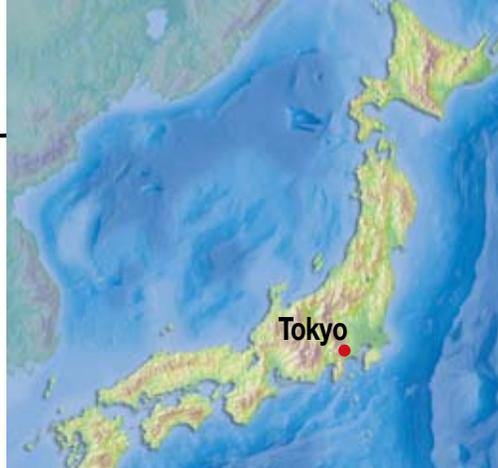
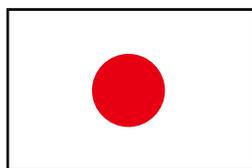


JAPAN



AMY Map by Boyet Rivera III

A. Total Stock (Number) of Migrants, as of 2005

MIGRANTS ABROAD	
ESTIMATED STOCK: MIGRANTS OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY	
TOTAL	-
a. By visa status	Documented migrant workers*
	Emigrants/residents
	Undocumented migrants**
	Refugees***
b. By sex	Male
	Female
c. Top destination countries	1. 6.
(thousands)	2. 7.
	3. 8.
	4. 9.
	5. 10.

MIGRANTS IN JAPAN	
ESTIMATED STOCK: MIGRANTS IN THE COUNTRY	
TOTAL	2,218,854
a. By visa status	Documented migrant workers*
	Emigrants/residents
	Undocumented migrants**
	Refugees***
b. By sex	Male
	Female
c. Top countries of origin	1. Korea - 598,687
	2. China - 519,561
	3. Brazil - 302,080
	4. Philippines - 218,038
	5. Peru - 63,725
	6. USA - 49,390
	7. Thailand - 48,055
	8. Vietnam - 33,003
	9. Indonesia - 32,023
	10. UK - 17,294

* Non-resident, temporary, or contract workers.

** Includes illegal entrants, overstayed or "jumped" visas, trafficked/smuggled people

*** As defined by the government, or in accordance with the UN refugee convention.

B. Annual Socio-Economic Data and Migration Flow

Annual indicators	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Population (million; mid-year estimate)	127.42	127.69	127.60	127.56	127.29	126.93
% population living in rural areas					21.10	
Economic growth: real GDP (%)	2.1	2.9	0.6	(1.0)	(0.3)	2.4
Per capita GDP (US\$)			33,713		32,601	24,900
Per capita GDP: purchasing power parity (US\$)	30,400	30,040		28,000	25,130	
Inflation rate: CPI (%; annual ave.)		(-0.2)	(0.4)	(0.9)	(1.1)	(0.7)
Exchange rate (Yen per US\$; annual ave.)	109.00	108.19	115.93	132.66	121.53	107.80
International reserves (US\$ billion; yearend)				450.00		
Foreign direct investments: actual (US\$ billion; yearend)			115.93			
Trade balance (US\$ billion; yearend)				5.5	5.3	
External debt (US\$ trillion, yearend)		1.545				
National debt (US\$; yearend) - net creditor so foreign debt not relevant						
National debt as % of GDP				130.0%		
Budget balance (US\$; yearend)						
Budget deficit as % of GDP						
Labor force (million)	66.4	67.0	68.0		67.5	67.7
Women as % of labor force			42.0			
Number unemployed (million)				3.61	3.40	
Unemployment rate (% of labor force)	4.3	4.7	5.3	5.4	5.0	4.7
Underemployment rate (% labor force)						
Women unemployment rate (% of labor force)			5.10	5.10		
Men unemployment rate (% of labor force)				5.70		
Average income (yen/month)				486,063		
Average income: women (yen/month)						
Adult literacy rate (% of age 15 & above who can read/write)				99.00	99.0	
Net migration rate (net # of migrants per 1,000 popn)		0.00		0.00		0.00
Annual outflow/deployment of MWs						
% women in the annual outflow						
Annual inflow of MWs						
% women in the annual inflow						
Annual migrants' remittance (US\$ billion/yr)						
Reported # of migrant deaths during the year						
Estimated # deported during the year						
Jailed/detained during the year						
HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate (adult PLHA as % of adult popn)	<0.1			< 0.10		
# People living with HIV/AIDS (thousand)			12,000.0			
# AIDS deaths during the year (adults+children)			500			
Cumulative #: HIV/AIDS cases among migrants (living+died)						

Sources: CIA World Factbook, UN/ILLO/UNDP statistical yearbooks/websites.

AMIC Information Bank



Migrants workers demonstrate for job security and equality for all workers, migrants as well as Japanese, in Japan. Organized by National General Union Tokyo Nambu, and other labor unions in Kanto.

JAPAN

This report was contributed by Naoto Higuchi, Solidarity Network with Migrants in Japan (SMJ).

Political and Economic Update

The year 2005 was a turning point for Japanese politics in the decade. Though the former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi caused friction with China and South Korea by worshipping at the Yasukuni shrine, he will be remembered as a neoliberal economic reformer. Keen to privatize the Japan Post, Koizumi's government submitted a bill for privatization as a symbol of structural reform. When it was voted down at the House of Counselors, Koizumi gambled to dissolve the Lower House and won a historical victory at the election that followed, bringing two-thirds of the seats to the ruling coalition.

After the election, Shinzo Abe took over as Prime Minister. The new Prime Minister has two main characteristics. First, as a grandchild of the most conservative Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi in postwar Japan, Abe declares his devotion to traditional conservatism. Thus his most important political agenda is 'beyond the postwar regime' which emphasizes the evils of political liberalism and the importance of morals and tradition. Second, although the cabinet continues to have neoliberal tendencies, Abe has forced the slow down of economic reforms by taking measures towards social polarization.

Economically, Japan came back to life and began to enjoy modest but stable economic growth, mainly due to the export boom which resulted from the weak yen. Following the economic recovery, on one hand, the unemployment rate decreased and some industries even suffered from labor shortages. On the other hand, the proportion of part-time employees rose from 20.9% in 1995 to 33.8% in

2007, because full-time staff have been replaced by part-timers over the past fifteen years.¹ This casualization of labor market has contributed to social and economic polarization.

Migration Update

Recent Immigration Statistics in Perspective

The Immigration Bureau reported that the number of registered foreign residents at the end of 2005 was 2,011,555, an increase of 37,808 or 1.9% over 2004.² Although the rate of increase actually fell from 3.1% in the previous year, this is the first time that the number of registered foreigners has exceeded two million. The composition of the population by nationality has also been changing. Though Koreans are still the largest group with 598,687 people, the number has fallen below 600,000 for the first time since 1945. Instead, the number of Chinese (519,561) and Brazilians (302,080) has been steadily increasing with each group reaching 500,000 and 300,000 for the first time respectively.

Meanwhile, the number of visa overstayers dropped down to 193,745 as of January 2006, the lowest recorded number since 1991. The decreasing number of overstayers is partly due to the government policy to cut the number of overstayers in half by 2008, but the effect of legalization should not be overlooked. Although Japan has never offered amnesty to migrant workers on a large scale, special permission for residence has been granted to those who married Japanese citizens. The table shows that the

number of special permits issued for residence is rapidly increasing, especially considering that the total number was below 500 prior to 1993.³ As a result, 55,741 migrants were legalized between 1990 and 2004, which is no small amount compared with those legalized by amnesty in such European countries as France and Italy.⁴

The Third Basic Plan for Immigration Control

The Third Basic Plan for Immigration Control was published in March 2005, which indicates the fundamental immigration policy for the coming five years.⁵ The most salient feature compared with the previous one is the increased security dimension of immigration control, as discussed in *AMY 2002-2003*. Based on the Action Plan for the Prevention of Terrorism formulated by the cabinet in December 2004, the plan referred to the possibility of introducing biometrics and taking facial photographs and fingerprinting.

Although the introduction expresses a welcome to tourists and skilled workers and refers to Japan's population decline, the basic tone has clearly rolled back the relatively liberal or inclusive arguments of the second Basic Plan.⁶ The phrase 'human rights', for example, is used only three times in the trafficking section of the third Basic Plan, while it was referred ten times in the second Basic Plan.

Anti-Trafficking Policies

In April 2004, the Japanese government set up a liaison body grouping four ministries and agencies to ratify a UN protocol to prevent

THE NUMBER OF ISSUING SPECIAL PERMISSION FOR RESIDENCE

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
China	789	566	802	1,464	2,212
Korea	1,337	1,100	1,198	1,671	2,057
Others	4,804	3,640	4,995	7,192	8,970
Total	6,930	5,306	6,995	10,327	13,239

Source: 2005 Immigration Control, Ministry of Justice, 2005

Japan Significant Events July 2004 - December 2005

2004

July

(11) The ruling Liberal Democratic Party loses to the Democratic Party Japan in the House of Councilors election, though the ruling coalition of LDP and New Komeito maintained its solid majority in the chamber.

(16) Mitsubishi-Tokyo Financial Group and UFJ Holdings agree on managerial unification, to establish the largest bank group in the world.

August

(15) 600 Japanese orphans abandoned in China and their descendants hold an assembly and demonstration in Tokyo, requesting public compensation.

(19) The Police Agency present an outline for the prevention of terrorism, announcing the realization of concrete measures within two years.

September

(1) 29 North Korean escapees take refuge in the Japanese school in Beijing, and are taken to the Japanese embassy there.

(17) Japan ratifies the free trade agreement (FTA) with the government of Mexico.

(21) Eight Bangladeshi overstayers voluntarily appear in the Tokyo Immigration Office, requesting special permission for residence.

(25) The Ministry of Education and Science begin research on the enrollment of foreign children, which is the first such investigation done by the national government.

December

(10) 20-30 detainees protested by sit-in, demanding improved conditions in the East Japan Detention Center.

2005

January

(18) Colombian and Japanese governments agree to take measures to prevent trafficking from Colombia.

(21) The Immigration Bureau deport the eight Bangladeshi overstayers who appeared the Tokyo Immigration Office requesting special permission for residence in 2004.

March

(6) 300 migrant workers, including factory workers from Asia, Africa and Latin America and English teachers from Western countries, demonstrate against unstable working conditions.

(15) The Ministry of Justice restricts application for entertainer visa status to Filipinos as a measure to prevent trafficking.

human trafficking.⁷ Despite its notoriety in trafficking to sex industry since the early 80s, Japan has been generally ignorant about the victims of trafficking. Increasing criticism from the USA, however, which put Japan on a special watch list of human trafficking countries,⁸ forced the government to take measures regarding the protection of victims.

In December 2004, the government developed the “Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons” which describes Japan’s intention to join the UN Protocol on Human Trafficking as soon as

possible”.⁹ The plan took shape in two ways.

First, the Diet passed the Law for Partial Amendment of the Penal Code and Relevant Laws promulgated in June 2005.¹⁰ The amendment is aimed to punish traffickers, but it is unclear if this legal framework is sufficiently comprehensive to criminalize all severe forms of trafficking in persons.¹¹ In addition, the focus of the new legislature is placed more on tightening the grip on brokers, while it gives less mention of identifying and protecting victims of trafficking and their basic human rights. Nevertheless, an

(16) The assembly of Shimane prefecture ratifies a local regulation to celebrate the day of Takeshima, which has been under territorial conflict between South Korea and Japan. This enraged the Korean people, and the Korean government filed an objection with the Japanese government.

(29) The Ministry of Justice published the third basic plan for immigration control.

April

(1) The government reimposes the legal cap on deposit-insurance coverage, which indicates the recovered strength of banks.

June

(16) The lower house passed the revised Criminal Law and the Immigration Law, which added clauses to punish trafficking.

(18) The first workshop of SMJ was held in Kyoto, in which more than 300 participants discussed various matters related to migration.

July

(3) The Special Reporter for Racism of the UN Human Rights Committee visits Japan for the first time to investigate the Japanese situations.

August

(1) Thai and Japanese governments sign the free trade agreement between the two countries.

(8) The House of Councillors votes down a set of bills to privatize the Japan Post in a move Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has threatened would lead to a snap national election.

September

(11) The ruling coalition of LDP and New Komeito wins a historical victory at the lower house election, bringing two third of seats to the two parties.

October

(14) The law to privatize the postal office is enacted.

November

(30) A Peruvian is arrested on murder of a girl, which caused criminalization of Latin Americans in Japan.

December

(8) Lawyers and NGOs establish a liaison group to enact the Foreigner's Human Rights Act.

(9) The Ministry of Justice decides to adopt stricter measures for issuing 'long-term resident' visa status for Japanese descendants, which oblige them to submit criminal records.

(31) Associate professor of Tokyo Women's Medical College present research which shows intermarriages between Japanese and foreigners increased to 6.6% of the total number of marriages.

Sources: Japan Times and Migrants' Net (SMJ)

accompanying revision of the Immigration Law enabled people recognized as trafficking victims to choose whether to return home or stay temporarily. All victims are given special permission for residence if they choose.¹²

Secondly, the government tightened its rules to issue entertainer visas in March 2005,¹³ requiring applicants to have a minimum of two years' education or experience in the corresponding activities outside of Japan. As a result, the number of de facto hostesses entering as entertainers, especially those from the Philippines, drastically

decreased: the number of registered Filipino entertainers in Japan fell from 83,295 in 2004 to 47,765 in 2005.¹⁴ This is because entertainer visas had been used as a cover to import migrant hostesses into the Japanese sex industry. The policy change was basically welcomed by concerned NGOs both in Japan and the Philippines, yet some worried that migration went underground, leading to harsher exploitation.¹⁵

EPA and Importation of Reproductive Labor
Japan has signed Economic Partnership



Photo courtesy of SMU

Symposium organized by the Advocacy Network in Trainee Issues; reforming the trainee system is a significant issue. November 2006.

Agreement with Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand as of June 2007. In terms of migration, ‘free trade’ of natural persons was one of important topics in the negotiations with the Philippines and Thailand. Although the Philippines signed the EPA in September 2006 and Thailand in April 2007, most of the negotiations took place in 2005.

Both countries were interested in sending nurses, care-givers and massage therapists to Japan, but the Japanese government was hesitant to introduce such workers despite its recognition of the strong demand for a reproductive labor force. As such, migration of massage therapists and care-givers was not referred to in the agreement between Thailand and Japan,¹⁶ in which agricultural export was the primary concern for the Thai government. The Philippine-Japan agreement, however, did specify the movement of nurses and caregivers.¹⁷

The focus of negotiation was the number and the certification of workers. In 2004, the Japanese government suggested admitting 400

nurses and 600 certificated care-givers, but subsequently reduced that number to 1000 in two years.¹⁸ More problematic is the certification of workers. Before the workers are to be admitted as trainees, they have to learn Japanese for six months without pay. In addition, unless they pass corresponding exams within three to four years, they have to return home. It is literally redundant and a waste of human resources to require Japanese qualification for nurses and care-givers certified in the Philippines.¹⁹ In addition, during working as ‘trainees’ in preparation for examinations, they may be exploited just as trainees in Japanese factories and farms are suffering.

Responses

The most remarkable activity in the year 2004 and 2005 was that of anti-trafficking lobbying. In the process of enacting anti-trafficking laws, the Japan Network Against Trafficking in Persons (JNATIP), established by 29 organizations in

October 2003, were actively engaged in lobbying and research on the issue.²⁰ Since little is known about the actual conditions of trafficking, research is crucial for lobbying. For this reason, JNATIP in collaboration with Ochanomizu University launched a research group and a follow-up survey on returned victims in the Philippines and Thailand. The results were published in March 2005, utilized as a basic resource for lobbying activities with MPs.²¹ In addition to the report, JNATIP and SMJ published two books between 2004 and 2005.

In terms of more comprehensive legislatures, the 47th human rights protection meeting of Japan Federation of Bar Associations was held in November 2004, in which the main theme was the rights of foreigners and ethnic minorities.²² Based on the declaration of the meeting and memorandum for the basic law on human rights of foreigners and ethnic minorities presented there, a liaison group for foreigner's human rights law was established by 20 groups in December 2005.²³ The salient feature of the liaison group is that it includes both long-established groups (i.e. resident Koreans)

and support groups of more recent arrivals. Because of the different issues the two groups face, their movements tended to be organized separately. The recent upsurge of xenophobia and strengthening surveillance of minorities, however, urged individual movements to combine their forces to work for human rights protections of all minorities.

It is also noteworthy that subnational networks have been launched almost nationwide, including Hokkaido, Kanto, Chubu, Kansai, Kyushu, Chugoku and Shikoku. In fact, while grassroots and migrant support groups are generally concentrated in metropolitan areas such as Tokyo and Osaka, the oldest subnational network was established in Kyushu island in 1995. In peripheral areas, support networks are all the more necessary because migrants living in scattered areas often lack social ties for mutual help. Since then, the Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan held national workshops in those areas with small number of such groups, encouraging subnational networks. In 2004, the Multicultural Network Chushikoku was established and held the first general assembly



Photos courtesy of SMJ

The 6th National Forum in Solidarity with Migrant Workers, Hokkaido, held on June 2006.



Photo courtesy of SMU

Migrant rights' advocate makes demands to the Ministries to better protect migrants' rights.

in August 2005.²⁴ Subnational networks are crucial for lobbying to local governments and local offices of ministries, which cannot be covered by national networks.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, 13 June 2007.
- ² Ministry of Justice, *Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants*, 2006.
- ³ Ministry of Justice, *2005 Immigration Control*, 2005.
- ⁴ Kiyoto Tanno, "Sociology of Law of the Special Permission for Residence," (in Japanese) *Ohara Institute Journal*, No.582, 2007.
- ⁵ English edition is available at <<http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/english/seisaku/index.html>>.
- ⁶ Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, *Migrant's net*, No.83, 2005.
- ⁷ *Japan Times*, 16 June 2004.
- ⁸ *Japan Times*, 14 July 2005.
- ⁹ *2005 Immigration Control*, op.cit, p87. The entire sentence regarding the plan can be seen on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/i_crime/people/action.html>.
- ¹⁰ <http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/english/seisaku/index.html>
- ¹¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, 2007, p.124.
- ¹² Nanako Inaba, "Trafficking in Japan: Racism Hindering Victims'/Survivor's Access to Help for Human Rights Abuses," *Peoples for Human Rights*, Vol.10, 2006, p.84-93.
- ¹³ The Ministry of Justice Ordinance to Provide for Criteria Pursuant to Article 7, Paragraph 1(2) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act.
- ¹⁴ *Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants*, op.cit.
- ¹⁵ Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, *Migrant's net*, No.92, 2006.
- ¹⁶ Agreement between Japan and the Kingdom of Thailand for an Economic Partnership, available at: <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/fta/thailand.html>>.
- ¹⁷ Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Philippines for an Economic Partnership, available at: <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/fta/philippines.html>>.
- ¹⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, 26 September 2006.
- ¹⁹ Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, *Migrant's net*, No.93, 2006.
- ²⁰ Information is available on: <<http://www.jnatip.org/aboutthejnatip.html>>.
- ²¹ JNATIP, *Research Report on the Victims of Trafficking in Japan* (in Japanese), 2005.
- ²² Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, *Migrant's net*, No.76, 2005.
- ²³ Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, *Migrant's net*, No.86, 2006.
- ²⁴ Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, *Migrant's net*, No.84, 2005.