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The transient experience of living in cities: focusing on the instability of
Japanese-Filipinos in Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan

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Abstract

This paper sheds light on the domestic movement of Japanese-Filipinos after migrating to Japan, focusing in particular on Japanese-Filipinos living in Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture. This study examines the movement of Japanese-Filipinos by taking the perspective that their current place of residence is *one part of a process of internal migration*.

The Filipino population has fluctuated significantly since 2017, indicating that residents are coming and going rapidly, a phenomenon closely related to changes in the Japanese-Filipino population. Most Japanese-Filipinos have moved in as a result of internal migration related to employment opportunities, mediated by a particular temporary employment agency which provides jobs to them working in factories, in addition to giving a large amount of support in both work and housing. As such, the relationship between Japanese-Filipinos and the agency is one of dependency. At the same time, however, the forced renewal of their working contracts every few months makes it difficult for them to have a long-term outlook, causing serious problems for families with children of school age.

The migratory trends of Japanese-Filipinos seen in Toyooka City suggest that they are likely to stay as long as their employment contract lasts. At the same time, however, when their employment contract ends, they are compelled to move to another city or region because the choice of recruitment agencies for foreigners is limited. Previous experiences of domestic migration highlight the possibility of future replacement. These characteristics suggest that Japanese-Filipinos have chosen to settle in Japan under conditions of instability, repeatedly moving around the country. At the root of this instability and mobility might be the kind of environment in which Japanese-Filipinos are able to make a living on their own. The movement patterns of Japanese-Filipinos, not settling in one city but moving from place to place, show that it is important to follow their migration as a “line”, that is, as an ongoing linear sequence of movements, in order to help clarify the way of life of Japanese-Filipinos in Japan.

Keywords

Japanese-Filipino, internal migration, transient living experience, instability

1. Research focus

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the domestic movement of Japanese-Filipinos after migrating to Japan, focusing in particular on Japanese-Filipinos living in Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture, marked by their tendency to live in households composed solely of Filipinos. Specifically, I will examine whether they choose to settle in one city, making it a base for their lives, or make domestic migration decisions after migrating to Japan.

In this paper, I use the term “Japanese-Filipinos” to refer to the children, grandchildren, and other descendants of Japanese immigrants who migrated to the Philippines before the end of the Asia Pacific War in 1945. They mainly hold the visa status of long-term resident, permanent resident, or spouse or children of Japanese nationals. Those with long-term resident status have the right to bring their spouses, in addition to their children as long as they are minors and unmarried, to Japan.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews previous studies on Japanese-Filipinos and outlines the analytical perspective of the paper; Section 3 gives a general picture of the Filipino population in Toyooka City and an overview of the survey upon which this paper is based; Section 4, the central section of the paper, draws on the findings of the survey to shed light on the lives of Japanese-Filipinos in Toyooka City; and the conclusion and findings are outlined in Section 5.

2. Literature review of studies on Japanese Filipinos

Before the end of the Asia Pacific War, a number of Japanese nationals migrated to the Philippines, with a number of these migrants marrying Filipinos and having children with them. These children are Japanese-Filipinos of Japanese descent who were born and raised in the Philippines. In his book *Hapon: Filipin Nikkeijin no nagai sengo*, based on interviews with such Japanese-Filipinos living in the Philippines, Shun Ohno describes the Japanese settlement of the Philippines, their wealth building, and the nature of their involvement in the Asia Pacific War (Ohno 1991). He also describes in detail the plight of Japanese-Filipinos in the post-war period. Ohno later conducted a study on Japanese-Filipinos’ identity and citizenship, covering the period from 1903, the time

when Japanese settlement began, to 2013 (Ohno 2015). In this he paints a vivid picture of the situation by using interviews, historical documents, and newspaper articles. Ohno's study conveys the prejudice towards Japanese-Filipinos during the pre-war and post-war period, and their status in Philippine society. He also reveals the process by which Nikkei associations are organized and the ways in which they are linked with Japan. Ohno not only provides detailed historical data, but also vividly depicts the present state of Japanese-Filipinos who have been working and living in Japan since around 2000.

Studies of Japanese-Filipino life in Japan also include Mariko Iijima and Shun Ohno's (2010) nationwide quantitative survey of Japanese-Filipinos, conducted through temporary employment agencies. Their study explores the working and living conditions of Japanese-Filipinos living in various parts of Japan, as well as dealing with issues of citizenship and identity. Iijima and Ohno found that the length which Japanese-Filipinos stay in Japan has been increasing. Furthermore, they revealed that the second generation of Japanese-Filipinos, who have residency status through a spouse or as a child of a Japanese national, have decided to obtain Japanese citizenship in order to "move up the ladder". As a result, although adult fourth-generation Japanese-Filipinos are not eligible for long-term resident status, they can come to Japan as legal third-generation Japanese Filipinos as a result of this "moving up the ladder". Thus, Iijima and Ohno's study shows the way in which employment opportunities in Japan are extended to the next generation of Japanese-Filipinos.

Sachi Takahata has published a number of articles on Japanese-Filipinos living in the Tokai region, particularly in regional cities such as Hamamatsu and Yaizu in Shizuoka Prefecture. I will review these articles here and compare with the situation in

my research site of Toyooka. Through this, I will show that Japanese-Filipinos have chosen to establish livelihoods in Japan through repeated internal migration.

The Tokai region, Takahata's main research area, has a thriving manufacturing sector, particularly in the automotive industry. The region faced a labor shortage that had begun around 1980, which, amendments to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act of 1990, led to a large number of descendants of Japanese nationals from South America migrating to Tokai for work, a group referred to as “Dekasegi” (Kajita et al. 2005). The influx of Japanese-Brazilians continued until around 2008 when the effects of the global economic crisis spread to Japan. Japanese-Brazilians were usually employed through temporary employment agencies, and they mainly worked in the manufacturing sector as indirect employees. In this type of employment, the client company can decide whether or not to renew the contract, meaning that whether or not the employee can continue to work heavily depends on the client company. The global economic downturn negatively affected this type of employment, with the majority of Brazilians of Japanese descent losing their jobs in Japan due to the non-renewal of contracts with client companies, the so-called “dispatch cut”. Many Japanese-Brazilians returned to their home country Brazil, either because they had given up on living in Japan without work or because they could no longer make a living in Japan.

Although the demand for labor in the automotive industry has recovered in the years since 2013, few Brazilians who had previously worked in the industry have chosen to return to Japan (Takahata 2016). Instead, Filipinos have turned out to fill the vacant “foreign quota” labor demand (Takahata 2016: 194).

In Yaizu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, certain temporary employment agencies employ large numbers of Japanese-Filipinos. Looking into this, Takahata conducted

interviews with one of the agencies in order to better understand the situation of Filipinos living in Yaizu City. The results revealed that 80% of Filipinos living in the city had previous or current employment relationships with the company (Takahata 2019b: 53).

By using recruitment agencies catering to them, Filipinos can find employment as soon as they arrive in Japan. These agencies select simple jobs that do not require a high level of Japanese language, making it possible for those with limited Japanese ability to work. Filipinos often rely on a travel expense loan system from recruitment agencies, in which the agency financially supports the travel expenses from the Philippines to Japan, which Filipinos subsequently repay over a period of about three years after arrival (Takahata 2019b:55). In addition to providing loans for travel expenses, these agencies also provide housing and take care of living arrangements (Takahata 2019a). Several agencies employ foreigners in Shizuoka Prefecture because this region has accumulated experience in employing Japanese-Brazilians as “foreign quota” workers (Takahata 2020: 65).

Takahata also describes the way in which Japanese-Filipinos migrate in a chain of kinship groups. As such, there are sometimes cases of single kinship groups comprising 40 to 50 people in the cities of Hamamatsu and Yaizu in Shizuoka Prefecture (Takahata 2016: 197, 2019b: 55). Takahata reports that a few kinship groups have large families spanning several generations, making mutual support possible (Takahata 2018:158-160). In such an environment, Japanese-Filipinos can live with little or no contact with Japanese nationals. Takahata describes a situation in which the individual is enclosed by the kinship group, which itself is enclosed by the temporary employment agency, meaning that they live in a “double shell” within Japanese society (Takahata 2018:159). Moreover, some of those who have paid back their loans choose to continue living in Yaizu City (Takahata

2018:156). Thus, we can say that Japanese-Filipinos are turning to settle in Yaizu City due to its familiarity, and the ability to live close to their relatives.

For descriptive purposes, this paper refers to the situation of Japanese-Filipinos in Yaizu City as “the Shizuoka Model”, identifying its characteristics as follows:

- Employment with a temporary agency
- Formation of kinship groups which provide mutual support
- Life within a “double shell” by a group of Filipino relatives and a temporary agency.
- Occasional shift to longer-term settlement

This rest of the paper will examine the mobility of Japanese-Filipinos, focusing on those who live in Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture as a case study, and comparing it with the case of Shizuoka Prefecture. Previous studies have focused on the lives of Japanese-Filipinos in Japan through fixed-point observations in single cities in order to examine changes over time. This study, on the other hand, observes Japanese-Filipinos from the perspective that their current place of residence is *one part of a process of internal migration*. In other words, by taking the migration of Japanese-Filipinos to be a “line”, that is, a continual linear process, this paper will attempt to elucidate the ways in which Japanese society is perceived by Japanese-Filipinos.

3. Statistical data and survey overview

3-1. Statistical data on Filipinos in Toyooka City

In this section I will look at Filipinos residing in Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture. Toyooka City is located in the northern part of Hyogo Prefecture, bordering the Sea of Japan to the north and Kyoto Prefecture to the east. Toyooka City has a population of approximately 80,000, of which 845 are foreign residents, representing 1.04% of the population ⁽¹⁾. Filipinos (137) are the third-largest foreign group after Vietnamese (184) and Chinese (175) in the city (as of March 2019).

The distribution of Filipinos by sex is 1: 3 (male: female), making the majority of Filipinos overwhelmingly female. Whereas there is no significant difference between the male and female population up to their 20s, the female population is overwhelmingly larger in their 30s and above. Women in their 30s and 40s make up the majority of the Filipino population in Toyooka City.

In terms of the residence status of Filipino residents, the most common is permanent residence (44.5%), followed by long-term residence (27.7%) and spouse of Japanese national (16.1%). Very few hold visas for Technical Intern Training, or Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services visas.

The Filipino population has changed markedly in recent years. Although the population of Filipinos hovered around 80 from 2006 to 2016, their population doubled from 80 to 160 in 2017. The following year the number dropped to around 120, but the population recovered to around 160 again in 2019. These changes show that the Filipino population has fluctuated significantly since 2017, indicating that residents are coming and going rapidly. These fluctuations are closely related to the Japanese-Filipino population, the main focus of this paper.

3-2. Survey outline

The survey data used in this paper is based on a survey conducted as part of the Toyooka City-Kobe University joint research project “Gaikokujin jumin ni kan suru chosa kenkyu [Survey Research on Foreign Residents]” in 2019, and an additional survey conducted in 2020. As part of these studies, we conducted two types of questionnaire surveys using an Individual Questionnaire for Foreign Residents (hereafter referred to as the Individual Questionnaire) and the Establishment Questionnaire ⁽²⁾, as well as interviews with foreign residents and interviews with establishments that employ foreign residents. This paper mainly uses the results from the Individual Questionnaire and data from the interviews with foreign residents.

In total, 702 Individual Questionnaires were sent to foreign residents (aged 18 years or older as of 10th June 2019), with 272 valid responses, for a response rate of 38.7% ⁽³⁾. The questionnaire was available in English, Chinese (simplified/traditional), Tagalog, Korean, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Thai, and a simplified Japanese version. A copy of the survey in each language and a simplified Japanese version were sent to the respondents. Looking only at responses from Filipino residents, the number of questionnaires sent out was 133, with 46 valid responses, a response rate of 34.6%. The responses to the questionnaire were categorized into Japanese-Filipino (19), international marriage (23), and other ⁽⁴⁾ for analysis ⁽⁴⁾.

I supplemented the questionnaire survey with one to two-hour semi-structured interviews with 18 Filipino residents, conducted in September and December 2019 and January, February, and December 2020. The interviews took place at Toyooka City Hall, Japanese language classes, homes of the interviewees, and at commercial facilities. The interviewees were those who responded to the Individual Questionnaire and those who were introduced through a Japanese language class. The 18 respondents were categorized

as Japanese-Filipino (8), international marriage (7), or other (3) based on the content of the interviews.

4. Japanese Filipinos in Toyooka City

4-1 Characteristics of Japanese-Filipinos

In Toyooka City, Japanese-Filipinos represent a new trend among the city's Filipino population because of their recent migration into the area. Japanese-Filipinos usually hold status-based (as opposed to skill-based) residence status, such as long-term resident status, spouse of a Japanese national, with some also holding permanent residence. They often bring their families to live with them in Toyooka City because these visas make it relatively easy for them to do so. The following is a summary of their lives based on the Individual Questionnaire and interviews.

According to the Toyooka City Basic Resident Ledger, the Japanese-Filipino population has an almost equal number of males and females. Furthermore, the population is not skewed towards any particular age group but rather spread evenly across all age groups, from preschoolers to those in their 50s (5). This trend is also confirmed by the results of the Individual Questionnaire. The proportion of males and females is 63.2% (12) and 36.8% (7), and the number of people in each age group is around 5, indicating that there is no significant gender bias.

By looking at the length of residence of Japanese-Filipinos in Toyooka City we can identify specific characteristics in comparison with internationally married Filipinos. All the Japanese-Filipinos surveyed as part of the Individual Questionnaire (19) have lived in the city for less than three years. This shows a strikingly short duration of

residence compared with internationally married Filipinos, of whom none had lived in the city for less than three years, and only 8.7% (2) had lived there for three to five years. In contrast, 69.6% (16) of the internationally married Filipinos had lived in the city for more than 10 years. We can therefore say that Japanese-Filipinos are a new generation of Filipino residents, who have recently moved to Toyooka City.

The research data also reveals other features of the mobility of Japanese Filipinos. In the Individual Questionnaire, 17 respondents, excluding two who did not answer, indicated that they had lived in other cities, meaning that they have experience of living outside of Toyooka City. This result suggests that Japanese-Filipinos do not immigrate directly from the Philippines to Toyooka City but tend to come from other parts of Japan.

4-2 The process of moving and daily life in Toyooka City

This section further explores the movement of Japanese-Filipinos to Toyooka City in recent years. Firstly, I will examine the domestic migration process using data from my interviews; and secondly, I will touch on Japanese-Filipino daily life in the city, including employment, housing, and household members.

Alvin (pseudonym), a man in his 50s, lives with his wife and children in Toyooka City, moving there after living in several cities in Japan. His Japanese grandfather and Filipino grandmother make him a third generation Japanese-Filipino, and he is currently married to a Filipino woman. He also holds long-term resident status. Alvin first came to Japan in 2013 and lived in Saitama and Kanagawa prefectures for about a year, before returning to the Philippines and living there for a few years. In 2017, he decided to come to Japan once again, this time accompanied by his wife and eldest

son, in contrast to his first stay which had been alone. Initially, his family lived in Hiroshima prefecture, but after suffering a back injury due to the heavy workload at the factory Alvin and his family decided to get another job. They used websites for Filipinos looking for work in Japan, and one of the jobs they found was in Toyooka City. In the following section from his interview, he describes how he got the opportunity to move there.

I spoke to a Filipino coordinator (on the phone). He told me that he was about to start a new job, and he mentioned some other Filipino colleagues. I thought he was trustworthy, so I decided to go to Toyooka. ...*(I)...never met him face to face, and I never saw the factory. It was only when I arrived that I saw it.*

(Supplementary explanation by the author in parentheses.) ⁽⁶⁾

Alvin and his family lived in Hiroshima prefecture for only a few months before moving to Toyooka City in 2017. After searching for a job that met their requirements among the options available on internet job sites, they moved to the city.

In addition to Alvin's case, other informants also spoke of having moved to Toyooka City because of the job opportunities. Benjamin, (pseudonym, male, in his 30s), who has been in Japan for four years, was working in an automobile-related factory in Aichi Prefecture when he found a job from the same recruitment agency through which Alvin was employed in Toyooka City. Benjamin describes the situation at the time he moved to Toyooka City.

When I started working at the company a few years ago, there were only a few Filipinos. Suddenly, the number of Filipinos increased (original in Tagalog, translated by author) (7).

His narrative corresponds to the rapid increase in the number of Filipinos in Toyooka City, as well as the stories of other interviewees. Chris (pseudonym, male, in his 50s), for example, has been living in Japan for 16 years, residing previously in Yamaguchi and Shimane prefectures, and like Alvin and Benjamin moved to Toyooka because of a job offer.

Alvin, Benjamin, and Chris are all Japanese-Filipino and have repeatedly changed jobs using recruitment agencies. Furthermore, when they heard the news that there were more job opportunities from the agency where they worked, they proactively shared this information with their relatives, encouraging them to move to Toyooka City. Such information exchange is mainly targeted at relatives who are already working in Japan. As a result, a chain of internal migration occurs, seen in the fact that Alvin's uncle, Benjamin's nephew, and Chris's five brothers and sisters have chosen to move to the city. They are all employed by the same recruitment agency. The above narratives show that Japanese-Filipinos living in Toyooka City tend to migrate to the city from other cities in Japan.

I shall now examine how Japanese-Filipinos live and work in Toyooka City. In response to the question of employment status in the Individual Questionnaire, 84.2% (16) of the respondents indicated that they were currently employed. As for the type of work, 89.4% (17) of the respondents chose factory work. As for the type of employment contract, all the respondents (16), with the exception of one who did not answer, stated

that they were contract workers. Despite the limited sample size of the Individual Questionnaire, it was still found that there was a significant bias in terms of employment for Japanese-Filipinos.

Of the eight people interviewed, six were currently employed and described themselves as contract workers at a factory. Furthermore, all of them were employed by the same recruitment agency. They work in rotating shifts of two or three, depending on the factory's operation, and need to renew their employment contracts every few months, often at periods of two to three months.

In terms of housing, Japanese-Filipinos mainly live in accommodation rented to them by the recruitment agencies, with part of their salaries deducted as rent. There are bus stops to take them to their workplaces near their residences since they often do not have a driving license, meaning that their daily transport is usually either by bicycle or on foot. This suggests that their range of activities is limited.

In terms of household members, Japanese-Filipinos tend to have households composed solely of Filipinos. The makeup of these families can be broken down into single, married couples only, and nuclear families, though no extended families spanning several generations can be observed. As mentioned earlier, due to the chain of internal migration, some Japanese-Filipinos have relatives in Toyooka City or the surrounding municipalities. Furthermore, a large number of them have relatives living in other cities in Japan not in the vicinity.

To summarize, in Toyooka City, most Japanese-Filipinos have moved in as a result of internal migration related to employment opportunities. One particular temporary employment agency provides jobs to Japanese-Filipinos working in factories, though as part of a system by which they are indirect employees of their place of work.

Furthermore, they live in housing rented by the agency, meaning that living in Toyooka City entails a strong connection to their recruitment agency.

4-3 Challenges for Japanese-Filipinos

Due to their employment contracts, the ability for Japanese- Filipinos to continue living in Toyooka City depends on whether their employment contracts are renewed, making it difficult to envisage a long-term future for their lives. This issue is particularly acute for families with children of school age. Parents want their children to graduate from school in the city which their children are familiar with, and where they have friends, something also desired by the children themselves. However, it is uncertain exactly how long they will be able to continue living in the city. The following narrative of Alvin and his wife shows their deep concern regarding this issue.

Alvin's wife: We want to stay here for our son (a junior high school student). We want him to continue his studies here. But I really don't know what will happen. We have to renew our contract every two months and renew...

Alvin: We have no choice. If we lose our jobs. I don't know what will happen. It depends on whether we have a job or not.

(Supplementary explanation by the author in parentheses) (8)

Behind this statement are a number of experiences which explain their concern. Previously the family had been forced to move to another prefecture when they could not

renew their employment contracts in Toyooka City. Although Alvin had tried to find another job in or near the city, he was unsuccessful. He used a recruitment website for Filipinos to search for a job, as he had done when he moved to the city. As a result, he successfully found a job in another prefecture, so his family decided to move from Toyooka City. A few months after moving to another prefecture, the recruitment agency where Alvin had been employed in Toyooka City sent letters to him offering him jobs at his previous place of work. He decided to move back to the city because he was satisfied with the educational support system his child had benefited from in Toyooka City. This experience of having to move due to employment has occurred frequently for Alvin and his family, and each time their child has to change schools, a great burden for him. For this reason, he would like to continue living in the city at least until his son graduates from junior high school. Whether or not this can be achieved, however, depends on the availability of an employment contract. Furthermore, given that many Japanese-Filipinos live in housing provided by the agency, they are presumably forced to relocate if their contracts are terminated. As such, they are living with the possibility of losing both their jobs and their homes at once.

One of the challenges Japanese-Filipinos face is their low level of Japanese language proficiency. Their jobs do not require a high level of Japanese, meaning that while they are able to work, they are likely to face challenges in their daily lives. While they can understand greetings, they find it difficult to communicate in Japanese. In the Individual Questionnaire, 70% (13) of Japanese-Filipinos answered that they could not speak Japanese. Only 10% (2) answered that their Japanese language skills were “about the same as a native Japanese speaker” or “sufficient for daily conversation”. This situation was also observed when I conducted the interviews. When I interviewed

Japanese-Filipinos, I had to do so with a Filipino interpreter or in English. The difference in Japanese proficiency when compared with intermarried Filipinos is obvious, where in all interviews (7) subjects responded in fluent Japanese. The reason for the lack of progress in the acquisition of Japanese language skills among the Japanese-Filipinos is thought to be related to their short length of residence, and the fact that they are not able to devote enough time to learning Japanese due to their work shifts.

What emerges from examining the challenges Japanese Filipinos face is an instability caused by need to renew their employment contract every few months. This makes it difficult for them to make long-term plans for their lives.

4-4. Discussion

A large number of Japanese-Filipinos have moved to Toyooka City since 2017. As a result of their rapid increase, two groups dominate the population distribution of Filipinos in the city: the previous majority international married population; and the newly arrived Japanese-Filipinos. While the number of Japanese-Filipinos has changed significantly, the nature of their living conditions has remained unclear. Therefore, this study has contributed to an understanding of the lives of Japanese-Filipinos.

Many of the Japanese-Filipinos who have moved to Toyooka in recent years have come from other cities in Japan. One of the main reasons for moving is for job opportunities, with one particular recruitment agency employing most Japanese-Filipinos in the city, who take up work factories as indirect employees. A chain of internal migration can be seen among Japanese-Filipinos, as those who move to Toyooka City inform their relatives and family members living in Japan about the job opportunities and

encourage them to move to the city. This has been made possible because the agency advertises a large number of job openings over a fixed period. Some Japanese-Filipinos also choose to bring their spouses and children from the Philippines after moving to the city. As such, the Japanese-Filipino population in Toyooka City has grown rapidly.

Japanese-Filipinos receive a large amount of support from the recruitment agency in both work and housing. This relationship between Japanese-Filipinos and the agency is one of dependency, as they heavily rely on the agency in order to continue to live in Toyooka City. The agency rents out housing in several locations in the city, where there are small concentrations of Filipinos. Japanese-Filipinos are mainly surrounded by Filipinos in their daily lives because they live close to each other in these areas. Moreover, their daily activity usually revolves around going back and forth between their place of work and their home. The lack of requirement for a high level of Japanese language in their jobs makes it possible for them to make a living in Toyooka City, even without a strong Japanese language ability.

On the other hand, however, the forced renewal of their working contracts every few months makes it difficult for them to have a long-term outlook. This is a serious problem for families with children of school age. Furthermore, when attempting to change jobs, they have limited choices to choose from, likely searching for jobs advertised through recruitment agencies on job sites for Filipinos. There are most likely no other temporary recruitment agencies near Toyooka City except the one which employs most Japanese-Filipinos.

These findings suggest that Japanese-Filipinos have multiple hurdles to overcome when choosing to settle down in Toyooka, related to housing, work, and

communication in Japanese. It is necessary to keep following their future decisions to see whether they will choose to continue living in Toyooka or relocate to another city.

5. Conclusion

The characteristics of the lives of Japanese-Filipinos revealed in this paper are similar in many ways to those of Japanese-Filipinos in Shizuoka Prefecture, as reported by Takahata. This can be seen in their employment by temporary employment agencies, and their lives within the “shell” of Filipino groups and the agencies. This situation allows them seldom contact with Japanese people. What I have attempted to examine carefully in this paper is whether the “Filipino-only households” formed by Japanese-Filipinos will choose Toyooka City as their permanent home in Japan. Although a chain of internal migration occurs among their relatives, this exists only as a passing on of familiar employment opportunities to relatives. There is little or no evidence of formation of extended families among Japanese-Filipinos in Toyooka City, in contrast to the case of Shizuoka.

The migratory trends of Japanese-Filipinos in the study area suggest that they are likely to stay as long as their employment contract lasts, or as long as jobs are available in Toyooka City. It has been seen that their numbers increase sharply during periods of high job availability. At the same time, however, when their employment contract ends, or they simply cannot find a job, they are compelled to move to another city or region. Previous experiences of domestic migration highlight the possibility of future replacement, with many Japanese-Filipinos having worked in other cities for a few years before moving to Toyooka City. Moreover, in the study area, the choice of recruitment

agencies for foreigners is limited. We can therefore assume that the challenges associated with low Japanese language ability are a major hurdle to finding other work opportunities in the same area, Toyooka City. This situation differs from that of the Tokai region, where several agencies are located in one area (Takahata 2020a, 2020b).

The above characteristics suggest that Japanese-Filipinos have chosen to settle in Japan under conditions of instability, repeatedly moving around the country. At the root of this instability and mobility might be the kind of environment in which Japanese-Filipinos are able to make a living on their own. As has been shown, Japanese-Filipinos interact with Japanese society through a network of recruitment agencies scattered throughout Japan. If they were to have access to more than one agency, they may be able to move freely through the network of these agencies. However, their current situation makes it such that their view of Japanese society comes from a small window, one that is associated with the staffing agencies upon which they are dependent. Within this restricted field of view, in order to continue living in Japan they likely choose a way of life that involves repeatedly moving around the country.

These Japanese-Filipinos do not settle in one city but move from place to place. It is important to follow their migration as a “line”, that is, as an ongoing linear sequence of movements, because it will help clarify the way of life of Japanese Filipinos in Japan. Previous studies have tended to observe single cities and compare data chronologically, but taking such an analytical perspective risks overlooking Japanese-Filipinos, because of their transient existence in specific locales.

Although Japanese-Filipinos seem to be actively choosing to move, the repetition of such choices seems to reflect the reality in which they are in fact being “forced to choose”. The migratory patterns of Japanese-Filipinos vividly illustrate their

integration into Japanese industrial society as an “adjustable workforce” to suit corporate production. If we think of Japanese-Filipinos as living in Japanese society on yachts moving with the wind, where do they weigh anchor? And will their relationship with the companies, the “wind” that blows in particular directions, change? These are questions that need to continue to be explored in further studies.

Note

- (1). Based on Toyooka City’s basic resident register data (as of 12th March 2019).
- (2). In total, 1,642 Establishment Questionnaires were sent to establishments which have bases in Toyooka City, with 327 valid responses, for a response rate of 19.9%. Looking only at responses from establishments which employ foreign residents, the number of was 40. See also Toyooka City-Kobe University joint research project (2019) and Umemura (2021).
- (3). The 21 returned items are excluded from the number sent.
- (4). The classification here is mainly based on status of residence and household members. Those with permanent resident status and whose household members are all Filipinos are classified as Japanese-Filipino. Foreign parents raising children of Japanese nationality who have settled status, but ex-husbands were Japanese, are classified as international marriage.
- (5). Based on Toyooka City’s Basic Resident Register data (as of 12th March 2019).
- (6). Zoom interview, December 2020.
- (7). Interview by author in January 2020, with Tagalog interpreter in attendance.
- (8). Interview at Alvin's home in February 2020 with Alvin and his wife.

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