Aging and Nikkeijin Workers in Japan: A Survey

(preliminary draft)

August 2008

Junichi Goto
Kobe University

ABSTRACT

The fertility rate in Japan is declining for a long period of time, and the Japanese population is rapidly aging. Changes in the next 25 years are extremely keen, and it is expected that the working-age population in Japan declines by 17 million by 2030, and that Japan faces serious labor shortage. In addition to labor shortage in the economy as a whole, shortage in certain sectors, such as elderly-care is expected to be extremely severe. In view of this, it is pointed out that Japan should accept migrant workers in a large scale in order to cope with labor shortage in the near future.

The number of Nikkeijin workers is more than a quarter of million, the largest group of various categories of migrant workers. Since the revision of the Japanese immigration law in 1990, there has been a dramatic influx of the Latin American, mostly Brazilian, of Japanese origin (*Nikkeijin*) working in Japan because these people are now allowed to do whatever activities in Japan, including an unskilled work. In spite of their importance, their detailed characteristics and the prospect for future migration and remittances are not well known. In view of this, the major purpose of the present paper is to examine policy, migration and remittance issues pertaining to *Nikkeijin* working in Japan. Although the main focus of the paper is placed on *Nikkeijin* Workers in Japan, I will include some discussions of migrant workers in general and the discussion of the history of Japanese emigration to Latin America (mostly Brazil), in order to better understand *Nikkeiji* workers in Japan .

Nikkeijin workers in early years (i.e., in early 1990s) were mostly temporary guest workers, who intended to return home in a few years with a big money earned in Japan. However, as time goes by, they have become settlers in Japan with their family. Since *Nikkeijin* are clustered in certain cities, (e.g., Hamamatsu, Toyota, Toyoshashi, Oizumi etc.), the social and economic impacts of *Nikkeijin* workers on these cities are enormous. Therefore, governments, as well as NGOs, are making various efforts to create harmonious living of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japanese communities. While current amount of remittances by *Nikkeijin* is huge, its future prospect might not rosy, because the amount of remittances tends to decline as the degree of settling of these workers in the host country increases.

I. Introduction

The fertility rate in Japan is declining for a long period of time, and the Japanese population is rapidly aging. Changes in the next 25 years are extremely keen, and it is expected that the working-age population in Japan declines by 17 million by 2030, and that Japan faces serious labor shortage. In addition to labor shortage in the economy as a whole, shortage in certain sectors, such as elderly-care is expected to be extremely severe. In view of this, it is pointed out that Japan should accept migrant workers in a large scale in order to cope with labor shortage in the near future.

The number of Nikkeijin workers is more than a quarter of million, the largest group of various categories of migrant workers. Since the revision of the Japanese immigration law in 1990, there has been a dramatic influx of the Latin American, mostly Brazilian, of Japanese origin (*Nikkeijin*) working in Japan because these people are now allowed to do whatever activities in Japan, including an unskilled work. The Japanese law prohibits foreigners from taking unskilled jobs in Japan in principle. The number of these Latin American migrants has increased from practically zero to more than a quarter of million. According to the statistics by the Japanese Ministry of Justice, the number of Brazilians staying in Japan has increased from about four thousand in 1988 to 268,332 in 2002. In 2005 the number has further increased to 302,080. These workers give a big impact on the Brazilian economy, as well as the Japanese economy, because the amount of their remittances is huge. The impact is especially keen on the *Nikkeijin* community in Brazil. The number of *Nikkeijin* in Brazil is estimated as a little less than two million, and the number of *Nikkeijin* workers from Brazil to Japan is about a quarter of million. In other words, about one in every eight *Nikkeijin*s in Brazil are staying in Japan. Since the return migration is rotating, practically every *Nikkeijin* family has someone in the family who has an experience of working in Japan.

In spite of their importance, their detailed characteristics and the prospect for future migration and remittances are not well known. In view of this, the major purpose of the present paper is to examine policy, migration and remittance issues pertaining to *Nikkeijin* working in Japan. Although the main focus of the paper is placed on *Nikkeijin* Workers in Japan, I will include some discussions of migrant workers in general and the policies of the government toward them, because these issues are not widely known to non-Japanese.

The paper is organized as follows. Before the discussion of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan, I will briefly examine the history of Japanese emigration to Latin America (mostly Brazil) in Section II, because it is indispensable for understanding the characteristics of return migration of *Nikkeijin* to Japan. In Section III, I will discuss immigration in Japan in general. As well known, the Japanese immigration law is very restrictive. With a few exceptions, foreigners are not allowed to take unskilled jobs in Japan. However, the revision of the Immigration Law in 1990 created a big exception to this principle, i.e., the *Nikkeijin* can now take any jobs, including unskilled jobs. Although the duration of the visa to *Nikkeijin* workers is three years, their renewal is almost automatic. After a few renewals, they can obtain permanent residency in Japan, which is almost impossible for other foreigners to obtain. Therefore, the share of *Nikkeijin* workers in the total migrant workers in Japan has dramatically increased in the 1990s. Section IV, the core section of this paper, discusses major characteristics of

Nikkeijin workers in Japan: where they live; where they work; how long they stay in Japan; what kind of difficulties they have, etc. In addition to the characteristic of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan, I will also discuss the present situation and future prospect of remittances to their home countries. In Section IV, I will also discuss the policies of the central and local governments toward *Nikkeijin* workers. Since the *Nikkeijin* workers have dramatically increased, and since they clustered in several cities (e.g., Hamamatsu, Toyota, Toyoshashi, Oizumi etc.), the social and economic impacts of *Nikkeijin* workers on these cities are enormous. Therefore, governments, as well as NGOs, are making various efforts to create harmonious living of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japanese communities. In Section V, I will summarize the findings of this study, and discuss areas where future studies are needed.

II. History of Japanese Emigration to Brazil

(1) Overview

Before discussing *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan, let us examine the history of Japanese emigration to Latin America. In view of the fact that 85 percent of *Nikkeijin* workers from Latin America to Japan are Brazilians (see Section IV in more detail), I will put an emphasis on Japanese emigration to Brazil. As the chronology of the Japanese Emigration in the Appendix I shows, the Japanese migration to Brazil began in 1908, when the ship named Kasado-Maru carrying 791 Japanese bonded workers (*colonos*) arrived in the port of Santos. They were employed as bonded workers in coffee plantations in the beginning. As time goes by, they engaged in various activities in Brazil, e.g., cultivation of various crops other than coffee, commerce, and education etc. Now the number of *Nikkeijin* in Brazil is estimated to be close to two million, as Table 1 shows.

The hundred years of Japanese emmigration to Brazil may be divided into five periods as follows:

Period 1 (1908-1924): Immigration by the private initiatives
Period 2 (1925-1936): Government sponsored immigration
Period 3 (1937-1951): Immigration stricken by the War and its aftermath
Period 4 (1952-1987): Post-war immigration
Period 5 (1988- to present): Return migration to Japan (Dekasegi)

In this section, I will briefly discuss Periods 1 to 4, and the detailed discussion of Period 5 will be made in Section IV below.

(2) Prologue (before 1908)

The government of Japan in Tokugawa era (i.e., Samurai era) had closed the country in 1639 in the fear of the spread of Christianity. Since then Japan had very limited contact with the outside world for more than two hundred years, until American Commodore Perry came to Uraga City and forced Japan to open the country in 1853. Japanese emigration began in 1868 (the first year of Meiji era), when about 500 Japanese immigrants arrived in Hawaii (and 40 in Guam). In 1869, about 40 Japanese immigrants arrived in California. Since these Japanese immigrants were treated badly,

the Japanese Government was reluctant to encourage emigration.

However, in the 1880s the attitude of the Japanese Government changed due to the stagnant economy in Japan. In order to mitigate unemployment problems in Japan, the Government of Japan concluded official migration agreement with the Government of Hawaii in 1885. In that year, the first official immigrants from Japan arrived in Hawaii. 943 Japanese immigrants arrived in Hawaii. From 1885 to 1894, many "official" Japanese immigrants were sent to many destinations, e.g., Hawaii, mainland of the United States, Australia, New Caledonia, and Fiji, etc.

In 1894, "Migration Protection Regulation (Imin Hogo Kisoku)" was issued by the Japanese Government which charged private migration companies to recruit and arrange Japanese emigration. Since then several migration companies took an initiative to send Japanese immigrants to all over the world. While major destinations of these immigrants were Hawaii and the United States, they were sent to other parts of the world, too. For example, in 1899, 790 Japanese bonded workers arrived in Peru, and in 1903, about 3,000 Japanese bonded workers arrived in the Philippines. However, the United States and Canada began to restrict Japanese immigration. In 1907, the Japan-U.S. Gentlemen's Agreement was signed, which severely restricted Japanese immigration to the United States including Hawaii, because the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898. In 1908, a similar gentlemen's agreement was concluded between Japan and Canada. As a result, the immigration to North America became very difficult, and migration companies looked for new destinations, mainly in Latin America. Table 2 shows the number of Japanese immigrants to Latin America. From 1899 to 1941 (the year when Japan-U.S. Pacific War broke out) more than a quarter of million Japanese migrated to Latin America. Brazil is by far the most favorite destination where more than two-hundred thousand (78.43%) of Japanese emigrants migrated[1]. Peru followed Brazil where thirty-three thousand Japanese migrated. Brazil was also the number one destination after the World War II. More than sixty percent Japanese emigrants to Latin America headed for Brazil. Following Brazil, Argentina became a favorite destination in the post-war era.

The desire of Japanese migration companies to shift Japanese emigration from North America to South America was coincided with the pull force in Brazil. In the beginning, major sources of labor in coffee plantation in Brazil were slaves brought from Africa. However, the slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888. Due to the labor shortage created by the emancipation, owners of coffee plantations accepted immigrants from Europe, mainly from Italy and Spain at first. But, the shortage of labor was not filled by the European immigration alone. Owners of coffee plantations in Brazil were looking for another source of supply of labor. The need of owners of coffee plantations for labor was coincided with the need of Japanese migration companies to shift migration from North America to South America. As a result, the agreement between a Japanese migration company and the government of Sao Paulo was quickly signed in 1907.

(3) Period 1 (1908-1924): Immigration by the private initiatives

[1] Source: De Carvalho, D.(2003)

On April 28, 1908, the Kasado-Maru left the port of Kobe for Brazil. The ship carried 781 Japanese emigrants, all of whom expected to become very rich in a few years in Brazil and to return in triumph to Japan. In order to quickly recruit Japanese emigrants to Brazil, the private migration company named Kokoku Shokumin Kaisha (Imperial Migration Company) issued very deceiving advertisement. According to the advertisement, coffee was “a tree of gold”, and each family of Japanese migrants in Brazil could save 40 yen a month (at that time monthly salary of young teacher in the elementary school was 10-13 yen). The advertisement of the migration company was sanctioned by the Japanese Police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

While the Japanese migrants dreamed of the tree of gold, the owners of coffee plantations simply wanted cheap labor. So, the Japanese migrants had to face disappointment: their actual income was far less than advertised (just a subsistence level); their working conditions were harsh. Although the Japanese immigrants dreamed of returning home after making a big money in a few years, it was just a dream. Of two hundred thousand Japanese migrants to Brazil before the World War II, only seven percent of them could return to Japan[2]. Majority of them had to stay in Brazil without knowing when (or if) they made enough money to return home.

In spite of the hardship of the Japanese immigrants in Brazil, migration wave to Brazil continued, partly because the Government of Sao Paulo and Owners of coffee plantation gave travel subsidy to Japanese migrants. Table 3 shows the number of Japanese emigrants to Brazil since 1908. As this table shows, the number of Japanese immigrants to Brazil jumped in the 1910s. In most years, the number reached several thousand per year. In 1914, total (accumulated) number of Japanese immigrants to Brazil exceeded ten thousands.

Almost all of the Japanese immigrants to Brazil in early years were bonded workers called “colonos.” These colonos had obligation to stay at their original plantations for a few years with contract, but due to low wages and harsh working conditions, most of them left the plantation before their contracted term was over. Some of them just ran way under the cloak of night, and others made an agreement with plantation owners to move away to other plantations. After leaving their original plantations, they had to find other jobs for living, which can be classified into three categories: (i) to work in coffee and cotton plantations relatively well-to-do Japanese owns; (ii) to engage in rice cultivation on the Rio Grande delta area; (iii) to move to cities like Sao Paulo and work as a domestic help etc. As early as 1909 (just one year after Kasado-Maru arrived in Sao Paulo), five Japanese families owned the land in Brazil. They started the cultivation of cotton. In 1915 several Japanese plantation called “colonies” were opened, the most famous of which was Hirano Colony Plantation. Fighting with Malaria, Japanese farmers worked in the Japanese plantations. Table 4 shows crop share of *Nikkeijin* farmers in Brazil since 1912. As this table shows, in 1912 more than 90 percent of Japanese farmers were engaged in coffee production. But ten years later (in 1922), the share of farmers engaged in coffee production dropped to half, and shares for rice, cotton, and suburb farming (vegetables, eggs, chicken etc) increased substantially.

---

[2] Takahashi, Y. (1993)

The Japanese migrants realized that it is extremely difficult for them to become rich and to return home quickly. They began to form infrastructure in the *Nikkeijin* communities. Since they wanted to return home some day, they put an emphasis on the Japanese language education for their children. In 1915, the first Japanese language school was opened in Sao Paulo (Taisho School). Since then the number of Japanese language schools rapidly increased. In 1932, the number of the Japanese schools in Sao Paulo alone was close to two hundreds, where more than ten thousand Nikkienjin children were enrolled. In 1916, the first Japanese-language newspaper was published. In those years, *Nikkeijin* lived within *Nikkeijin* communities, without assimilating into Brazilian communities. They did not speak Portuguese, and inter-marriages were rare.

(4) Period 2 (1925-1936): Government-sponsored immigration

As mentioned above, in early years the Sao Paulo Government and owners of plantations there gave Japanese immigrants travel subsidies in the hope that those Japanese immigrants would provide cheap labor in coffee plantations. The Japanese immigrants were brought to Brazil under the agreements between the Sao Paulo Governments and the Japanese migration companies with subsidies from Brazilian side. However, since the Japanese immigrants did not stay in the original coffee plantations, the Government of Sao Paulo announced the termination of travel subsidies to Japanese immigrants in 1921. In order to cope with this, in 1925, the Japanese Government decided to provide travel subsidies to Japanese emigrants to Brazil. This was the beginning of the era of government-sponsored immigration to Latin America. In addition to travel subsidies, in 1926 the Japanese Government loaned a big amount of money (eighty thousand yen), with very low interest rate, to Japanese coffee farmers in Brazil, who were suffering from the plunge of world coffee price. In 1927, “Overseas Immigration Union Law (Kaigai Iju Kumiai Ho)” was enacted in Japan. The purpose of the law was to promote Japanese colony plantations to all over the world, except to the United States and Canada. The United States and Canada took very tough policies against Japanese immigration. For example, 1n 1924, the United States enacted the law which completely prohibited new immigration from Japan. In 1928, Canada took a similar measure to severely restrict Japanese immigration to Canada. In 1928, the Ministry of Immigration (Takumu Sho) was created in the Japanese Government, whose mission was to promote and direct Japanese emigration to overseas (again except for the United States and Canada).

Due to the emigration promotion policies by the Japanese government and the shift from the United States and Canada, the flow of Japanese immigration to Brazil greatly increased in these years. As Table 3 above shows, the number of Japanese annual emigration to Brazil more than doubled in 1925. The high rate of Japanese emigration to Brazil continued until mid-1930s. During the period, the average number of Japanese emigration to Brazil exceeded ten thousand per year.

In the 1930s, the Japanese imperialism, backed by the military force, became prevalent, and Japanese invasion to China was intensified. In 1931, the Manchurian Incident, i.e., the war between Japan and China, broke out. In 1932, Manchuria became an “independent state,” which was a puppet regime of the Japanese military force. Since then the flood of Japanese immigration to Manchuria continued until the

end of the World War II (in 1945). In the same year, the Japanese Government greatly increased travel subsidies given to the Japanese emigrants to Brazil in order to boost the immigration to Brazil. As a result, more than twenty thousand Japanese arrived in Brazil in 1933 (and also in 1934).

The military advance of Japan put *Nikkeijin* in Brazil into a difficult situation. Since Brazil was a close ally to the United States, she discouraged the inflow of immigrant from Japan, Germany, and Italy. In 1934, the famous "two percent clause" was added to the Brazilian Constitution. The clause limited the number of annual inflow of immigrants from each country to two percent of total number of immigration from that country in the last fifty years. Since Japanese immigration had a short history (started in 1908), the two percent clause meant a drastic decline of inflow of Japanese immigration to Brazil. As a result, the number of Japanese immigration to Brazil decreased to become zero in 1942, when Brazil cut diplomatic relations with Japan, Germany, and Italy.

In 1936, the Japanese militarism further intensified by the "2.26 incident." On February 26, about 1,400 military personnel attempted coup d'etat in Japan. Many politicians, included Minister of Finance, were assassinated. Although the coup attempt was failed, the Japanese government was controlled by the military authorities since then.

(5) Period 3 (1937-1951): Immigration stricken by the War and its aftermath

Faced with the military advance of Japan and the imminent breakout of the warfare between Japan and the United States, Brazil, a close ally to the United States, began to take oppressive measures against *Nikkeijin* in Brazil. Brazilian Government tried to force *Nikkeijin* to assimilate to Brazilian society and to become Brazilian rather than Japanese staying in Brazil. In an attempt to force assimilation, the Brazilian Government prohibited Japanese language education for students under fourteen years old in 1937. In 1938, the Brazilian New Immigration Law was enacted, which severely restricted *Nikkeijin*'s right. In that year, Japanese (also German and Italian) language schools were forced to be completely closed in Brazil. In 1939, the World War II broke out, and many Japanese immigrants returned to Japan to fight for their country. In 1941, Japanese language newspapers were prohibited in Brazil. Also in 1941, the Pacific War (Japan-U.S. War) broke out, which made *Nikkeijin* the people from an enemy country. In 1942, Brazil cut diplomatic relation with Japan, Germany, and Italy, and various oppression measures were imposed on *Nikkeijin* in Brazil. Some of the *Nikkeijin* properties were frozen, and *Nikkeijin* were expelled from certain districts of large cities for the reason of "national security."

In June 1945, Brazil declared the war against Japan. In August 6 and 9, the U.S. bombers dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allied Nations. In spite of the defeat of Japan in 1945, most *Nikkeijin* did not believe the defeat, because they were isolated from information from Japan and because they had been told, by pre-war education, that Japan is the nation of the Sacred God, which never loses. *Nikkeijin* who did not believe Japanese defeat were called "Kachi Gumi (the group of winners)", because they believed Japan won the War. Those who believed Japanese defeat by the United States were called

"Make Gumi (the group of losers), because they believed that Japan lost the War. In a few years after the end of the war, extremist groups of Kachi Gumi gave terrorist attacks against Make Gum people. Many assassinations of leaders of Make Gumi were made by radical Kachi Gumi members. This conflict between Kachi Gumi and Make Gumi was a very tragic event in the history of *Nikkeijin* in Brazil.

Another tragic event in the *Nikkeijin* history was "Return home scam." Since many *Nikkeijin* in Brazil believed that Japan won the War, they were waiting for the triumphant Japanese ships to arrive in Brazil to save them from their hardship in Brazil. Some scam artists, who were also *Nikkeijin*, took advantage of this situation. The scam was like this: They gave other *Nikkeijin* false information that a Japanese ship will arrive in, say, the port of Santos next month. In order to reserve the seat on the ship, people have to make an advance payment for return travel ticket. Although the scam seems very simplistic, many *Nikkeijin* became victims of the return home scam. In 1950, about fifty members of the right-wing fraud syndicate "Kokumin Zenen Tai (National Vangurd)" were arrested in Sao Paulo for the return home scam.

In spite of such hardship, Japanese immigrants worked hard, and put an emphasis on education of their descendents. As time went by, successful *Nikkeijin* emerged in Brazil. For example, in 1951 Mr. Tamaru became the first *Nikkeijin* parliament member of the State of Sao Paulo.

(6) Period 4 (1952-1987): Post-war immigration

In 1952, the Brazilian Government approved resumption of Japanese immigration to Brazil, and the first Japanese immigration ship after the World War II arrived in Santos in 1953. After the end of World War II, the Japanese Government promoted emigration to mitigate poverty and unemployment in Japan. During the World War II, most major cities in Japan, including Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Kobe, to name a few, were almost completely destroyed by carpet bombing of the U.S. forces. Eighty percent of the production capacity of the Japanese Economy was lost. The situation facing Japan then was probably worse than those of many developing countries today. In an attempt to ease unemployment in Japan, in 1955 the Emigration Bureau (Iju Kyoku) was created in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The mission of the department was to promote Japanese emigration to overseas, mainly to the Americas, e.g., the U.S, Brazil, Argentina, Dominican Republic, etc. As Table 3 above shows, the average number of Japanese emigration to Brazil in 1955-1961 was more than five thousand per year.

However, the wave of the post-war immigration was short-lived because of the economic success of Japan. Although Japanese economy was severely damaged by the War, Japan quickly recovered and has shown a miraculous economic development thanks to very effective industry policies and trade policies. (See Figure 1 for *real* GDP of Japan). In 1961, Japanese Prime Minister Ikeda announced the "income doubling plan," which initiated miraculous economic growth in Japan. Thanks to the effective economic policy, the Japanese economy began to show a sign of strong recovery, and continued double-digit growth rate until the Nixon Shock in 1971. Table 5 shows GDP and per capital GDP of selected OECD countries since 1950. As the table shows, in 1950, the GDP per capita of Japan was less than seven percent of that of the United

States. But, the speed of her catch-up was remarkable, and the Japanese per capita income has exceeded that of the Unites States since 1990[3].

Thanks to the prosperity in Japan after the mid-1960s, the movement of people from Japan to Brazil decreased, and foreign direct investment (movement of capital) to Brazil increased. In the late 1970s, more than five hundred Japanese firms went to Brazil.

Although the Japanese immigrants before and during the War were Japanese who wanted to return to Japan sooner or later, the Japanese migrants, especially the descendents of them, in the post-war period were *Nikkeijin* in Brazil who expected to continue to live in Brazil. Because of the emphasis on education, now *Nikkeijin* are playing important roles in Brazil, e.g., many *Nikkeijin* have become politicians, doctors, lawyers, professors etc.

Since late 1980s, many *Nikkeijin* in Brazil have been coming back to Japan to make money, which is the migration in the opposite direction to Japanese emigration before. The detailed discussion of the return migration of *Nikkeijin* is given in Section IV below.

III. Migrant Workers in Japan and the Policy of the Government toward Them

1. Recent Trend of Number of Migrant Workers in Japan

In the above section, I have examined emigration from Japan. In this section, I will discuss immigration into Japan. While Japan was highly closed to foreign workers, the number of migrant workers has been increasing rapidly. Table 6 lists the share of foreign population in total population in selected countries in 1990. As the table shows, the foreign population share in East/Southeast Asian countries is only 1.2 percent, which is substantially lower than that in North America (8.6 percent) and that in Europe (5.0 percent). Some internationalized countries (areas) such as Hong Kong (40.0 percent) and Singapore (15.5 percent) are notable exceptions. The share of foreign population in Japan is only 0.9 percent, which was among the lowest in the world.

However, the increase in the 1990s and onward has been very rapid. Table 7 shows the changes in aggregate number of registered foreigners in Japan since 1978. As shown in the table, the number of registered foreigners in Japan has almost doubled from 1.1 million in 1990 to 2 million in 2005. The share of foreign population in 2004 was 1.6 percent. Although the share is still smaller than those of most countries in the world, the rate of increase is dramatic.

Table 8 shows the number of registered foreigners by regions. As the table shows three quarter of registered foreigners are from Asian countries, while the share of people from South America is 18.2 percent in 2004, most of them are *Nikkeijin* from Brazil, as discussed in detail in the next section.

---

[3] Needless to say, it is difficult to compare the GDP of one country with that of another country, because the international comparison depends on foreign exchange rates between their currencies.

2. Basic Principles of the Japanese Immigration Policy

Let us examine the basic principles of the Japanese immigration policy, especially of the policy towards migrant workers. The policy of the Japanese Governments towards migrant workers is very clear. The Ninth Basic Plan of Employment Measures, approved by the Cabinet in August 1999 presents three principles for immigration policy in Japan as follows (translation by the present author):

(i) As for foreign workers with professional skills, their immigration to Japan should be promoted in order to vitalize economy and society of Japan, and to promoter further internalization of Japan;

(ii) As for so-called unskilled foreign workers, their immigration should be monitored cautiously, because their admission is likely to have serious impact on the economy and society of Japan and the lives of Japanese citizen;

(iii) It is improper to consider immigration in an attempt to cope with expected labor shortage due to aging and declined fertility in Japan. In order to cope with the labor shortage, it is important to create the society where elderly and women can work actively.

From the above, it is clear that the Japanese Government welcomes professional and skilled foreign workers, but prohibits admission of unskilled foreign workers, with some exceptions, e.g., *Nikkeijin* as discussed below.

However, in view of rapid aging of Japanese population in recent years, many people have began to argue that Japan should accept more foreign workers, both skilled and unskilled. They argue that, since the Japanese population is rapidly aging, Japan cannot cope with possible labor shortage without accepting large scale immigration to Japan. They also argue that migration to Japan benefit sending countries because emigration to Japan would increase the national income in sending countries through remittance from immigrants in Japan, and that Japan, one of the richest countries in the world has responsibility to admit migrant workers from poor developing countries.

3. Three Categories of Migrant Workers in Japan

(1) *Legal Skilled Workers*

The number of legal and skilled workers is very small at about 190 thousand or about 0.3 percent of total labor force in Japan. Even when unskilled workers, mostly from Latin America, are included, the number of legal migrant workers is 460,000 or just 0.62 percent of total labor force. This is partly due to the strict Japanese immigration law, which severely restricts jobs that foreign workers can take in Japan. Therefore, most legal foreign workers, except for the Latin Americans of Japanese origin called *Nikkeijin* (see below for the detailed discussions of *Nikkeijin*), are professional workers, such as professors, researchers, lawyers, accountants etc. The share of legal foreign workers in total labor force in Japan is far smaller than those in European countries. The share of migrant workers, including illegal migrants, in the

total labor force in Japan is less than one percent, while the share of foreign workers in total labor force is around seven percent in France and Germany and as high as seventeen percent in Switzerland.

While the number of skilled and professional migrant workers in Japan is small, there are two groups of migrant workers that have dramatically increased in recent years: (i) illegal unskilled workers from neighboring Asian countries and (ii) legal Latin American workers of Japanese origin, most of whom are *Nikkeijin* workers. In what follows, these two groups of migrant workers will be discussed.

(2) *Illegal Unskilled Workers*

Although the number of migrant workers (both legal and illegal) in Japan is less than a million, or less than one percent of her labor force (see Table 9), the rate of increase in the number of illegal foreign workers has been dramatic since the mid-1980s, at least until the severe economic recessions in the 1990s. As Figure 2 shows, the number of illegal foreign workers apprehended by the authorities has sharply increased from 2,339 in 1983 to 64,341 in 1993. Although the number declined a little after that due to the severe recession of the Japanese economy, the number of illegal migrant workers are far greater than the level before mid-1980s. Needless to say, these numbers represent only a small part of the total illegal foreign workers in Japan. According to the Ministry of Justice, the total number of illegal foreign workers in Japan is currently estimated at 200, 000 - 300, 000.

Just as most illegal aliens in the United States come from Mexico and other neighboring countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, most illegal foreign workers in Japan come from neighboring Asian countries (See Table 10). Since the wage rate in their home countries is extremely low, even a discriminatory low wage by the Japanese standard means a lot to these workers.

The recent influx of Asian workers is markedly different from earlier migrations. Until the middle of the 1980s, most of the illegal foreign workers were women who worked as bar hostesses (so-called "*Japayuki San* (Miss Japan-going)"). In 1983-84, for example, more than 90 percent of the illegal foreign workers were female. But, the number of male workers dramatically increased to about 50-80 percent of the total illegal immigrants. (See Figure 2)

As shown in Table 11, in 2004, about a quarter of the illegal male workers were construction workers, and 36 percent of female workers are bar hostess. Most of the illegal aliens are doing work that few Japanese want to do because of unfavorable working conditions. It should be noted that about two-thirds of the illegal migrants are working in the nontraded goods sector, such as construction and service industries.

(3) *Legal Unskilled Workers – Migrant Workers of Japanese Origin (Nikkeijin)*

In addition to the illegal foreign workers discussed above, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Latin American workers of Japanese origin (*Nikkeijin*) since late 1980s. The influx of these workers is mainly due to the revised immigration law in Japan, which was enacted in 1989 and was put into effect in June 1990. While the Japanese immigration law does not allow foreigners to take an unskilled job in principle, the revised law made it possible for "a foreign citizen whose

parent or grandparent was a Japanese citizen" to do whatever activities (including unskilled work) in Japan. Further, these people are allowed to stay in Japan for three years (instead of three months for visitors).

The revision of the immigration law resulted in the dramatic increase of workers from Latin American countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Bolivia, to which many Japanese citizens had emigrated long time ago. Since the wage rate in Japan is much higher (and Japanese society is much safer) than that in Latin America, a host of Latin American people of the Japanese origin were attracted to Japan. According to the newspaper reports, some people fell into huge debt to pay for their travel cost, and other people without Japanese origin were arrested for forgery of their birth certificate or using other person's identification. Figure 3 shows the number of these *Nikkeijin* workers since 1988. While the number of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan was only eight thousand at the end of 1988, the year before the revised immigration law was enacted, after that the number of *Nikkeijin* workers doubled every year to become around 150,000 in June 1991. In 2004, the number of *Nikkeijin* staying in Japan is 250,734. The detailed discussion of *Nikkeijin* workers will be made in the next section.

4. *Reasons for the Sharp Increase -- Push and Pull*

Why did many unskilled foreign workers suddenly come to Japan after the middle of the 1980s? While it is clear that the most important reason for the increase in the *Nikkeijin* workers from Latin America is the revision of the Japanese immigration law in 1990, the reasons for the influx of illegal foreign workers from neighboring Asian countries are not so obvious.

One of the most important reasons is that a push-force in neighboring Asian countries coincided with a pull-force in the Japanese economy in the 1980s. Probably, one of the most important reasons on the supply side for the sharp increase is that the destination of Asian migrant workers has shifted from the Middle East to Japan. In the 1970s, an increasing number of Asians had been recruited to work at construction sites in the oil producing Middle Eastern countries. When the price of crude oil quadrupled after the First Oil Crisis in 1973, a construction boom occurred in the oil-rich countries because their oil revenue dramatically increased. But the population size of these countries in the Middle East is relatively small. Therefore, these rich countries recruited a large number of temporary immigrants mostly from southern Europe and Asia. As a result, the number of migrant workers from eight Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand, and South Korea) to the Middle East grew from a little more than 0.1 million in 1976 to more than 1.2 million in 1982. But, as the price of crude oil went down in the 1980s, the construction boom in the Middle East subsided, and some 400 thousand Asian migrant workers lost their jobs and had to return to their home countries.

The return of these workers was a serious blow to the Asian sending countries, because remittance from them was an important source of foreign exchange receipt. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, for example, remittance from migrant workers was almost as large as the total value of their exports. Moreover, the dependence of the migrant workers from these Asian countries on the Middle East for their destination was

extremely heavy. Therefore, the decline in labor demand in the Middle East created a large pool of Asian workers who lost jobs in the Middle East and were eager to find new jobs in some other countries. Probably, to these unemployed workers, one of their rich neighbors, Japan, must have looked like a new land of opportunity.

The increase in the supply pressure coincided with the increased demand of Japanese businesses for the migrant workers. Due to the strong performance of the Japanese economy, the labor market in Japan became very tight since the mid-1980s. The labor shortage was especially keen in the construction and service industries. Moreover, an important source of the domestic supply of marginal workers (i.e., a group of seasonal workers called "*dekasegi*") has shrunk, and therefore, the demand for migrant workers to fill the gap in this marginal labor market increased.

The performance of the Japanese economy after the middle of the 1980s was dramatic: the annual growth rates of the real GNP in 1988, 1989, and 1990 were 6.2%, 4.7%, and 5.6%, respectively; those of industrial production in 1988, 1989, and 1990 were 9.5%, 6.1%, and 4.6%, respectively. Consequently, the labor market became very tight, and the job-opening/job-seeker ratio (one of the most commonly used indicators of the labor market condition in Japan) sharply increased. While the ratio nose-dived in 1975 (the First Oil Recession) and stayed at around 0.6 (i.e., only six jobs were available for every 10 job seekers), it began to increase after 1987. In 1988, the ratio exceeded one for the first time since 1974, and it went as high as 1.40 in 1990.

A typical practice of Japanese firms in boom years has been to increase the number of marginal workers, such as seasonal and temporary workers, because firms had at least a moral obligation to keep their *regular* employees on the payroll even in a recession. However, the construction industry is losing an important source of its supply of domestic nonregular workers. Until the 1980s, the labor shortage in the construction industry in boom years had been largely filled by seasonal workers, *dekasegi*, who were mostly farmers in the northern part of Japan who came to metropolitan areas like Tokyo and Osaka to take temporary jobs in an attempt to supplement their farm incomes in the farmers' slack season. In the early 1970s, the number of *dekasegi* amounted to about 600,000[4]. But, because of increased job opportunities in their home towns, that number has been steadily diminishing: only 142,200 *dekasegi* were reported in 1993[5]. The decline in the supply of *dekasegi*, along with the recent construction boom, created a serious labor shortage in the construction industry. The strong demand for marginal workers in the Japanese construction industry attracted an increasing number of foreign workers whose supply pressure had been increased by the decreasing demand in the Middle East.

Faced with the strong push-force and pull-force, illegal mediators between Japanese employers and Asian migrants (like the "coyote" figure for Mexican illegal aliens in the United States) have become prevalent. Although the details of their illegal activities are unknown, involvement of gangsters was often reported. According to an estimate by the Japanese Ministry of Justice, in 1990 about 70 percent of illegal migrant workers entered Japan with the help of such illegal mediators.

---

[4] Goto (1990)

[5] Japanese Ministry of Labour

IV. *Nikkeijin* Workers in Japan and the Policy of the Governments toward Them

1. Dramatic increase since the beginning of the 1990s

The influx of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan is due to the revision of the Japanese immigration law in 1990. As mentioned above, foreigners are prohibited from taking unskilled jobs in Japan, in principle. However, the revision of the immigration added a visa category of "long term resident (teijusha)." The law allowed anyone whose parent or grandparent were Japanese (second and third generations) to apply for "long term resident visa." Long term residents can stay in Japan for three years, and they can do whatever activities in Japan, including the unskilled work. Thus, a host of *Nikkeijin*, began to come to Japan to make quick money. Table 12 shows the number of "long term residents" by sending countries. As this table shows, more than half (57.6 percent) of the long term residents are Brazilians in 2004.

The increase in the number of Brazilians coming to Japan is dramatic. Figure 4 shows the number of Brazilians staying in Japan since 1988. As the figure shows, the number of Brazilians staying in Japan in 1988 was only 4,159, but the number jumped in 1990 to become 56,429. Since then, the number of Brazilians staying in Japan has increased almost every year to become 286,557 in 2004, which is seventy times as high as that in 1988.

Moreover, many Brazilians coming to Japan are repeaters, who come back to Japan in a few years after they returned home. Table 13 shows the number of entry of Brazilians to Japan since 1999. As the table shows, about half of Brazilians come to Japan as repeaters.

In early 1990s, most of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan were single male, who intended to stay for a few years and to return home with a big money earned in Japan. So, they remit a large portion of their income in Japan to their home country. However, as time goes by, the *Nikkeijin* workers stay in Japan for longer period of time, and they started to live in Japan with their family. Some of them obtained permanent residency in Japan. The more they take root in Japan, the less remittance they may send to their home country. In the following discussion, I will briefly discuss the situation of *Nikkeijin* workers in early 1990s first. Then I will examine what kind of changes emerged in the characteristics of *Nikkeijin* workers in more recent years, and discuss how the changes affect the amount of future remittances to their home country.

2. *Nikkeijin* Workers in early 1990s --single male in car parts factory[6]

In this subsection, I will briefly discuss salient features of these *Nikkeijin* workers in early 1990s. The Ministry of Labor in Japan published a result of the survey on *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan in 1991, and the following discussion is mainly based on the survey result.

According to the survey, most of them were young male: About two thirds of them were male, and the majority of them were under thirty years old. About two thirds

[6] The discussion in this subsection is largely based on Goto (1993).

were coming to Japan without family, and only thirteen percent of them brought their entire family to Japan.

Almost all (more than ninety percent) of these males were working as production workers in manufacturing sector. About one third of them were employed in transport equipment production sector (most of them are car parts factory). This constituted a striking contrast with illegal unskilled workers from Asia, who were employed mainly in the nontraded good sectors such as construction and services.

What were the working conditions of these *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan in early years? When we compare hourly wage of the *Nikkeijin* workers with that of the Japanese counterpart, there were no big difference between the two. Since they were legally employed, employers tended to pay them by regular hourly wages. However, the annual income of these *Nikkeijin* workers was much smaller than that of Japanese workers, because most of the *Nikkeijin* workers were employed on daily basis and paid by hourly wage. Note that, in terms of wage structure, blue-collar production workers in Japan are similar to white-collar workers in the United States. Most of the blue-collar production workers in Japan receive monthly salary (instead of hourly wages). Further, these salaried workers in Japan receive bonus payments twice a year, and enjoy various fringe benefits. The bonus payment in Japan constitutes a substantial part of their annual income, and the amount of average bonus is equal to five months salary. Therefore, even though hourly wage rate of *Nikkeijin* workers was similar to that of the Japanese counterpart, their annual income was much smaller than Japanese workers because most of *Nikkeijin* workers did not receive bonus payment and fringe benefit.

Further, the *Nikkeijin* workers were often exploited by brokers or mediators. According to the survey result, less than half of *Nikkeijin* workers were directly employed by the firm where they actually worked. More than half of *Nikkeijin* workers were employed by mediator agencies and were sent by them to the factories.[7] Hence, the amount of income of *Nikkeijin* workers was usually smaller than what the factories were paying for their work. In some cases, exploitation by gangsters was also reported.

Further, the above survey reveals that most of the *Nikkeijin* workers were working without medical insurance and unemployment insurance.[8] In Japan, almost hundred percent of workers (and their family) are covered by very generous government sponsored medical insurance program. Workers contribute to the medical insurance

---

[7] As shown in Table 17 below, this is still the case in 2003. In 2003, more than 64 percent of Nikkeijins are employed through mediators and contractors.

[8] Thanks to the efforts by central and local governments, most Nikkeijins are now covered by the unemployment insurance system. However, many Nikkeijins are still outside of the coverage of medical insurance. The reason for the low coverage of medical insurance is believed that medical insurance and pension are presented as a package (i.e., if someone wishes to participate in the public medical insurance, he or she has to be enrolled in the national pension system as well). Since Nikkeijin does not think he or she stay in Japan for more than twenty years, when he or she becomes eligible to receive pension), he or she tends to decline the public medical insurance in order to avoid contribution to the pension system.

program according to their income. And, the deductibles are nominal. No matter how high the actual medical cost is, the payment out of the patient pocket does not exceed about five hundred dollars a month and the balance is paid by the insurance program. Very poor people can enjoy the same benefit as the others without contributing anything.

However, according to the above survey, only twenty-three percent of the *Nikkeijin* workerss were covered by the generous medical insurance program, probably because both employers and *Nikkeijin* workers themselves did not want to pay their contribution to the program. But, in case of illness or accident, these *Nikkeijin* workers had to pay 100 percent of their medical expenses from their pocket.

3. *Nikkeijin* Workrs in recent years: settlers with family

(1) From Temporary Guest Workers to Settlers

When an increased number of *Nikkeijin* in Brazil began to come to Japan in early 1990s, most of them were "dekasegi" workers (i.e., temporary guest workers), who stayed in Japan just for a few years and came back to their home country with big money earned in Japan. Most of the dekasegi workers were single male. However, in recent years, the Brazilians began to settle in Japan, just as the Japanese emigrants to Brazil did so about hundred years ago. Figure 5 shows the result of a survey on *Nikkeijin*'s length of stay in Japan, which was conducted by Sangyo Koyo Antei Sentah (Industry Employment Security Center) in 2002. As the table shows, almost eighty percent of *Nikkeijin* workers stayed in Japan for more than three years. Twenty-eight percent of them stayed in Japan for more than ten years. Probably because it was very difficult for *Nikkeijin* dekasegi workers to quickly make a big money under the stagnant Japanese economy, and because due to the stagnant Brazilian economy it was difficult for them to find good jobs in Brazil after returning home, many Brazilians have been staying in Japan for many years. Although the long term resident visa is valid only for three years initially, the Japanese Government is very generous to allow those Brazilians to apply for renewals. Unless they commit a crime, the renewal is almost automatic.

After two or three renewals, they can apply even for permanent resident visa, which is very difficult for foreigners other than *Nikkeijin* to obtain. As a result, the number of permanent residents from Brazil has been rapidly increasing in recent years. Table 14 shows the change in the number of the permanent residents by nationality since 2000. As the table shows, in 2000-2004 the number of permanent residents as a whole has increased only by 18 percent from 657,605 in 2000 to 778,583. However, the increase of Brazilians is dramatic. In 2000 the number of permanent residents from Brazil was 9,062, and the number in 2004 (52,581) was almost six times larger than that in 2000.

In early 1990s, visa category of Brazilian dekasegi workers was predominantly long-term resident visa. But, as Figure 6 shows, the situation has changed in recent years. In 2002, the share of long term residents decreased to about half (52 percent) of total Brazilians staying in Japan. Thirty four percent of Brazilians entered Japan with visa for spouse etc. of Japanese citizens, and 12 percent were staying in Japan with permanent resident visa.

As *Nikkeijin* from Brazil stay longer in Japan, they bring their family to Japan.

The male dekasegi workers started to bring their wives and children from Brazil. Table 15 shows such tendency. The table compares the number of Brazilians by age and gender in 2002 with those in 1992. As the table shows, the share of working-age Brazilians (15 to 64 years old) in 1992 was 91.5 percent, but ten years later (in 2002) the share dropped to 84.4 percent. On the other hand, the share of children (0-14 years old) has increased by seven percentage points from 8.3 percent in 1992 to 15.2 percent in 2002.

As discussed in detail below, the increase in spouses and children has brought about various problems, such as educations of their children in Japan and daily life in the Japanese community.

(2) Clustered Cities

Nikkeijin from Brazil clustered in a certain number of cities and towns, where employments in manufacturing industry are available to them. About sixty percent of foreign residents clustered in fifteen towns and cities, as shown in Table 16. Table 16 shows the share of foreign residents (and Brazilians) in total population in each municipality. While the share of Brazilians in total population in Japan is 0.21 percent, the Brazilian shares in the population in these fifteen cities are much higher than national average. For example, in Oizumi Town in Gunma Prefecture, where the number of total population is 41,284, more than four thousand Brazilians are living. The share of Brazilians in Oizumi Town exceeds ten percent (11.4 percent). In certain living districts in these cities, the clustering exists more clearly. For example, in Homi Housing District in Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture, where about ten thousand people are living, the number of Brazilians is as high as four thousand, or 40 percent. Since very few Brazilians speak Japanese, and since social custom in Japan is very different from that in Brazil, the Brazilians often encounter various problems: e.g, while a party with Samba music at midnight might be common in Brazil, such behavior often results in serious conflict with Japanese neighbors. .

Due to the clustering, the municipal governments in these cities encountered various problems, and in May 2001, mayors from thirteen municipal governments in the cities where foreign residents, mostly Brazilians, clustered to live, formed “Gaikokujin Shuju Toshi Kaigi (Congress of Major Cities where Foreign Residents Concentrate to Live)” to achieve harmonious living by foreign residents in the Japanese communities.

As for employment of the *Nikkeijin* Workers, Table 17 shows almost all of them (86.0 percent) are employed in manufacturing industry. That is very different from other (illegal) foreign unskilled workers, most of whom are employed in service sectors. It should be noted that two thirds (64.3 percent) of *Nikkeijin* workers obtain employment through private mediators and contractors. It is reported that *Nikkeijin*s in Japan are often exploited by these mediators and contractors.

The municipalities where foreign residents concentrate to live provide public housing to foreigners. Table 18 shows the current state of foreign households’ occupancy of public housing in selected municipalities. As the table shows, in these cities, more than ten percent (13.7%) of public housing is occupied by foreign residents. Especially, in Iwata City in Shizuoka Prefecture more than a quarter of public housing are occupied by foreign residents.

(3) Problems in Education and Crimes of Their Children

The increase in the number of children of *Nikkeijin* workers has brought about various problems. Education and Crimes of their children are the most important of all. As Table 15 above shows, the number of school-age children (5-14 years in the table) tripled in ten years. In 1993, the number of school-age children was 7,244, and it became 23,610 in 2002. It is surprising to see that non-attendance ratio is very high among *Nikkeijin* children. These children do not attend school because they do not follow the class due to the lack of Japanese language skill, and because the tuition of Brazilian-language schools in Japan is expensive.

Table 19 shows the number of school-age foreign residents and the number of their school enrolment in cities where foreign residents concentrate to live. As Table 19 shows, truancy of foreign children, mostly *Nikkeijin*'s children, is appalling. More than a quarter of *Nikkeijin*'s children do not attend school, while more than 99.9 percent of Japanese children go to school.

Truancy often results in juvenile delinquency. Table 20 summarizes the change in the number of criminal offences by Brazilians and Peruvians since 1992. In ten years from 1992 to 2002, the number of foreign residents from Brazil increased by eighty percent from 147,803 in 1992 to 268, 332 in 2002. On the other hand, the number of criminal offences committed by Brazilians dramatically increased. The number of Crimes committed by Brazilian in 2002 (4,967) is twenty-two times larger than that in 1992 (222). That constitutes a sharp contrast with Peruvians in Japan. While there are no clear increase in criminal offences by Peruvians, those committed by Brazilians has increase sharply in recent years. Moreover, the number of criminal offences per Brazilian resident is much higher than that of Peruvians. Criminal offences are particularly serious among Brazilian juveniles. Brazilian is the number one national in terms of the number of juvenile crimes committed by foreign residents in Japan.

(4) Policies of the Japanese Governments towards *Nikkeijin* in Japan

Faced with the increasing number of *Nikkeijin* workers and their families in Japan, the Japanese governments, both central and local, are taking various policy measures to assist the living of *Nikkeijin* in Japan, and to realize harmonious coexistence of Japanese and *Nikkeijin*. The following is a partial listing of such policy measures.

(i) Measures taken by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare

* Interpreters of Portuguese and Spanish at 62 public employment security offices
* Job counseling specially designed for *Nikkeijin* Workers at the employment service centers for *Nikkeijin* (at Tokyo and Aichi Prefectur)
*Job counseling to prospective dekasegi workers in Sao Paulo
*Leaflets on job openings in Portuguese and Spanish
*Assistances to *Nikkeijin* juveniles to find jobs in Japan

(ii) Measures taken by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

*Special teachers who give necessary assistances to non Japanese-speaking students
*School counselors who assist students and parents coming from abroad
*Special curriculum to non Japanese-speaking students

(iii) Measures taken by the local governments (especially of clustered cities)
*Leaflets and newsletter in foreign language (Portuguese, Spanish, English etc.) on the life in Japan
*Counseling centers in various foreign language
*Free medical examinations for foreign residents
*Special personnel to assist students from foreign countries
*Japanese language education

(5) Remittances

In many developing countries, e.g., the Philippines, remittances are very important source of income. It is also the case in Brazil. According to Mistiaen (2005), remittances by *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan are estimated to be US$2.2 billion annually, almost equal to the annual exports from Brazil to Japan.

There are a few studies on the amount of remittances to Brazil from each *Nikkeijin* workers. Nihon Rodo Kenkyu Kikou (Japan Institute of Labour) conducted interviews in 1993 and 1998 to *Nikkeijin* in Brazil who have an experience in working in Japan. According to the survey, average monthly remittances from each dekasegi workers are US$1,664 and US$1848 in 1993 and 1998, respectively. In 1993, the remittance of US$1,664 was almost three times higher than average monthly income in Brazil (US$623). Also in 1998, the amount of monthly remittances (US$1,848) is a little higher than monthly income in Brazil (US$1,806).

Commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank, Microfinance International Corporation (2005) did similar study on remittances of Latin Americans working in Japan: Seventy percent of Latin Americans working in Japan remit regularly; they remit 14.5 times a year; average amount of remittance each time is US$600. So, they remit US$8,700 annually, or the average amount of monthly remittance is US$725, which is far less than the amount based on the study by the Japan Institute of Labour.

While the amount of total remittances by *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan is enormous at present, the future prospect might not as rosy as the current amount suggests. As discussed in the above, more and more *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan are becoming settlers in Japan from temporary dekasegi workers to Japan. In 2004, the number of permanent residents from Brazil exceeds fifty thousand, and the number has been increasing rapidly in recent years. The longer they stay, the less they might remit. The history of Turkish guest workers in Germany has shown the decline in the amount of remittances, as the guest workers settled in the host country.

V. Concluding Remarks

So far, I have examined background and major characteristics of *Nikkeijin* workers n Japan, whose number has dramatically increased after the revision of Japanese Immigration Law in 1990. In Section II, I examined the history of Japanese

emigration to Latin America (mostly Brazil), because it is indispensable for understanding the characteristics of return migration of *Nikkeijin* to Japan in recent years. In Section III, I discussed immigration in Japan in general. As well known, the Japanese immigration law is very restrictive. With a few exceptions, foreigners are not allowed to take unskilled jobs in Japan. However, the revision of the Immigration Law in 1990 created a big exception to this principle, i.e., the *Nikkeijin* can take any jobs, including unskilled jobs. Although the duration of the visa to *Nikkeijin* workers is three years, their renewal is almost automatic. After a few renewals, they can obtain permanent residency in Japan, which is almost impossible to other foreigners. Therefore, the share of *Nikkeijin* workers in the total migrant workers in Japan has dramatically increased in the 1990s. In Section IV, I have discussed major characteristics of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan. *Nikkeijin* workers in early 1990s were mostly temporary guest workers, who intended to return home in a few years with a big money earned in Japan. However, as time goes by, they have become settlers in Japan with their family. Since *Nikkeijin* are clustered in certain cities, (e.g., Hamamatsu, Toyota, Toyoshashi, Oizumi etc.), the social and economic impacts of *Nikkeijin* workers on these cities are enormous. Therefore, governments, as well as NGOs, are making various efforts to create harmonious living of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japanese communities. In Section IV, I have pointed that, while current amount of remittances by *Nikkeijin* is huge, its future prospect might not rosy, because the amount of remittances tends to decline as the degree of settling of these workers in the host country increases.

Although I have presented various data on *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan, more studies on *Nikkeijin* and remittances are clearly needed. First, while there are various studies on characteristics of *Nikkeijin* workers and remittances, most of them are based on ad hoc interviews, and therefore the results vary widely from study to study. For example, on the amount of monthly remittances, the study by the Japan Institute of Labour said they remit $1,664 -- $1,848, while the study commissioned by the IDB reported far smaller amount of $725. Thus, accumulation of ad hoc survey results does not seem very useful for understanding *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan and future prospect of remittances from those workers. Instead, a scientific survey, including household survey, which is based on solid statistical technique, is clearly needed.

Secondly, an econometric study is clearly needed, in addition to tabulation of numbers. For example, in order to forecast the future remittances, it seems useful to estimate elasticity of the amount of remittances with respect to, say, the length to stay, the number of family members in each *Nikkeijin* household, etc.

Bibliography

De Carvalho, D. (2003), Migrants and Identity in Japan and Brazil: The *Nikkeijin*, London and New York: Routledge Curzon

Kikumura-Yano, A. (2002), Encyclopedia of Japanese Descendants in the Americas: An Illustrated History of the *Nikkeijin*, Tokyo: Japanese American National Museum, Tokyo

Takahashi, Y. (1993), *Nikkeijin* Burajiru Iminshi (A History of *Nikkeijin* in Brazil), Tokyo: San-Ichi Shobo (in Japanese)

Goto, J. (1990), Gaikokujin Rodo no Keizaigaku (Economic Analysis of Migrant Workers), Tokyo: Toyo Keizai Shimposha (in Japanese)

Goto, J. (1993), Gaikokujin Rodosha to Nihon Keizai (Migrant Workers and Japanese Economy), Tokyo: Yuhikaku (in Japanese)

The Japan Institute of Labour (1995), Nikkeijin Rodosha no Jukyu Sistem to Shuro Keiken (Demand-Supply System and Work Experiences of Nikkeijin Workers), Tokyo (in Japanese)

Japanese Ministry of Labor (1991), Gaikokujin Rodosha ga Rodomentou ni oyobosu eikyoutou ni kannsuru kennkyuukai senmon bukai houkokusho (A Report of Committee on the Impact of Migrant Workers on Empoyment and Labor in Japan), Tokyo (in Japanese)

Table 1

The Number of *Nikkeijin* in Brazil (1923-2006, estimate)

Year	Number
1923	39,249
1932	133,358
1940	205,850
1958	430,151
1976	800,000
1986	1,075,133
1996	1,444,889
2006	1,941,810

Source: Carvalho (2003)

Table 2

Japanese emigrants to Latin American countries

Country	1899-1941		Post-1945		Total	
	number	share(%)	number	share(%)	number	share(%)
Total	257,575	100.00	86,427	100.00	344,002	100.00
Argentina	5,398	2.10	12,066	13.96	17,464	5.08
Bolivia	202	0.08	6,357	7.36	6,559	1.91
Brazil	202,025	78.43	53,555	61.97	255,580	74.30
Chile	519	0.20		0.00	519	0.15
Colombia	229	0.09		0.00	229	0.07
Cuba	686	0.27		0.00	686	0.20
Dominica		0.00	1,390	1.61	1,390	0.40
Mexico	14,476	5.62	671	0.78	15,147	4.40
Panama	415	0.16		0.00	415	0.12
Paraguay	521	0.20	9,612	11.12	10,133	2.95
Peru	33,070	12.84	2,615	3.03	35,685	10.37
Uruguay	18	0.01		0.00	18	0.01
Venezuela	12	0.00		0.00	12	0.00
Others	4	0.00	161	0.19	165	0.05

Source: Compiled from the data in Carvalho (2003)

Table 3

Number of Japanese emigrants to Brazil, 1908–1986

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1908	830	1924	2,673	1940	1,268	1956	4,912	1972	352
1909	31	1925	6,333	1941	1,548	1957	6,147	1973	492
1910	948	1926	8,407	1942	0	1958	6,586	1974	239
1911	28	1927	9,084	1943	0	1959	7,123	1975	254
1912	2,909	1928	11,169	1944	0	1960	7,746	1976	1,126
1913	7,122	1929	16,648	1945	0	1961	6,824	1977	682
1914	3,675	1930	14,074	1946	6	1962		1978	584
1915	65	1931	5,632	1947	1	1963	2,124	1979	500
1916	165	1932	11,678	1948	1	1964	1,138	1980	562
1917	3,899	1933	24,494	1949	4	1965	903	1981	417
1918	5,599	1934	21,930	1950	33	1966	937	1982	329
1919	3,022	1935	9,611	1951	106	1967	1,070	1983	289
1920	1,013	1936	3,306	1952	261	1968	597	1984	261
1921	840	1937	4,557	1953	1,928	1969	496	1985	258
1922		1938	2,524	1954	3,119	1970	435	1986	363
1923	895	1939	1,414	1955	4,051	1971	452	Total	225,580

Source: Carvalho (2003)

Table 4

Crop Share of *Nikkeijin* Farmers in Brazil

	1912	1922	1932	1942	1958
Coffee	92.6	52.2	59	24.3	27.5
Rice	2.5	17.6	8.3	4.5	3
Cotton	1.2	12.1	14	39.2	20.5
Kinko	0.6	10.2	13	19.9	34.1
Other	3.1	7.9	5.7	12.1	14.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Kikumura-Yano, A. (2002)

Table 5: National Income of Selected OECD Countries

	GDP				GDP per capita			
	(Value, in $billions)				(Value, in $)			
	Japan	USA	UK	Germany	Japan	USA	UK	Germany
1950	109	2883	377	234	131	1897	744	468
1960	440	5153	727	722	468	2852	1390	1302
1970	2033	10155	1249	1846	1949	4952	2254	3041
1980	10632	27319	5353	8185	9103	11996	9567	13296
1990	30522	58033	9946	15470	24718	23209	17377	24458
2000	47661	98247	14409	18752	37574	34796	24571	22844
	(Index, USA=100.0)				(Index, USA=100.0)			
	Japan	USA	UK	Germany	Japan	USA	UK	Germany
1950	3.8	100.0	13.1	8.1	6.9	100.0	39.2	24.7
1960	8.5	100.0	14.1	14.0	16.4	100.0	48.7	45.7
1970	20.0	100.0	12.3	18.2	39.4	100.0	45.5	61.4
1980	38.9	100.0	19.6	30.0	75.9	100.0	79.8	110.8
1990	52.6	100.0	17.1	26.7	106.5	100.0	74.9	105.4
2000	48.5	100.0	14.7	19.1	108.0	100.0	70.6	65.7

(Source) IMF

Table 6: Foreign Population in Selected Countries

	Total population (thousand)	Foreign population (thousand)	[1990] Foreigner ratio (%)
East/Southeast Asia	652,927	7,594	1.2
Japan	123,267	1,075	0.9
Korea	42,663	900	2.1
Malaysia	17,670	745	4.2
Singapore	2,690	418	15.5
Taiwan	19,080	1,508	7.9
Hong Kong	5,680	2,271	40.0
Thailand	55,138	314	0.6
North America	276,384	23,868	8.6
Canada	27,606	4,266	15.5
United States	248,778	19,603	7.9
Europe	498,740	24,908	5.0
France	56,563	5,897	10.4
Germany	79,195	5,037	6.4
Switzerland	6,804	1,092	16.0
United Kingdom	57,332	3,718	6.5
Latin America	402,285	6,550	1.6
Argentina	32,325	1,675	5.2
Brazil	147,134	1,138	0.8
World	5,926,830	120,000	2.0

Source: United Nations, Japanese Ministry of Labor, U.S. Censum Bureau

Table 7

Number of registered foreigners in Japan (as of the end of the year)

Year	Total number	Year-on-year rate (%)	Index	The shre in total population of Japan (%)
1978	766,894		39	0.67
1979	774,505	1.0	39	0.67
1980	782,910	1.1	40	0.67
1981	792,946	1.3	40	0.67
1982	802,477	1.2	41	0.68
1983	817,129	1.8	41	0.68
1984	840,885	2.9	43	0.70
1985	850,612	1.2	43	0.70
1986	867,237	2	44	0.71
1987	884,025	1.9	45	0.72
1988	941,005	6.4	48	0.77
1989	984,455	4.6	50	0.80
1990	1,075,317	9.2	54	0.87
1991	1,218,891	13.4	62	0.98
1992	1,281,644	5.1	65	1.03
1993	1,320,748	3.1	67	1.06
1994	1,354,011	2.5	69	1.08
1995	1,362,371	0.6	69	1.08
1996	1,415,136	3.9	72	1.12
1997	1,482,707	4.8	75	1.18
1998	1,512,116	2.0	77	1.20
1999	1,556,113	2.9	79	1.23
2000	1,686,444	8.4	85	1.33
2001	1,778,462	5.5	90	1.40
2002	1,851,758	4.1	94	1.45
2003	1,915,030	3.4	97	1.50
2004	1,973,747	3.1	100	1.55
2005	2,011,555	1.9	102	1.57

sources:Japanese Ministry of Justice.

Table 8

The number of registered foreigners by sending region (as of the end of the year)

Region	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004		
						Share (%)	Percentage change from the end of the previous year (%)
Total	1,686,444	1,778,462	1,851,758	1,915,030	1,973,747	100.0	3.1
Asia	1,244,629	1,311,449	1,371,171	1,422,979	1,464,360	74.2	2.9
South America	312,921	329,510	334,602	343,635	358,211	18.2	4.2
North America	58,100	60,492	63,201	63,271	64,471	3.3	1.9
Europe	47,730	51,497	55,288	57,163	58,429	3.0	2.2
Oceania	12,839	14,697	15,898	16,076	16,131	0.8	0.3
Africa	8,214	8,876	9,694	10,060	10,319	0.5	2.6
Stateless	2,011	1,941	1,904	1,846	1,826	0.1	-1.1

source:Japanese Ministry of Justice.

Table 10

Illegal Foreign Workers Apprehended, by Country of Origin (2004)

	Number			Share (%)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	55,351	31,100	24,251	100.0	56.2	43.8
China	15,702	9,536	6,166	100.0	60.7	39.3
Taiwan	503	156	347	100.0	31.0	69.0
Hong Kong	66	37	29	100.0	56.1	43.9
Philippines	8,558	2,975	5,583	100.0	34.8	65.2
Korea	7,782	2,781	5,001	100.0	35.7	64.3
Thailand	3,572	1,384	2,188	100.0	38.7	61.3
Indonesia	2,103	1,463	640	100.0	69.6	30.4
Malaysia	1,575	1,141	434	100.0	72.4	27.6
Myammar	1,466	1,179	287	100.0	80.4	19.6
Brazil	1,338	833	505	100.0	62.3	37.7
Banglades	1,312	1,215	97	100.0	92.6	7.4
Peru	1,292	775	517	100.0	60.0	40.0
Other	10,082	7,625	2,457	100.0	75.6	24.4

Source: Japanese Ministry of Justice

Table 11

Illegal Foreign Workers Apprehended, by Activities (2004)

		Number	Share (%)
Male	Total	25,348	100.0
	Factroy worker	7,401	29.2
	Construction worker*	6,185	24.4
	Cook*	2,591	10.2
	Unskilled help*	2,185	8.6
	Bartender *	1,401	5.5
	Dish washer*	1,112	4.4
	Other	4,473	17.6
	(Nontraded)	13,474	53.2
Female	Total	17,710	100.0
	Bar hostess*	6,368	36.0
	Factory worker	3,038	17.2
	Waitress*	2,070	11.7
	Other service*	1,670	9.4
	Cook*	1,001	5.7
	Dishwasher*	973	5.5
	Other	2,590	14.6
	(Nontraded)	12,082	68.2

Source: Japanese Ministry of Justice
Note: "Nontraded" is the summation of activities with an asterisk (*).

Table 12

The number of foreign resident with "long term resident" visa (as of the end of the year)

Nationality (place of birth)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004		
						Composition ratio (%)	Percentage change from the end of the previous year (%)
Total	237,607	244,460	243,451	245,147	250,734	100.0	2.3
Brazil	137,649	142,082	139,826	140,552	144,407	57.6	2.7
China	37,337	36,580	35,020	33,292	32,130	12.8	-3.5
Philippines	13,285	15,530	18,246	21,117	23,756	9.5	12.5
Peru	21,369	22,047	21,538	21,045	20,779	8.3	-1.3
South Korea / Korea	9,509	9,243	9,091	8,941	8,751	3.5	-2.1
Others	18,458	18,978	19,730	20,200	20,911	8.3	3.5

source: Japanese Ministry of Justice

Table 13: Entry of Brazilians to Japan

Year	Total	First commer	Repeater
Number			
1999	70,794	38,275	32,519
2000	101,513	58,577	42,936
2001	81,800	39,533	42,267
2002	71,763	33,296	38,467
2003	79,692	41,101	38,591
Share(%)			
1999	100.0	54.1	45.9
2000	100.0	57.7	42.3
2001	100.0	48.3	51.7
2002	100.0	46.4	53.6
2003	100.0	51.6	48.4

Source: Ministry of Justice

Table 14

The number of the permanent residents by nationality (as of the end of the year)

Nationality (place of birth)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004		
						Composition ratio(%)	Percentage change from the end of the previous year(%)
Permanent resident	657,605	684,853	713,775	742,963	778,583	100.0	4.8
General permanent resident	145,336	184,071	223,875	267,011	312,964	40.2	17.2
China	48,809	58,778	70,599	83,321	96,647	12.4	16.0
Brazil	9,062	20,277	31,203	41,771	52,581	6.8	25.9
Philippines	20,933	26,967	32,796	39,733	47,407	6.1	19.3
South Korea / Korea	31,955	34,624	37,121	39,807	42,960	5.5	7.9
Peru	7,496	11,059	13,975	17,213	20,401	2.6	18.5
Others	27,081	32,366	38,181	45,166	52,968	6.8	17.3
Special permanent resident	512,269	500,782	489,900	475,952	465,619	59.8	-2.2
South Korea / Korea	507,429	495,986	485,180	471,756	461,460	59.3	-2.2
China	4,151	4,060	3,924	3,406	3,306	0.4	-2.9
Others	689	736	796	790	853	0.1	8.0

sources:Japanese Ministry of Justice.

Table 15

The number of foreign residents by age and gender (Brazilian)

(the end of 1992)

Age	Brazil	Composition ratio	Male	Composition ratio	Female	Composition ratio
Total	147,803	100.0%	87,679	59.3%	60,124	40.7%
0-4 year	5,082	3.4%	2,541	2.9%	2,541	4.2%
5-14 year	7,244	4.9%	3,682	4.2%	3,562	5.9%
15-19 year	12,997	8.8%	7,550	8.6%	5,447	9.1%
20-64 year	122,269	82.7%	73,760	84.1%	48,509	80.7%
over 65 years of age	211	0.1%	146	0.2%	65	0.1%

(the end of 2002)

Age	Brazil	Composition ratio	Male	Composition ratio	Female	Composition ratio
Total	268,332	100.0%	147,322	54.9%	121,010	45.1%
0-4 year	17,264	6.4%	8,852	6.0%	8,412	7.0%
5-14 year	23,610	8.8%	12,035	8.2%	11,575	9.6%
15-19 year	16,106	6.0%	8,397	5.7%	7,709	6.4%
20-64 year	209,702	78.2%	117,214	79.6%	92,488	76.4%
over 65 years of age	1,650	0.60%	824	0.6%	826	0.7%

sources:"Foreign residents statistics" from Japanese Ministry of Justice.

Table 16: The number of foreign residents in municipalities where foreign residents concentrate to live

	Total population	The number of foreign resident	The number of Brazilian resident	The proportion of Brazilian in total population
Ota City,Gunma	149,599	7,203	3,390	2.3%
Oizumi Town, Gunma	41,284	6,166	4,704	11.4%
Iida City, Nagano	109,434	2,873	1,380	1.3%
Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka	596,988	21,434	12,712	2.1%
Iwata City, Shizuoka	90,128	4,392	3,301	3.7%
Kosai City, Shizuoka	44,601	2,549	1,818	4.1%
Fuji City, Shizuoka	242,392	4,494	1,850	0.8%
Toyohashi City, Aichi	372,986	15,417	9,655	2.6%
Toyota City, Aichi	344,549	11,381	6,251	1.8%
Ogaki City, Gifu	154,048	5,397	3,432	2.2%
Kani City, Gifu	96,203	3,854	3,015	3.1%
Minokamo City, Gifu	50,820	3,373	2,438	4.8%
Yokkaichi City, Mie	289,797	7,234	3,127	1.1%
Suzuka City, Mie	187,425	7,046	3,851	2.1%
Ueno City, Mie	59,626	3,041	1,999	3.4%
Total	2,829,880	105,854	62,923	2.2%
(National Data, whole Japan)	126,688,364	1,851,758	268,332	0.2%

Sources:The data from each municipality.

Table 17

The employment situation of non-Japanese and *Nikkeijin* from Latin America

(as of Jun.1st, 2003)

	non-Japanese who come from Latin America	Composition ratio	(Of those) *Nikkeijin* from Latin America	Composition ratio
The total number of direct labor	61,172	100.0%	55,193	100.0%
(by industry)				
Manufacturing industry	51,980	85.0%	47,444	86.0%
Service sector	4,524	7.4%	3,708	6.7%
Wholesale and retail trade	669	1.1%	571	1.0%
Restaurant, lodging industry	271	0.4%	205	0.4%
Instruction, learning assistance service	189	0.3%	80	0.1%
Others	3,539	5.8%	3,185	5.8%
The labor who takes up employment with a business establishment which primarily performing labor dispatch or contracting business	38,542	63.0%	35,469	64.3%

sources: Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare

Tabel 18

The foreign household's occupancy status of the public housing in municipalities where foreign residents concentrate to live

(the end of March, 2002)

	The total number of households	The number of foreign households	The proportion of foreign households
Ota City,Gunma	3,505	355	10.1%
Oizumi Town, Gunma	698	96	13.8%
Iida City, Nagano	1,103	145	13.1%
Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka	7,413	951	12.8%
Iwata City, Shizuoka	623	116	18.6%
Kosai City, Shizuoka	516	146	28.3%
Fuji City, Shizuoka	2,765	183	6.6%
Toyohashi City, Aichi	6,694	1,159	17.3%
Toyota City, Aichi	7,176	1,450	20.2%
Ogaki City, Gifu	1,197	27	2.3%
Kani City, Gifu	227	4	1.8%
Minokamo City, Gifu	266	26	9.8%
Yokkaichi City, Mie	5,639	670	11.9%
Suzuka City, Mie	2,084	129	6.2%
Total	39,906	5,457	13.7%

Sources:Gaikokujin Shuju Toshi Kaigi (Congress of Major Cities where Foreign Residents Concente to Live)

Tabel 19

The current state of school attendance in the cities where foreign residents concentrate to live

＊The current state of school attendance of foreign residents ready for school (2002)

	School age foreign resident	The number of school attendance	The enrollment in foreign school	The number of school non-attendance	Rate of school non-attendance
Ota City,Gunma	502	233	91	178	35.5%
Oizumi Town, Gunma	646	313	109	224	34.7%
Iida City, Nagano	195	149	0	46	23.6%
Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka	1,556	873	358	325	20.9%
Iwata City, Shizuoka	270	118	91	61	22.6%
Kosai City, Shizuoka	169	116	unknow	58	34.3%
Fuji City, Shizuoka	274	191	0	83	30.3%
Toyohashi City, Aichi	1,100	644	250	206	18.7%
Toyota City, Aichi	819	431	236	75	9.1%
Ogaki City, Gifu	364	212	unknow	152	41.8%
Kani City, Gifu	258	91	74	93	36.0%
Minokamo City, Gifu	238	110	74	54	22.7%
Yokkaichi City, Mie	461	274	109	78	16.9%
Suzuka City, Mie	497	167	50	280	56.3%
Total	7,349	3,922	1,442	1,913	26.0%

Sources:Gaikokujin Shuju Toshi Kaigi (Congress of Major Cities where Foreign Residents Concentrate to Live)

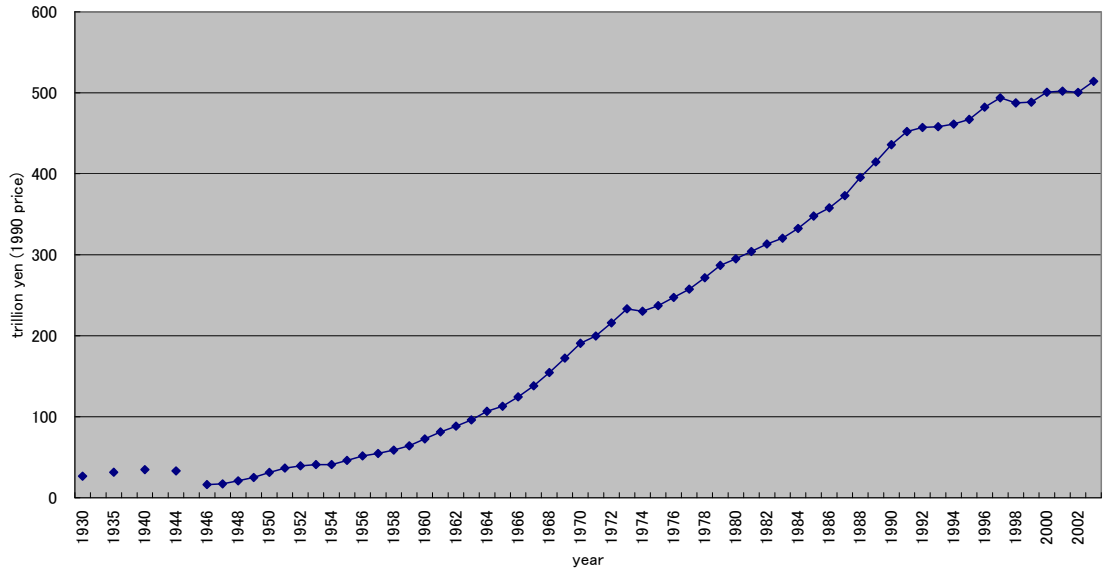
Table 20

Criminal Offences by Brazilians and Peruvians

	1992	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	increasing rate
The number of foreign resident	1,281,644	1,512,116	1,556,113	1,686,444	1,778,462	1,851,758	4.1%
Brazilian	147,803	222,217	224,299	254,394	265,962	268,332	0.9%
Peruvian	31,051	41,317	42,773	46,171	50,052	51,772	3.4%
Number of Offence	12,153	31,779	34,398	30,971	27,763	34,746	25.2%
Number of Criminal Offence	7,457	21,689	25,135	22,947	18,199	24,258	33.3%
Brazilian	222	3,278	5,110	3,273	3,457	4,967	43.7%
Peruvian	331	1,023	1,250	482	425	436	2.6%

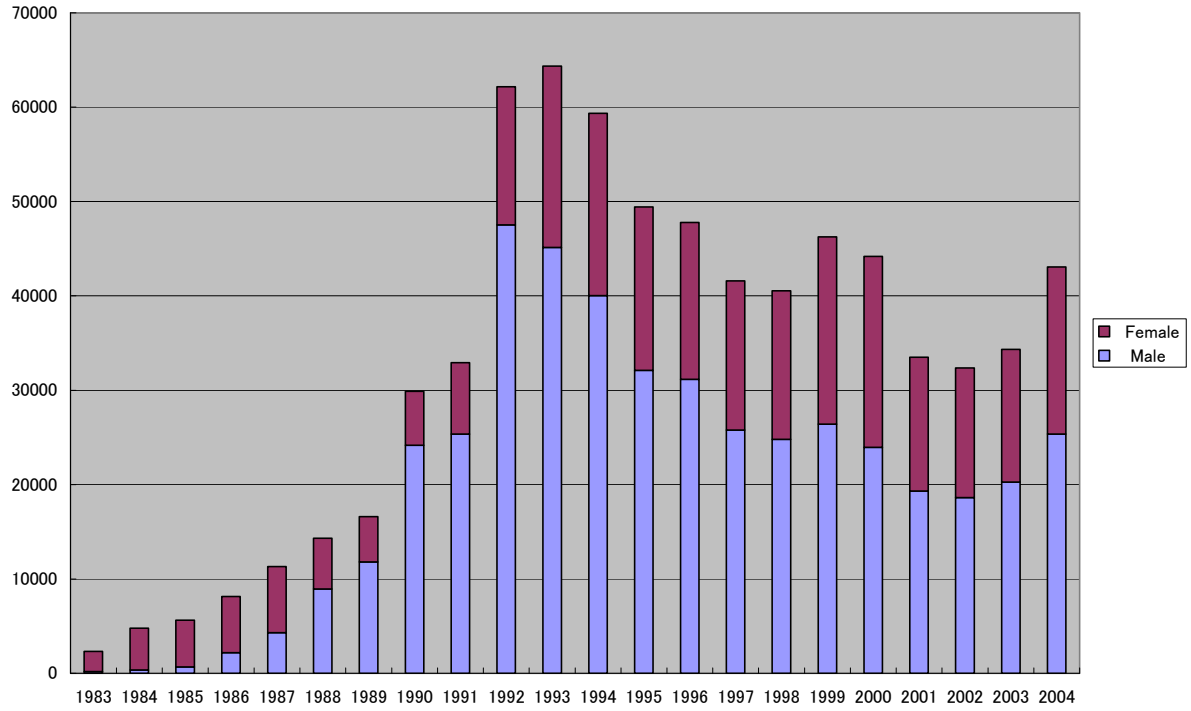
Source: Ministry of Justice

Figure 1: Real GDP of Japan



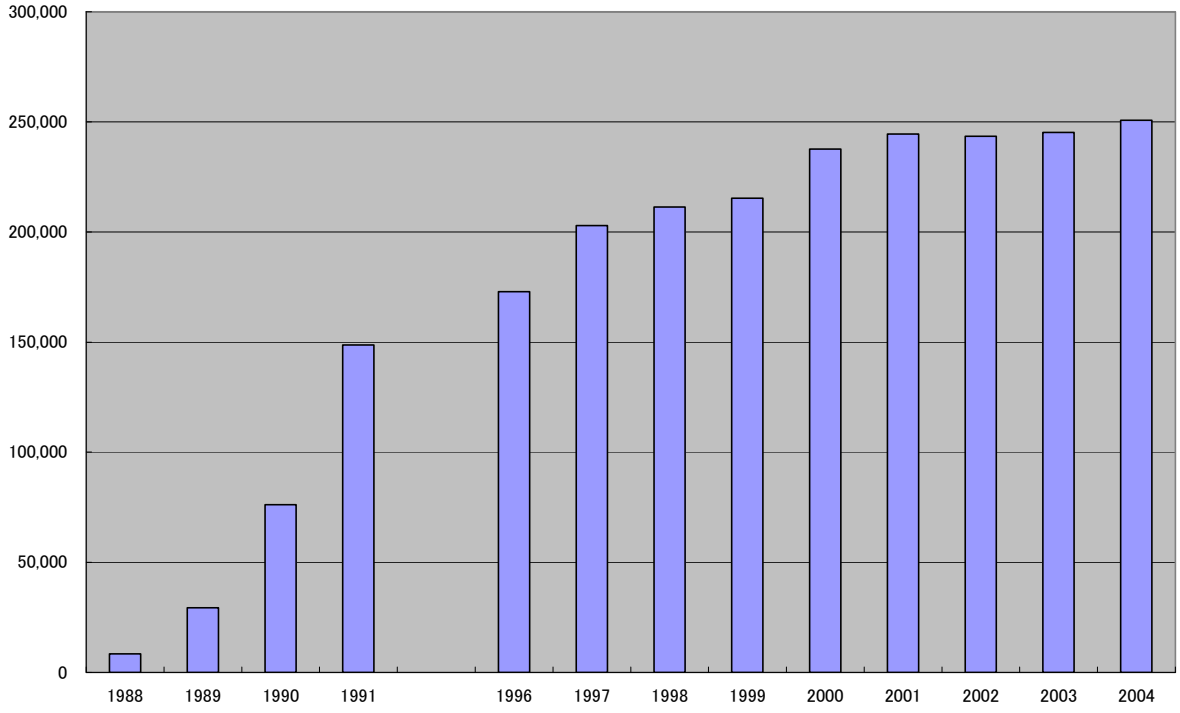
Source: Japanese Prime Minister's Office

Figure 2
Illegal Foreign Workers Apprehended



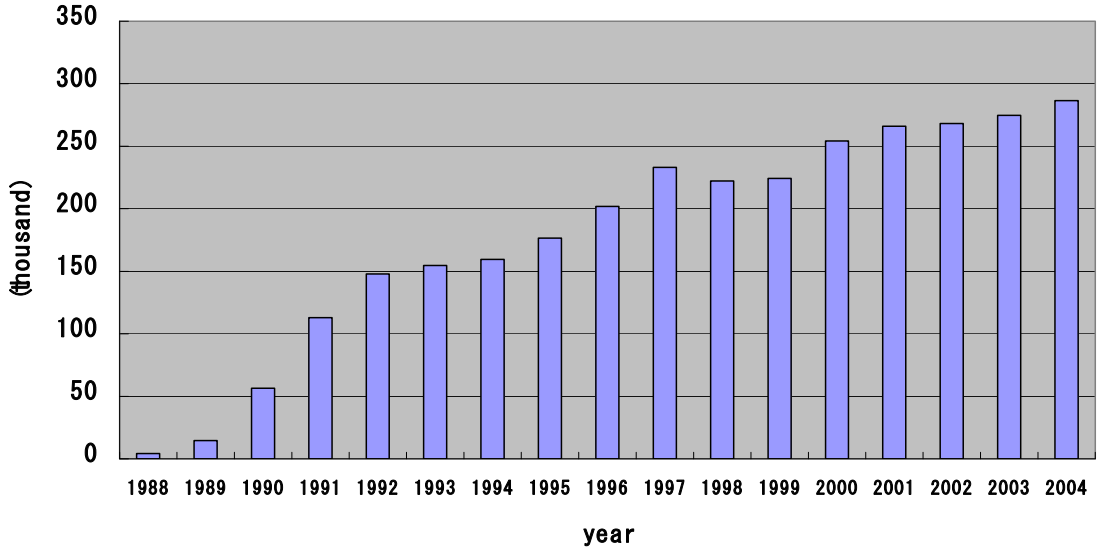
Source: Japanese Ministry of Justice

Figure 3
Migrant Workers of Japanese Origin



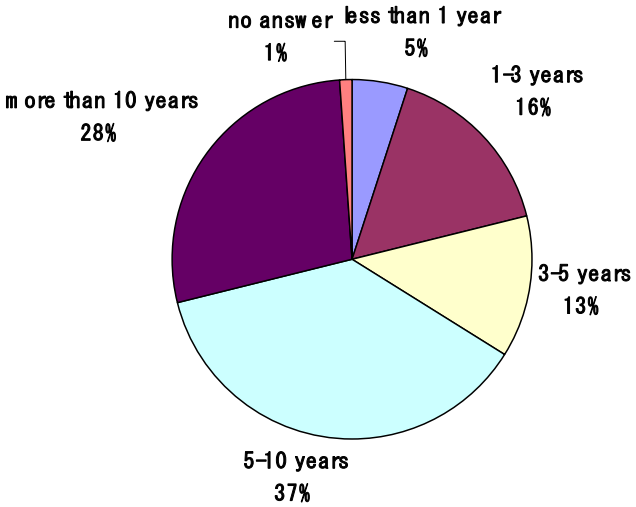
Source: Japanese Ministry of Justice

Figure 4: The Number of Brazilians Staying in Japan



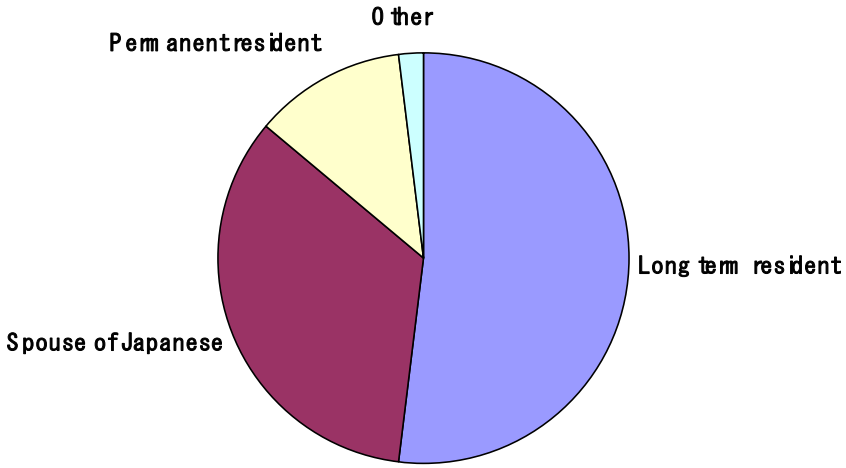
Source: Japanese Ministry of Justice

Figure 5: Nikkeijin's Length of Stay in Japan



Note: The data for 2002
Source: Sangyo Koyo Antei Sentah (Industry Employment Security Center)

Figure 6: Brazilian by Visa Categories



Note: The data for 2002
Source: Japanese Ministry of Justice

APPENDIX I: Chronology of the Japanese Emigration

1868 Meiji Restoration
About 500 Japanese immigrants arrived in Hawaii.
About 40 Japanese immigrants arrived in Guam.
1869 About 40 Japanese immigrants arrived in California.
1885 Official migration agreement was concluded between governments of Japan and Hawaii.
First "official" immigrants from Japan arrived in Hawaii (943 people)
1888 Emancipation of slaves in Brazil
1894 "Migrants Protection Regulation (Imin Hogo Kisoku)" was issued from the Japanese Government to charge private migration companies to recruit and send emigrants.
1895 Diplomatic relations were opened between Japan and Brazil
1899 Japanese bonded workers arrived in Peru (790 people)
1903 Japanese bonded workers arrived in the Philippines (about 3,000 people)
1907 A Japan-U.S. Gentlemen's Agreement was signed, which severely restricted Japanese immigration to the United States
1908 "Kasado-maru", which carried 791 Japanese immigrants, arrived in the port of Santos, Brazil. Almost all of these immigrants were bonded workers in coffee plantations.
1909 Five Japanese families owned the land in Brazil. They started the cultivation of cotton.
1910 Japan annexed Korea. The rush of Japanese migration to Korea started.
1914 The number of Japanese immigrants to Brazil exceeded ten thousands.
The state government of Sao Paulo announced termination of immigration contract with Japanese migration companies.
The World War I broke out.
The direct immigration from Japan to Argentina began.
1915 Japanese colony plantations were opened, the most famous of which was "Hirano Colony Plantation."
The first Japanese school was opened in Sao Paulo (Taisho School)
1916 The first Japanese language newspaper was issued in Brazil.
1921 The state government of Sao Paulo announced termination of travel subsidies to Japanese immigrants.
1924 The United States enacted the law which prohibited the new immigration from Japan. As a result, the immigration to Latin America was boosted.
1925 The Japanese government began travel subsidies to Japanese immigrants to Brazil. It was the start of the government sponsored immigration to Brazil.
1926 The Japanese governments loaned 850 thousand yen, with very low interest rate, to Japanese coffee farmers in Brazil.
1927 "Overseas Immigration Union Law (Kaigai Iju Kumiai Ho)" was enacted. The purpose of the law was to promote Japanese colony plantations.
1928 Japanese immigration to Canada was severely restricted by the Canadian government.

1929 “The Ministry of Immigration (Takumu sho)” was created, whose mission was to promote and direct Japanese emigration.
The Great Depression. The price of coffee plunged.
1931 The Manchurian Incident broke out..
1932 Manchuria became an “independent state.” The flood of Japanese immigration to Manchuria started (until the end of the World War II in 1945)
The Japanese government greatly increased travel subsidies to Japanese immigrants to Brazil.
1934 “Two percent clause” was added to the Brazilian Constitution. The clause limited the number of annual inflow of immigrants from each country to two percent of total immigration from each country in the last fifty years. This resulted in a severe reduction of Japanese immigration to Brazil.
1936 “The 2.26 Incident” occurred in Japan. (About 1400 military personnel attempted coup d’etat on February 26. Many politicians, included Minister of Finance, were assassinated. Although the coup attempt was failed, the Japanese government was controlled by the military authorities since then.
Cotton plantations managed by Japanese immigrants greatly increased.
1937 Japanese language education for students under 14 years old was prohibited in Brazil.
1938 The Brazilian New Immigration Law was enacted, which severely restricted Japanese immigrants’ rights.
Japanese (also German and Italian) language schools were forced to close in Brazil.
Japanese short-wave radio broadcast to overseas began.
1939 Many Japanese immigrants returned to Japan.
The World War II broke out.
1941 Japanese language newspapers were prohibited in Brazil.
The Pacific War (Japan-U.S. War) broke out.
1942 Brazil cut diplomatic relations with Germany, Italy and Japan.
Various oppression measures were imposed on Japanese immigrants in Brazil.
1945 Brazil declared the war to Japan (in June)
Atomic bombs were dropped to Hiroshima and Nagasaki (in August)
Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces (in August)
1946 Terrorist attacks by “Kachi-Gumi (non-believer of Japanese defeat)” on “Make-Gumi (believer of Japanese defeat) increased.
1947 “Return home scam” victims increased among Japanese immigrants in Brazil.
1950 About 50 members of the right-wing fraud syndicate “Kokumin Zenei Tai (National Vangurd)” were arrested in Sao Paulo.
1951 The first Japanese ship (Kobe-Maru) after the W.W.II arrived in the port of Santos.
1951 Mr. Tamaru became the first *Nikkeijin* parliament member of the State of Sao Paulo.
1952 The Brazilian Government approved resumption of Japanese immigration.
1953 The first Japanese immigrants after the WWII arrived in Santos.
1955 The Emigration Department was established in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The mission of the department was to promote Japanese emigration to the Americas.
1956 The first group of Japanese immigrants arrived in Dominican Republic.

1957 The foreign direct investment of the Japanese firms to Brazil increased.
1959 Japanese Prime Minister Kishi visited Brazil and Argentina.
1961 Prime Minister Ikeda in Japan announced the “income doubling plan”, which initiated miraculous economic growth in Japan.
1961 Pan-American Airlines began scheduled service between Japan and Brazil, which connected the two countries in 40 hours.
About 600 Japanese immigrants to Dominican Republic returned home, and reported their terrible immigration experiences.
1960s Emigration boom subsided in Japan due to the Japanese economic success.
1988 Return migration of *Nikkeijin* workers increased.
1990 The Japanese immigration law was revised, which allows the second and third generations of the Japanese emigrants to come and work in Japan.
1990s The number of *Nikkeijin* workers in Japan dramatically increased.