Growing Diversity in the Heart:

A Case of Tokyo's Inner Suburbia

Tetsuo MIZUKAMI

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with the development of global migration which comes to expression in Japan's urban communities, where in recent times, peoples of diverse background have been interacting with growing intensity. The inner city communities of Tokyo, in particular, have experienced a massive inflow of foreigners since the middle of 1980s and this has brought about the 'living together' perspective that promotes healthy relationships between Japanese and non-Japanese people. Previously, the major streams of newly arrived foreigners were from neighbouring Asian countries, but since the early 1990s, another stream has come to the fore. Those visitors are Japanese descendents in the countries of Southern Central America, including Brazil, Peru and Bolivia[1]. In the conventional Japanese sociological literature, both of these types of arrivals (the Asian and Japanese-South American) are generally designated 'newcomers.' The latter group has tended to cluster around several industrial zones outside Tokyo. But the former has created visible ethnic communities in certain inner cities of Tokyo, such as the Shinjuku or Ikebukuro districts. In this study, by consulting relevant literature, the characteristics of increasing diversity in the heart of the metropolis will be surveyed in the context of these urban migratory movements. The major focus will be upon the Toshima ward, which is the location of Ikebukuro, one of the major transportation terminals[2].

2. POST-WAR URBANISATION WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Before examining the reasons for this increased inner suburban diversity, I will describe Tokyo's post-war urbanisation, since its development has closely related to this ethnically oriented diversity. Immediately after the Second World War, amongst the extensive expanse of Tokyo's burnt-out ruins, several terminal stations were developed in centres of black market activity, and the Ikebukuro area is one of those. During and immediately after the war, Japan's city dwellers dispersed into rural

areas, emptying the cities. In addition, it was the rural areas which embraced so many demobilised and repatriated people[3]. In the mid-1950s, heavy industry advanced under the support of the government's development policy. And since then, youth have been leaving the agrarian villages and towns for the metropolitan areas in order to gain employment in manufacturing and other industries. This has meant an influx of new settlers from Hokkaido to Kyushu who gravitated to the Tokyo metropolitan area, contiguous with the prefectures of Kanagawa, Saitama and Chiba (Okuda, 1993a: 229). This trend ended with the oil crisis of 1973-74. This sustained domestic migration from rural to urban areas meant large-scale changes in Japan's demographic structure and led to uneven regional development. It has brought with it a serious decline in the fishing and agricultural industries. In periods of high economic growth, especially in the 1960s, Japan's rapid industrialisation required massive infrastructure construction, which translated to increasing labour demand similar to other industrialised countries. In the Ikebukuro district, the number of single-person dwellings clustered around the area increased exponentially and at this time it was many flat-type wooden houses which provided accommodation for students and impoverished single workers from the countryside (Ibid.).

Post-war urbanisation was part of economic development and the advancement of industrialisation in many industrialised countries. Large-scale labour forces were demanded, and in the 1950s and 1960s, North American and West European countries experienced massive labour force migration from overseas. These migrants were expected to eventually return home. The economic status of those migrant labourers from foreign lands, who make up sub-populations in the host countries, has been regularly calculated as generally lower than that of the corresponding categories of workers in the host society[4]. And so, many industrially advanced countries have adopted 'quick and easy' solutions to domestic consumption demands by relying upon migrant workers being mobilised as temporary labour. But in these terms, Japan provides a striking contrast with North American and Western European countries in terms of the ethnicity of its inner city urbanisation. In Japan, the domestic mobilisation of labour from the agrarian sector to the metropolis was capable of providing the necessary work force. In other words, Japan's post-war urbanisation supported its own rural-urban population mobilisation.

3. SUBURBANISATION AND INNER-CITY DECAY

Japan experienced urban sprawl slightly later than other industrialised countries. In Japan, there were numbers of shanty dwellers immediately after the war. In response to the stringencies necessitated by the housing shortage as a result of war-time destruction, a post-war baby boom and thus a new growth concentration of the population in metropolitan areas led to the Housing

Corporation being established in 1955. On the outskirts of the metropolitan areas, many densely populated apartment buildings appeared. And Japan's rapid urbanisation gave rise to various social problems throughout the country[5]. Several rural areas encountered serious depopulation problems and old couples, though in relatively small numbers, were left in the outlying regions. From the beginning of the 1960s, the gravitation of population toward Japan's metropolises has resulted in areas of significant congestion and a steep rise in real estate prices. For example, rapid industrialisation resulted in the growth of consolidated real estate management agencies at the same time that inner city areas encountered serious urban decay. In several business areas in Tokyo, the commercialisation of the inner city spaces caused a drop in residential accommodation and the previous 'night-time population' vanished[6].

Japan also experienced an inner-to-outer mobilisation in its urban areas. This mobilisation is understood in spatial terms and the consequences of the significant growth in the distances to be travelled to bridge residential areas and work-places. Hence, the necessary advancement of public transport support the 'spatial' mobilisation. And so, many single dwellers, originally from the rural areas, began to move from inner city areas to suburbs located on the outskirts, particularly when they established their own new households[7]. In several inner suburbs, many schools have been amalgamated in response to the striking decrease in the number of actual inhabitants, while the nature of the consolidated urban management mechanisms have actually grown as a consequence of the increase in the numbers of commuters to the area.

Similar to other developed countries with a rainbow-rich ethnic composition, the inner areas of metropolitan Tokyo embraced many single-family dwellers as members of the work force; these were people who either lived in rented rooms of wooden houses or, later, in developed apartment complexes. As mentioned previously, the domestic population movements *en masse* from rural to urban areas halted with the oil crisis of 1973-74 which was also the threshold of a stable economic growth period. Many industrialised countries experienced the rapid post-war urban development which resulted in significant changes in the structure of the urban landscape; the management agencies consolidated their growth in the city cores, while suburbia expanded on the metropolitan fringes. Japan is one of the most urbanised countries in the world in terms of the proportion of its urban dwellers. Although suburbanisation itself is not a post-war trend, it did develop with remarkable intensity after the Second World War[8]. Many other industrialised countries have also faced a similar tendency: a decline in the residential environment in the inner city areas, while residential space extended the outskirts of the major cities. This tendency has been noted in almost all industrialised countries, in Europe and North America, as inner city predicaments multiply as a result of significant population decline or deterioration of housing stocks from the end of 1960s[9].

Suburban development is in response to the mobilisation of the urban population. This

population shift, which in turn has stimulated suburban development, is itself characterised by centripetal and centrifugal tendencies, movements which need to be understood in terms of each other. The effect of the latter, for example, promoting suburban formation, was so great that it led to depopulation in inner city areas. This problem, related to urban decay, has emerged in many industrialised countries. In fact, the advancement of industrialisation coupled with a high rate of urbanisation, means a change in our understanding of the change in metropolitan structures. Urban systems tended to form in two different directions: the heart of the metropolis which functions as a productive space, while in contrast, the suburban area functions as a consumption space. As a result, in the central city area, it is commuters, who do not stay over-night in the locality, who have become more important for the area's development than the full-time citizens who actually live in the community.

There have been studies of the preferences of people towards suburban life. The ideal of a new type of community life in suburbia was created on the basis of the pursuit of better life in terms of both physical and psychological conditions. In Japan, as similar to the United States of America, the basic ideal of suburbia prevails and there is an expectation of a secure life in the suburban society held together by common values[10]. But in recent years, suburban disorganisation has been highlighted when news media has brought attention to suburban conflict resulting in death. In Japan, the urban form is generally divided into two categories: the inner city area and outer suburbia. In Japan urban development policy sometimes means that the growth of outer zones will extend into adjacent prefectures because transport developments will enable suburbanites to commute from adjacent prefectures to the central metropolitan areas (i.e. Tokyo and Osaka). There are also economic reasons for this, namely the virtual impossibility for ordinary Japanese people to obtain their own houses in the heart of the metropolis.

4. GROWING ETHNIC DIVERSITY

As mentioned in the previous section, some inner-urban communities in Japan have began to confront the prospects of urban decay as they face local labour shortages combined with their ageing population. The eastern Ikebukuro district of Toshima ward is one of the typical examples of urban development in central Tokyo. However, in the late 1980s, Toshima ward experienced the growth in the number of foreign 'newcomers,' mainly from neighbouring Asian countries[11]. The reason for this expansion in foreign residents is said to result from the following favourable conditions of the district: its business development; its advanced shopping facilities; many jobs are offered in service industries; the existence of dilapidated yet low-cost accommodation; the convenience of living anonymously in a central city locality where local residents are not overly

concerned with new dwellers (Okuda and Tajima, 1991)[12]. Contemporary Japanese who hold conventional 'suburban' ideals are not fond of living in these old dilapidated buildings, but the low-price rents do serve to attract the newcomers from overseas.

This area became the popular destination for domestic migration during the period of high economic development, with many single dwellers clustering around. There were various facilities for single households as well as shopping areas with many restaurants and taverns, public baths, coin laundries, and even hockshops. In the period of intense suburbanisation, many single dwellers moved to establish their family households on the outskirts. Since the mid or late 1980s, the domestic labour pipeline from rural to urban areas has been replaced by foreign residents (Ibid.). The influence of the expanding numbers of foreign newcomers has brought about not only changes to the ethnic diversity but it has also brought revitalisation to several inner-city areas, as the number of foreign newcomers covers to some degree the reduction in the numbers of productive Japanese in the equivalent age group.

The presence of a heterogeneous population has meant there are many notice boards devoted to several different language groups. Indeed, the rapid increase in the number of newcomers has promoted public awareness about the existence of the heterogeneous population within Japanese local communities. In the light of the changes in major demographic characteristics, ethnicity issues have become a focal point for sociological studies in Japan. The debates concern ethnic diversity, and were initially concerned with the presence of foreign labourers but have now been extended to consider human settlement and public service, and those elements including migratory movements, residency, lifestyles, child rearing and schooling, medical aid, and social welfare. There is also class and status-group stratification amongst foreign residents of non-Japanese backgrounds which has its own impact upon the diversified pattern 'newcomer integration' into the host community. The theme of 'living together' between different cultural groups is thus indicative of how newly arrived residents from foreign lands are received but also how the host community is being transformed.

Since many foreigners, including over-stayers, have already put down their roots in the host Japanese community, some marry Japanese citizens and form families, though in the initial stage of their settlement in the late 1980s, they were considered to be merely transient migrant workers, who will eventually leave for home. The international marriage rate in Japan, particularly in Tokyo, has rapidly increased. Hence, expanded public services are required to take account of contemporary issues that also arise from promoting cultural diversity in a situation where legally-registered permanent residents and other residents including sojourning foreigners live side by side.

5. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTER OF FOREIGN POPULATION

In terms of the number of arrivals from foreign countries in Japan during 2005, some 7,450,103 foreigners entered or re-entered as shown table 1. Of the total of 7,450,103 entrants, the number of new entrants was 6,120,709. Thus the re-entrants were 1,329,394. The number of new entrants from Korea was the longest (2,008,418), followed by China (1,315,594). Of foreigners entering and re-entering, 68.9 percent were accounted for by the 'arrivals from Asian regions' category.

Table 1   The Number of Documented Foreigners Entering Japan Classified by Region in 2005

Region	Number of persons
Asia	5,134,673
Europe	874,247
Africa	28,782
North America	1,035,301
South America	125,973
Oceania	249,945
Stateless	1,182
Total	7,450,103

Source: Zaidanhojin nyukankyokai [Japan Immigration Association]. 2006. *Heisei 17nen shutsunyukokukanrikankei tokeigaiyo [2005 Statistics on Immigration Control]*. Tokyo: Zaidanhojin nyukankyokai [Japan Immigration Association], p. 8.

Some kinds of foreigners in Japanese communities tend to show distinctive residential characteristics. Many expatriates, for example, as sojourning elites from overseas, live in inner city areas and tend to send their children to international schools. In central Tokyo, for example, there are several high-ranked apartments in which many foreign elites live, and the majority of Japanese cannot afford these. For example, in Minato ward in central Tokyo, many foreign elites are concentrated in the area because nearly half of the foreign embassies and consulates, as well as various head offices of major foreign enterprises in Tokyo, have gravitated to the area[13]. According to the statistical data from the Tokyo municipality, on 1st of January 2008, there were 21,806 foreigners registered in Minato ward (almost 10 percent of the entire ward population), of whom, the arrivals from the United States of America recorded the largest number of 4,906 or 22.5 percent of the foreign population of the ward.

Toshima ward has been characterised as an Asian population locale. Until the 1970s, almost 90 percent of the foreign population in Toshima ward was of North and South Korean origin, and Chinese. Although the proportion of these groups has declined with the increase of new foreign arrivals from various countries, the same tendency of Asian residency persists. By the end of

1990s, the number of registered foreign population was 13,452, of which China with 6,635 was the largest nationality and this accounted for nearly half of the foreign residents. Next was North and South Korea's 3,046 (see Table 2). These two groups together represent 72 percent of the total. At the corresponding day in 2008, there were 15,913 foreigners, and the Chinese proportion of the population had increased to 54.4 percent (8,657). This number, combined with that of North and South Korea, was 12,126, over three-quarters of the foreign population in this ward. Unlike for the Minato ward, the number from the United States of America was only 346 (2.2 percent of the foreigners).

Table 2 The numbers of registered foreigners by top 10 countries in 1999-2008 in Toshima ward

Year / Country	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
China	6,635	6,889	7,629	8,325	8,903	9,405	8,636	8,455	8,400	8,657
North and South Korea	3,046	3,156	3,240	3,278	3,215	3,132	3,101	3,215	3,246	3,469
Myanmar	904	871	834	822	799	832	647	572	560	640
Philippines	455	483	501	577	542	509	541	465	432	452
The United States of America	349	355	350	365	377	374	347	340	327	346
Thailand	136	138	171	187	201	211	230	214	199	219
Nepal	34	37	30	30	35	49	63	86	123	208
Great Britain	260	238	231	241	249	242	213	225	208	207
France	119	122	121	131	133	151	137	159	164	187
Bangladesh	109	102	100	98	113	151	150	139	152	157
India	80	80	67	72	86	97	103	106	117	132
Malaysia	350	391	461	544	478	468	337	238	150	126
Vietnam	21	21	31	35	42	35	54	60	94	102
Australia	87	72	72	88	104	102	100	101	101	96
Canada	108	93	91	112	122	119	103	113	109	95
Indonesia	64	67	69	77	75	80	73	66	56	71
Singapore	62	63	62	58	62	67	63	67	55	61
Brazil	101	106	106	93	85	91	91	76	63	53
Sri Lanka	23	26	32	33	33	25	27	37	50	51
Russia	11	15	30	46	36	43	47	41	40	40
Others	498	520	553	608	674	650	547	531	523	544
Total	13,452	13,845	14,781	15,820	16,364	16,833	15,610	15,306	15,169	15,913

* The numbers indicated on this table are 1st of January every year.
Source: Toshima kuyakusho [Toshima ward government]. 2008.

In October 1987, in response to the rapid increase in newly arrived foreigners in the 1980s, the local government of Toshima ward organised a committee to attend to the internationalisation of the area, presenting a proposal for establishing a 'living together' project between Japanese and non-Japanese in the ward to promote mutual respect. In the following year of 1988, the ward government included an 'internationalisation' line-item, in its budget. Thus, that year was

designated as 'First Year of Internationalisation' to recognise the increasing number of foreign residents. In recent years, however, the government has not held any particular committees or activities for internationalisation.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In Japan, the outward residential movements of metropolitan areas have been dramatic in scope, with significant depopulation of inner city areas. As mentioned previously, in several city cores within the metropolitan Tokyo region, the decline of living space as well as the disappearance of night-time populations have demonstrated the serious inner-city predicaments that arise when entire communities are effectively abandoned by those making an outer-suburban relocation. But after a time, a process of re-urbanisation has taken place with the increase in the population of several inner cities. Since the late 1980s, the theory of urban management has come into its own as a major subject for research that seeks to understand the contemporary patterns of residential life in relation to large metropolitan centres like Tokyo[14]. At the same time, there has been a growth in research into ethnic communities in inner cities conducted by sociologists[15]. It is now essential to acknowledge that the development of inner-city mobility paradigms must take into account the wide-ranging and stratified community networks, including those of foreign residents, if policy is to develop which effectively copes with the multicultural nature of inner suburbia.

Note

1   The increase in foreign population led to the amendment of the Immigration Act in June 1990. It is the Japanese blood relation principle which, according to the Act, opened a door for those of Japanese descendents, but, rigidly restricted other unskilled labour migration.

2   In Japan, the local districts, or boroughs, include *shi-ku-cho-son* which are the equivalent of cities, wards, towns and villages. Especially in Tokyo, there are twenty-three *ku* (wards), including down-town and up-town, which are generally considered to be central Tokyo because of their location. The survey divides boroughs by *ku* (wards) and *shi-cho-son* (cities, towns, villages).

3   It is estimated that in 1940 the urban population made up 37.9 percent of the entire population in Japan and in 1945, that proportion declined to 27.8 percent (Hasumi, 1980: 48).

4   Cohen (1987) and Sassen (1988) have presented influential studies that identify the mechanisms of international labour mobilisation and they have analysed class stratification in the receiving countries. Cohen (1987: 135) provides the example of the emergence of a 'permanent status of under-privileged workers' who entered European countries in the 1950s and 1960s. In the case of Germany, post-war migrant workers were recognised and expected to be 'temporary guest workers' who were excluded from the German legal system as they did not have political rights and secure employment.

5   In the period of rapid economic growth, environmental issues in urban areas came to the fore as

regional development promoted by the government's policies resulted in the prospect of a decline in living environment and the commercialisation of the inhabitants' living spaces (Mizukami, 1998).

6   A typical example of inner city decline under the influence of rapid economic development can be seen from the demographic features of Chiyoda ward which is located in the central Tokyo.

7   Following the suburban development, these newcomers from across Japan moved to the outskirts of Tokyo when they formed households (Okuda, 1993a).

8   For instance, after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, spurred along by modernisation and industrialisation, Japan's population expanded exponentially and the massive rural population started to move to cities. Afterwards, population concentration in cities continued, with the exception of the war time years, and then markedly accelerated again during the period of post-war economic development (Kurasawa, 1984).

9   In order to re-vitalise the inner areas, some municipal governments have adopted the gentrification policy.

10   Miura (1996) explains that post-war Japanese dreams were based on American soap operas which focused on middle-class suburban life. Like America's middle-class, Japanese people pursued suburban life with a detached house. Jinnai (1996) also points out that following American dreams of the 1950s, Japanese people have been willing to move outwards from the city centre by setting greater value upon outer suburban areas which are abundant with natural environments.

11   In this ward, the registered foreigners made up six percent of the population and the proportion, including undocumented foreigners, was calculated as twelve percent of the entire population (Okuda and Tajima, 1991).

12   Okuda and Tajima (1991), in their extensive research into Asian newcomers in the Ikebukuro district, clarify that the majority of these foreigners found accommodation through their relatives and friends of the same ethnic background. Further extensive research in the Shinjuku area by Okuda and Tajima (1993) elucidates that the image of clandestine single workers has been declining because some of them live in the local community as a family.

13   Ten percent of the residential tax of the ward can be traced to these foreigners who consist of managers of large corporations, foreign diplomats, and other white-collar techno-professionals (Tsukada, 1991; 78).

14   According to Okuda (1993b), the definition of 'Urban' implies life-styles in which the different attitudes of groups of individuals, as a means of expressing individual idiosyncrasies, become intertwined and thus inhabitants attempt to become cognisant of cultural diversity due to living in an environment with a sophisticated complex made up of diverse relations.

15   For example, as for the research into Asian newcomers, see Okuda and Tajima (1991 and 1993), Okuda and Suzuki (2001), and for the Japanese-Brazilians, refer to Hirota (2003), Kajita, Tanno and Higuchi (2005), and so on.

References

Cohen, Robin. 1987. *The New Helots: Migrations in the International Division of Labour*. Aldershot: Avebury Gower.

Zaidanhojin nyukankyokai [Japan Immigration Association]. 2006. *Heisei 17nen shutsunyukokukanrikankei tokeigaiyo [2005 Statistics on Immigration Control]*. Tokyo: Zaidanhojin nyukankyokai [Japan Immigration Association].

Hasumi, Otohiko. 1984. "Sengo shakai no tenkai to chiiki shakai [The post-war development of local communities]" In O. Hasumi and M. Okuda (eds.), *Chiiki Shakairon [Community Studies]*, pp. 44-59,

Tokyo: Yuhikaku.

Hirota, Yasuo. 2003. *Esunishithi to toshi (shinpan) [Ethnicity and City, New Edition]*. Tokyo: Yushindo.

Inaba, Yoshiko. 1996. "Tokyo eunikku kuukan no uchigawa - kokusaikasur okubo no machi, hito, seikatsu [Inside the ethnic space in Tokyo: Internationalised town, people and lives in the Okubo district]." *Kokusaikoryu (International Exchanges)* 18 (4): 54-58.

Jinnai, Hidenobu. 1996. "Tokyo saisei no shinario o sekai e [The scenario of the revitalisation of Tokyo in coping with the world]." *Kokusaikoryu [International Exchanges]* 18 (4): 2-11.

Kajita, Takamichi, Kiyono Tanno and Naoto Higuchi, 2005. *Kao no mienai teijyuka - Nikkei burajirujin to kokka/shijo/imin nettowaku [Invisible Residents: Japanese Brazilians vis-à-vis the State, the Market and the Immigrant Network]*. Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai.

Kurasawa, Susumu. 1984. "Toshishakigaku no kisogainen [Basic concept of urban sociology]" In Suzuki, H. and S. Kurasawa (eds.) *Toshishakaigaku [Urban Sociology]*, pp. 35-56. Kyoto: Akademia Shuppan kai.

Miura, Atsushi. 1996. "Kogai no yume to genjitsu to kanousei - amerikan dorimu no atoni [The dreams, actuality and possibility of suburbia: After the American dream]." *Kokusaikoryu [International Exchanges]*, 18 (4): 59-63.

Mizukami, Tetsuo. 1998. "Urban Residents' Movements and the Settlement of Foreigners in Japan: Activities of the Asian People's Friendship Society." *Asian Studies Review*, 22 (3): 357-371.

Okuda, Michihiro. 1993a. "21seiki sisutemu toshiteno daitoshi to komyuniti [Megacity and community in coping with the future mechanism]." In O. Hasumi and M. Okuda (eds.) *21seiki nihon no neo-komyuniti [New perspectives on Japanese community]*, pp. 229-245. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai.

_____. 1993b. *Toshi to chiiki no bunmyaku o motomete [The prospective urban mechanisms: in pursuit of the contextual framework of the metropolis and community coordination]*, Tokyo: Yushindo kobunsha.

Okuda, Michihiro and Junko Tajima. 1991. *Ikebukuro no Ajiakei Gaikokujin - Shakaigakuteki Jittaihokoku [Asian Foreigners in the Ikebukuro District - A Sociological Portrait of Their Actual Conditions]*, Tokyo: Mekon.

_____. 1993. *Shinjuku no Ajiakei Gaikokujin - Shakaigakuteki Jittaihokoku [Asian Foreigners in the Shinjuku District - A Sociological Portrait of Their Actual Conditions]*, Tokyo: Mekon.

Okuda, Michihiro and Kumiko Suzuki. 2001. *Esunoporisu Shinjuku/ Ikebukuro [Ethnopolis of the Shinjuku and Ikebukuro District]*. Tokyo: Havest.

Sassen, Saskia. 1988. *The Mobility of Labour and Capital*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Toshima kuyakusho [Toshima ward government]. 2008 Website. *Toshimaku no tokei [Statistics on Toshima ward]*, http://www.city.toshima.tokyo.jp/toukei/2008/01/toukei-01.html

Tsukada, Hiroyasu. 1991. "Kokusaitoshi Tokyo no mondaisei [Problems of International City, Tokyo]." In K. Matsubara (ed.) *Jichitai no kokusaiseisaku [Local governments; international policies]*, Second Edition (First Edition in 1988), pp.67-91. Tokyo: Gakuyoshobo.

（立教大学教授）