

From Foreign Workers to Minority Residents: Diversification of International Migration in Japan

Makoto SATO

Abstract

This paper analyses the trend and characteristics of migration and international population movement in Japan. It argues that although the number of foreign workers did not drastically increase during the economically stagnant 1990s after the collapse of the bubble economy, international migrants became considerably diversified, and some of them began to be permanently settled in Japan. International migration is exactly one dimension of current globalisation of Japan. The number of foreign workers during the past decade maintained a similar level to that of the previous period. Yet, along with foreign workers, other groups of migrants increased substantially. International migrants in the current Japan should not be equated with foreign workers, but be understood as an aggregate of various groups such as workers, students, re-united families and internationally married couples. Diversification was also noticeable in the origin of foreign residents. Koreans, which shared nearly 90% of foreign residents thirty years ago, shrank to mere 34%, and instead, other ethnic groups such as Chinese, Brazilian and Filipino drastically increased. A substantial portion of these people transformed themselves from temporary residents to permanent residents. The immigration policy of the Japanese government which had excluded unskilled workers while simultaneously introducing a certain section of professional and skilled labour into the Japanese labour market would not seem to fundamentally change in the foreseeable future. It may be likely however, to expand the migrant labour by changing bureaucratic interpretation of the borders between skilled and unskilled labour.

Professor, College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan, and Senior Associate Member, St Antony's College, University of Oxford, UK.

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Introduction

This paper¹ analyses trends and characteristics of international migration and population movement surrounding Japan. Although the scale of international migration in Japan is smaller than that of other industrialised countries in Europe and North America, the number of people going out and coming into Japan has steadily increased in the past two decades. Characteristics of international migration and social structure of foreign residents have also changed significantly during these years. The quantitative and qualitative changes of international migration have undeniably had an impact on the whole of Japanese society.

We first look at three basic statistical data: 1) the number of people, both Japanese and non-Japanese, going out of and coming into Japan calculated at immigration control, 2) the number of foreign residents staying for over three months and registered at local councils, 3) the number of Japanese staying overseas for over three months and who report their stay to the nearest Japanese consulates.

We also look into other data. Those include the number of students, both Japanese studying abroad and non-Japanese studying in Japan, non-Japanese children at primary and secondary schools, the number of international marriage, and refugees. One of the arguments this paper makes is that diversified international migration in contemporary Japan could not be fully grasped by simply counting the number of migrant workers but that we should understand migration as an aggregate social phenomenon of various types of trans-border human movements.

Finally, we sketch out impacts on Japanese society and structural changes of non-Japanese people brought about by the rapid increase of recent international migration. We shall see that existing theoretical models do not necessarily fit the Japanese case.

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1. Scale of International Migration

1.1 Statistics of immigration control

The number of Japanese traveling abroad in 2002 was 16,522,804, an increase of 1.9% over the previous year. Although the number of Japanese traveling abroad had shrunk since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001, the number in 2002 showed a slight recovery. Foreign visitors to Japan including re-entrants in 2002 totalled 5,771,975, a record and an increase of 9.2% over the previous year. The number of Japanese traveling abroad in 1982 was 4,086,138 and the number of foreign visitors in the same year was 1,708,306. Thus, the number of Japanese traveling abroad has increased 4.0 times and foreign visitors increased by 3.4 times over the past twenty years (MOJ, 2003a).

Among the Japanese visitors 92.5% returned to Japan within a month, mainly for sightseeing and tourism. The most popular country for Japanese tourists was the United States (22.0% of the whole visitors), followed by China (18.1%), Korea (14.0%), Hong Kong (8.4%), and Thailand (7.5%). The increase of Japanese tourists visiting China is remarkable (35.7% increase in two years), making a sharp contrast to the decrease of Japanese visitors to the United States (28.3% decrease in the same period), partly due to the 9/11 shock (MOLT, 2003). On the other hand, among the new entrants of foreign visitors 92.6% were temporary visitors, over half being sightseeing tourists. As for nationalities among the foreigners who entered Japan in 2002, entrants from Asian nations numbered 63.7% (Korea 25.5%, Taiwan 15.8%, China 9.1%) (MOJ, 2003a).

All in all, the Asian region has steadily strengthened its importance as both Japanese tourist overseas and entrants from overseas to Japan. The fact that some 13% of the whole Japanese population went abroad every year has a significant impact in their perception and understanding of foreign cultures. In the same token, growing number of foreign tourists, though only a third of those Japanese visiting overseas, has increased its importance in the Japanese tourist industry, particularly in the western part of Japan.

1.2 Foreign residents in Japan

Foreign residents who stay in Japan over three months are required to register themselves with local councils. The total number of foreign residents registered with local councils for 2002 was 1,851,758, and equivalent to 1.45% of Japan's

total population. The number of foreign residents in 1982 was 802,477 (0.68% of the total population), and the number in 1992 was 1,281,644 (1.03%). Thus both the number and its proportion of the total population more than doubled in twenty years (MOJ, 2003b)

Along with the absolute increase of foreign residents, the qualitative change of the composition of these foreign residents is significant. In 1964, Koreans (both North and South) constituted an absolute majority, 87.7%, of the foreign residents at the time. Most of these Koreans were permanent residents, that is, immigrants and their descendants from Korea, then a colony of Japanese empire. Legally they were given special permanent resident status. The proportion of Koreans slightly declined in 1974 to 85.3%, and further by 1984 to 81.7%. Since the late 1980s, when the number of foreign residents, including migrant workers, drastically increased, however, the percentage of Koreans began to fall quickly: 72.0% in 1988, 50.0% in 1994, 40.9% in 1999 (Yamagami, 1989; MOJ, 2003b).

The statistics for 2002 show that, although Koreans were still the largest, their share now declined to 33.8%, a third of foreign residents. In contrast, absolute number and proportion of other nationalities increased. As for 2002, those are Chinese (22.9%), Brazilians (14.5%), Filipinos (9.1%), Peruvians (2.8%) and Americans (2.6%). From the regional breakdown, Asian nationals (74.0%) shared the absolute majority, followed by South Americans (18.1%).

South Americans, mainly Brazilians and Peruvians, are in most cases, descendants of Japanese emigrants to these countries (immigration laws categorize them as long-term residents, or spouses and descendants of Japanese), 85.9% in case of Brazilians. In the case of Chinese, spouses and descendants of Japanese make up 20.8% and students and industrial trainees 32.1%. Among Filipinos, spouses or descendants of Japanese comprise 37.6%. To summarise: following the complex requirements of Japanese immigration regulations, some enter Japan as professionals or skilled workers, others as students or industrial trainees, and still others use their special status as descendants of Japanese, some of whom now reside permanently in Japan through marriage (MOJ, 2003b).

1.3 Japanese residents overseas

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the number of Japanese residing overseas in 2003 was a record of 911,062. Since 1990 the number of Japanese residents in a foreign country increased by 46.9% over thirteen years. Among them 68.0% are persons who resided in a foreign country for more than three

months, and the rest were those who obtained permanent residential status in respective countries. Excluding permanent residents, the United States housed 36,4% of Japanese overseas, followed by China (12.3%) and Britain (6.6%). Two categories, employees for private sector (56,5%), and, students and researcher/academics (24.8%) are predominant (MOFA, 2004).

2. Migrant Workers

2.1 Skilled workers and descendants of Japanese

Among the 1,851,758 registered foreign residents in 2002, 713,775 (38.5%) were permanent residents, and the rest 1,137,983 (61.5%) were temporary residents. We focus on the latter group.

As is well known, post-war Germany systematically introduced foreign workers based on short-term contacts institutionalized by bilateral agreements with labour-sending countries (guest workers). Being a same defeated nation and experiencing a similar post-war economic growth to Germany, Japan did not adopt such a policy of introducing foreign labour. The fundamental reason lied in the fact that immediate post-war Japan heavily relied on agriculture, and thus, had an ample source of labour in rural areas within its territory. In 1950, 45.4% of active labour population were engaged in agriculture. A drastic land reform and increase in agricultural productivity after that led to the emission of surplus labour to urban industries where demand of labour rapidly expanded. This situation was more or less maintained during the high economic growth period, and even after that, up to early 1980s.

Comparatively, Japan succeeded in maintaining a stable economic growth during the 1980s. Other industrialised countries, particularly the United States which suffered from twin deficits of trade and federal budget, put greater pressure on Japan. At a G5 finance ministers' summit in 1985, Japan accepted a drastic revaluation of yen. Stronger yen invited a rocketing price hike of real estate, and led to the "bubble" booming economy. Strong yen and expanding labour demand in Japan attracted a portion of migrant workers in neighbouring countries who faced an exclusion from the labour market in the Middle East region. At that time, those people who were engaged in agriculture shrank to 8.3% (1985) in Japan, and so rural areas could no longer be a supplier of labour to urban industries (Yanotsuneta-kinenkai, 2000) Japanese employers in some sectors such as the construction industry became reliant on the new influx of

foreign workers including, in some cases, those without authorized visas.

Thus, without clear government policy on migrant labour, Japan faced a rather sudden influx of foreign labour after the mid-1980s. After the initial confusion and embarrassment, several guiding principles were gradually formed by the government through revision of immigration regulations, administrative guidelines and policy statements. Firstly, the government drew a clear dividing line between professional or skilled labour, and “simple” (unskilled) labour. The former group of people are widely given authorization to work in Japan, but the latter group is generally not allowed to enter. Secondly, the foreign nationals who were descendant of Japanese are given special treatment and permitted to work basically without restriction. Thirdly, several new schemes such as an industrial training system for foreign workers in some sectors were introduced. Those trainees were allowed to work in the same job for a certain period after training. Up to now these principles have mostly been maintained.

According to the estimate of registered foreign residents, the number of professional and skilled workers was 179,639 in 2002. In addition, the spouses and descendants of Japanese plus some categories such as industrial trainees who were allowed to stay and work for a limited period, totaled 554,237 at the end of 2002, though not all actually worked. Thus, the number of those who were actually, or who were allowed to be, engaged in professions totaled some 730,000 (MOJ, 2003b).

2.2 Workers without authorization

It is even more difficult to estimate the number of foreign nationals who work without legal permission. In 2002 persons apprehended on suspicion of being working without authorization under the immigration law numbered 32,364 (MOJ, 2003c). On the other hand, those who continued to stay after the expiry of their visas numbered 224,067 in January 2002 (MOJ, 2002), and most of them worked without authorization, although this number decreased by some 25% compared to 298,645 in May 1993, the highest record. For nationalities of these overstayers Koreans (24.6%) were predominant, followed by Filipinos (13.2%), Chinese (12.3%) and Thais (7.6%). In addition, the stowaways apprehended, believed to enter for seeking employment, numbered 8,388 in 2002 (MOJ, 2003c).

All in all, the number of foreign workers either with or without authorization was estimated to be some 900,000 to 1,000,000, which was equivalent to 1.4%-1.6% of Japan's active labour population in 2002. It is still lower than the level of

foreign workers in North America or Europe, yet a significant figure given the history of the Japanese labour market.

Apart from professional and skilled workers we may describe some characteristics of unskilled foreign workers by analysing those who were apprehended for working without authorization, as their conditions were fully investigated by the immigration authorities. Firstly, 91.2% come from Asian regions. Secondly, over half (56.5%) worked in Japan over 2 years, and in fact over a quarter, 27.9%, stayed and worked in Japan for over 5 years. Thirdly, there is a fairly clear division of labour between male (57.5%) and female (42.5%) workers. Among male workers, 63.9% worked in manufacturing, construction and other manual works, while 56.2% of female workers are engaged in service sectors such as waitress, nightclub workers, though 13.8% of female workers also worked in manufacturing industry (MOJ, 2003c).

Since the collapse of the “bubble” economy in 1991 Japan has experienced a hard economic recession for the rest of the 1990s through the beginning of the 21st century. The rate of unemployment reached a record of 5.4 % in 2002. More recently it dropped a little, but still as high as 4.7% in April 2004. In spite of this, the number of foreign workers has steadily increased as we saw, though not so drastic as before. It is certain that foreign workers in Japan are no longer a simple regulative valve of labour.

3. International Population Movement at Educational Institutions

3.1 Students coming into and going out of Japan

The expansion of international population movement is also evident in the sphere of education. The number of both foreign students in Japan and Japanese students studying abroad has significantly increased in the past two decades. The Ministry of Education estimates that the number of foreign students at higher educational institutions in Japan numbered 95,550, an increase of 21.2% to the previous year. Among them, 27.5% studied at graduate schools, 52.1% at universities and junior colleges, and the rest at technical colleges and others. As for the nationalities of students, 61.3% came from China, followed by Korea (16.6%), Taiwan (4.5%), Thailand (1.6%) and Indonesia (1.4%) (MOE, 2003).

The proportion of all the foreign students in Japanese higher education in 2002 was 2.6%. It is still much smaller than Britain (18.1%), Australia (14.8%), Germany (11.6%), France (7.6%) or the United States (6.6%) (figures either in

2000 or in 2001). Nevertheless, the increase of foreign students at Japanese higher education for the past two decades is remarkable. It was in 1983 that Japan set out a full-scale invitation policy for foreign students with the aim of having 100,000 foreign students at the beginning of 21st century. The number of foreign students in that year was 10,428. With the expansion of scholarships for foreign students and the introduction of special state subsidy programmes for schools which accept foreign students, the number of foreign student doubled in four years (22,154 in 1987), and then became fourfold in eight years (45,066 in 1991). Then the number shank at the end of the 1990s, after the collapse of "bubble" economy, but again started increasing at the turn of the century.

The number of Japanese students studying abroad has also increased. Based on information supplied by other countries, the Ministry of Education estimates that the number of Japanese students studying abroad totals some 76,000 in 32 countries in 2000. This figure already surpasses the number of foreign students in Japan, but the actual number might be higher, since statistics from other countries are apparently incomplete. As for the destination, the most popular country is the United States (46,497 students), followed by China (13,806), Britain (6,163) and Australia (2,200) (MOE, 2003).

In March 1999 an advisory committee of policy for foreign students submitted a report responding to an inquiry of the Ministry of Education, which was outlining government policy towards foreign students at the beginning of the 21st century (Ryugakusei-seisaku-kondankai, 1999). The report emphasizes the importance of accepting many foreign students, referring to this as Japan's intellectual contribution to the international community. Three factors are mentioned: 1) contribution to Japan's security and international peace through deepening friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and countries sending students, 2) strengthening of Japanese intellectual influence in the international community through securing hegemonic global standards and establishing human networks, 3) promoting economic and social reform, including educational reform in accordance with the internationalization of Japan. An essential argument of the report thus lies in 'national interest' and the 'internationalisation' of Japan.

3.2 Children at primary and secondary schools

The number of foreign children at primary and secondary schools has increased steadily, though they draw less attention than foreign students at higher

education. Most of these children enter Japan with their parents, such as migrant workers from Brazil with little command of the Japanese language. According to the research of the Ministry of Education, the number of children who need special language training totaled 19,042 in September 2003 : 12,523 at primary schools, 5,317 at junior high schools, 1,143 at high schools, and 59 at other schools. As for the mother tongues of children three major languages, Portuguese (35.6%), Chinese (25.8%) and Spanish (14.0%), represent three-quarters of the children (MOE, 2004).

In most cases the children are given special Japanese language training, and many schools and local communities conduct various kinds of projects such as producing pamphlets and leaflets in the children's native language for instruction, with the assistance of citizen volunteers. The research also indicates that 20.4% of the children have remained at their school for less than 6 months, while 45.1% of the children already remained for over 2 years. It is apparent that many children have become more permanent residents than simple short-term learners.

4. International Marriage

In parallel with the increase of foreign residents, international marriage registered in Japan has increased more rapidly. International marriage refers here to marriage between Japanese and non-Japanese. According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the total number of marriage registered in 2002 was 757,331 cases (couples). Among them, international marriage numbers 35,879 cases (between Japanese bridegrooms and non-Japanese brides 27,957, and between non-Japanese bridegrooms and Japanese brides 7,922), represent 4.7% of all marriage in Japan (MOH, 2004)

This percentage far surpasses the rate of permanent residents (0.56%), total foreign residents (1.45%) in Japan's whole population, or that of foreign workers in the active labour population (1.4 - 1.6%), or foreign students in all the students at higher educational institutions (2.6%). The number of international marriage may be even larger when we take into account those couples of common law marriage, or those couples who register their marriage in other countries. This is more significant when we consider the fact that the Japan's total fertility rate is now low as 1.29 (2003) and the absolute population is expected to begin declining in less than ten years.

Statistics also counts marriage between Japanese and permanent foreign

residents as international marriage. The number of Korean partners for Japanese bridegrooms and brides doubled in twenty years: 4,109 cases in 1980 to 8,723 cases in 2000. However, the proportion of Korean partners among foreign partners for Japanese bridegrooms and brides fell from 56.6% to 24.1% in the same period. Thus, an increase of marriages between permanent resident Koreans and Japanese provides only a partial explanation for the increase in international marriage.

The number of marriage in Japan reached a peak in 1972 when 1,099,984 couples married. In the same year only 0.5% were international marriage. The number of marriage declined after that and fell to less than 700,000 in 1987. It recovered a little in the mid-1990s, but stagnated after that. During this period the proportion of international marriage slowly increased to 0.9% in 1980, 1.7% in 1985, and increased dramatically to 3.5% in 1990. As for nationalities, in 2002 Japanese bridegrooms married Chinese (38.5%), Filipina (27.3%), Korean (19.1%), and Thai (5.5%) brides. In the case of Japanese brides, they married Korean (30.0%), American (18.8%), Chinese (10.3%), British (4.0%) and Brazilian (2.9%) bridegrooms.

On the whole, international marriage in Japan since the late 1980s have increased both in terms of their absolute number and percentage, and the nationalities of partners for the Japanese has diversified. In contrast with migrant workers or foreign students, mostly staying in Japan for a limited period, international marriages are perpetual. And taking the second generation of married couples into account, international marriages will definitely have a greater impact on the Japanese society. So far very few studies on international migration have paid attention to international marriage (Takeshita, 2000).

5. Refugees

We have focused on voluntary type of migration. Yet, there is, of course, another type of migration by force, refugees and asylum seekers. In fact this is the only area where we could recognise little development in the past decades. In 2003 there were 336 applications of asylum by foreign entrants to the Japanese immigration authorities. Prime applicants were from Myanmar (111 persons) followed by Turkey, Iran, China, India and Pakistan. Among them only 26 persons were recognized as refugees or admitted to stay in Japan. The picture is little different when we see the figures over ten years time, i.e. since 1990. From 1990 through 1999 there were 1099 applicants of asylum, only 165 of them were

given refugee status or permission to stay (MOJ, 2004). It is doubtful whether this kind of situation will continue in the future, taking into account possible stronger international pressure.

6. Social Impact of International Migration

The Japanese government has maintained a principle of welcoming professional and special skilled workers on the one hand, and rejecting “simple” (unskilled) workers on the other. We should know, however, that “simple” labour in the interpretation of the Japanese immigration authorities is not exactly the same as “unskilled” labour conventionally understood. For instance, cooks are generally classified as special technical workers while construction workers are generally regarded as “simple”. Yet, it is obvious that some workers may be skilled while others may not. In other words, classification of skilled or “simple” labour by the immigrant authorities is no more than a labeling of desirable or undesirable job for the Japanese labour market.

In this sense the categorization of skilled and “simple” labour is not stably fixed, but may change in certain circumstances. Such a possibility is in fact suggested by the immigration authorities. In March 2000 the Ministry of Justice published a Basic Plan for Immigration Control (2nd Edition). The plan aims to establish basic guidelines on immigration control for the beginning of the 21st century based on the understanding of domestic as well as international environments which necessitate the introduction of new policy, that of smooth exchange of personnel and proper immigration control against the rapid progress of globalisation, Japan’s aging population and decreasing workforce, tougher and more effective measures to cope with social safety and illegal immigrants.

At a glance the plan does not seem to change the Ministry’s position that Japan will not accept unskilled labour. Yet, it says, when a specific need is recognized for a certain unskilled occupation, “rearrangement of status of residence shall be studied”. Similarly, special consideration may be given to illegal entrants under certain circumstances (MOJ, 2000). In other words, while it officially maintains the existing principle of not allowing the entry of unskilled labour, it admits good possibility of introducing workers into new sectors by changing the classification of “skilled labour”.

The influx of foreigners as professionals, workers, students and family members of local Japanese, and the subsequent formation of new ethnic minorities have a strong impact on the Japanese society. In particular, Japanese

people came to recognise for the first time various issues of minority groups which had existed before the mass influx of foreign population began in the middle of 1980s. For example, the Japanese government had for a long time refused to recognize Ainu people (population 23,800) as an indigenous group, who lived in northern Japan. In 1992, the International Year of Indigenous People, the United Nations officially recognized them as an indigenous group. In 1994 an Ainu candidate was elected as a Member of Parliament, the House of Councillors, for the first time. This clearly indicates that voters rapidly deepened their understanding and consciousness of Ainu issues. Such a changing social atmosphere and international pressure led the Japanese government to gradually shift its stance, and to enact a new law for the purpose of promoting and developing Ainu ethnic culture in May 1997.

The fact that an increasing number of newly coming foreigners has come to be permanently settled, also led Japanese to face an old issue of permanent foreign residents, particularly Koreans. They are not only a historical prototype of international migration in modern Japan, but their presence continues to be a major social issue for contemporary Japan. Although immigration regulations impose no job restrictions, social discrimination limits their employment opportunities. Some social security systems could not be used by foreign residents until mid-1980s: the National Pension Fund before 1982, Child Benefit before 1982, and National Health Service before 1986. The then influx of Indochinese refugees into Japan and the signing of the Refugee Treaty by Japan in 1982 triggered this liberalization of the social security system for foreign residents (Tanaka, 1991).

Another way that an influx of foreign workers since the late 1980s has contributed to improving the position of permanent residents is in their effect on civil service employment. In 1992 several large cities like Kawasaki, Yokohama, Osaka and Kobe for the first time began employing foreign nationals as civil service specialists, and in 1995 the Kochi Prefecture decided to employ foreign nationals in most civil service posts (*Asahi Shinbun*, 15-12-1996, 26-03-1997).

A current major issue is how to broaden citizenship rights for permanent resident foreign nationals, local voting rights in particular. In February 1995 the Supreme Court ruled that it is constitutionally permissible to give local suffrage to permanent resident foreign nationals. Major obstacles exist within some quarters of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, who insist that nationality and citizenship should not be separated. The bill was supported by the South Korean government, while the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan,

virtually under the direction of North Korea, objected the bill on the grounds that it would erode the identity of Korean residents.

The Japanese public is generally supportive of the bill. By the end of 2003, 1518 local council representing 75.5% of the Japanese population expressed their support for the bill. The opinion polls independently conducted by three national newspapers all show that the majority of the public support the bill: 66% conducted by the Yomiuri in March 1999, 58% by the Mainichi in October 2000, and 64% by the Asahi in November 2000 (*Mindan Shinbun*, 01-01-2004).

Some local councils ventured with experimental policies independently from the central government such as enacting ordinances which allows foreign residents to participate in a referendum, or establishing foreign residents councils where representative of minority groups could join policy formulation. Such challenges of local councils derive from practical necessity rather than ideological orientation. Because of the rapid increase of various ethnic groups in local communities it is common in many town halls and community centres to prepare leaflets in foreign languages explaining services such as garbage collection.

Theoretical Implications

The increase of international migration in Japan in the past two decades was really outstanding in the context of Japanese history, although it was still in a smaller scale geographically compared with other industrialized nations. Over the two decades, the number of international migration in Japan increased: Japanese tourists overseas 4 times, foreign students at higher education 9 times, the proportion of foreign residents in the population 2 times, international marriage 3 times. The quantitative increase accompanied qualitative changes. The proportion of Koreans among foreign residents decreased from 80% to a little more than 30%, and instead, other ethnic groups such as Chinese, Brazilians and Filipinos increased in both absolute number and the proportion among the foreign residents. The diversification also became noticeable even among the foreign workers of the same ethnic group, from business elites to low-paid workers without authorization. Thus, it became unpractical to classify these foreign workers into a single category. The expanding international migration had a grave impact on the whole Japanese society. People are searching for a way of harmonious co-existence and mutual understanding with neighbours of the foreign origin in the same community.

We shall then consider theoretical implications our empirical analyses make.

Among the few attempts to theoretically explain the complex realities of Japanese international migration, a most provocative thesis was proposed by Sassen. She argues that in Tokyo, as a global city, not only business elites working for the global centres of banking and management multiply, but also low-paid jobs servicing such global centres are created which absorb a number of migrant workers. She also contends that Japan created the precondition for an influx of foreign workers through its direct investment and aid in South East Asia (Sassen, 1988). However, several empirical analyses do not necessarily support her thesis. Most of the low-paid foreign workers are engaged in more traditional manufacturing and construction industries rather than newly formed service sectors (Machimura, 1994). Analyses of bilateral relationship between Japan and South East Asian countries indicate that there is no direct relationship between level of Japanese investment and aid in a country, and the number of migrants coming from that country (Sato, 1998). Most of the Malaysian migrants working in Japan are of Chinese ethnic origin, while Malay ethnic group is most affected by the Japanese direct investment (Ishii, 1998).

The inconsistency between Sassen's thesis and empirical examinations by others seems to derive from the fact that she is caught in a trap of economic determinism, paying too little attention to political, social and cultural factors in the analysis of Japanese case. Theoretical explanations of international migration including migrant workers need multi-dimensional analysis.

Secondly, for migrant labour, it is inappropriate to explain the supply and demand of migrant labour from the viewpoint of total demand and supply for labour of a country. It is specific types of labour in specific sectors which demand migrant labour. In the past two decades the Japanese economy experienced both a record boom and a record recession. The demand for labour significantly fluctuated. Yet, the migrant workers almost steadily increased, as certain types of labour in certain industries continuously demanded migrant workers. Based on this understanding it is doubtful to argue that Japan will necessarily face a massive influx of migrant workers in the near future because of aging population. The idea that an aging population inevitably leads to an acute shortage of labour does not seem to be fully verified. The shortage of labour in general does not necessarily lead to the general demand for migrant labour. We may expect, however, that the demand for certain types of migrant labour such as nursing care for elderly people will increase in an aging Japan.

Thirdly, international migration should be understood as an aggregate social phenomenon of various types of cross-border human movements. In its "World

Migration Report”, the International Organization for Migration defines international migrants very broadly as “persons who take up residence in a foreign country”. In other words, they are “those foreigners who remain for an extended stay in a new country”, excluding the tourists, business travelers and religious pilgrims. Concretely speaking, international migrants belong to two groups, voluntary migrants and forced migrants, and voluntary migrants include “people who move abroad for purposes of employment, study, family reunification, or other personal factors” (IOM, 2000).

Our analysis of International Migration in Japan seems to verify the appropriateness of this broad definition. There is no doubt that international migration has a great impact on the labour markets of the countries concerned. Yet, those people coming from overseas to Japan have brought much wider influences on various dimensions of Japanese society in the areas of culture, education, local community life, and marriage and family, along with labour market. As the salient increase in international marriage demonstrates, there is uneven development among various phenomena of international migration.

Fourthly, concerning the role of the state there are two opposing dimensions. The sudden influx of migrant workers in the late 1980s without the clear introducing policy of the government indicates that international migration may develop independently from state policies. At the same time, the drastic decrease of migrant workers as a result of introducing new visa requirements, as were witnessed among Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Iranian migrants in the early 1990s, indicates the decisive power of the state in certain circumstances. Similarly, an enormous increase of foreign students in the past decades was not imaginable without the active initiatives of inviting foreign students by the state. We should understand both dimensions of state role in international migration.

Fifthly, the development of international migration gave many Japanese opportunities to reconsider existing minority issues in Japan. Without the influx of Vietnam refugees in the late 1970s the liberalization of social security systems for foreign residents in the early 1980s would not be realized. In the same token, without the drastic increase of international migrants since the mid-1980s the Japanese public would not come to widely support to granting foreign residents the voting rights in local elections. In this sense the issue of international migration works as a litmus test for the Japanese society, indicating level of recognition of minority issues within its society.

Finally, there is still some room of consideration to say whether global citizen consciousness has been formed among Japanese. It is certain, however, that a

substantial portion of Japanese people have outstepped the border of ethno-national limitations in their daily life. We may say that we are certainly witnessing the burgeoning trans-border consciousness.

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