

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In expressing my humble gratitude to the following individuals and institutions, I must begin by acknowledging the connection between my upbringing and this book. I was born and raised in a small, unassuming neighborhood near Kyoto University, where I learned more about the diversity and complexity of Japanese society than I did at the private Japanese elementary school I attended. While I was educated in the proper Japanese way of speaking and behaving at school, another important source of my acculturation was through playing and fighting with neighboring children, including those who attended ethnic Korean schools. It was only in my adolescent years that I became aware of the underlying discrimination against our *burakumin* and Korean neighbors. Conscientious people like Sōhō Machida, who was a practicing Buddhist monk at the time, clued my family in to the fact that branch offices of the Buraku Liberation League and the Korean Residents Union (Mindan) were located just down the street. At the same time, A-Eon Wang, Dae-In Cha, and other close friends impressed upon me the importance of their strong sense of ethnic identity as *zainichi* Koreans in Japan. Together, they helped raise my awareness of various struggles for equality, human rights, and social justice in Japan, despite the mainstream discourses on Japanese homogeneity and pacifism that dominated the era of high-speed economic growth.

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