Migration in the interest of the nation

Population movements to and from Japan since the Meiji era

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Contents

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1. Introduction

Throughout the recent history of human migration Japan has differed from the other developed countries. During the great European exodus to North America during the 19th and 20th centuries the Japanese emigrants, being barred from entry there in 1907, went to South America, North East China and South East Asia. After the Second World War, when Europe was rebuilt using migrant labor, Japan closed its borders and achieved spectacular economic growth by domestic labor. Towards the end of the century, when Europe and North America became the target for migrants from less developed countries, Japan cautiously opened a front door to ethnic Japanese returning from South America keeping a watchful eye on the small trickle of foreign immigrants through the side doors. With the problem of a rapidly aging population structure and falling dependency rates, Japan now faces the same dilemma as other developed countries, whether to accept large scale immigration or keep the borders closed.

The phenomenon of migration can be studied at three different levels: micro, meso and macro. Personal decisions on to stay or to go are made on the micro level, social and symbolic ties between the movers and stayers form the meso level, and political-economic-cultural structures of the sending and receiving countries constitute the macro level (Faist 2000: 30-35).

Analyzing major migration movements according to these levels reveals differences in the importance of each level. In the great emigration to America all levels played their part. On the structural level North America welcomed immigrants, there was land to farm and job opportunities, while the oppressive structures in Europe had a repelling effect, the meso-level kicked in when word spread from emigrated relatives and neighbors and at the micro level crude cost-benefit analyses prompted people to decide on migration. This in spite of the macro structures in Europe that contradicted the North American structural pull, most governments were uneasy about young and able people leaving the country and some tried to stem the tide.

In present day emigration to the wealthy Northern countries, the structures of the receiving countries have stemmed the flow; Europe has built high walls against immigration. The political and economic structures in the sending countries exercise the same push as those in Europe a hundred years ago and individual decisions clash millions of migrants against “fortress Europe” and against the southern border of the USA.

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In Japan the macro level has been far more important to migration than in other advanced countries. In 1624 the Shogun Iemitsu expelled all foreigners except the Dutch from Japanese soil and prohibited his subjects from leaving Japan upon pain of death. For the next 250 years the country was closed to the outside world (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 14). When migration gained momentum after the Meiji-restoration, it was under the aegis of the Japanese government. Emigration was not downright forced on the individual level, but “redundant” people were more or less compelled to go by the authorities and organizations that decided on the migration target and arranged the travel. The state continued to exercise influence on the emigrant colonies in the countries of destination, especially in Latin America and Manchuria. This kind of structural power was never exercised by other emigrant sending countries.

The “migration machine” as it has been labeled, was refueled after the Second World War, and kept in motion until the 1970s when the structural migration push turned into a pull by the accelerating economic growth in Japan. It was turned into reverse gear at the end of the 1980s to bring former emigrants and their descendents back to fill the need of unskilled labor in an overheated economy. This well is soon drained, however, and other solutions are needed in the future, challenging the traditional ideology of ethnic homogeneity in Japan.

The first part of this paper describes the prewar migration to and from Japan and focuses on the two main targets, Brazil and Manchuria. The second part gives an overview of the postwar migration and discusses the present situation and implications for the future.

2. The initial period of emigration from Japan

During the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) migration to and from Japan was prohibited. After the Meiji restoration Japan faced increasing economic and social problems. The peasants had been granted landownership in 1872, but the heavy land tax that the Meiji government imposed on them led to thousands losing their land. In reality the peasantry paid the cost of modernizing Japan. The following rural dislocations created a major social problem, sparking unrest in society (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 8).

Influenced by Western theories and practices of colonization and Malthusian population theories the Japanese elite spoke enthusiastically about emigration as a solution for the increasing domestic problems. Emigration became from its very beginning associated with colonial expansion. The first Japanese colonization had begun in the 1870s, when the northern island Hokkaido became the first target of mass-colonization. Hokkaido was at that time populated by the ethnically distinct Ainu people who were politically and culturally separate from the Japanese. The Hokkaido Colonization Board was established in 1869 and it pursued a colonization policy which dispossessed the Ainu from most of their land, turning it over to Japanese colonizers. The Ainu population diminished through poverty and disease from a 95 percent majority to a minority of 22 percent between 1873 and 1897. Hokkaido became Japan’s first colony, and this rapid success became a model for subsequent emigration policy (de Carvalho 2003: 3-4, Young 1999: 311-312).

The first mass emigration of Japanese overseas occurred in 1868, when 147 Japanese contract laborers were shipped to Hawaii and 42 to Guam by private brokers. These early attempts were illegal because the Japanese government had not granted the organizers permission for this. The ventures failed and hearing rumors of ill-treatment of Japanese workers in Hawaii, the Japanese government brought back all surviving workers in 1871 (Moriyama 1985: 1-2). Emigration was prohibited for the next fifteen years, and the government chose to promote the colonial migration to Hokkaido instead.

Emigration was a viable option for managing social and economic problems in the agricultural areas, as the Hokkaido experience had shown, A suitable target overseas was needed, which could be officially sanctioned - especially since the conditions of the farmers had worsened after 1881. The Japanese foreign ministry did receive many requests for Japanese workers from abroad, but turned nevertheless all proposals down until 1885. Then the first government sanctioned overseas emigration wave started as the governments of Japan and Hawaii concluded the Immigration Convention and agents from fruit and sugar plantations started to recruit workers in Japan. By 1894 more than 29,000 Japanese, mainly from Kyushu and South Western Honshu, had emigrated for Hawaii sponsored by the two governments involved. The emigration proved a success; most of the emigrants had left to earn much money in a short time, and most of them achieved their goal (Moriyama 1985: 8-24).

The government sponsored emigration ended in 1894, when Japan decided to turn the operation of the emigration over to private companies. In the same year the government set up a system of laws designed to regulate overseas migration; the Emigrant Protection Law and guidelines for private emigration companies to follow. The companies tried to ship as many emigrants as possible to raise their profits, and the government expected long-term profit from the emigration in form of remittances. Emigration also served as a safety valve against social unrest, especially in the southern and western prefectures. During the period 1894-1908 almost 150,000 emigrants were shipped to Hawaii by brokers (Moriyama 1985: 52).

When Hawaii became a part of the United States in 1900, contract labor became according to US laws prohibited, which made the migrants free workers unbound to any contract with the sugar plantation. The emigration companies had to change their policy from supplying plantations with contracted labor to transporting free emigrants. This caused many Japanese to bypass Hawaii and travel to North America, where the wages were higher.

The emigration companies also transported Japanese workers to the South and West Pacific regions. By 1898 the number of Japanese residents in Australia exceeded 3000, and over 1500 workers arrived there during the following seven years. More than 4500 workers were sent to the Philippines between 1903 and 1904 where they built highways and worked on large construction projects. A small number of emigrants traveled to Fiji, French Indochina, Thailand and other South East Asian destinations for similar contract work. These immigrants followed the Hawaiian pattern; they were not settlers, but temporary laborers planning to return home with money after a few years of work in a foreign land and the overwhelming majority of them were men (Moriyama 1985: 153-154).

Japanese did not migrate in large numbers to the U.S. mainland until after the American annexation of Hawaii. The 1890 census recorded only 2038 Japanese in the United States, half of whom lived in California doing agricultural work, but by 1910 the number of Japanese in the US amounted to 130,000 (de Carvalho 2003: 3-4, Goodman et al 2003: 5, JAMN 2006).

The emigration companies had very little to do with this migration. Their main target was Canada instead, where jobs in mining, lumbering, fishing and railroad building were available. Some 10,000 Japanese emigrants went to Canada between 1898 and 1908, a little over half of them as company emigrants (Moriyama 1985: 153).

Japanese emigration never compared to the European, but Japan had become the only non-western imperialist power after the Russo-Japanese war, and the colonial character of the emigration was uneasily looked upon. Such fears certainly played a part in limitations on Japanese immigration in the Americas and the Pacific. Australia and New Zealand, preferring European immigrants, restricted Japanese immigration right after the turn of the century. The so-called “Gentlemen’s Agreement” with the United States and Canada in 1907-08 and later the Quota Immigration Act of 1924 ended the Japanese emigration to the US and Hawaii completely (De Carvalho 2003: 4-5, Young 1999: 312-313).

3. Latin America as the emigration target

When immigration restrictions in North America began to take effect in the early 1900s, Japan had to look for other emigration targets. The underdeveloped economies of Latin America did not offer any economic opportunities comparable to North America, but since the doors to the North were closing other alternatives had to be found. As an aspiring world power, Japan was also sensitive about the treatment of its citizens abroad. Thus the government wanted to make treaties with the Latin American nations, which also would provide guidelines for the national migration policy. Treaties were signed with Peru in 1873 and with Mexico in 1889. Before the United States and Canada closed their borders, the Japanese emigration to Latin America was, however, small. Between 1899 and 1908 only a little over 18,000 Japanese immigrated there, most of them to Mexico and Peru. As in Hawaii, these immigrants were male contract workers, most of them from Southwest and Southern Japan, who intended to return to Japan with the savings they hoped to make (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 11-42).

As the Gentlemen’s Agreement required the Japanese government to limit immigration to territories adjacent to the United States, the doors to Mexico also closed. Peruvian suspicions of the Japanese grew with the Japanese military buildup and the Russo-Japanese war. Also the working conditions in Peru were harsh providing meager economic opportunities. In 1907 the Japanese government decided to permit emigration only to countries where Japanese settlers would be welcome (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 11, 33-42, Normano and Gerbi 1943: 71-72).

The official emigration interest turned from Spanish to Portuguese South America. The immigration to Spanish South America could not compare to the mass migration to Brazil. This migration was heavily subsidized and accompanied by significant capital investment by both Brazilian and Japanese interests. An agreement between Japan and Brazil to initiate large-scale immigration was reached in 1907 when the president of the *Toyo Imin Gaisha* and the Brazilian president signed a contract to bring 3000 Japanese immigrants to São Paulo. In 1908 the ship *Kazatu-Maru*, discharged the first 781 Japanese immigrants in the port of Santos, a considerable part of them families in accordance with the agreement (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 42-44).

In the following thirty years Japanese migrated to twelve Latin American nations, over 182,000 to Brazil, which was the main target, and over 20,000 to Peru. The number going to other countries of Latin America was considerably smaller. Most of the migrants hoped to return to Japan, but the reality proved different. More than 93 percent of the Japanese migrants to Brazil 1908-33 never returned. This was in accordance with the governmental settlement policy, the emigrants to Brazil were to be families, and they were encouraged to make Brazil their home (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 51-52, 70-74).

Most of the immigrants to Brazil settled in the southern states of São Paulo and Paraná and started out as contract workers on coffee plantations as so-called *colonos*, but some came as independent workers and settled in the cities, while others had acquired settlement land already in Japan. Working on plantations was mostly an initial stage before purchasing own land or moving to the cities. The Japanese settlers tried out new crops, such as cotton, rice and potatoes. In 1922 the share of farmers in coffee production had dropped to half and shares for rice, cotton, vegetables etc. increased substantially. Unlike the Japanese in Peru, who shifted to urban professions, the immigrants in Brazil prospered in rural areas. By the 1940's the Japanese were in general economically well established in Brazil (de Carvalho 2003: 8-9, Goto 2006).

After the turn of the century the Japanese emigration companies had to redirect much of their operation from Hawaii to Peru, Mexico and after 1908, Brazil. Near the end of the First World War the Japanese government wanting to further facilitate migration to Brazil merged three emigration companies to form the Overseas Development Corporation (*Kaigai Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha*), which after 1920 became the only emigration company in Japan. Its function was to recruit and transport contract emigrants, give loans and invest in colonization projects abroad (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 78). In 1921 the Government of São Paulo terminated the travel subsidies to Japanese immigrants and the Japanese state assumed increasing responsibility for emigration, taking over much of the functions that primarily had been conducted by private migration agencies. Recruitment was encouraged, transportation expenses and employment and housing in Brazil became government responsibility. Land for settlement was acquired with funds from the government, and Japanese investors completed the state involvement in aiding the emigrants. In 1927 "Overseas the Immigration Union Law (*Kaigai Iju Kumiai Ho*) was enacted in Japan with the purpose of promoting Japanese colony plantations to all over the world except North America. An administrative agency for promoting Japanese settlement in Brazil was established, the Federation of Immigration Cooperative Societies. Such societies had been created all over Japan to support the colonists, and with government support the Federation acquired large areas of land for colonization in São Paulo and Paraná. Two years later the Brazilian Colonization Company *(Burajiru Takushoku Kumiai*, commonly known as BRATAC*)* was established in Sao Paulo to administer these colonies. BRATAC supported the settlers by acquiring real estate, building infrastructure, roads and railways and subsidized related business activities. The Japanese government wanted to consolidate the Japanese presence in Brazil to facilitate further immigration (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 83-84, de Carvalho 2003: 4-6, Goto 2006).

Brazil drew the most Japanese immigrants, but more than 20 000 chose to go to Peru. Most of them arrived as contract workers, but later fled the harsh conditions on the sugar plantations, most for the cities, which provided better opportunities. With cotton prices rising and sugar prices falling, many Japanese also saw the opportunities in cotton production, and soon they had a substantial share of the Peruvian market. The Japanese community was centered in the Lima-Callao metropolitan area where most of the Japanese ran shops and restaurants (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 63-73).

Once the settlers realized that they would not become rich quickly and could not return triumphantly to Japan, they started to create infrastructure in their communities. The Japanese state encouraged them to this by subsidies. Educational and economic institutions were particularly influential in reinforcing the cultural and socioeconomic reproduction of "little Japans"-- i.e., children's schools for education and cultural heritage purposes, Japanese newspapers and other media for information and news dissemination or ideological propaganda, agricultural cooperatives, and mutual aid and credit cooperatives for agrarian or industrial development and social security. These associations also contributed to the further growth of the Japanese immigrant population by preparing jobs and social safety nets for latecomers. Thus Normano and Gerbi wrote in 1943 (Normando and Gerbi 1943: 39-40):

– *“The Japanese live almost completely isolated from the native element in Brazil. The population of their centers varies from three hundred to six or seven thousand, in cities, towns, and large fazendas, but always they remain in atmosphere and surroundings completely Japanese (…) The buildings, the fields, the crops have all been reproduced from those of Japan (…) Japanese laborers, storekeepers, drivers, schools with only Japanese students make it a piece of Japan in Brazil – even the Buddhist temples are not missing”*

In 1932 the number of Japanese schools in São Paulo alone was close to 200 and several Japanese newspapers were published. The *nikkeijin* led a Japanese life within their communities without assimilating into the larger society, did not speak Portuguese[2]. Inter-marriages were rare; instead they married “Picture brides” from Japan or other *nikkeijin* (Goto 2006).

The emigrants were largely from poor rural areas, like the overseas migrants from Europe to North America during this time; Italians from Sicily and the south, Swiss from the poor Alpine regions, Finns from the rural Northwest, just to name a few examples. The impact of the uneven economic growth in Japan was most felt in the rural peripheries. Emigration policy became an alternative to rural reforms in order to channel social unrest which was a potential threat when the commercialization of farming created surplus population. According to Endoh’s (2000) dissertation on Japanese emigration policy socioeconomic factors may have been necessary conditions, but they were not sufficient to explain the regional clustering in the southwest of Japanese emigrants to Latin America, or even the whole migration process. He points out two paradoxes: The first was that emigrants were sent to less developed countries and regions where chances of success for settlement were unfavorable, and local demand for immigrant labor was low. The second was that the emigrants from Latin America mainly

[2] Many of these social institutions have continued to the present day as one of the most important catalysts for sociocultural reproduction of the Japanese communities in the Americas. Nowadays they also function to alert these communities to the need for labor in Japan, teaching the workers bound for Japan basic Japanese, and aiding them in getting visas (De Carvalho 2003:7-18, Endoh 2000).

came from the Southwest of Japan, which was not outstandingly rural and overpopulated compared to other rural regions.

Although the emigration was voluntary, permanent settlement in the state designated areas was a de facto requisite. Japan regulated the settler’s profession, place of residence and products for cultivation. The emigrants were essentially a profit-generating commodity, an attempt to generate national wealth by remittances, as import suppliers and as market expansion for Japanese exports (Endoh 2000: 18-19). This is an important explanation for the national choice of emigration target, especially when Japanese immigration to North America became restricted.

According to Endoh (2000), the major reason that the Japanese state focused on the southwest in its Latin American emigration policy was the social instability in the region with a tradition of separatist movements and rebellions. Also *burakumin* (descendants of outcaste communities in feudal Japan) and coal miners were heavily clustered in the southwest. The state saw them as politically dangerous and removing them by emigration was a tempting option. In spite of the official voluntary label, the emigration involved various forms of state manipulation and control, even if it did not target specific individuals. The two prewar peaks (1928-30 and 1933-34) in the number of emigrants immediately followed major economic and political disturbances in the southwest.

Following the Manchurian invasion and Japan’s war with China an officially sanctioned anti-Japanese campaign occurred in Brazil. The Japanese government nonetheless increased travel subsidies to boost emigration to Brazil, but the military advance of Japan created difficulties for the *nikkeijin*. Starting in 1934 Brazil restricted Japanese immigration, and as a consequence it declined drastically. Peru took similar measures in 1936. With the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 strict wartime measures were applied and Japanese immigration to Brazil almost stopped. Between 1939 and 1941 only a little over 4200 Japanese entered the country and almost as many left it. In 1942 Brazil broke off relations with Japan as it had become an enemy country. The Brazilian government tried to forcibly assimilate the Japanese population by measures such as prohibiting Japanese language education, forbidding Japanese newspapers and applying various oppression measures. In the United States 110,000 of the 127,000 resident Japanese were interned in relocation centers, and the US had similar plans for those in Latin America, but the scheme was deemed impossible because of the logistical problems of shipping and housing (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 121, de Carvalho 2003:18-21, Goto 2006). Japanese emigration became directed to Manchuria instead.

4. The colonization of Manchuria

The colonization of Manchuria in the 1930s, involved the state-sponsored emigration of impoverished farm families from Central and Northern Japan to this region. Areas like Micronesia, Manchuria, and Japan's colonial and newly occupied territories drew a large number of Japanese until the end of World War II.

Soon after the Meiji Restoration Japan had embarked on an expansionist course, and conquered Chinese territory in the Sino-Japanese war 1894-1895.Taiwan became a Japanese colony in 1895 after Japan's victory over China. Korea was officially annexed in 1910 as a result of the Russo-Japanese War and Japan strengthened its influence in Manchuria. When the First World War broke out Japan seized the opportunity to expand and declared war on Germany in 1914 and quickly occupied German territories in China's Shandong Province and the Mariana, Caroline, and Marshall Islands in the Pacific. A swift invasion in the German colony of Jiaozhou proved successful and the colonial troops surrendered later the same year. These regions, combined with portions of Manchuria, became a locus of Japanese development. Manchuria, lying at the point where Russia, China and Japan converged, was of great strategic importance, but it was also rich in resources with an area three times bigger than Japan.

The Northeast region of China called Manchuria (or Manchu by the Japanese) was a political creation by the Japanese. It was far from virgin land for settlers, but had a population of 30 millions and the great majority was Chinese. Korean settlers came next to the Chinese in numerical strength in 1929, numbering around a million and 1.5 millions in 1945. Korean migrants to Manchuria served as “molecules in the diffusion of Japan’s power from Korea to Manchuria” (Park 2000), Korea being under Japanese rule. The Korean farmers who had been impoverished by the Japanese annexation of their country were, however, not loyal subjects to the colonizing power, but bricks in the game between Japan and China. A contemporary scholar wrote that Koreans hardly could be considered a vanguard of Japanese colonization in Manchuria; the few pro-Japanese among them restricted their residence to the Japanese South Manchurian Railway and other localities with pronounced Japanese influence (Lee 1932).

The number of Japanese settlers in Manchuria was insignificant at this time. By 1929 Manchuria had received approximately 240,000 Japanese, but they were bureaucrats, managers, soldiers, employees of the South Manchurian Railway Company and their families. The number of agrarian settlers in Manchuria was less than 1000. Despite the early disappointing results of agricultural migration, these provided models for planning future colonization. Emigration became a part of the building of the Japanese empire (Tamanoi 2000, Young 1999: 317).

When a bomb exploded on the Japanese railway near Mukden in September 1931, the Japanese Kwantung army used this so-called Manchurian incident as a pretext to occupy Manchuria and proclaimed the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932. The Chinese government of the new state took their orders from Japanese officers and officials, and Manchuria was never internationally accepted as a sovereign state, Also its passports were invalid, placing parts of the population of the new state in a kind of limbo without acknowledged nationality (Tamanoi 2000).

In 1932 the government started to support trial colonies of a small number of households to be resettled in Manchuria. These initial groups had a military role, they were protected by the Japanese Kwantung Army and formed self-defense compounds. Often they took over Chinese farms by sheer force rather than pioneering uncultivated land. They were essentially colonizers protected by the military power of Japan.

This emigration project grew to the “A million households to Manchuria” program in 1936. Literature promoting resettlement in Manchuria was spread in rural Japan and hundreds of thousands answered the call (Young 1999, 320-321). Most of the emigrating adults went through the village colonization program. Emigration offices were set up in the rural villages determining the quota of excess population and discussions were organized to convince people to emigrate. The community emigration program was not based on any enthusiastic voluntary individual migration, but a recruitment drive. The colonists left their villages in waves, every six months over a period of three years. Louise Young characterizes it as “the emigration machine” (Young 1999, 375-377).

The colonists were strategically settled as a safeguard to the Japanese Empire, near the border to the Soviet Union, along transportation routes and often on vacated land where Chinese resistance had been cleared and former peasants forcibly moved to collective villages. According to the Japanese regulations, the colonization groups were to reclaim unused fields and bring them into cultivation, but when it came to actually buying land, the colonizers wanted highly productive fields, which were the very fields that the Chinese wanted to keep for themselves. It was common that peasants were pressed to sell their land below its market value, sometimes forcibly being driven out of their homes when they refused to sell. As a consequence Chinese resistance activities continued throughout the existence of Manchu-kuo (McDowell 2003, Suleski 1981).

The conscription of young men and the war casualties soon greatly lowered the number of emigrant candidates towards the end of the 1930’s. As the wartime industry labor demand began to exceed the supply, boys between 16 and 19 were targeted as prospective emigrants. They were to join the paramilitary “Patriotic Youth Brigade”, which was established in 1938. Until 1945 more than 86,000 members were sent to Manchuria. This happened at a time when the army intensified the conscription of able bodied men, also from the families of agrarian settlers. Those who left behind in Manchuria were thus women, children, elderly and the young brigade members too young to be drafted to fight in Southeast Asia (McDowell 2003, Tamanoi 2006, Young 1999: 390-397). The Manchurian colonization became a strain to the wartime industry and agricultural production, which both faced labor shortage. As Young writes:*“The relentless pursuit of its mission against utility or logic had turned the migration machine into a tyrannical force within the state and rural society”* (Young 1999: 392).

When the Soviet Union invaded Manchuria in 1945 the Japanese army left the settlers to their fate. Those men who hadn’t earlier been drafted by the Japanese military were taken as prisoners to Siberia. The local peasants who once were displaced by Japanese colonists turned their rage against them. Of the 223,000 settlers in Manchuria at the end of the war only 140,000 returned to Japan. More than a third of the colonists died in Manchuria, most due to starvation and illness, but a considerable number in battle or by their own hand (Young 1999: 407-411). In the chaos and confusion following the Soviet invasion, many families were separated and children were left behind with trusted Chinese families and many children were simply abandoned or orphaned.

Between 1946 and 1958 altogether some 1.3 million Japanese were evacuated from Manchuria. The mass repatriations stopped in 1958 due to the worsening relations with China. Estimates of the number of women and children left behind in Manchuria by 1958 range between 6,000 and 10,000. These are commonly called *zanryufujin*, left-behind women, and *zanryukoji*, left-behind orphans (Inomata 2006). As of January 31st 2006, 3,810 of the former and 2,499 of the latter had migrated to Japan (Sien-Center 2007). This will be discussed later in the paper.

Table 1. Japanese residing abroad,
October 1st, 1938

Manchuria	418,315
Brazil	170,165
Hawaii	115,850
United States	115,773
China	95,508
Philippines	25,837
Canada	23,045
Peru	21,503
Argentina	6,659
World	1,059,913

Source: Japanese Foreign Office statistics, quoted in Normano and Gerbi 1943: 11

5. The postwar emigration from Japan

When the Allies stripped Japan of its colonies, the overseas Japanese were repatriated at a fast pace. Already by the end of 1946 over 5 million of the 3.8 million soldiers and 3.2 million civilians overseas had returned to Japan. Many were left behind, especially women and children in Manchuria, but also in Micronesia, the Philippines, and in other Asian regions, where they often were taken in by local people. Japan had during the war experienced considerable colonial immigration by Taiwanese, Koreans and Chinese, who were nominally given the status of Japanese. Many of them had more or less forcibly been brought to Japan as workers. The Korean population in Japan reached approximately two million in 1945. In cooperation with the Japanese government the Allies deported over a million persons to their homelands, but over half a million Koreans and much smaller numbers of the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese remained. Many of the deported later returned illegally to Japan (Komai 2001: 60-64, Kashiwazaki 2007, Watt 2002: 2).

Early postwar emigration

During the era of the Empire, when Japanese settled overseas, there was a clear distinction between the home islands of Japan and the colonies. The former were referred to as *naichi* and the latter as *gaichi*, inside and outside territory. After the war most *gaichi* returnees reintegrated smoothly into Japanese society, but for tens of thousands the process proved difficult. The division in “us and them” materialized in categorization. The authorities tried to place everybody in occupied Japan into an appropriate administrative category. The returnees became *hikiagesha* (repatriates) and former colonials - such as the Koreans - remaining in Japan were categorized as *sangokujin* (third country nationals). This institutionalized the long practice of resisting outsiders. Prejudice against repatriates and racism towards Koreans and Chinese were two sides of the same coin. The repatriates were ethnic Japanese, but many of them now found themselves as strangers in their own homeland and potential threats to social stability (Watt 2002: 3-8).

Soon the migration machine was up and running again. War-devastated Japan suffered from overpopulation and took up same emigration policy it had pursued before the war. Many of the migrants were Okinawans, and the US government encouraged this emigration because the US military needed space to build bases. After the Peace Treaty of 1951 that granted Japan independence, the country again made special arrangements with the governments of Latin America to send immigrant settlers for agricultural development. The first postwar immigrants went to Brazil in 1952, Paraguay in 1954, Argentina in 1955, the Dominican Republic in 1956, and Bolivia in 1957. In 1955, the number of emigrants topped 10,000 per year and kept rising. Most of the emigration during this period was for agricultural purposes, the emigrants either going to work on farms already established by earlier Japanese emigrants or going to develop new agricultural lands. In fact, Brazilian authorities were not willing to receive more Japanese immigrants, but as immigrants' relatives were still allowed to enter the country, the migration continued. More than half of the post-war immigrants came to Brazil this way - a new treaty regulating Japanese emigration to Brazil was not signed until 1960. Besides São Paulo and Paraná, immigrants went to the Amazon region and, Mato Grosso and to the northeast and south of Brazil. Many of them came from the former Japanese colonies to settle permanently in Brazil. Between 1950 and 1965 Brazil received nearly 50,000 Japanese immigrants. This was a new period in the Japanese communities in Latin America, because the second and third generations began to increasingly identify with the societies in which they lived and refer to themselves as Brazilian *nikkeijin*. (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 179, de Carvalho 2003:25, Diplomatic Bluebook 1985).

Soon after the war the Federation of Overseas Associations (*Kyokai kabushiki rengokai*), part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was established to handle the recruiting of emigrants, arranging for their acceptance, and lending them travel money, thus overseeing the whole process of emigration. This policy was further strengthened the next year with the founding of the Overseas Emigration Promotion Association (*Kaigai Shinko Kabushiki Kaisha*) to purchase and distribute land and to provide financing for emigrants. These two organizations had branches in Latin America with the same function as BRATAC before the war. Both were in 1963 merged into the Overseas Emigration Service *(Kaigai Ijyu Jigyodan)* which became responsible for all Japanese emigration affairs and the colonization programs in Latin America (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 181, de Carvalho 2003:25). At this time Japanese emigration no longer carried high priority because of the rapidly growing economy. The emigration service was merged into the International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which was established in 1974.

Japanese emigration began tapering off as the Japanese economy got back on its feet and expanded employment opportunities were available in Japan. By 1962, the number of emigrants dropped below 10,000. Simultaneously, the ties to Brazil proved beneficial to the Japanese economy, in the late 1970s more than 500 Japanese firms established themselves in Brazil, but during the serious economic decline in Latin America in the 1980s, Japanese investments were withdrawn. The JICA aided some smaller Japanese communities such as in Paraguay, but overall the *nikkeijin* did not benefit from the Japanese economic growth, except those who chose to migrate to Japan (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 225, Goto 2006). In the 1970s the Japanese migration to Brazil ended, and a different kind of migration era started.

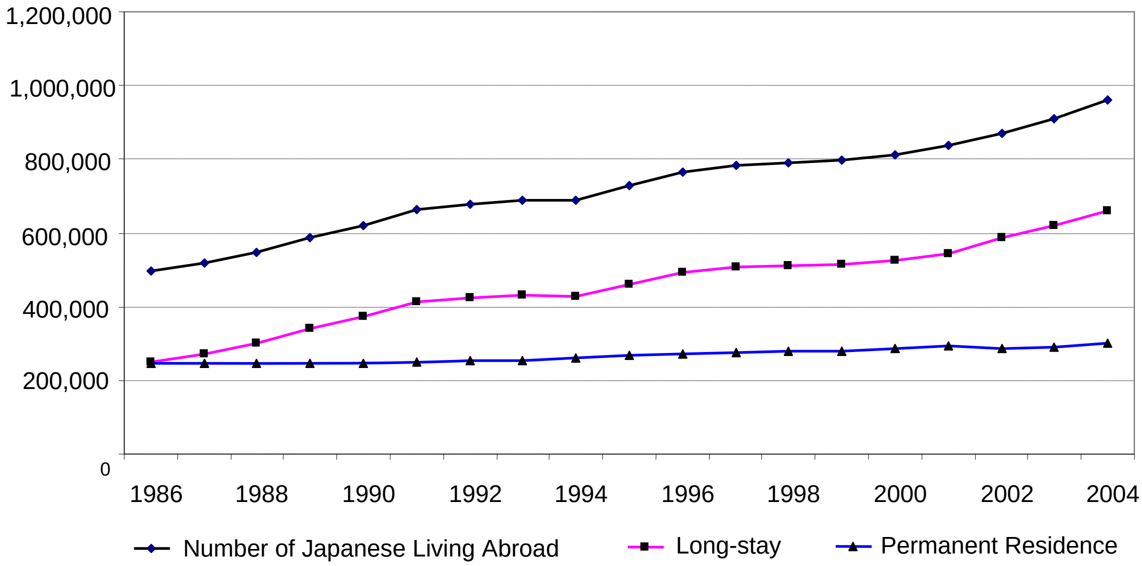
Emigration changes character

There were two strands in Japanese emigration since the very beginning. Most of the emigrants were poor migrant workers, but there was also a migrating elite consisting of bureaucrats, officials, experts, traders, businesspeople and the like. This division was institutionalized in 1908 when the Japanese government established two specific passport categories, *hi-imin* and *imin*. The former was designating persons who were neither laborers or intended to engage in manual work. In the prewar days there was a cleavage between these two groups, often within single Japanese communities. Migrant workers were frequently looked down upon as “savage Japanese” by the elites. Thus the overseas communities reflected the old homeland in terms of class structure and social discrimination. Their authority depended upon the activities of the imperial state. The first migration to Manchuria was to a large extent elite migration, as referred above. Interestingly, reflections of this have continued to the present day Machimura (2003: 148-149) writes that “*there still exists a disparity between the state- or corporate-sponsored elite group and the more localized and less privileged population*”.

The last thirty years of emigration has mainly been *hi-imin* migration. Japanese corporate development has been primarily responsible for this emigration. Instead of importing foreign labor, Japanese professionals were sent to manage Japanese factories elsewhere. The branch-plant economy of joint ventures depended on migratory flows of technical advisors, managers and executives, training and clerical staff. As the following figure shows, the number of Japanese with permanent residence abroad has been fairly constant, and the increase is mainly due to the long-stay category. Working abroad for the company has become a step on the career ladder, and overseas positions are rotated, often for a period between 3 and 5 years. The situation has changed from what it was in the 1970s, when overseas assignment was a necessary evil for the employees and the returnees faced difficulties in terms of stagnated career development and family re-integration. Their status changed in the 1980’s from a potential new minority group that faced discrimination to becoming a new elite group (White 1980, Goodman 2003: 177-194).

The number of Japanese in different regions reflects the economic interests of Japan; the three cores of the globalizing economy, North America, Western Europe and the Pacific rim. Like their *imin*-predecessors the new migrants cluster to form Japanese communities. The sending companies give housing provision; support the establishment of clubs and organizations, finance construction of Japanese schools (which are run by the Japanese Ministry of Education). The daily life of Japanese expatriates is connected to the homeland through the educational system, through imported consumer goods and services and through media. It is common for expatriate communities to create such “environmental bubbles”, but this applies stronger to the Japanese than to other migrant groups. The social milieus in these communities operate according to rules and expectations familiar from Japan, and the contacts to home are intensive. There is a split between the old-comer *imin* and newcomer *himin*, their contacts are rare and sometimes even in conflict, as the *hi-imin* look down upon the *imin* and their offspring as those who could not make it in Japan (Goodman et al 2003:9, Machimura 2003:151-153).

Figure 1. Number of Japanese living abroad by type of stay 1986-2004.



Source: Web-Japan 2007 (Ministry of foreign affairs)

Table 2. Number of Japanese living abroad by country (in thousands as of October 1, 2005)

Year	Total	U.S.A.	China	Brazil	U.K.
1990	620	236	8	105	44
1995	728	264	17	91	52
2000	812	298	46	75	53
2005	1,013	352	115	66	55
Percent change, 2004-2005	5.3	3.6	15.9	-4.5	8.1

Source: Japan in figures 2007 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

The pre- and postwar migration patterns of Japan are both products of the "migration machine", albeit in different ways. The roles of the state and private companies in managing migration flows have shifted during different periods according to national interests. The pre- and early postwar structural imperatives of the society – overpopulation, limited resources, economic and social factors – led to an emigration policy different from anything seen in other major emigrant sending countries during these eras. When the responsibilities of Japan Emigration Service were taken over by JICA in 1974, it reflected the cessation of the *imin*-migration. JICA has developed to be

"a bridge between the people of Japan and developing countries" (JICA 2007) and has little to do with Japanese emigration any more - although it has been of help in small Japanese communities in Latin America, such as in Paraguay (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 225). Private companies have taken over the care of the emigrants they send.

6. The migration flow turns

The large scale movement of people during Japan’s colonial period ended in the aftermath of the Second World War. Until then Japan had experienced considerable colonial immigration by Koreans, Taiwanese and Chinese. World War I boosted the Japanese industry and the demand for labor accelerated rapidly. Cheap labor was drawn mainly from rural areas, but the local supplies of labor in many areas was exhausted, partly because of emigration, as described above. Following the annexation of Korea, a new supply of labor was opened. Japan’s economic policies created financially difficult circumstances for a large part of the Korean population, so although the immigration of Korean workers between 1910 and 1939 was voluntary, most of them had no other choice; increasing numbers of Korean farmers were impoverished, which created a massive rural exodus. These Korean farmers and workers had few other options than to compel to the Japanese policies and migrate. Korean workers were also conscripted for work as replacement labor in the mining and construction industries (Sellek 2001:18-19).

As imperial subjects, they were nominally given the status of Japanese. The Korean population in Japan reached approximately two million in 1945 and a smaller number from China and Taiwan. Almost three quarters of them were repatriated after the war, but some half a million eventually remained. These so-called *Zainichi* Koreans were divested of Japanese nationality, and thus many civil rights, leaving them without any clear defined residence status. These former colonial subjects living in Japan remained in an insecure situation until the treaty between The Republic of Korea and Japan was signed in 1965. They were designated a special status as “Treaty Permanent Residents” (Morris-Suzuki 2006, Komai 2001, Kashiwazaki 2007, Sellek 2001: 19).

The prewar trend toward a “multiethnic” Japan was broken and a concept of homogenous nation was revitalized. It was cemented with legislation aimed at controlling foreigners and a system was set up requiring them to carry registration cards and present them to authorities on demand. This legal system effectively barred immigrants from Japan until the late1970s. Immigrants were divided into two categories: "old comers", mainly Koreans, who have resided in Japan since before 1952, and their descendants, and "newcomers", referring primarily to foreigners who came to Japan in or after the 1980s (Komai 2001: 14-15, Kashiwazaki 2007).

The postwar period until the 1980s is generally considered to be a period almost lacking migration to Japan. The economic growth after the Second World War was spectacular and the common conception is that unlike Europe, the economic growth was accomplished without foreign workers. Kondo (2002) summarizes four reasons for this: Migration from rural to urban industrial areas, automation, utilization of home working, students and elderly people as part time labor and long working hours. A fifth reason could be added: Localizing production overseas supervised by Japanese management.

While it is safe to say that economic success did not depend on immigrant labor, like it did in Europe, a number of foreign workers did contribute to it. As Morris-Suzuki (2006: 121) writes:

– *Migrants did come, and some also left again. Some stayed just a few months, others for a lifetime. Most worked in Japan, and their presence demands acknowledgment for several reasons. First, the experience of migration had a formative effect on many thousands of individual lives. Second, postwar immigration and official responses to that immigration shaped Japan's migration and border control policies in ways that continue to have a profound impact to the present day. Third, although their influence on macroeconomic growth may have been very small, postwar migrants made important contributions to the destiny of particular industries and particular communities within Japan.*

Morris-Suzuki acknowledges that it is impossible to provide accurate statistics of migrants who entered Japan between 1946 and the late 1970s and concludes on the basis of available data and archival sources that they numbered at least in the tens of thousands, and possibly in the hundreds of thousands (Morris-Suzuki 2006:122).

The great majority of the illegal migrants to Japan in the early postwar period were Koreans who came secretly on cargo vessels or fishing boats. Of those who were returned to Korea after the war a great number could not take up their old lives there, many had brought their families to Japan with the intention or staying more or less permanently. For many of these returning to Japan seemed the best option. Many migrants came for short periods to earn money, study or rejoin relatives, some crossed back and forth between Korea and Japan many times. Most of them came to work, however, and they generally found employment in very small firms with only a few employees, often run by other Koreans. Some also succeeded to get employment in larger Japanese companies (Sellek 2001:19, Morris-Suzuki 2006). As illegal immigrants they fell between the two categories "old comers" and "new comers". The treaty between Japan and Korea did not apply to them, so they lived a marginal life, sometimes for decades under the fear of being deported (Morris-Suzuki 2006).

The illegal migration to Japan has continued mainly in form of visa overstayers, whose number hit a peak of 298,646 in 1993, decreasing to 207,299 in 2005. This decrease is due to the severe punishments; employers can be fined and imprisoned for hiring illegal migrants and the migrants fined, imprisoned and expelled (Banki 2006, Higuchi 2006).

Most illegal workers in Japan come from neighboring Asian countries; China, Korea, Philippines and Thailand. Until the middle of the 1980s most of them were women who worked as bar hostesses, but later the number of male workers dramatically increased to between 50 and 80 percent of the total illegal immigrants. Of the male illegal foreign workers apprehended in 2004, around 50 percent were factory or construction workers, and almost a third of the female workers were bar hostesses (Goto 2006).

7. Japan as an immigration country

In the 1970s five major categories of immigrants started to enter Japan: Women from the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan and Korea who mainly came to work in the sex industry, Indochinese refugees, descendants of Japanese who had been left in China at the end of World War II, *nikkeijin* from Latin America and business people from Europe and North America.

The influx of low-wage labor power increased dramatically in the later half of the 1980s in response to the shortages accompanying the economic boom. These immigrants came from Pakistan, South Korea, China, the Philippines, and from all over the world. A great part of them worked illegally; visa overstayers and foreigners taking employment outside the scope permitted by their residency status. The influx of foreign students and trainees rose tremendously from former levels and the latter were often used as labor force (Komai 2001:16, Kashiwazaki 2007).

The entertainment industry

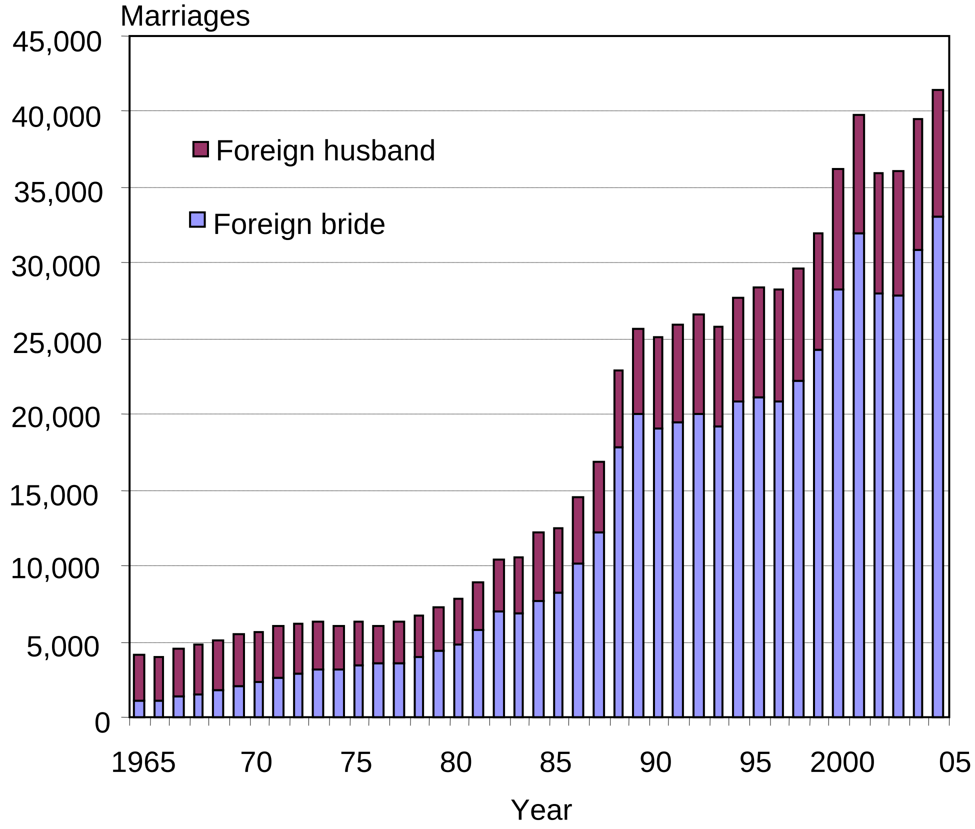
The inflow of foreign female workers in the entertainment industry started with the lucrative sex tourism in the Philippines and Thailand in the 1970s. Japanese men were major customers, and thus a demand for Asian women was created in the domestic market of Japan. The networks which were originally managing the sex tourism from Japan were adapted to transfer the same sort of business to Japan. Far from all women who migrated to Japan worked in the sex industry in their home country. The enormous wage differences between Japan and most other Asian countries were strong incentives also for well-educated women not able to find a job matching their educational background. Other options such as working in the domestic and the service sector were not available for them in Japan because of the Japanese policy of prohibiting foreigners from taking employment in the unskilled job sectors. Providing sexual services could also produce large profits within a limited period of time, compared to other type of labor, but at the cost of social stigmatization (Sellek 2001: 166-172). Most of these women entered the country legally as entertainers, but also as illegal migrants. In 2004 there were 137,820 persons in Japan with the status as entertainer, 100,046 of these were from Asia (Japan statistical yearbook 2006), but considering so many working illegally in Japan, it is impossible to give an accurate number of foreign women in the sex industry.

The amendment of the criteria for the status of residence “Entertainer” in 2005 tightened the control considerably. A minimum of two years at a foreign educational institution studying performance arts, or a minimum of two years’ performance experience outside Japan as an entertainer became required (Immigration Bureau of Japan 2007).

International marriages

Japan’s colonial period brought close contacts with neighboring Asian countries. The Japanese government encouraged marriages between Japanese and Korean colonial subjects as part of a wider policy to eliminate Korean racial and ethnic identities. Under this policy especially Japanese women married Korean men who worked in Japan. This pattern continued a long time after the war with international marriages being mainly between Japanese and Koreans. The majority of these Korean nationals were permanent residents in Japan who themselves or whose parents had once had Japanese nationality under the colonial period. Due to the nationality criteria these marriages were registered as international in official statistics.

Figure 2. International marriages in Japan



Source: Ministry of health and Welfare 2007.

During the Allied occupation of Japan, international marriages between Japanese women and men from the United States became prominent. Many of these “war brides” migrated to the US, partly because of the hostile attitude in Japan towards them (Nakamatsu 2002: 11). The trend of Japanese women marrying foreign men continued until 1975, when the number of Japanese men marrying non-Japanese women surpassed the number of the former.

The trend in international marriages on the one hand reflected the interaction between Japan and other Asian countries, and on the other an increasing number of Japanese men, especially in the rural areas, not finding marriage partners (Komai 2001: 72). From the beginning of the 1990s brides from China and the Philippines became more numerous than those from Korea. Intermarriage between Japanese men and Filipino and Thai women who work in Japan reflects the growth of the entertainment industry and the establishment of the international marriage business in Japan (Nakamatsu 2002:12).

In 2005 the wives in international marriages mainly came from China(11,644) the Philippines (10,242), Korea (6,066) and Thailand (1,637).

Until 1970 citizens of the United States topped the statistics of non-Japanese grooms. In 2005 the proportion of Japanese women marrying men from the US has decreased from the 1965 level of 51 percent to 18 percent although the number of these marriages has increased (1551 in 2005). Korean grooms now top the statistics (2,087) and Chinese rank third (1,015).

Refugees and Asylum seekers

Indochinese refugees began arriving in Japan by boat in the 1970s after the fall of South Vietnam. Over 10,000 refugees from Indochina have been allowed to remain in Japan since then. Because Japan did not ratify the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees until 1981-82, the vast majority of the Indochinese was not considered convention refugees. Their resettlement was organized under a different system created especially for this purpose.

Convention refugee status is granted by the Japanese government and entitles the refugee to stay and work in Japan long term. Very few have, however, been awarded this; between 1982 and 2005 only 376 of 3928 applicants were granted Convention status (JAR 2007). Some applicants may remain in Japan after their application for refugee status has been rejected, usually for humanitarian reasons. The yearly number varies, but only 381 have received this status since 1982 (JAR 2007).

The number of asylum seekers is very low in Japan. UNHCR in Japan has stopped giving mandate status to asylum seekers altogether because of the dominance of the Japanese state in these matters. In 2005 only 284 applications for asylum were made. Japan’s refugee policy reflects the generally restrictive migration policy (Banki 2006).

Colonial returnees from China

The *zanryu fujin/koji*, the Japanese women and children who were separated from their families and left behind in China during and after World War II, were the first immigrants officially accepted into Japan after 1945. According to incomplete statistics, more than 4,000 of the Japanese children left behind were adopted by Chinese families (China Daily 6.9.2006), but any definite number of *zanryu fujin/koji* has not been possible to determine. A year after the diplomatic relations between Japan and China were normalized in 1972, they were allowed to move to Japan on state expense. Initially only those who could prove their identity and had a Japanese guarantor could move to Japan and accompanying family members had to pay for themselves. *Zanruy fujin* and *zanruy koji* were treated differently from one another at this time. A person 13 of age or older at the time of the Russian invasion of Manchuria was considered to have freely chosen to remain in China. Most of these were women who had married Chinese citizens, often in order to survive the turmoil created by Japan's capitulation. Children under 13 were considered to have been too young to make their own decision. Furthermore a change in policy in 1959 reducing the number of years a person was required to be missing before considered legally dead reduced the number of non-repatriated civilians from 77,000 to 31,000 and these persons lost their citizenship. Thus many of the *zanryufujin/koji* had to migrate to Japan as non-Japanese (Ward 2006).

The immigration process proved difficult and in 1981 the Japanese government began to sponsor groups of *zanryu fujin/koji* to visit Japan and identify their biological families and thus prove their identity. In 1989 a special sponsor scheme was introduced and the applicants were required to have a sponsor rather than a guarantor, which made their migration much easier. In 1994 a “Law to promote the smooth reentry of Japanese Nationals left behind in China, etc. and to support their independence following reentry" was enforced to facilitate their integration.

At the end of 2006, a total of 20,248 people from the former colonies had migrated to Japan (Sien-Center 2007). They are elderly and many came with their spouses, children or grandchildren, who sometimes have spouses of their own. These come under the status as second or third generation returnees (Komai 2001, Ward 2006). Considering that a returnee on the average brings 10 or more relatives and in-laws, many of them outside the state-supported program, the aggregate number of *zanryu fujin/koji* including their family members must be around 100 000, but the exact number is not known. These returnees face the same language and culture barrier as other immigrants, but are in a situation of dual diaspora being of Japanese ancestry, looking Japanese but not knowing the culture. They are also much more dependent on public assistance benefits than other immigrants and have a lower employment rate (Komai 2001: 61).

Reacting to their difficult situation in Japan, 2000 *zanryufujin/koji* resettled in Japan have filed lawsuits with 15 district courts and one high court nationwide to compensate for the state's failure to take swift action for their resettlement and adequately help them become self-reliant in Japan. Osaka district court refused compensation in July 2005, stating that there was not sufficient evidence to rule that the government had negligent in finding the orphans and that the government was not obliged to support them after returning to Japan. The Kobe District court decided differently in December 2006, and ordered the government to pay a combined 468.6 million yen in compensation to 61 of the 65 plaintiffs for its failure to take care of them. At the end of January 2007 the Tokyo district court rejected a similar demand from 40 war-displaced Japanese (Asahi Shimbun 2.12.2006, Japan Times 2.12.2006, 31.1.2007).

The nikkeijin from Latin America

Before the economic bubble burst in the beginning of the 1990s, Japanese companies experienced serious labor shortage, and the number of illegal workers was rising to meet the demand for unskilled workers. In 1989 the Japanese government embarked on reforming the Immigration Control Act in response to the uncontrolled development of immigration. The government reorganized new visa categories to facilitate the immigration of professional and skilled personnel; the number was enlarged from 18 to 28. The basic principle of not accepting unskilled foreign labor was maintained and employer sanctions were introduced to discourage hiring illegal workers. A side door was, however, kept open for "trainees and technical interns" who could stay for a maximum of three years. This became a system for rotating cheap unskilled workers (Sellek 2001, Kondo 2002, Kashiwazaki 2007).

Another major effect of the Revised Immigration Control Act, which went into force 1990, was that it allowed second and third-generation persons of Japanese descent (so-called *nikkeijin*) easier access to residential visas with no employment restrictions. Under these provisions the *nikkeijin* were allowed to enter Japan on two types of visas, as spouse or descendant of Japanese and also under a new category as long term resident *teijusha* with no activity restrictions. Although these special visas were of limited duration, they could be easily renewed (Tsuda 2003: 93). The official explanation for granting residence-work status to Japanese descendants was to provide opportunities to visit relatives in Japan, but the hidden agenda was to stop illegal immigration and solve a serious labor shortage (Kondo 2002).

The *nikkeijin* population in Latin America was around 1.5 million at the turn of the millennium. Brazil hosts more people of Japanese origin than any nation outside Japan itself. Most of the Japanese population (91 percent) is concentrated in the southwest and south of the country. The states of São Paulo and Paraná have the highest number of *nikkeijin*. Some 30 percent of the Japanese Brazilians are second generation *nisei*, 41 percent are third generation *sansei* with a small but increasing population of fourth generation *yonsei* , 62 percent of whom are of mixed descent (Tsuda 2003: 57).

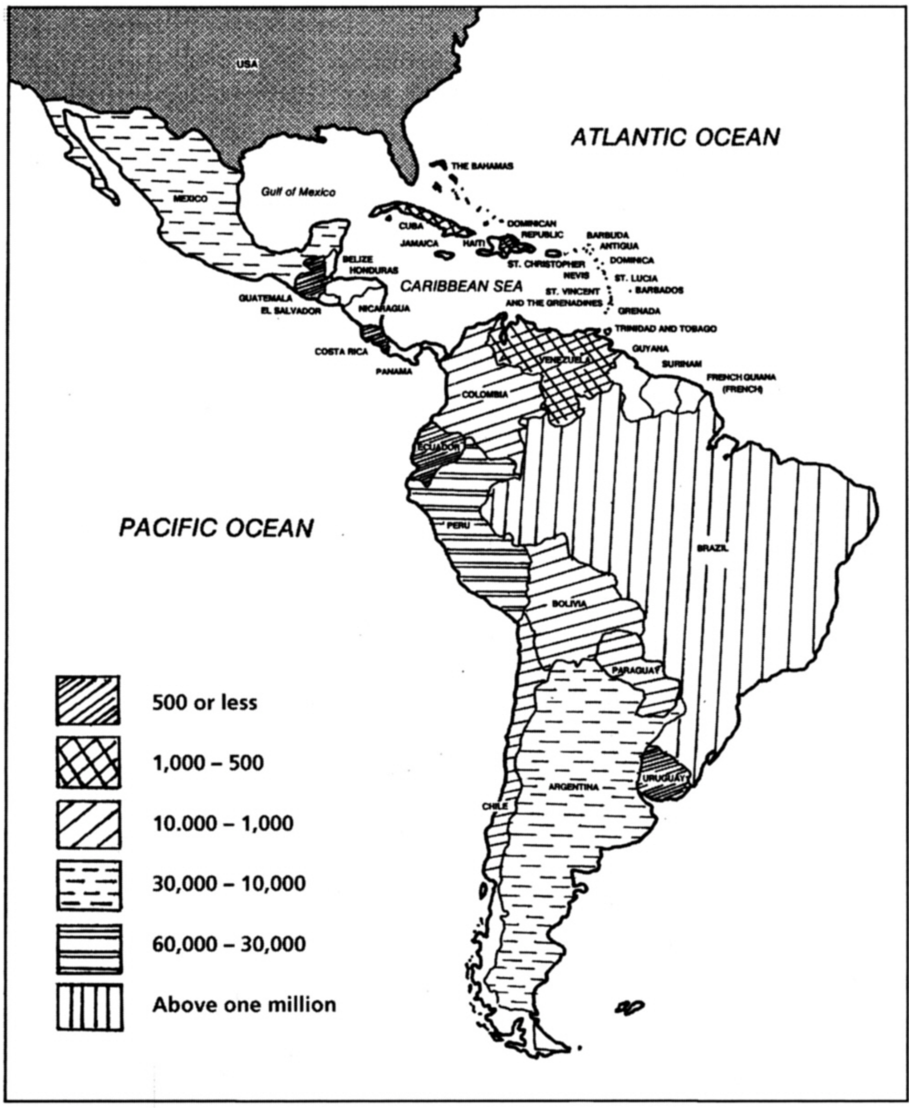
The Japanese government had shown comparatively little interest in them until the enacting of the new Immigration Control Act in 1990. The sudden massive influx of these immigrants into Japan was quite unexpected. They had not kept up contact with relatives in Japan and few had visited the country. Only around 2000 such returnees lived in Japan in 1986, but in 2005 their number had risen to around 360 000. The pull factor was economic, private brokers organized the journey, job and housing. There were also strong push-factors. The Brazilian economy had deteriorated badly in the 1990's and Japanese wages were very high compared to those in Brazil. They got jobs as manual workers in the 3-K sector - "*kitanai, kitsui, kiken*"- dirty, difficult, dangerous, replacing temporary illegal workers and trainees (Sellek 2001, Brody 2002).

The first to come in the 1990s were single men intending to stay for a few years and return home with the money earned in Japan, which resulted in an age distribution with few elderly and children. As the *nikkeijin* established themselves in Japan, bringing families along and obtaining permanent residency the proportion of fourth generation *yonsei* and fifth generation *gosei* has increased (Goto 2006, Arakaki 2006).

The *nikkeijin* are not evenly distributed in Japan, but are concentrated in certain industrial areas. The prefectures with the largest number of Brazilian *nikkeijin* are Aichi, Shizuoka, Kanagawa, Saitama, Gunma, Chiba and Tokyo city (Tsuda 2003: 99). In certain living districts the proportion of *nikkeijin* is very high and they have created their own local culture with Brazilian shops and bars. For example in Homi housing district in Toyota city around 40 percent of the residents are Brazilian (Goto 2006, Linger 2001: 79-86, International Press 3.2.2007).

They have added new chapters to Japan's ethnohistory being of Japanese lineage and looking Japanese, but having a language, culture, customs and behavior deriving from South America. Many ethnic Latin American spouses and children also accompanied them to Japan, adding to the cultural confusion. It is common to classify the second and third generation *nikkeijin* as return migrants, but where is the point of reference, their "home"? Linger (2001, 26) suggest that the situation is one of "dual diaspora" because they shuttle between two homelands, being Japanese in Brazil and Brazilian in Japan.

Figure 3. Estimated population of Japanese ancestry in Latin America 1998.



Source: Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004

The *nikkeijin* face many difficulties in Japan, especially with regard to language and culture. They stay illiterate for a long time, and they have difficulties adapting to the Japanese way of living. As they tend to stick to other *nikkeijin* and form ethnic communities, Komai (2001, 37) writes that the “*nikkeijin* society is going through a process of cleavage from Japanese society”.

Even though the returnees are admonished to become model Japanese, they are constantly reminded of their otherness. They experience a kind of double discrimination, because they are not excused as foreigners when they do mistakes, they are expected to follow Japanese customs and speak the language because they have Japanese blood. Coming from what by the Japanese is perceived as developing countries also puts them in an inferior position (Roth 2002).

8. Internationalization and integration

The total number of foreigners in Japan was over two millions in 2005, and it is increasing. Table 3 shows how the nationality structure is changing with the "newcomers" (part of who are already elderly, such as second generation *nikkeijin*). The number of "oldcomers", especially Koreans, is declining, and the number of "newcomer" Chinese rising. The largest group of newcomers, the Chinese, is a very diverse group. It consists of former Japanese nationals and their families returning from China (*zanryufujin/koji*), students and trainees, spouses and children of Japanese nationals, company employees and other. In addition there is a large number of illegal Chinese migrants in Japan, mainly visa overstayers (Komai 2001: 26-27).

Table 3. Registered Foreigners in Japan (in thousands, 2005)

End of year	Total	Korea[1)]	China	Brazil	Philip-pines	Peru	U.S.A.
1990	1,075	688	150	56	49	10	38
1995	1,362	666	223	176	74	36	43
2000	1,686	635	336	254	145	46	45
2005	2,012	599	520	302	187	58	49
Percent change, 2004-2005	1.9	-1.4	6.6	5.4	-6.1	3.5	1.1

1) Republic of Korea and Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Source: Japan in figures 2007 (Ministry of Justice)

Table 4 gives the numbers and percentage of non-Japanese residents by residence status. The permanent residents are the biggest group, because it includes the oldcomers, mainly from Korea and China. The next biggest groups, spouses and children of Japanese nationals and long term residents include the *nikkeijin* .

Table 4. Number and percentage of non-Japanese residents by residence status (2004)

Total number	1,973,747	100
Permanent residents	778,583	39.4
Non-permanent residents	1,195,164	60.6
Spouses or children of Japanese nationals	257,292	13
Long term residents	250,734	12.7
College students	129,873	6.6
Dependents	81,919	4.2
Entertainers	64,742	3.3
Trainees	54,317	2.8
Specialists in humanities and international services	47,682	2.4
Pre-college students	43,208	2.2
Engineers	23,210	1.2
Skilled workers	13,373	0.7
Intra-company transferees	10,993	0.6
Spouses and children of permanent residence	9,417	0.5
Instructors	9,393	0.5
Professors	8,153	0.4
Other	190,858	9.7

Source: Ministry of Justice 2007

Ethnicity and Japanese culture

In 1986, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone described Japan as a "homogenous race" nation and faced strong criticism, especially from the Ainu indigenous people. As recently as in February 2007, education minister Bunmei Ibuki said at a convention of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party: "Japan has been historically governed by the Yamato (Japanese) race. Japan is an extremely homogenous country" (Japan Times 26.2.2007). The increasing foreign presence in Japan is, however, challenging the idea of a cultural and racial homogeneity. The word "race" (*jinshu)* is in fact not commonly used by the Japanese to refer to themselves, but the idiom "Japanese blood" (*junketsu*), a conception that carries symbolic sentiments more than genetic imperatives; belonging to the same family by virtue of blood lineage is what distinguishes the Japanese from the rest of the world (Yoshino 2004: 255-259). The simplest criteria of being Japanese are to be born in Japan, to be of Japanese parents, to live in Japan and speak Japanese (White, cit. Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 240). Theories of the uniqueness of Japanese culture, language, psyche and even physical traits are summarized under *nihonjinron* (lit. "theory of the Japanese"), a concept which Japanese folklorists, anthropologists, philosophers and others developed after the war (Befu 2001: 16-23). The *nihonjinron* –debate was especially intensive from the 1960s to the 1980s. In later times the debate the discourse on this concept has shifted from an internal debate about the Japanese unique properties and culture to a debate about Japan's role in the world, especially in opposition to that world. Characteristics perceived as distinctively Japanese, such as harmony, group conformity and consensus, are often used to explain the Japanese-Western differences as a contrast between homogeneity and heterogeneity (Befu 2001: 68-72, Clammer 2001: 36, 45-46).

The homogeneity inherent in *nihonjinron* is, however, not a fact in spite of common culture language, religion and lifestyle. It ignores the minorities of Japan, such as immigrants, Koreans, Ainu, Okinawans, as well as class, gender, regional and other variations. It is a construct to promote a certain cultural conception of Japan. It has, however, gained a widespread common acceptance among the Japanese (Befu 2001:69).

Closely connected with the *nihonjinron*-debate is the *sakoku-kaikoku* debate of the 1980s focusing specifically on immigration to Japan. *Sakoku* means closed country, and origins in the closing of Japan to the outside world during the Tokugawa era. *Kaikoku* means opening of the country. Supporters of *sakoku* argued that an opening of Japan to foreign labor would lead to a segmentation of the labor market with crime, industrial inefficiency and social problems, while those supporting *kaikoku* maintained that opening Japan to immigration would be a solution to the labor shortage, enhance the richness of Japanese culture, and be internationally beneficial (Brody 2002: 36-37, Sellek 2001: 55-57).

Mayumi Itoh uses in her book "Globalization of Japan" (2000) the concept of *sakoku* to explain the Japanese attitude to the outside world and relates it to the internationalization policy. According to her the *sakoku* mentality combined with *nihonjinron* retards the internationalization of Japan. A true internationalization would end exclusion, xenophobia and protectionism. Itoh identifies two previous openings of Japan to the outside world, the first being implemented with the opening of Japan to foreign trade in 1853 by Commodore Perry, and the second when Japan in the 1980s pressed by the US yielded to opening its markets to foreign goods and investment. She calls for a third *kaikoku* with increased internationalization.

Hellyer (2002) criticizes writers such as Itoh for seeking too far-fetched explanations from history and asks why so many people see the Japanese as holding on to a xenophobic *sakoku* mentality rooted in decisions made centuries ago and give less consideration to events in the 20th century. More immediate political and economic factors may be behind the reluctant immigration policy. Conservative policy intentionally and unintentionally employs the *sakoku* theme to cover political agendas and thus avoids discussing sensitive more appropriate internationalization issues. The term globalization, which has replaced internationalization, is little more than a variation on the same theme. Conservative thinking and *nihonjinron* has, as Clammer (2001:37) puts it:

– *"..turned it (the internationalization) into little more than a fad for learning a little English, sprinkling advertisements with foreign words, consuming a small amount of foreign foods or other goods and enjoying travel abroad. Its effect on fundamental attitudes towards the world has been minimal"*

As shown earlier in this paper Japan has not been a strictly closed country since 1853. After the end of the Second World War the specter of *sakoku* returned and was put in practice until the 1980s. Somehow the prewar international period of Japan with expansion, emigration and immigration was forgotten.

Legislation and integration

Immigration policy has two interrelated parts: immigration control policy and integration policy. In the Japanese context they are, however, synonymous (Kondo 2002). The three pillars of the immigration system were erected at the end of the allied occupation of Japan. These were (1) the Nationality law (1950) based on the transmission of nationality through the paternal line, (2) the Immigration control act (1951), which was drafted in close cooperation with the Supreme Command Allied Powers and modeled on the US immigration policy (3) the Alien registration law (1952) which set up the system with registering and fingerprinting foreigners (Komai 2001:14-15). The legislation also revoked the Japanese nationality of Chinese and Koreans in Japan. They lost a wide range of rights and were left without any clearly defined residence status and deprived of their right to leave and re-enter Japan (Morris-Suzuki 2006). The legislation did have a category of “permanent residents” corresponding to the category of “immigrants” in the US policy, on which it had med modeled, but nobody was ever accepted in that category. It was not designed to integrate newcomers; rather it was an instrument of surveillance and control thus discriminating foreigners.

In 1982 a new Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was enforced. Japan had been reluctant to join the original International Refugee Treaty of 1951, but the arrival of Indochinese refugees in Japan and international pressure compelled the government to sign the convention relating to the status of refugees. This reform provided the legal framework for different types of status of residence and re-entry permits and equal treatment to nationals and non-nationals abolishing some discrimination of foreigners within the social security system. Rather than using the concept integration policy, the Japanese government used internationalization policy or domestic internationalization policy *(kokusaika)* (Komai 2001: 16-17, Kondo 2002, Sellek 2001: 25). This concept had emerged in the 1970s with the economic development of Japan and increasing international trade. Prime Minister Nakasone set out to transform Japan into an “international country” in a speech before the parliament in 1984 as a response to the American demand to open Japan for foreign exports. *Kokusaika* is, however, a complex term, which cannot be reduced to the word internationalization. It also carries a connotation to japanization of the foreign in the world and of the foreign in Japan. It is also closely related to the concept of *nihonjinron* described above. Because of the controversial meanings *kokusaika* carries, terms such as globalization (*gurobaruka)* and co-existence *(kyosei)* have replaced it in common use (Burgess 2004).. The latter has become popular not only in government use, but also among volunteer and citizen groups. Some local governments with many resident aliens have adopted this term in their policy.

In 2001 the so-called "Hamamatsu Sengen" declaration was made by the City of Hamamatsu with signatories from mayors of 12 other nearby cities with a large population of foreign residents. The document declares that

– *“Signatories, for the sake of "regional coexistence" (chiiki kyosei), have established a "Council of Cities with High Concentrations of Foreign Residents" (Gaikokujin Shuju Toshi Kaigi). This will not only increase cultural exchanges for all residents, but also a sys-*

tem to make regions safe and comfortable, and rules clear. It will also promote a society where everyone can participate to increase mutual respect for and understanding of different value systems and cultures, and to establish the rudiments of a society where rights are respected and duties are carried out" (Hamamatsu Sengen 2001)

In 2004, the Council adopted the "Toyota Declaration" including various suggestions, to facilitate the situation for foreign nationals in Japan. The Japan Business Federation also drafted 'Proposals for Solutions to Problems Regarding the Acceptance of Foreigners' in 2004. The activities of the council have led to the start of various trends towards *kyosei* within the whole country (Gaikokujin Shuju Toshi Kaigi 2007, Proposal for the Promotion …2005).

The development of the legislation relating to immigration reflects the ideology expressed in cultural debates. The *nihonjinron, kokusaika, kyosei* and other concepts relating to Japanese culture have had a considerable impact on the situation of foreigners in Japan. These terms have served to affirm the distinctiveness and separateness of the Japanese in relation to foreigners inside and outside Japan. The later generations of Japanese "returnees" from Latin America and China have as a result fallen in between, making their situation in Japan difficult.

The so-called "*nikkeijin*" provision in the Revised Immigration Control Act of 1990 rested on the implicit assumption that ethnic Japanese would fill the demand for unskilled workers without disturbing the ethnic and cultural uniformity of Japan. They were expected to assimilate easily into the society regardless of nationality, the concepts of ethnicity, culture and "blood" were used to legitimate this assumption (Goodman et al 2003). Japanese "blood" was measured by the number of generations removed from Japan. This was reflected in that second generation Japanese descendants (*nisei*) were eligible for a 3-year long visa, whereas third generation (*sansei*) were entitled only to a 1-year visa. Fourth generation and thereafter did not qualify to enter Japan under the scheme, as a great part of them was of mixed descent[3] (Takenaka 2003: 225). This legislation allowing the return of ethnic Japanese falls in fact back on *nihonjinron*–thinking: to meet the need for labor keeping those with no Japanese blood outside, not letting even fourth generation *nikkeijin* with their "diluted blood" in. *Nikkeijin* and *Zanryufujin/koji* in Japan get explicitly confronted with this when the native Japanese wonder why a person with a Japanese surname and a Japanese physical appearance is unable to speak Japanese and act like one. When they do learn the language, they do not get the same compliments as other non-Japanese achieving this, because they are supposed to have it somehow inherent "in their blood". Instead, they even confront hostility not being able to confirm to all the implicit expectations and norms in Japan.

Since the enacting of the Immigration Control Act in 1990 many revisions have been made in the immigration legislation. In 1991 persons and their descendants who lost their Japanese citizenship in accordance with the Peace Treaty were permitted special permanent residence status (the bilateral agreement with South Korea in 1965 had ensured the status of permanent

[3] The *nisei* and *sansei* would in principle have had the option of entering Japan as Japanese nationals if their parents would have registered them at the Japanese consulate promptly after their birth. According to the Japanese nationality law, children born to a Japanese national are automatically entitled to Japanese citizenship, regardless of their place of birth. Not being Japanese citizens, the *nikkeijin* were admitted as "co-ethnic family visitors" and "settlers" allowed to work without any restriction

residents only for citizens of South Korea and their children) (Kondo 2002). Further amendments were made in 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2006 tightening the control on illegal aliens in Japan, but also making improvements, such as taking measures against trafficking in persons (Immigration Bureau of Japan 2007).

Amendments have also been made in the Nationality law 1984 and 1993 changing the principle of patrilineal jus sanguinis to both patri- and matrilineal. The requirement of a Japanese name as requirement for naturalization was also dropped. In 1993 the Alien registration act was amended and eliminated fingerprinting as a requirement for permanent residents, and in 2000 it was abolished for all resident aliens (Ministry of Justice 2007). It did return with the amendment of the immigration policy act in 2006 in another form, fingerprints are taken when entering the country, and not as before only for resident aliens at the local immigration office.

The Immigration Control Act of 1990 also stipulated that the Minister of Justice was to establish a Basic Plan for Immigration Control to set forth immigration control guidelines and other measures. In the 1st Basic Plan for Immigration Control of 1992, the main objectives were the promotion of smooth exchanges of personnel and measures against illegal foreign workers. The second basic plan of immigration control announced in 2000 outlined a more open policy of foreign migration to Japan. With the country facing a population decline due to the age structure, it acknowledged the need to accept at least some immigration and stated:

– *“However, this does not mean short-circuited acceptance of immigrants or a huge number of foreigners, but rather acceptance of foreigners corresponding to the societal needs, through active utilization of presently available systems, smooth enough not causing friction or unease in a society” (Ministry of Justice 2007).*

The plan clearly reflected uneasiness with a growing number of aliens, especially illegal foreigners and advocated strong measures to keep out the unwanted and choose the desired immigrants carefully.

Based on the five-year experience under this plan, the Japanese government announced the Third Basic Plan in 2005. The fundamental concept is similar to that of the Second Basic Plan and it also addresses the smooth settlement of long-term foreign residents.

– *“Japan has adopted a basic policy to openly accept foreign workers in professional or technical fields. It is therefore necessary to more openly accept foreign nationals who are welcome in Japanese society, and from the viewpoint of enhancing the international competitiveness of Japan, there is special need to welcome those foreign nationals who are vital to Japanese society such as highly-skilled workers who have world-class specialized knowledge or technical skills.*

– *In this respect, there is also a need to develop an environment where foreign nationals can live comfortably, and therefore through such measures as considering a social security system for foreign nationals and by coordinating with other administrative measures the smooth acceptance of foreign nationals will be promoted through realization of a Japanese society where foreign nationals can live in a stable environment (Ministry of Justice 2007).*

In order to promote these goals, the government wanted to extend the possibilities of longer stay with a proper visa and clarify the conditions for the permission of permanent residency. Traditionally, the Japanese immigration policy has not been willing to allow permanent residence for foreigners. Before 1998 a 20 year continuous residence in Japan was needed before qualifying, but has since then been lowered to 10 years of continuous residence. Naturalization, in contrast, requires only five years of continuous residence[4].

9. Prospects for the future

According to the preliminary counts of the 2005 Population Census, Japan's population increased by only around 0.1 % annually between the years 2000 and 2005, the lowest increase rate during the postwar period. Japan is now entering a period of population decrease. The Japanese government has clearly acknowledged the need for immigrants in this situation, but a consistent policy is lacking. If Japan wants to maintain the present population number of a little over 127 million, this would be achieved with an average net increase of at least 381,000 immigrants per year, a total net increase of 17 million immigrants 2005-2050. Other scenarios count with as much as 30 million to maintain the current level of economic prosperity (World Population Ageing 2001). This is a more or less impossible thought in present day Japan.

There were high hopes for the *nikkeijin* to fill the labor shortage in Japan without disturbing the homogeneity of the nation. It did alleviate the immediate shortage, and had a positive effect on the population age distribution. Tanimura (2000) has, however, calculated that the total number of *nikkeijin* in Brazil and Japan is too small to fully support the pension system in Japan. The number required is very large and unrealistic and the length of stay has to be longer than 20 years in order to make a significant impact. Thus the number of *nikkeijin* required is not feasible to offset the pension shortfall completely.

The doors will not open wide, the government cautiously wants professionals and highly skilled workers, preferably with some Japanese language skills. Unskilled workers are not wanted, even if there is a demand. Turning the migration machine in reverse gear is a difficult task. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, like his predecessors since Nakasone, has spoken vaguely of opening Japan to the world (Japan Times 24.1.2007), but there is no authority consensus of how to proceed.

The former head of the Tokyo Immigration Bureau Hidenori Sakanaka published an important, but little read book in 2005 "Nyuukan Senki" (Immigration battle diary). In this he argues that Japan must decide what kind of country it must become by the middle of this century. Being a big country requires roughly 20 million immigrants to keep the wheels turning and being a small country with a population of around 100 million is the consequence when most foreigners are kept out. In the latter case robots must do some of the work the immi-

[4] The spouses or children of Japanese nationals or permanent residents can after renewing the one-year spouse visa a couple of times, extend it to a three-year spouse visa (but only those from countries in favor with Japan). Then, when the first three-year spouse visa comes close to expiring it is possible to apply for permanent residency.

grants would do. Sakanaka favors the big country alternative, not just for economic reasons, but Japan should become the “Canada of Asia”, a multicultural and multiethnic salad bowl.

Japan is part of a global migration system which connects particular sending countries with particular receiving countries. Migration is an outcome of interacting macro-, meso- and microstructures. In relation to the macrostructure Japan’s presence in Asia has been substantial through direct investments and export of consumer goods, but also in terms of cultural links. The influx of Asian illegal workers to Japan which gained momentum before the recession in the 1990s is connected with this macrostructure. The meso-level connections between migrants in Japan encourage to further migration, but on the micro level the obstacles set up by Japanese legislation and authority control and enforcement counteract this strongly. Thus the prewar tradition with strong state control of migration is continued, even counteracting the interests of the Japanese economy. Japanese mass media frequently voice opinions in favor of “opening the doors”, like many critics and analysts of the system, often referring to the large proportion of immigrants in Europe, North America and Australia. The problem is that Japan lacks a continuous tradition of accepting foreign labor, and adjusting to a situation with a sudden massive influx of immigrants would pose considerable problems, not least considering the public opinion.

Abandoning the perceived homogeneity in favor of ethnic heterogeneity requires many changes in the Japanese immigrant legislation to eliminate the institutional discrimination that foreigners in Japan encounter today. For example compulsory education in Japan does not apply to foreign children. This means that those immigrant children who drop out of primary school have no other education choices and sometimes wind up in an uneducated underclass of youth gangs (*furyo* in Japanese. litt. “spoiled goods”). Foreign crime is perceived as a serious issue in Japan, and it is often exaggerated by authorities and media thus contributing to the prejudices against foreigners, both on a common an institutional level.

The current foreign population of Japan poses no threat to the society, and ethnic minorities are not targets of hatred and xenophobic violence like in many countries with large immigrant populations. Still there exists institutional discrimination to an extent that would not be possible in most western societies. This situation is gradually changing with the increasing foreign presence in Japan. The myth of Japanese homogeneity is slowly waning away. Even so, Japan need not necessarily follow the road other developed countries have taken.

The population will decrease in Japan. The declining birthrate is, however, not the main cause. The reason is that members of the post-World War II baby-boom generation who are predicted to die in the next 30 years outnumber children to be born during the same period. The population will shrink even if the birthrate increased drastically. Women who are predicted to have babies in the next 30 years constitute a smaller portion of the population.

The immediate pressing issue for Japan to address is the dependency rate; to keep the ratio of working age population to the retired population at a reasonable level. There are basically only three ways to do this: To increase fertility, to change pension benefits (lower pensions, postponed retirement age) or to increase immigration.

The government has introduced a series of policies supporting childcare during the last decade in order to increase the population fertility and reformed the pension system, but these measures are not sufficient. Immigration could be a remedy to the problem with an ageing population if it brings young active population who will work, consume and pay taxes, which will contribute to financing the social security system. Theoretically, temporary immigration would be a good solution, because it would change the population pyramid. Temporary immigrants would require little state-funded medical attention and they would leave before being eligible to receive pension benefits. Immigrants taking up permanent residence are, however, no solution in the long run, as they are likely to confirm to the Japanese society with low birthrates.

Another, more seldom discussed matter relates to environmental sustainability. Japan is a mountainous nation and most of the country is uninhabitable making the population density one of the highest in the world. Japan's environmental problems are a result of excessive industrial production and waste discharge in the overpopulated country. The most voiced concern about the graying Japan relates to the economy; a small working population means lower production. One might, however, question the reasonability of continuing to pursue a higher economic growth keeping or even increasing the current population level. Would a shrinking population not be an option, taking the overpopulation, the environmental problems and Japan’s low food self-sufficiency rate into account? That has rarely been given serious consideration in the debate.

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