

# A Research on the Reentry Types of the Chinese Migrant Laborers Returning from South Korea

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**Abstract.** This paper explains and demonstrates the returning types of the Chinese migrant laborer returning from South Korea from a perspective of time dimension. Qualitative and Quantitative analytical method are used in this paper. 500 questionnaires were sent out and 465 valid pieces were collected. Through the analysis, it is found that there are three returning types: long-term returning types, mid-term returning types and short-term returning types. A specific returning type could be transformed to another type because of diversified factors, such as: returning motivation, age, gender and family needs and ethnicity.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Since the 1990s, the process of global economic globalization and regional economic integration has been accelerating. Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province, as the only Korean Autonomous Prefecture, is an adjacent to the border areas of China, Russia and Korea Peninsula. Yanbian started its labor export industry to South Korea under this social economic situation. A large scale of Chinese migrant workers went to South Korea to make money. The outflow of the laborers brought benefits for the whole area, yet there are also serious social problems. The return of the laborers has been taken as a significant question to economic and social development. Most related research focused on the domestic mobile migrant workers and the international mobile students. There is less research on the return of transnational workers. Therefore, this paper aims at analyzing the returning types of the Chinese migrant laborers returning from South Korea from the perspective of time dimension.

### 1.2 Demarcations

Based on the preliminary investigation, the study divided returnees into three types according to the length of their return: The first is long-term return type, and returnees usually return to China for more than 37 months. The second is a mid-term return. Such returnees usually work abroad for several years before returning to live for 13-36 months. Then they go to work in a guest country or apply to work in another country. The third type is returning home in the short-term, and such returnees usually work in guest countries for a period of time, then return to live for 1-12 months, and then go to work in South Korea or other countries.

Table 1. The Classification of the returning type

Return type	The period of stay
Long term return	37 months or more
Midterm return	13-36 months
Short term return	1-12 months

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Data sources

#### 2.1.1 Primary data

The primary data was collected by sending questionnaires and doing a preliminary investigation. The preliminary investigation were made through interviews to figure out the major types of the returning migrant labor workers from a view of time dimension. After the preliminary investigation, questionnaires were distributed. The research object includes young migrant workers aged between 18-40 in 8 cities in Yanbian Prefecture. The questionnaire was issued and recovered from February 2015 to March 2016. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed and 465 valid questionnaires were returned, including 232 Chaoxianzu ethnic respondents, 231 Han respondents, and 2 other ethnics.

#### 2.1.2 Secondary data

Secondary data were collected through books, reports and the information from mass media.

### 2.2 Analytical method

This paper integrates both qualitative and quantitative analytical method. Qualitative method is used to explain the preliminary investigation, quantitative analysis is used to prove the hypothesis, to research on the percentage of return laborers in different types, and to explain the characteristics of the returnees.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Long-term returning type

The long-term return form of this study refers to the returning youth group who stayed in the country for more than 37 months after returning home to South Korea and did not return to Korea or other countries. Most people in this group have a very clear goal before going abroad: They are working abroad to make money, and then use the economic capital as a preparation for a better job and life back in China. Most long-term returnees are interested in starting businesses or engaging in intensive agricultural production activities. In this group, there are also a small number of people who are severely hit by personal dignity, national self-esteem, and national honor because they are not adapted to the local lifestyle and intensity of work abroad or have experienced conflicts that they have not experienced before. Most of these people have no intention to return to Korea after returning home.

Table 2. Proportion of major ethnic groups in the long-term Return Type(Unit: person, %)

Return type	Chaoxianzu ethnic		Han		other		Total	
	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct
Long-term return	19	10%	180	89%	1	1%	200	43%

(data source: result of questionnaire analysis)

Through the survey, among the long-term returnees, the Chaoxianzu ethnic accounted for 10% , yet the Han group accounted for 89% (see Table 2). From the aspect of proportion, it can be seen that the young people of the Han nationality in China have the most significant intention and behavior for long-term residence in the country after returning home from South Korea.

### 3.2 Mid-term returning type

The mid-term returning type refers to South Korean workers who have worked in South Korea for a few years and returned to settle down for 13-36 months before returning to work in South Korea. This type of return-to-township is a cyclical pattern in their cross-border employment. , and have a gap. In other words, those who work in Korea work in Korea for several years and return to live in China for 1-3 years. Then after going to Korea again for several years, they return home for another 1-3 years. Going abroad - returning home is like a cycle. Repeatedly within a certain period. Most of the returnees were planning to return to China for long-term development before they returned to their homes, or to recuperate for some time. However, after returning home for several years, they found that their domestic work or life was not satisfactory and they did not meet expectations. Therefore, there is the idea of leaving the country to work again, leaving the country can be in other cities in the country or going abroad. Because of the huge differences in geographical advantages, cultural similarities, and income, many people chose to go to work in South Korea again.

Table 3. Proportion of major ethnic groups in the mid-term Return Type(Unit: person, %)

Return type	Chaoxianzu		Han		other		Total	
	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct
Long-term return	81	68%	14	19%	1	1%	96	21%

(data source: result of questionnaire analysis)

As can be seen from Table 3, Chaoxianzu accounted for the highest proportion of mid-return type, reaching 68%, Hans accounted for 19%, and other ethnic groups accounting for 1%. It can be inferred that the Koreans prefer to stay in the country for several years after returning home, and then go abroad to work again. The destination of the employment place is usually South Korea; while the Hans are conservative in their re-entry to work in Korea. Not willing to drift between China and other countries for work and life. At the same time, visas restrict the majority of Han people from going to South Korea to work again.

### 3.3 Short-term returning type

The short-term return type in this study refers to the type of workers who went to work in Korea for a certain period of time before returning to live and live in China for 1-12 months, and then returning to South Korea or other countries to work or study. This type is characterized by the fact that returnees work in Korea for shorter periods of time than the other two types and have a shorter stay in China too. The purpose of returning home is usually for vacation, family visits or family formation (marriage). This type of respondents usually have a long-term Korea visa to to go and return freely, and can flexibly plan its own work and vacation time. For this group, Korea is like a place for working, and China is home to rest and reunite with their loved ones.

Table 4. Proportion of major ethnic groups in the short-term Return Type(Unit: person, %)

Return type	Chaoxianzu		Han		other		Total	
	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct	Pop.	pct
Long-term return	132	81%	37	31%	0	0	169	36%

(data source: result of questionnaire analysis)

As can be seen in Table 4, among the short-term return groups, the Chaoxianzu population accounts for 81% of the population, far exceeding the proportion of Han and other ethnic groups. This is because Chaoxianzu ethnic group has an absolute ethnic advantage: Chaoxianzu culture has the same roots as Korean culture, and there are basically no obstacles in language communication. The Korean government issued F4 and H2 visas for Chaoxianzu. Priority policy advantages allow them to travel freely between China and South Korea and freely choose workplaces and job types. The Han nationality accounts for 19% of this type of return. Most of them are working while studying and have certain advantages in social or culture capital. They are eligible for permanent residence through highly educated policies and examinations; or through marriage or false marriage, the way to get an F6 visa, so that to a certain extent can freely travel between the two countries and enjoy a certain degree of freedom of work. The reason why the Han people have a relatively low proportion of short-term returnees is due to visa restrictions. If Han nationality workers want to work in South Korea, they can only apply for a type of work visa that has strict regulations on the type of work and work place and working hours.

#### 4. Summary

From the perspective of the comparison between ethnic groups, various ethnic groups have different characteristics in terms of their political, economic, cultural, and educational conditions in the long-term, medium-term, and short-term returns.

Table 5. Return Types from the Perspective of Time Dimension

	Long-term	Mid-term	Short-term	total
Chaoxianzu ethnic	8%	35%	57%	100%
Han ethnic	78%	6%	16%	100%
Other ethnic	50%	50%	0	100%
Proportion of the total respondents	43%	21%	36%	100%

(data source: result of questionnaire analysis)

As shown in Table 5, from the perspective of intra-ethnic comparisons, Chaoxianzu ethnic group still accounts for the largest proportion of returnees in the short and medium term. In terms of the internal comparison, the long-term return type still occupies an absolute high proportion among the Han ethnic returnees, which is related to the Chinese local economic development and the Chinese national culture.

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