
UN/POP/MIG/2005/07

27 June 2005

**UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL
MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Secretariat

New York, 6-8 July 2005

**POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF JAPANESE MIGRATION POLICY
IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP IN EAST ASIA***

Yasushi Iguchi**

*The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

** Kwansai Gakuin University, Japan

A INTRODUCTION

Fourth, the presence of China in terms of international migration has been growing rapidly, especially through labor export schemes to neighboring countries including trainees as well as migration of students, who are not workers but are candidates for the highly skilled.

2000 and 2003. As foreign residents can apply for permanent resident status after ten years of legal stay (in the case of spouses of Japanese, only five years of legal stay).

When we look at the number of Japanese residing in foreign countries, it is clear that when long-term residents (staying in foreign countries more than three months) increase, the Japanese people as permanent residents in foreign countries increases (table 2)

Then we look at distribution of foreigners in Japan according to their origin. Non-permanent residents of Asian and Latin-American origin occupy the majority of them, while permanent residents are also concentrated to Asia and Latin-American origin.

It is important to note that Japanese people residing in North America occupy the most share and permanent residents also concentrates in North America, while the ratio of permanent residents in total Japanese people in Asia is much lower than in North America (table 3)

In addition, it is important to distinguish permanent residents as “old comers” and those as “new comers” The population of permanent residents as “old comers”(the foreigners, who lost their Japanese nationality after the conclusion of San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952 between Japan and the allied nations) has been declining because of growing number of naturalization, while the population of permanent resident as “new comers” is growing as more and more of the foreign residents are staying for more than ten years (as spouses of a Japanese: five years).

Therefore, it should not be overlooked that when temporary migration increases, permanent residents also increase in East Asia.

TABLE 2. DEVELOPMENT OF PERMANENT AND NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS

	<i>Foreign residents in Japan</i>			<i>Japanese Nationals staying abroad</i>		
		<i>Non-Permanent</i>	<i>Permanent</i>		<i>Long-term</i>	<i>permanent</i>
1990	1,075,317	429,879	645,438	620,174	374,044	246,130
1995	1,362,371	736,331	626,040	728,268	460,522	267,746
2000	1,686,444	1,028,839	657,605	811,712	526,685	285,027
2003	1,915,030	1,172,067	742,963	911,062	619,269	291,793

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice

TABLE 3. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PERMANENT AND NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS

	<i>Foreign residents in Japan</i>			<i>Japanese Nationals staying abroad</i>		
		<i>Non-Permanent</i>	<i>Permanent</i>		<i>Long-term</i>	<i>permanent</i>
Total	1,915,030	1,172,067	742,963	911,062	619,269	291,793
Asia	1,422,979	761,960	661,019	206,520	199,122	7,399
Oceania	160,726	15,045	1,031	63,018	35,152	27,866
NorthAm	63,271	53,111	10,160	369,639	240,033	129,606
LatinAm	343,635	281,699	61,936	101,894	10,547	91,347
Europe	57,163	50,302	6,861	158,548	124,553	33,955
Africa*	10,060	8,571	1,489	11,398	9,818	1,580
Other	1,846	1,379	467	44	44	0

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice
Note: * includes middle east.

TABLE 5. SKILL COMPOSITION OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN JAPAN (ESTIMATED)

<i>Status of Residence</i>	1990	1995	2000	2002	2003
----------------------------	------	------	------	------	------

TABLE 8. TRAINEES ACCEPTED BY THE SUPPORT OF JITCO ACCORDING TO SECTOR (2003)

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Foreign trainees</i>	<i>Composition among total</i>	<i>Comparison with the last year</i>
Total	43,457 (13,303)	100.0	+9.4
Textile and garment	11,988 (3,682)	27.6	+4.4
Food and drink	6,427 (1,814)	14.8	+10.3
Transport machinery	3,593 (656)	8.3	+15.2
Electric and electronic	2,936 (595)	7.2	+11.5
Construction	2,213 (1,759)	6.4	+16.0
Metal	2,334 (811)	5.4	+19.7
Agriculture	2,768 (811)	5.1	+3.8
Plastic	1,606 (461)	3.7	+43.5
General machinery	1,022 (331)	2.4	+40.4
Steel	1,004 (332)	2.3	+34.8
The others	7,388 (2,051)	17.0	-0.7

Source: JITCO

Note: () stands for the number of enterprises accepting trainees.

TABLE 9. BRAZILIAN NATIONALS AS DESCENDANTS OF JAPANESE ACCORDING TO PREFECTURE (2003)

<i>Top-10 Prefecture</i>	<i>Child/Spouse of Japanese</i>	<i>Long-term residents</i>	<i>Permanent resident</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total	85,482	140,552	41,711	267,745
Aichi	14,032	28,615	13,473	56,120
Shizuoka	11,853	22,166	6,527	40,546
Nagano	6,185	10,429	939	17,553
Mie	5,167	10,169	1,850	17,186
Gifu	4,226	8,919	2,970	16,115
Gunma	4,740	8,593	2,025	15,358
Saitama	5,499	6,712	1,447	13,658
Shiga	3,610	6,516	636	10,762
Ibaraki	4,196	5,674	806	10,676
Tochigi	2,988	4,167	1,361	8,516

Source: Ministry of Justice

TABLE 10. NUMBER OF SPECIAL PERMISSION TO STAY BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE

<i>Year</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>
Number	4,318	6,930	5,306	6,995	10,327
Korea	653	1,337	1,110	1,198	1,671
China	511	789	566	802	1,464
Others	3,154	4,804	3,640	4,955	7,192

Source: Ministry of Justice.

3. Composition of Foreigners according to Sex

When we look at the entry and stay of foreigners according to nationality and sex, almost 80 per cent of those from the Philippines are occupied by female, while 74 per cent of those Thai nationals who stay in Japan are female. This may mean that certain networking exists between Japan and the Philippines or Thailand.

On the contrary, the people from Bangladesh, Iran and India are dominated by men, which are

TABLE 12. EMPLOYEES IN J

TABLE 13 DETERMINANTS OF CORPORATE TRANSFER AND RELATION TO BUSINESS TRAVELER

	<i>Intra-regional Movement</i>		<i>To Europe</i>		<i>To North America</i>	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>T-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>T-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>T-value</i>
FDI flows	0.03139	0.344	0.03687	5.100***	-198.092	-0.583
Exchange rate	-1.82286	-1.843*	- 1.4990	-0.813	-0.05946	-4.494***
Employees in affiliates	- 0.005094	-5.830***	0.002806	1.938*	- 0.003610	-1.979**
Transferees in affiliates	0.007677	9.631***				
Business travelers	0.973	17.025***	0.009672	6.530***	0.01812	10.912***
Constant	-300.875	-1.663	-1.550	-0.700	-198.092	-0.583
Adjusted R	0.851		0.977		0.989	
D.W	0.946		1.974		1.150	
Sample	100		50		30	

Source: By the author using the pool of Japanese statistics from 1991 to 2000.

Note: See Iguchi (2004).

* is statistically significant with 10 per cent level.

** is 5 per cent level .

*** is 1 per cent level.

Therefore, it can be clearly said that number of intra-company transferees does not always grow in Asia, but they will be reallocated to the other affiliated companies within the same region or to the other regions.

It is also interesting that those intra-company transferees who has good experience in managing local commercial presence in Asia or North America are also dispatched to Europe, where the European Union is about to enlarge itself to additional 10 member countries in Central and East Europe (Iguchi 2000).

The negative correlation between the number of intra-corporate transferees and that of T(h)2.E

Ae0sre5(a)11.3e".eyvua4(t1(2.E).3(f)-1.

D. MIGRATION POLICY IN JAPAN AND FOR EAST ASIA

1. Limitation of Migration Policy

There were no basic changes in Japanese migration policy for the past 15 years. Many kinds of changes in Immigration and Refugee Recognition Act can be regarded as “fine tunings”. The effects of employment policy for foreigners were still marginal and there were no linkages between local immigration bureau and public employment offices or municipalities. What has been attracting public attention recently is crack-down of foreigners in irregular situation especially overstaying foreigners.

Now, we should ask ourselves: what are limitations of Japanese migration policy which could not adjust itself to the changing domestic and international environment?

First, the basic policy of accepting foreign workers was decided by the Cabinet in 1989. The Government of Japan has been maintaining the basic policy until now that foreigners with knowledge or technology should be accepted actively, while the acceptance of the so-called unskilled workers should be carefully examined.

From the late 1980s to the middle of 1990s, there was the “first debate” in Japan whether Japan should accept “the so-called unskilled workers” with the background of the “bubble economy”. But, this debate did not affect the basic policy of the government of Japan at all.

With the long economic depression and accelerating decline of fertility, there has been the “second debate” since the second half of 1990s, whether Japan should allow “(mass-) immigration” in future.

Even during “the first debate”, the Government had no intention to change the basic policy, while it enlarged the foreign traineeship programs and promoted the employment policy for the foreigners of Japanese descendant.

Now in the process of “the second debate”, the Government has already undertaken pension reform (2000, 2004), promote employment of the old-aged by 65(2004) and reinforced policy measures to curb fertility decline (2004). However, the Government is still reluctant to change the basic policy on foreign workers while it has strengthened criminal sanctions and intensified crack-down of foreigners in irregular situation (2003, 2004). The penal sanction against trafficking was also introduced (2005).

However, the fundamental problem of the Japanese migration policy lies in the fact that there is only “immigration control” policy, and no concept of “integration policy” of foreigners.

The Immigration Control Bureau of Ministry of Justice has been able to manage international migration, when temporary migration has been dominant. Now that foreigners as long-term residents or those with permanent resident status increase and the second generation of foreigners are growing up, it is indispensable for Japan to introduce “integration policy” for foreigners and realize better combination between “immigration policy” and “integration policy”.

By the way, employment policy for foreigners was not effective enough and working condition of foreign unskilled workers especially has been deteriorating since the late 1990s, as deflation continued and irregular employment has been glowing. For example, many foreigners of Japanese descendant are working for subcontracting or dispatching company with the contract only for a few months and their wages are in declining tendency. Their experiences are not reflected in their wages. Most of them are not covered by public pension insurance or public health insurance.

Therefore, it is urgent to realize a new legal framework also by domestic labor laws in combination with bilateral agreement, to guarantee appropriate working conditions and safety net by social insurance.

Fortunately, Japan is situated in a very advantageous geographical place, because dynamic East Asian countries are rapidly growing in East Asia. From the demand side, there are no worries for the Japanese economy to shrink (Iguchi, 2004b).

Based upon such consideration, it is desirable and possible for Japan to develop migration policies compatible with regional integration in East Asia. .

The “Human Resource Development and Human Circulation Strategy” which the author has been proposing based on the idea “to develop, circulate and utilize human resources in East Asia for development of Asia itself”(Iguchi, 2004a; Iguchi, 1997).

Asia has long been the source region of the highly skilled to North America and Europe. With the declining fertility, North America and Europe need more human resources from Asia. Now, Asia should be able to develop its human resources within the region, circulate them within the region and encourage

E. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since the monetary crisis in 1997, East Asian countries acknowledged the necessity to prevent outbreak of monetary crisis, to realize sustainable growth through technological development as well as expansion of internal market.

Moreover, the reality of economic interdependence in East Asia is far beyond “free trade agreement”. The economic interdependence is promoted not only by foreign direct investment but also by international migration. Institutionally speaking, the migration system in Asia should have to catch up with the new reality.

Looking at the migration policy in Japan, 1) lack of “integration policy” will cause more problems of foreigners in Japan, 2) combination of human resources development and migration policy may be of great importance at different kind of skill levels, 3) facilitating intra-corporate transfer of multinationals is indispensable for Japan to promote technology transfer and regional cooperation.

The “Human Resource Development and Human Circulation Strategy” is one example of combining domestic efforts and international cooperation. It is to achieve better combination of national and regional interests.

By taking these measures, it is expected that Japan would be able to overcome its problems arising from fertility decline and to contribute to the sustainable development of East Asian region.

Lastly, East Asia has several political frictions among countries and regions, irrespective of growing economic interdependence. To realize “East Asian Community”, it is of strategic importance to promote exchange of persons within this region.

REFERENCES

Findlay, A.M. (2001), From Brain Exchange to Brain Gain: Policy Implication for the UK of recent

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2004)