

“Social Cohesion and Migrants’ Participation in the Host Community”: Report on Fifth International Symposium

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We are pleased to report upon our fifth international symposium, “Social Cohesion and Migrants’ Participation in the Host Community,” jointly organized by research centres from Rikkyo University, Tokyo, and Monash University, Melbourne. This was successfully held on 11th March 2019. The Rikkyo Institute for Global Urban Studies was founded in 2007. It arose within the College of Sociology, Rikkyo University. launched during the college celebration for its fiftieth anniversary. In 2015, this Institute co-organized the first International Symposium with the Centre for Social and Population Research, Monash University. This is the fifth consecutive event of this collaboration between Rikkyo and Monash Universities. However, since the closure of this Centre, the symposium has developed in cooperation with the Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre. And so, in addition to migration studies, “social cohesion” has been a theme of our symposia.

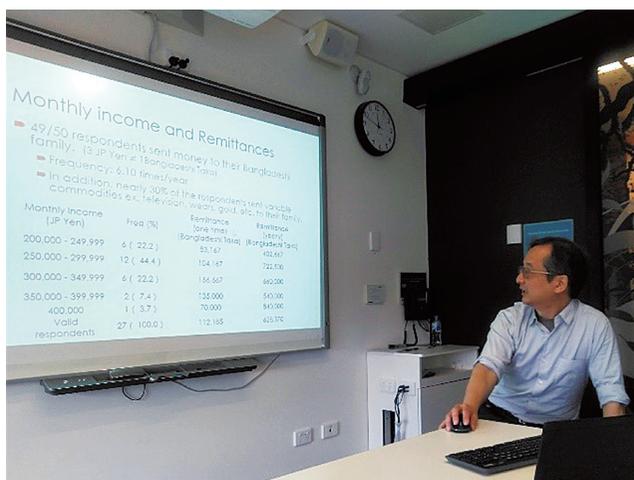
In Australia, issues of international migration, particularly of the intake of immigrants, has been a significant matter of government policy since the federation of the Commonwealth in 1901. And now, since embarking upon the next 21st century, “Social Cohesion” has become a most important topic. Much research of this theme focusing upon immigration has been undertaken in Australia, Canada and various European countries. International organizations, like the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development are vitally concerned with such research. “Social Cohesion” may not have yet become a “front and center” research frame for Japan’s sociology, immigration issues have been receiving public attention more and more. Thus, we from Japan have been very content to work within this symposium.

The opening address was offered by Prof. Dharmalingam Arunachalam from Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre, who also chaired the first session consisting of three paper presentations.

The first paper was titled “Meta-identity and recent migrant settlement patterns in metropolitan Melbourne” by Dr. Ernest Healy, from Monash’s School of Social Sciences.

In his statistical data analysis of Melbourne’s demography, he ascertained that, first, with increasing diversity of religious identification, significant spatial concentrations of religious identification has occurred; Second, at the same time, some areas of metropolitan Melbourne have become much more religiously diverse than other areas; and third, where significant religious spatial concentrations of recently arrived migrants has occurred, internal and ongoing international migrations have often acted to consolidate these concentrations. He indicates that “Meta-ethnicity” may be a more appropriate explanatory concept to help explain migrant settlement patterns in metropolitan Melbourne than the previously taken-for-granted and somewhat narrow conceptions of ethnic identity or religious affiliation.

The second paper presentation was “Returned Migrants’ Lives from Japan to Bangladesh” by Prof. Yoshiaki Edwin Noro from Rikkyo University’s Institute for Global Urban Studies. He discussed the lives of Bangladeshi returnees from Japan. A particular village, Bikrampur (Vikrampur), has spawned many migrant workers to Japan. Bikrampur is “the capital of several Hindu royal families in the 8th and early 13th centuries, and has been in Munshiganj district since 1986.” (Rahman 2010: 288). Thus, Bikrampur is not the name of the administrative division, but is used as a common name around the current municipality of Munshiganj. Since the Graduate School of Sociology at Rikkyo University has introduced a research project course for conducting research into returned migrants in Dhaka and Bikrampur, a few of the staff and postgraduate students had visited this village and parts of the research outcome has already published in Japanese, *Iminseisaku to tabunkakomyunithi eno michinori [Migration Policies and Path to Multicultural Community]* (2018).



Photograph 1 Menzies Building, Monash University, Clayton, Melbourne.

The last paper for the first session was “The Changes in the Pattern of Japanese Migration to Australia.” by Prof. Tetsuo Mizukami, who briefly reviewed historical changes in Japanese migration to Australia: in the late 19th-century, Japanese immigrants in Australia had a unique profile in terms of their occupation such as pearl divers, plantation workers and prostitutes. After the Second World War, war-brides entered Australia as the first post-war immigrants. Since the 1990s, migrants from Japan have been diversifying, and among these can be found marriages of an international character. When we visited the Japanese Saturday school in South Oakleigh, we were presented with more evidence of such international marriages among the students of classes in the earlier academic years.

After a tea break, the second session commenced and was chaired by Prof. Tetsuo Mizukami. All the participants openly discussed prospective collaborative research projects and how these and the findings of past research might be publicized. We promised to continue this discussion in the following year, as we seek to make our efforts more productive.

Prior to this symposium, on 9 March, Professors Mizukami and Noro visited The Melbourne International School of Japanese, which runs classes on Saturdays on the premise of Oakleigh South Primary School. A Japanese school for supplementing Japanese elementary school students originally started on the premises of Malvern Central State School in 1968, which later became the full-time school in 1986. “The Melbourne International School of Japanese was established in 1986 as a supplementary Saturday school. When the previous supplementary school was transferred to a full-time school that



Photograph 2 Oakleigh South Primary School

year, many parents of students wished to have a supplementary school opened because their children had already settled in local schools. At the same time, in order to follow Japanese education or to improve the children's Japanese language, they requested some former school staff to carry on classes for supplementing Japanese education” (Mizukami, 2007: 153). When the school was opened, they conducted Saturday classes on the premises of Brighton Grammar School. Later they moved to Kilvington Grammar School, and then transferred to the current location at Oakleigh South Primary School.

In 2017, the Japanese party visited the International School of Melbourne, which was officially established in Caulfield in 1986 as a full-time school, as previously mentioned. Then, in 2018, Japanese party visited the Japanese Saturday College of Melbourne which runs Saturday classes on the premises of Sandringham East Primary School. This began operations in April 2011. There have been three different major Japanese schools, which reflect the changes of Japanese communities in Australia. It is obvious that the number of international couples has been increasing quite dramatically, and thus the pattern of social cohesion is expected to change in line with this “sojourner” and “settler” communities’ needs for the educational direction of this new generations.

References

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