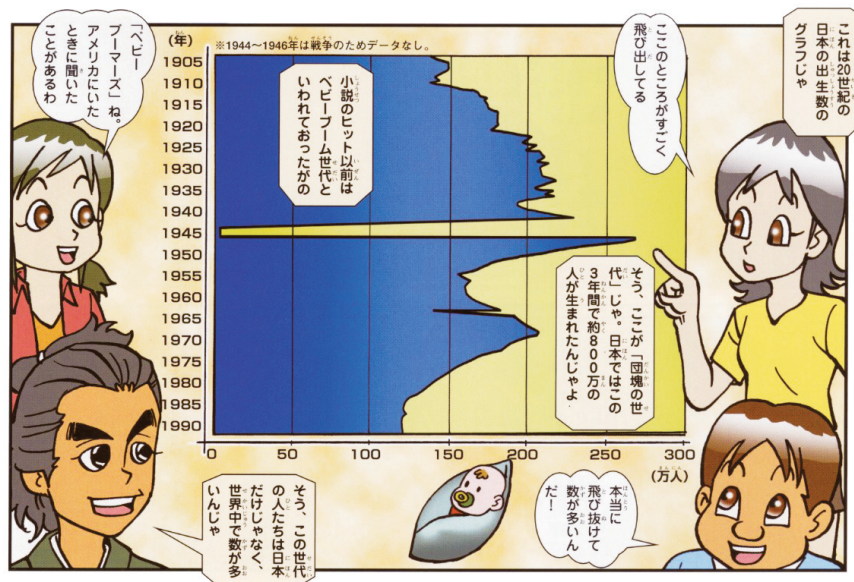


Interdisciplinary Japanese Studies On Site

“Here, this is the ‘babyboom generation’. In these three years around 8 million children were born in Japan.”

This is how Japan’s demographic situation in the first year after the retirement of the baby boomers born between 1946 and 1949 is explained in an easy-to-grasp manner for school kids and a general readership. The manga magazine *Shūkan sōnan da! Manga de wakaru yononaka no shikumi* [I see! Weekly: Understanding the world through mangas] (40,000 copies) has taken on the subject. The DIJ focusses on this and other aspects of demographic change as its current key research topic.



Not enough to live – or to die

Ever more Japanese elderly fall through the gaps in the social security net, spending their sunset years as working poor (*wākingu pua*). The general public is only slowly becoming aware of this.

Poverty in the countryside

Nobody can possibly remain unmoved by the hopeless situation of the 74-year-old tailor Yūji Suzuki. His monthly pension of 60,000 yen (US\$560) barely covers the care costs for his bedridden wife. His own living he earns by offering custom alterations. His annual turnover: 250,000 yen (US\$2300). Nonetheless, he has saved money for his wife’s funeral, only to discover that in doing so he has forfeited his right to any income support. Mr. Suzuki is an example of the working poor.

Eye-opener

Featured in a report by Japan’s public broadcasting network NHK entitled “Working Poor: No matter how hard you work, you’ll never get anywhere” (*Wākingu pua: Hataraitemo hataraitemo yutaka ni naranai*), the tailor’s fate was carried to all parts of the country. Although bearing some of the hallmarks of sentimental journalism and coming close to being a tearjerker

in places, this award-winning documentary clearly shows what is currently happening on the bottom rung of society — something that has hardly entered into political debate.

No well-deserved retirement

The example of Mr. Suzuki has shown that more and more people continue to work after reaching retirement age not by choice but out of sheer necessity. The reason is gaps in the social security system. This is the oft-forgotten and even ignored dark side of the comparatively high labour participation of elderly people in Japan (19.8 per cent of the over 64-year-olds in 2004). The NHK documentary has helped many Japanese realize that quite a few working seniors are struggling for survival.

The book to the NHK Special program “Working Poor”: Shuzai-han (ed.) (2007): *Wākingu pua: Nihon o mushibamu yamai* (Working Poor: The sickness undermining Japan). Tokyo: Popura-sha, 1,260 yen (ISBN 9784591098271).

Dr. Volker Elis is head of the DIJ Business and Economics section. Projects: “Demographic change in Japan and its regional implications”; “Employment of the elderly”.

In a new form

After 10 years, the DIJ newsletter has a new face. The recent blooming of electronic media has also had a strong influence on the function of printed newsletters.

We offer information on:

- current research at the DIJ,
- Japan in the context of our research,
- events and
- recent publications.

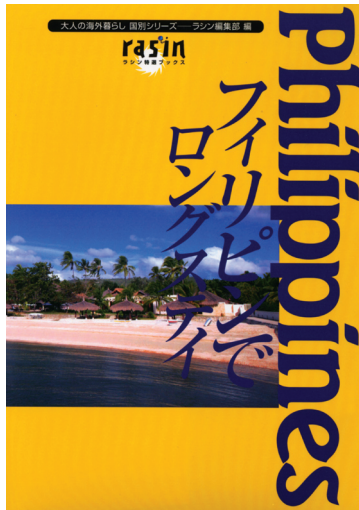
We thus hope to provide an easy entry point for anyone interested in present-day Japan.

For additional information, please visit our homepage at:

www.dijtokyo.org

◀ The documentary won the Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association Award (awarded by the Nihon Shinbun Kyōkai) in 2007.

Sunbathing on the beach: Japanese seniors in the Philippines



► Book cover. Founded in 1992, the Long Stay Foundation provides information in Japanese on countries targeted for long stays.

Nursing homes, elderly communities, assisted living in a pleasing environment, and a service that is almost unaffordable in Japan: For a growing number of Japan's elderly, spending their remaining years outside their home country has become an option. The Philippines is a favoured destination.

They have names like "Utopia Homes", "The Elysium", "Tropical Paradise Village" or "Rose Princess Home": gated communities or large housing estates – some exclusively for Japanese – that offer full care and medical services when needed. Apartments and houses are available in a wide price range. These communities often resemble holiday resorts with golf courses and all other leisure-time facilities one could imagine. Along with Thailand and Malaysia, the Philippines are the most attractive destination for Japanese seniors in Asia.

25 per cent of the Japanese 65-plus generation can imagine living overseas for some time.

Surveys reveal that 2 per cent of persons aged over 65 are planning to live in a foreign country for an extended period of time. Another 25 per cent do not have any concrete plans yet, but could imagine doing so. The advertising agency Dentsu has predicted the demand for living space outside Japan to grow further.

New market opportunities

It is therefore little wonder that a number of companies have discovered the 'retirement market', hoping to benefit from the ageing of Japan's society. Tropical Paradise Village, a Philippine subsidiary of a Japanese company, even pursues a double strategy: they send nursing staff, trained in the Philippines, to Japan where a shortage of qualified personnel has recently made itself felt. A bilateral agreement was reached between Japan and the Philippines in September 2006 and is likely to come into effect soon. It facilitates Philippine nurses and nursing staff for elderly care to work in Japan.

How many Japanese retirees do actually live in the Philippines is difficult to ascertain, because many of them formally keep their residence in Japan. The Japanese Long Stay Foundation however estimates that about 1,100 persons were holding a Philippine Special Resident Retiree's Visa (SRRV) in 2005.

The topic of elderly migration to other countries had already been discussed in the mid-1980s, when MITI issued the so-called "Silver Columbia Plan", a programme that was to support Japanese elderly set up a new life outside Japan. Lower cost of living, compared to Japan, were one of the main motives for this initiative. The plan, however, had to be dropped soon after. Critics – mainly from outside Japan – had started to accuse Japan of trying to export their aged.

Targeting elderly Japanese

Today the situation is different: the Philippine President, Gloria Arroyo, approved the building of care facilities for Japanese seniors in 2003. And the Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA), founded as early as 1985 by the Philippine government with the purpose of coordinating activities to attract foreign retirees, has meanwhile set the standards together with the NPO Philippine Retirement Incorporated (PRI) for housing estates and care facilities.

Four million new jobs

The procedure of obtaining a Special Resident Retiree's Visa has repeatedly been made easier. The ambitious aim is to attract and settle one million retirees in the Philippines by 2015. For the Philippine economy, foreign retirees are a factor that can hardly be underestimated. The PRI projects that each foreign retiree will generate four new jobs, and if taken at face value, this would provide employment to four million people.

The book by the Long Stay Foundation: Rashin Henshūbu (ed.): *Firipin de rongu sutei* [Long time stay in the Philippines]. Tokyo: Ikarosu Shuppan, 188 pages, 1,570 yen (ISBN 978-4-871-49714-5).

www.philippineretirement.org/

www.pra.gov.ph/

www.longstay.or.jp/

Dr. Maren Godzik, research fellow at the DIJ, is examining the housing and living arrangements in Japan's ageing society from a sociological perspective.

Fewer Japanese, more immigrants

“Let’s be positive!” This is the motto of Marutei Tsurunen, a Finn by birth and Japanese citizen since 1979. Since 2002 he has been a member of the House of Councillors for the leading opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).

Tsurunen is the first and so far only immigrant to become a member of parliament in Japan. His policy focus is sustainable agriculture and foreigners’ rights in Japan. For the opposition’s shadow cabinet he acts as Vice Environment Minister.

Tsurunen delivered the keynote speech for the symposium “Migration and Integration—Japan in a Comparative Perspective” on October 23, 2007. The two-day international symposium was co-organized by DIJ and GSAPS (Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies,

Waseda University, Tokyo) and brought together experts from Japan, Europe and the US to discuss possible future scenarios of Japan’s migration policy. From a comparative perspective it became clear that migration flows need to go hand in hand with integration efforts. It is only then that a new and positive structure of society can be formed. This thought matches Tsurunen’s main vision for a changing Japan.

The DIJ Newsletter will keep you informed on the publication project that is to follow this symposium.



► A Finnish-born Japanese in politics: Marutei Tsurunen's campaign poster.

Day care reforms

January 31 was the deadline for parents seeking to place their children in public day care facilities (*hoikuen*). Day care centres are organized to mirror the Japanese school system and start on April 1. Yet many children cannot find care – 19,794 children in 2006 remained on waiting lists of public day care centres. A new reform law is to improve this situation by 2009.

Increased need for day care centres

The declining fertility rate in Japan is reflected in the declining demand for kindergartens (*yōchien*), which provide part-time care for children aged 3 to 6. Since as early as 1975, enrolment figures have steadily dropped. At the same time, however, the number of children in day care centres, which offer full-time care for infants from around 2 months of age to children aged 6, has been growing. But while public day care centres are open until 8 p.m. at the latest, private facilities are often open until as late as 10 p.m.

One reason for the growing demand for *hoikuen* is the increasing number of two-income families. Another reason is the increasing divorce rate, and accordingly the growing number of

single parents having to work full time. It is these changes that have led to new demands on childcare facilities.

Reform programme

As a reaction to these developments, the government is now launching far-reaching reforms of the day care centre system, to be implemented by 2009. The reform programme first and foremost aims to abolish waiting lists for public day care. There are also to be more day care centres that offer special care for sick children, as well as care on Sundays and holidays. In 2005, only 681 day care centres nationwide offered such services, a number that is to rise to 2,200 by 2009. Finally, numerous kindergartens are being converted into *kodomo-en*, a mix of *yōchien* and *hoikuen*.

The first kindergartens were converted into *kodomo-en* in October 2006, and less than a year later – by August 2007 – the number had already risen to 105 nationwide. Clearly, this new concept has been highly successful. Despite this, there are no plans to further extend the opening hours of day care centres.

Kodomo-en – a new form of childcare

Dr. Barbara Holthus, sociologist at the DIJ, organizes the international symposium “Fertility and Social Stratification – A German-Japanese Comparison” (Tokyo, November 6 and 7, 2008) together with Dr. Axel Klein. She also heads the DIJ project on “Childcare and Fertility”.

Events

Socio-political and Business Aspects of Care in an Era of Demographic Change

– Workshop –
(Tohoku Fukushi University, Sendai; III/7/2008).
Co-organized by DIJ, Finpro, Sendai-Finland Wellbeing Center, and Tohoku Fukushi University.

Workshop on the 'Silver Market'

(DIHKJ, Tokyo; VI/13/2008).
Co-organizers: DIJ and JapanMarkt.

Recent publications

Ralph Lützel:

Ungleichheit in der global city Tōkyō. Aktuelle sozialräumliche Entwicklungen im Spannungsfeld von Globalisierung und lokalen Sonderbedingungen. [Inequality in the global city Tōkyō. New socio-spatial developments under the influences of globalization and local conditions]. Munich: Iudicium, 2008.

Peter Backhaus (ed.):

Japanstudien 19. Familienangelegenheiten [Family affairs]. Munich: Iudicium, 2007.

Florian Kohlbacher:

International Marketing in the Network Economy: A Knowledge-based Approach. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

This page keeps you informed on recent publications and current Japanese trends. For suggestions and enquiries, please contact:

claus.harmer@dijtokyo.org



Visit us on the Internet at:

www.dijtokyo.org

Data at a glance

Death surplus in Japan

Following a one-year interruption, Japan in 2007 recorded more deaths than births for the second time. Compared to Germany, which has shown constant death surpluses since 1972, the extent in Japan is still moderate. According to projections, however, the death rate will exceed the birth rate by 5.3 per thousand in 2020.

Sources: Kōsei Rōdōshō (I/7/2008) and the Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland.



Book review

Chizuko UENO (2007): *O-hitorisama no rōgo* [Singles in their waning years]. Tokyo: Hōken, 263 pages, 1,400 yen (ISBN 978-4-87954-680-7).

Everybody is alone in the end

Man or woman, married or not, everybody is alone at the end of their life. This fact is spreading among the people of Japan, a country with one of the world's most rapidly ageing populations. And this seems to be particularly true of Japanese women, who have the longest life expectancy in the world.

"Don't be afraid of loneliness in your last years" is the message of Chizuko Ueno, a sociologist well known for her gender studies. A single herself, she provides mental support and gives advice on how to arrange the waning years of one's life, advice ranging from residential choices to social life, finances and care to dying itself, as well as what should be done afterwards.

Catchword

おひとりさま (*o-hitorisama*)

'O-hitorisama' was originally used as a finely nuanced expression for a guest, male or female, who turned up without company in a restaurant or hotel. In 2001, however, the journalist Kumiko Iwashita published a book titled *O-hitorisama* in which she applied this expression to women who are working, financially independent and mostly single. She characterized these women by their self-confident lifestyle, which includes spending money for travelling alone or eating in a restaurant by themselves. Iwashita positively emphasized female independence as a means of being recognized as an individual.

The opposite of this term is the recently popular word *makeinu* (meaning: a loser), which refers to unmarried women over the age of thirty. Meanwhile, 'o-hitorisama' has become an ironic expression for a self-reliant generation of women, as the title of Chizuko Ueno's book *O-hitorisama no rōgo* (2007) shows.

Picture credits:

Page 1: {manga} by courtesy of K.K. DeAgostini Japan, *Shūkan sōnan da!* No. 39, 2007, p. 16, and the artist Riki Matsuoka. Page 2: {book cover} Rashin Henshūbu (ed.): *Firipin de rongu sutei*. Tokyo: Ikarosu Shuppan (ISBN 978-4-871-49714-5). Page 3: {campaign poster} by courtesy of Marutei Tsurunen. Page 4: {statistic} Ralph Lützel, data by Kōsei Rōdōshō and the Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland.

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