanese communities abroad. (for example, Weiner 1994; Weiner 1997; Ryang 2000; Komai, Iyotani and Sugihara 1996; Sugihara 1998; Savel’ev 1997) The Chinese diaspora has also been the subject of much research and debate, and more recently and belatedly the Korean diaspora, and the issue of foreign immigrants in Korea, has attracted growing attention. (for example,

Ong and Nonini 1997; Ang 2001; Hyun 2000) Despite its emphasis on border crossings, however, this research has tended to remain dominated by the spatial presence of the single nation state. The issue at stake has been migration to or from Japan, to or from (but mostly from) China and Korea.

But border controls in prewar East Asia were just part of a complex and evolving system which sought (often quite unsuccessfully) to regulate multidirectional and intersecting movements of people across the territory of the region, across and beyond the space carved out by the Japanese empire. The image of Chinese merchants and migrants travelling down the Korean peninsula on their way to Kobe or Shimonoseki, for example, raises new questions: how did Japanese colonial officialdom deal with Chinese migrants to Korea, and how did their presence, whether transient or longer-term, fit into the structures of colonial society?

Today, as long-closed Cold War borders again become porous, new multidirectional flows of people across the space of East Asia are starting to take shape. Migrants are moving in large numbers to and fro across the border between China and Far Eastern Russia, while the economic collapse of North Korea is stimulating mass emigration across the border into China. These flows add to the more established paths of migration from China and South Korea to Japan. Contemporary movements of people through the region are still influenced by the legacies of the colonial period. They include, for example, the return to Korea from China of prewar Korean migrants and their descendants, and (in smaller numbers) of some Korean workers taken to colonial Karafuto during the Pacific War.

With the ongoing reshaping of the political landscape of East Asia, freedom of movement and border controls are likely to become increasingly salient issues for the future of the region. The story of the Shenyang asylum seekers may have vanished from public consciousness, swept away by the emotional force of more recent media narratives. But the complex of politics of border controls, which the incident briefly exposed to view, remains a topic of profound significance for the region and for the world.

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