

Japan Grapples with the Rise of Hate Groups (VIDEO) 上昇する差別煽動集団と取り組む日本

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Between 2012 and 2014 we posted a number of articles on contemporary affairs without giving them volume and issue numbers or dates. Often the date can be determined from internal evidence in the article, but sometimes not. We have decided retrospectively to list all of them as Volume 10, Issue 54 with a date of 2012 with the understanding that all were published between 2012 and 2014.

Michael Penn and the Shingetsu News Agency

Grassroots conservative groups led by Gambare Nippon began marching in the streets of Japanese cities beginning in 2010, but this year rightwing activism has notably intensified, coinciding with the establishment of the second Abe administration. Gaining the most notoriety is a group called the Zaitokukai or “The Citizen’s Association That Will Not Permit Special Privileges for Resident Koreans.”

This video introduces the activities of the Zaitokukai, especially their marches through predominantly Korean neighborhoods such as

Shin-Okubo in Tokyo, and interviews the head of a small political party that lends them support. It also listens to the voices of two critics of the Zaitokukai, one a grassroots anti-racism activist of Korean heritage and the other a liberal politician worried about the rise of hate speech in Japanese society.

Zaitokukai-allied politicians won more than 100,000 votes in the July 2013 House of Councillors election. This was far below the number of votes needed to gain a seat in the Diet, but suggestive of the possibility that a substantial number of ordinary Japanese are more open to public messages of antipathy toward Korea and Koreans than may be acknowledged by the nation's political establishment, including the mainstream media.

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