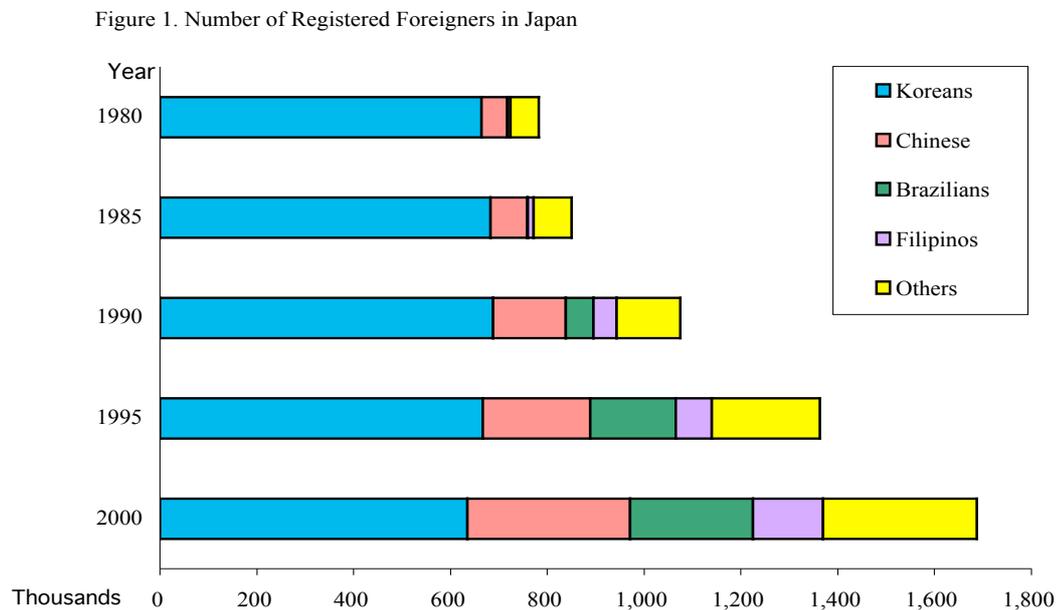


## Local Government and Resident Foreigners: A Changing Relationship

Kashiwazaki Chikako

This chapter traces the development of local government policy with regard to foreign residents. As their ethnic diversity has increased, so have their numbers; the sharp rise that commenced in the 1980s resulted at the end of 2000 in there being approximately 1.7 million registered foreigners, representing 1.3 percent of the country's population (figure 1; Japan Immigration Association 2001) But this official figure does not reflect the true ethnic diversity of Japanese society, for it includes neither the undocumented foreigners—estimated to total 230,000 as of January 1, 2001<sup>1</sup>—who have overstayed their visas, nor those who have their roots in another country but have acquired Japanese citizenship either through naturalization or because one parent is a Japanese national.<sup>2</sup>



Sources: Immigration Bureau (1993, 250); Japan Immigration Association (1996; 2001)

The government needs to respond at the local-government level to this growth in ethnic

diversity, because it is the municipal authorities that are primarily responsible for providing social services and administering those policies that have a direct bearing on the lives of foreign residents. In the 1990s, an increasing number of local governments developed programs and policies for resident foreigners—as opposed to those who were merely tourists—and it is to these individuals that this chapter refers when discussing foreign resident programs and policies.

### **FOREIGN RESIDENT POLICY: A GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE**

There is a growing body of Japanese-language literature on local government programs and initiatives concerning resident foreigners (Ebashi 1993; Komai and Watado 1997), and research topics include partnerships between local governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (Watado 1996), as well as political participation by foreign residents (Miyajima 2000).

Though informative and useful for interlocality comparisons, the existing research is wanting regarding two central issues: the relationship between the growing concern for foreign resident policy in recent years and the earlier situation when Koreans accounted for the vast majority of the foreign resident population; and the way the concept of internationalization has been loosely linked to foreign residents.

The need to accommodate foreign residents in local communities has been interpreted as the need for Japanese society to achieve domestic internationalization—*uchinaru kokusaika* in Japanese. While there is considerable variation in the understanding of what is meant by this term, it is generally employed in reference to the interaction between Japanese and foreign nationals in Japan, rather than international exchange activities overseas (Pak 2000, 249–250).

This chapter considers the role of local-level internationalization, the broad policy framework formulated at the national level, in shaping the ways municipal governments design programs focusing on foreign residents. Such internationalization has no doubt been useful to the extent that it has provided local governments with a channel for developing

foreign resident policy. It could be argued, however, that Japan's interpretation of internationalization and its subsequent application in the creation of a policy framework has had its limitations: First, it has resulted in foreign resident policy being treated as merely a derivative of international exchange projects; second, the interpretation is based on the relationship between the rigid categories of Japanese versus foreign.

## **POLICY PLANS EVOLVE**

### **Local Government Policy on Korean Residents of Japan<sup>3</sup>**

From the end of World War II until around 1980, most of the foreign residents in Japan were Koreans, of whom there were approximately 600,000 in 1980. A smaller group of these residents, also former colonial subjects, comprised Taiwanese.<sup>4</sup>

Until 1980, local governments did not consider resident foreigners to be part of the local community and administrative services were extended only to those of Japanese nationality.<sup>5</sup> Thus, for example, local governments would send a notice concerning the start of primary-level schooling for six-year-old children only to Japanese parents. Policies toward foreigners were administered mostly at the national level, the emphasis being on control, and resident foreigners were, first and foremost, subject to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Alien Registration Law. They were denied many of the social rights due to nationality-based eligibility restrictions that existed on, for example, the national pension plan, public housing, and public-sector employment.

However, in response to demands by Korean residents of Japan, municipal governments had instituted programs to serve foreign residents in some areas, despite restrictions at the national level. Thus, by the late 1970s, the majority of municipalities had an ordinance that extended to foreign residents' national health care, which had been previously, by law, available only to Japanese citizens (Yoshioka 1995, 53–57).<sup>6</sup> But changes at the national level occurred only around 1980, after the Japanese government agreed to admit a small number of Indo-Chinese refugees for resettlement. Once it had joined international conventions on human rights and refugees, the Japanese government was compelled to largely abolish

nationality-based eligibility restrictions in social security and housing.

### **Local-Level Internationalization**

In the 1980s, Japan emerged as a major economic power, and the term internationalization became a popular slogan with policymakers seeking to overcome the country's insularity. At the grass-roots level, diverse partnerships with sister cities around the world increased, as international exchange programs expanded and involved ever greater numbers of citizens (see chapter 4).

In 1987, the then-Ministry of Home Affairs (which in January 2001 incorporated other ministries and was renamed the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications), together with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education, launched the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. Under this program, young university graduates were invited from abroad to take part in cultural exchanges.<sup>7</sup> As David McConnell (2000, 39) puts it, the Ministry of Home Affairs had been one of the least international ministries and hence was an unlikely sponsor of such a project. Nevertheless, in the same year it issued guidelines for local authorities' international exchanges and embarked on a comprehensive local-level internationalization plan. The 1989 Guidelines for the Local International Exchange Promotion Plan<sup>8</sup> instructed prefectures and the twelve largest cities to prepare a policy package for the advancement of international exchange, and to offer financial support to new projects in that area. The development of an organizational infrastructure followed.

In 1988, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) was established and, beginning in 1989, the Ministry of Home Affairs recognized one organization per prefecture or per one of the twelve designated cities as the local international exchange association or quasi-governmental association (quango) that was to play a central role in organizing grass-roots international exchange activities. In 1995, the ministry went further and issued Guidelines for the Local International Cooperation Plan, thereby defining international cooperation as another component of the grass-roots-level internationalization plan.

At the core of the national policy of local-level internationalization was an economic goal, namely, “to revitalize localities through the creation of a community that is connected with the global society” (Nagasawa 1987, 27). To this end, local authorities were expected “to promote international exchange programs by taking advantage of each locality’s unique features, raise awareness among local residents concerning international understanding, thereby establishing a local identity in the global society, and promote local industry and economy” (Nagasawa, 1987, 27). The Ministry of Home Affairs expected the exchange promotion plans to result in the following.

1. The development of local government-led international exchange programs as well as the provision of financial and other forms of support for initiatives by the private sector (setting up sister-city affiliations; organizing cultural, academic, and athletic exchanges and festivals; and developing citizens’ awareness programs.)
2. The internationalization of local industries and economies, and increased tourism.
3. The creation of an environment in which local Japanese and non-Japanese residents can live together comfortably, improved administrative services would be available, and education assistance would be offered to those children who have lived and attended school abroad and required help in catching up with the local syllabus (Kanda et al. 1993, 10–13).

Of the above points, most relevant to foreign residents are the creation of a comfortable living environment and the provision of improved administrative services, to which end the 1988 Guidelines for the Creation of Localities for International Exchange specifically recommended the use of foreign languages on maps, signs, and in public facilities; the publication of foreign-language guidebooks explaining community life; and the organizing of festivals and events in which foreigners and Japanese could take part (Chiba 1989, 39–40). Simultaneously with the issuance of these guidelines, the Ministry of Home Affairs launched a project to promote localities that were committed to furthering international exchange, and subsidized local government initiatives that were in accordance with its recommendations.

It should be noted that the ministry’s guidelines and recommendations reflect a perception of foreigners primarily as guests of—not residents in, and citizens of—local

communities. The concept of foreign resident policy was absent. Instead, the ministry's perception was that international exchange—and, by extension, the revitalization of local communities—would be facilitated simply by providing services for foreigners. Moreover, the plight of the long-term residents originally from Korea, Taiwan, and mainland China, many of whom had been born and raised in Japan, received scant attention.

### **Foreign Resident Population Grows**

When the Ministry of Home Affairs embarked on internationalization in the mid-1980s, little attention was paid to the presence of resident foreigners. Beginning in the 1970s, the entertainment industry absorbed many of the growing number of migrant women who were entering Japan. They were not considered “foreign workers” (*gaikokujin rodosha*) as the term was generally associated with traditional blue-collar jobs. The presence of foreign workers only came to be an issue in the late 1980s, with the arrival of a significant number of male migrants, mainly from other Asian countries, many of whom overstayed their visas and took jobs in the construction, manufacturing, food processing, and other industries in which employers were finding it increasingly difficult to attract Japanese workers.<sup>9</sup> It was in part to stem the increasing ranks of these undocumented workers that an amendment to the immigration control law was passed in 1990. One major consequence of the changed law was the influx of large numbers of ethnic Japanese from South American countries, particularly Brazil.<sup>10</sup>

The population distribution of newly arrived foreign residents has been highly uneven, with wide local variations in terms of countries of origin and employment patterns. While Tokyo has attracted people of diverse nationalities and occupations (Machimura 2000), industrial towns and cities—such as Ota and Oizumi (both in Gunma Prefecture), Hamamatsu, and Toyota—boast concentrations of second-generation Brazilians of Japanese descent (Yamanaka 2000, 134–135), and some rural communities—such as the Mogami area in Yamagata Prefecture—have become home to a number of foreign brides, who have come to fill the needs of those farming families that have had difficulty finding Japanese women to

marry farmers (Sellek 2000, 180–183). In other places, such as Osaka City, many among the foreign community are Koreans who came to Japan before the end of World War II.

### **Increased Problems and Government Responses**

As the ethnic composition of local communities has changed, local authorities have been forced to respond to a variety of problems—such as housing, social security, medical care, education, and human rights—that are particularly acute in those localities in which the proportion of foreign residents has grown rapidly over a short period. Public housing complexes with a high concentration of foreign residents have had their share of friction involving Japanese and foreign residents new to the area, while in the private housing market, foreign nationals seeking accommodation often face discrimination and have difficulty finding a guarantor, who would normally have to be a Japanese national. The language barrier has been evident in local schools, which have often been reluctant to accommodate children who do not speak Japanese, as well as in hospitals and the courts, where interpreters with a good knowledge of technical terms are in short supply. Furthermore, since a large number of foreign residents are not covered by health insurance, some hospitals have been reluctant to treat uninsured patients in a bid to avoid having to shoulder the high costs of emergency medical care.

Municipal responses to the above problems have included a variety of services designed to support foreign residents, including Japanese-language classes, multilingual information brochures, legal consultation services, and financial support for emergency medical care (Ebashi 1993). In order to provide services to foreign residents, some local governments have also sought to cooperate with NGOs involved in supporting resident foreigners.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, Korean residents of Japan continued to fight against discrimination and for improved legal status. The 1981 revision of the immigration control law extended permanent-resident status to first- and second-generation Koreans who had not benefited from the permanent-resident-by-treaty status that had been introduced under the 1965 Japan-South Korea treaty. Since the national policy toward foreign residents continued to emphasize

control, the 1980s saw Koreans as central players among foreign nationals opposing the legal requirement that a fingerprint be affixed to a resident's alien registration card—which every foreign resident is required by law to have in easy reach at all times for the purpose of identification. Although the Ministry of Justice was in charge of this requirement, it was at municipal government offices that foreign residents reported to have their fingerprints taken, and some of these authorities took a more liberal view of the regulation and refrained from reporting dissidents to national administrative offices.

In the 1990s, Koreans were active in campaigning for the right to public-sector employment, participation in local elections, ethnic education, and social security. As a result, in 2000 several groups of Diet members submitted different versions of bills to give local voting rights to permanent resident foreigners.

A major issue in the area of education has been ethnic schooling. Excluded from the categories of ordinary educational institutions, Korean schools are disadvantaged in that, for example, their students are not eligible to apply for entry into national universities. Meanwhile, only a limited number of public schools offer programs designed to foster ethnic identity among students of Korean descent.

Furthermore, despite the principle of equality between Japanese nationals and foreigners in the area of social security, when, in the 1980s, the government abolished the nationality requirement for the national pension scheme, no transitional measures were introduced, as a result of which elderly foreign residents who had earlier been denied the opportunity to join the scheme still found themselves left with no old-age pension. In a bid to remedy the situation, a number of local governments have in recent years provided these elderly residents with special welfare allowances.

The language barrier is a major problem for those who have recently arrived in Japan, and their needs tend to differ somewhat from those of long-term residents whose settlement originated in the colonial era. However, both groups share the same goal of securing basic rights as local residents and participating fully in their local communities. Parallel with the demands from both the newer and the better-established foreign residents, the scope of foreign resident-related policy expanded from merely providing information and services to

facilitating foreign-resident participation in local administration. Several local governments have launched councils for resident foreigners, such as the Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents, set up in 1996. Other measures to facilitate political participation include the appointment by local authorities of foreign citizens as advisory committee members or citizen monitors.

The legal and administrative functions of municipalities are, however, limited and broader responsibilities are borne at the national level. Thus, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare is in charge of social security and medical care; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology oversees Japanese-language teaching and ethnic education in schools; and the Ministry of Justice controls immigration and visa status. The central government, further, has maintained that in connection with public-sector employment, foreign nationals are not allowed “to exercise public authority or to take part in the formation of a public will” (Okazaki 1998, 13–14). Originally formulated by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau in 1953, this official stance has been repeatedly invoked to limit the trend to liberalize nationality requirements for public administration positions.

The problems faced by resident foreigners do not fall neatly into the international exchange category, as they have been classified by the national government, and cannot be solved by the local government initiatives that adhere to the Ministry of Home Affairs’ project to promote localities committed to furthering international exchange. For, whereas such projects might incidentally benefit foreign nationals settled in local communities, the main purpose for which they were organized was to facilitate exchange activities with foreigners who come to Japan either just to visit or to stay for a short time. Local-level internationalization devised at the national level thus has failed to address the problems of resident foreigners.

#### **FOREIGN-RESIDENT POLICY FORMULATION BEGINS**

In the 1990s, some local government authorities took the initiative and developed—as had a few in the previous decade—foreign resident–related policies despite national-level legal and

administrative restrictions. Four approaches to this policy formulation are cited below. Although the administrative units in these examples differ in size and government level—in that two are bed towns, another is one of the twelve large cities designated by law and the fourth is a prefecture—all four have accommodated foreign nationals as residents since before the introduction of the Ministry of Home Affairs' internationalization plan.

### **Takatsuki City**

Located between the cities of Osaka and Kyoto, Takatsuki has a population of approximately 360,000. During World War II, conscripted Korean laborers were brought to the area to build factories and, after the war, a Korean district formed. At present, Koreans represent about two-thirds of the city's 2,900 foreign residents, who account for 0.8 percent of the population (Takatsuki City 1982).

Two factors explain why Takatsuki has been a leader in developing foreign-resident policy despite its relatively small number of foreign residents. One is the city's history of interaction with the Korean community. Since the 1970s, a local Korean group known as Mukuge no Kai has been demanding that the city improve the status of those residents of Korean descent, and its negotiations with the city have contributed to the step-by-step abolition of the nationality requirement for positions in local government offices as well as to the development of educational projects for Korean children.

The second factor is the city's emphasis on the protection of human rights. In 1978, the city declared that it would uphold the principles of human rights, ahead of the central government's ratification, the following year, of international conventions on human rights. Its responsibility to serve the Korean community was interpreted by the city as part of its overall duty to protect human rights and raise public awareness regarding the concerns of minorities.

But Takatsuki's approach is, perhaps, best illustrated in the area of education. In 1979, the city issued the Basic Policy Concerning the Problems of Residents of Korean Descent. The city thus placed the education of Korean children under the rubric of human rights

education, thereby relating it to the problems faced by the *buraku* people, a caste-like minority long subject to discrimination by the majority Japanese, as well as the physically and mentally challenged. In 1985, the city launched an education project for Koreans that included on the steering committee representatives from Korean organizations. Among the programs were a children's program, a junior high school program, Japanese-language classes, and social events to raise the level of public awareness regarding issues pertaining to the Korean minority population.

While this municipal education project was initially focused on Korean residents, it has now been adapted to meet the needs of other newcomers, including the children of so-called Chinese returnees—those Japanese who were left behind in China, during the times of political confusion during and at the end of World War II, and their immediate relatives—and Filipino children. While the city has appointed instructors at public schools to assist those students in need of Japanese-language lessons, municipal programs targeting newcomers are still in their infancy.

Three departments at the Takatsuki city office are involved in foreign resident policy: the Human Rights Promotion Division, the Board of Education, and the Exchange Program Division. The focus of the Exchange Program Division is on such conventional international exchanges as sister-city programs, although it also offers Japanese-language classes for foreign residents. Likewise, the Takatsuki International Association, which is mainly engaged in international exchange programs, also has a link for residents, to whom it offers consultation services. Overall, the city's foreign-resident policy has not been entirely subsumed in international programs, in contrast to the situation in other cities, where an office in charge of international exchange may well simultaneously cover programs for foreign residents. Moreover, in Takatsuki, programs for Koreans who have resided in the country for some time still remain quite separate from those for foreign nationals who have arrived more recently, perhaps reflecting the early institutionalization of certain Korean resident-related programs and the fact that there is only a relatively small number of newcomer foreign nationals in the city. Although the city plans to adopt a comprehensive internationalization scheme by merging its international exchange and foreign resident policies, that might be quite a challenge,

because the former has emphasized “outward” exchange programs whereas the latter has focused on the rights of resident Koreans.

### **Toyonaka City**

Located northwest of Osaka, this city has some 4,800 resident foreigners who account for 1.2 percent of its 390,000 residents.<sup>12</sup> While Koreans comprise the majority of these foreigners, an increasing number of recent arrivals from China are settling in the city. Like Takatsuki, Toyonaka has been responsive to its foreign resident population and so, for example, abolished the nationality requirement for all jobs in municipal offices in 1981, the year when Japan joined the refugee convention. In the area of ethnic education, the city has a Basic Educational Policy for Resident Foreigners, according to which budgetary allocations are made for such programs as summer schooling for the children of Korean residents of Japan.

Also like Takatsuki, Toyonaka initially approached issues concerning Koreans primarily from a human rights perspective but, unlike Takatsuki, in the 1990s it developed a comprehensive policy to promote grass-roots internationalization. This involved heeding the concerns of long-time and newly arrived Korean residents, and integrating the city’s international exchange and foreign-resident policies.

An effort to formulate internationalization programs began in 1989, partly in response to the 1987 guidance issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.<sup>13</sup> In 1991, the section in charge of international exchange was moved under control of the newly inaugurated Human Rights and Cultural Affairs Department, and now the section has become the Cultural and International Affairs Section, which currently coordinates the overall internationalization plan that includes foreign residents–related programs.

In 2000, the city announced the Basic Guidelines for Promoting Internationalization: living together and working together for local-level internationalization. The document clearly defines foreign residents as citizens, and internationalization as involving protecting their human rights, providing them with social services, recognizing them as cocitizens with the Japanese, and accepting them as residents in the community (Toyonaka City 2000, 21). This

understanding of internationalization is considerably different from that of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The above-mentioned basic guidelines are designed to ensure: (1) the protection of human rights and the promotion of cross-national understanding; (2) internationalization of school education, including assistance for newcomer children, programs to foster ethnic identity among students of Korean descent, and the development of a curriculum for intercultural understanding; (3) the development of a foreign-resident policy; (4) internationalization of the city's administration, including assistance for foreign residents through information and consultation services, political participation by foreign residents, and human resource development for facilitating internationalization programs; (5) promotion of international exchange and cooperation; and (6) citizens' participation in the aforementioned programs.

The Toyonaka Association for Intercultural Activities and Communication plays a major role in implementing the above policy and strives to encourage its citizens to take the initiative in international exchanges and create a community in which Japanese and foreign citizens live together, and also endeavors to persuade all citizens to work together for the common good. The association is active in international exchange activities overseas and programs concerning foreign residents. In addition to consultation services for newly arrived foreign residents, it also offers such programs for long-time residents as a monthly gathering for the children of long-term Korean residents, and helps them learn about their Korean heritage.

Toyonaka's comprehensive plan for internationalization and its emphasis on foreign-resident policies is the result of three main factors. First, since its programs for long-term Korean residents were not as institutionalized as those of Takatsuki, it was probably easier to place them under the heading of internationalization. Second, the city's 1996 master plan linked both the human rights concerns of Korean residents and the promotion of international exchanges to the goal of "creating a peaceful and egalitarian society" (Toyonaka City 2000, 14). Third, both scholars from among the city's Korean residents and NPO representatives active in promoting a multicultural community were members of the city's internationalization policy committee, and were probably instrumental in making foreign

resident-related issues central to the guidelines.

When it comes to policy implementation, however, it is still early days. As evidence of the internationalization of the city's administration, for instance, there was still no more than a Japanese-language version of the city's newsletter in 2000, although preparation for a multilingual publication was under way. But there was progress in other areas; Japanese-language lessons for foreign children and interpreting services began in schools in 1998. And plans are also afoot to establish an organ for foreign citizens' participation in local governance to fulfill the city's goal of promoting citizen participation.

### **The City of Osaka**

Osaka, the major city in western Japan and the center of trade and commerce, is home to the largest community of Korean residents of Japan. Of the city's population of 2.6 million, foreign residents account for about 4.6 percent, the highest proportion among Japan's twelve largest cities (Japan Immigration Association 2000). The number of Koreans, who account for over 80 percent of Osaka's foreign residents, is declining, but new arrivals from other countries are gradually increasing.

Osaka is characterized by both its relationship with the Korean community, and its desire to become international. Historically, Koreans have experienced major political struggles in Osaka, particularly in the area of education. In the years following Japan's defeat in World War II, Koreans demanded the right to a Korean education within the public school system, but the Japanese authorities made few concessions.<sup>14</sup> Yet the Korean community and teacher organizations persisted, organizing special classes outside the ordinary school curriculum to foster Korean children's awareness of their ethnic identity. As a result, Osaka has, since 1992, appropriated a budget for these classes, which have been steadily increasing in number.<sup>15</sup> As in the case of Takatsuki, Osaka's interaction with its Korean community has made it responsive to the concerns of the overall foreign-resident population.

Osaka's desire to become international is well served by its extensive overseas connections. The opening of the Kansai International Airport in 1994 increased the city's

ability to welcome visitors from abroad, and each year it hosts a number of international events. Thus, for example, the city has made it a point to ensure that signs of importance in public places are written in roman script as well as Japanese characters.

As one of Japan's main cities, Osaka was asked by the Ministry of Home Affairs to draw up a master plan for internationalization, which it did in 1997. The Basic Directives for the Promotion of Internationalization in Osaka is based on the principles of international exchange; international cooperation; attracting visitors from abroad (*shukyaku*); and accommodating residents from abroad (*kyosei*). Osaka's perception of internationalization emphasizes establishing overseas links, and its connection to foreign-resident policy seems weak.

The detached nature of Osaka's foreign-resident policy is reflected in the city's internal structure. The Human Rights Division coordinates foreign-resident policy, whereas the International Relations Department of the mayor's office is in charge of the broader internationalization plan. The organizational features of Osaka are, therefore, more similar to those of Takatsuki than of Toyonaka. However, Osaka does not have separate policies for long-term and newly arrived residents, while its foreign-resident policy is relatively autonomous and independent within the internationalization policy framework.

In 1998, Osaka city's Human Rights Department compiled and published the Basic Guidelines for Foreign Resident Policy, the main objectives of which are the protection of the human rights of foreign residents, the formation of a multicultural society, and enabling foreign residents to take part in public life. The document outlines the current situation and elaborates on the policy requirements in areas such as administrative services, education, mutual understanding, and local community participation. It is a comprehensive policy plan that pays attention to both long-term Korean residents and newly arrived people of other nationalities. In the area of education, the guidelines specifically mention the need to give special consideration to those children who are naturalized or have dual nationality (Osaka City 1998, 18–19). This is particularly noteworthy, since the framework of internationalization or foreign-resident policy does not automatically cover children who have their roots abroad but have Japanese nationality. To be sure, schools pay attention to the

problems of children whose native language is not Japanese, regardless of nationality status. However, those without linguistic barriers are generally treated as “Japanese,” that is, little effort is made to recognize and foster their “ethnic” identity. Osaka has also encouraged foreign residents to participate in the policymaking process, as a result of which well-informed foreign citizens participate in the foreign-resident policy committee, a few being members of the city’s various deliberation committees.<sup>16</sup>

International House, Osaka, was set up in 1987 and has been designated the Local International Exchange Association. As in Toyonaka, it organizes a good part of the city’s internationalization-related programs, including an information service for foreign residents. An Information Center offers a multilingual consultation service for resident foreigners staffed by regular members and volunteers, and is equipped for teleconferencing to facilitate consultations.<sup>17</sup> As foreign residents have come to stay longer in Japan in recent years, it has become increasingly likely that they will consult the center on such issues vital to their day-to-day living as health care coverage and childbirth.<sup>18</sup> While the International House is thus active in serving newly arrived foreign residents, there are few programs designed for long-term Korean residents.

### **Kanagawa Prefecture**

Kanagawa, a prefecture adjacent to Tokyo, has a population of 8.5 million and as of the end of 2000, the foreign-resident population was approximately 120,000, or 1.4 percent of the prefecture’s population (Japan Immigration Association 2001). The prefecture’s two major cities are Yokohama and Kawasaki, the latter having a well-established Korean community and active Korean citizens’ organizations. While Korean residents have been decreasing in number and now represent somewhat less than 30 percent of the prefecture’s foreign-resident population, there has been a marked increase in the number of new resident foreigners since the 1980s, including Chinese (22 percent of the foreign-resident population), Brazilians (10 percent), and Filipinos (10 percent). In addition, more than 5,000 Indo-Chinese refugees—Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians—reside in the prefecture, their

concentration here being due to there having been a national center for the settlement of Indo-Chinese refugees in Yamato City between 1980 and 1998.

Kanagawa's active involvement in international exchange projects preceded the central government's initiative by many years. Elected in 1975, former Governor Nagasu Kazuji was an advocate of people-to-people diplomacy (*minsai gaiko*), and encouraged grass-roots cross-national exchanges and cooperation in the interests of peace and for the common good. Applying the concept of diplomacy at the local government level or to activities conducted by ordinary citizens was a novel idea at the time,<sup>19</sup> but soon the appropriate organizational infrastructure was developed, with the setting up of the International Exchange Section in the prefecture's Public Relations Department in 1976, and the establishment of the Kanagawa International Association in 1977.

While these people-to-people diplomacy programs involved overseas friendship exchanges such as sister-city affiliations, they also came to be applied at the local level reflecting the need to accommodate foreign residents in the local community. The first major effort by Kanagawa prefecture to tackle the issue of foreigners as residents took the form of a research project conducted in 1982 and sponsored by its local governance research center. A team of officials conducted interviews with foreign residents of Korean descent living in the prefecture and the report subsequently compiled by the research team provided the incentive for the prefecture to conduct a broader survey of long-term foreign residents in 1984. Since the Indo-Chinese refugees were at around this time swelling the newly arrived resident population, the foreign-resident policy that was drawn up by the local authorities was designed to cater for the needs of both long-term and newly arrived residents.

As has been the case in Osaka, the policy package for foreign residents in Kanagawa is considered a part of the broader international policy. The latest master plan, issued in 2000, is entitled the New Kanagawa International Policy Promotion Plan, revised. It features foreign-resident policy as one of the main areas of international policy with the slogan, "Building a regional community for coexistence with foreign residents," and stresses the concept of participation by foreign citizens in both the prefectural government and community life. In order to facilitate participation, the plan urges that human rights be protected, multilingual

information be made available, greater efforts be made to provide administrative services, and that support be given to those seeking accommodation.<sup>20</sup>

Kanagawa has been among the leaders in implementing foreign resident–related policies. In 1998, the prefecture launched the Kanagawa Foreign Residents’ Council as an advisory body to the governor, with the stipulation that its policy recommendations are to be incorporated in the formulation of international policy. On the whole, conditions in the prefecture have been conducive to the development of foreign-resident policy, the people-to-people diplomacy under the reformist governor having led to the accumulation of grass-roots-level expertise in citizens’ organizations, the International Association having played a major role in facilitating networking among NGOs.

In each of the four cases discussed above, there is common recognition that local government needs to have a systematic foreign-resident policy, that the Ministry of Home Affairs’ local-level internationalization program has helped shape local policy structure, and that there is growing emphasis on the concept of participation, based on the recognition that the provision of services is necessary but not sufficient if foreign residents are to be treated as citizens and members of the community.

#### **THE EFFECTIVENESS AND LIMITATIONS OF DOMESTIC INTERNATIONALIZATION**

Advocating internationalization has helped start to ease open Japan’s closed society, while advocating domestic internationalization has contributed to raising public awareness regarding the problems faced by foreign residents. Nevertheless, there are two major problems with using internationalization as the umbrella under which to develop policies to respond to Japan’s increasing ethnic diversity.

First, international exchange and cooperation are the main focuses of internationalization policy, and foreign-resident policy tends to be treated only as a side issue without autonomous status. To be sure, some local governments, such as those of Toyonaka, Osaka, and Kanagawa, have developed innovative foreign resident–related plans, even under the rubric of internationalization and often by taking advantage of the appeal this concept has in

Japan.<sup>21</sup> Takatsuki City has the potential to develop a more comprehensive foreign-resident policy by building on its experience in working with the Korean community, while some other local governments that experienced an influx of new arrivals in the 1990s have made efforts to respond effectively to the concerns of foreign residents.

The same cannot be expected of a great number of other localities, however. Following the administrative guidance of the central government, all prefectures and the country's twelve largest cities drew up plans for the promotion of local-level internationalization, mostly following the suggestions of the Ministry of Home Affairs (Iwata 1994). While the model designed at the national level did bring some concrete benefits—the popularization of guidebooks for foreign residents—internationalization as a slogan can shift the focus away from such central tasks of foreign-resident policy as ensuring basic civil and social rights, and facilitating participation in local society. The full development of foreign-resident policy may, therefore, be difficult when it is appended to international exchange programs.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, rather belatedly, began to pay attention to the issues of foreign residents in response to the unexpected increase in the number of foreign workers and their families. In 1992, the project to promote localities that were committed to furthering international exchange added a new category, namely, “measures for resident foreigners.” In the initial year, the project allocated subsidies to Hamamatsu city (Shizuoka prefecture), Sano city (Tochigi prefecture), and Aikawa town (Kanagawa prefecture), all of which had experienced a sharp growth in the number of Brazilians and Peruvians of Japanese descent (Furukawa 1993, 28–29).

In 1998, CLAIR began a new financial-support program by merging one existing program administered by the organization and another by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Several proposals and initiatives for foreign residents have received subsidies under the new support program. Nevertheless, the Home Affairs Ministry continues to believe that providing services for foreign residents is just one aspect of internationalization.<sup>22</sup>

The second major problem with developing policies under the umbrella of internationalization lies in the concept itself, which assumes that exchanges take place between Japanese and foreigners and that Japanese culture is to interact with foreign culture.

For the purposes of this discussion, the Japanese people and their culture are considered homogeneous, but, by insisting on the notion of homogeneous Japanese and ignoring the presence of Japanese citizens of overseas origin, the perspective on diversity is undercut. If the goal of foreign-resident policy is to develop a multicultural society, using the phrase “foreign resident” can have an adverse effect by reinforcing the rigid categorization based on nationality status. For instance, an increasing number of schools have attempted to tackle the problems faced by foreign children. However, it is often not easy to identify children with an immigrant background when they hold Japanese citizenship.

Thus there is also a need to consider whether the current programs to foster cross-national understanding are satisfactory in fostering diverse ethnic identity, and whether what would be preferable might not be “multicultural understanding” (on the basis that both Japanese and foreign citizens have diverse origins and cultural backgrounds), rather than “cross-national understanding” (on the basis of learning about foreign cultures by getting to know foreign nationals).

The challenge for local governments is twofold. First, it is necessary to formulate a comprehensive foreign-resident policy focusing on participation in local communities and on the overall social support necessary to that end. Seen from this perspective, foreign-resident policy should overlap with programs concerned with human rights protection. Second, in anticipation of the continued increase in the number of Japanese citizens of overseas origin, programs are needed to acknowledge and promote cultural diversity. Greater emphasis should be given to *tabunka kyosei* (living together in a multicultural community) rather than internationalization. Of particular importance is multicultural education, as well as projects that encourage and support activities by a variety of cultural communities. National-level legal and financial support is vital in pursuing both these directions.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter has examined the relevance to foreign-resident policy of local-level internationalization. In so doing, it has addressed the problems; offering solutions remains the

task of others. As has been pointed out, the national-level policy framework has not always been decisive in shaping local-level outcomes. To wit the case studies above, in which the local authorities have, at times, shown some originality in formulating their policies.

While the effectiveness of programs is better judged by the measures implemented than by a mere analysis of program frameworks, the latter are, nevertheless, important. A policy framework indicates basic principles and ideals, gives direction to the organization of specific programs, and provides a basis for the ordering of priorities. And within it, some issues are emphasized while others may be left out entirely.

The term internationalization gained currency in the 1980s and, together with globalization, is still commonly used in Japan to indicate the direction in which it is hoped society shall move. In local governance, waving the banner of internationalization has the double advantage of securing financial support from the central government and the approval of the populace. Calls for internationalization have without a doubt contributed significantly to the promotion of policies regarding foreign citizens. Ironically, it is because the majority of Korean residents of Japan have maintained their nationality and not become Japanese citizens that the framework of internationalization has been accepted with ease. This, in turn, has made it possible to integrate issues pertaining to long-term and newly arrived residents.

With an increasing number of long-term Korean residents of Japan holding Japanese citizenship, the foreign-resident policy in the future needs to take into account a demographic cycle in which a percentage of foreign nationals become naturalized Japanese, while newly arrived foreigners add to the population of foreign nationals. Clearly it is time that local government policy recognize the diversity of both the Japanese and foreign nationals who reside in Japan.

The ultimate goal of the local-level internationalization plan is the revitalization of localities and, hence, importance is attached to international projects that yield economic gains for the community. However, as residents are the local community's most valuable assets, assisting citizens of migrant origins to participate fully in public life can be an effective way of revitalizing localities.

## Notes

1. “The number of illegally-remaining foreigners, as of January 1, 2001,” Ministry of Justice, Press Release, April 2001.
2. In 1985, the Japanese nationality law adopted the principle of bilineal *jus sanguinis*: A child acquires Japanese nationality by birth if at least one parent is Japanese. For many Japanese, however, it is difficult to comprehend that a person who looks non-Japanese may be Japanese by virtue of having Japanese nationality, or that a person who looks Japanese may have non-Japanese parentage and yet have Japanese nationality, as is the case with those individuals of Korean descent. The rapid increase in international marriages is challenging the hitherto entrenched equation that citizenship = nationality = ethnicity. Nevertheless, the common assumption remains that foreign registration statistics measure the degree of ethnic diversity in society.
3. The Korean residents of Japan—known as *zainichi* Koreans (*zainichi* literally means “residing in Japan”)—are mainly those individuals whose settlement in Japan originated during Japan’s colonization of the Korean peninsula, although early post-1945 immigrants are also included.
4. During the colonial period, both Koreans and Taiwanese in Japan held Japanese nationality and were considered Japanese imperial subjects. When the San Francisco Peace Treaty went into effect in 1952, the Japanese government declared that all former colonial subjects, including those residing in Japan, were to be stripped of their Japanese nationality. Consequently, many of the Koreans in Japan have lived as foreign nationals since then, although the rate of naturalization has increased over the years. For background, see Kashiwazaki (2000a; 2000b).
5. The records of foreign residents are entered into the foreigners’ registration system and are not combined with the Japanese household registries. In recent years, some local authorities have compiled household records by incorporating the two systems so as to provide more efficient public services.
6. However, this restriction did not apply to South Korean nationals who held permanent-

resident-by-treaty status under the 1965 Japan–South Korea normalization treaty. This caused disparity among Korean residents, since those who opted not to register as South Korean—due to their support for North Korea or for some other reason—found themselves at a disadvantage. The latter group obtained permanent-resident status in 1981, as mentioned below.

7. The role of participants in the JET Programme was primarily that of English teacher in the public school system, but the scope of the program subsequently expanded to include other activities. Since 1987, more than 25,000 people from 39 countries have taken part in the program <[http://www.clair.nippon-net.ne.jp/HTML\\_E/JET/JET.HTM](http://www.clair.nippon-net.ne.jp/HTML_E/JET/JET.HTM)>. See McConnell (2000) on the development of the program as well as its implementation.
8. For the content of the Guidelines for the Local International Exchange Promotion Plan, see Kaneda et al. (1993, 10–13).
9. See Mori (1997) concerning Japanese labor market conditions and the growth of migration to Japan.
10. The 1990 change in the law allowed ethnic Japanese to obtain visas with no employment restrictions attached. The number of Brazilian nationals in Japan increased from 56,000 in 1990 to 176,000 in 1995 (Japan Immigration Association 1996). See also Sellek (2000, 72–84).
11. While local governments were slow to respond to the growing numbers of newly arrived foreign residents, NGOs played a major supporting role (Roberts 2000).
12. “Trend in foreign registration” (<http://www.city.toyonaka.osaka.jp/toyonaka/tokei/gif-data/980002.gif>).
13. Based on the author’s interview with a Toyonaka city official, November 13, 2000.
14. A well-known example is the large-scale protest movement against the closure of Korean schools in 1948, known as the Hanshin Education Struggle, which was met with a crackdown by the authorities. At that time, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) was increasingly concerned about Korean political activity and supported the severe measures taken by the Japanese government.

15. As of December 2000, 42 primary schools and 38 junior high schools were conducting special classes for the benefit of children of Korean descent (based on an interview by the author of an Osaka city official.). On the history of such special classes in Osaka, see Suzuki (1997).
16. As is the case for Toyonaka, Osaka's committee of informed citizens on foreign resident policy issued a detailed report and recommendations, which is thought to have been instrumental in enriching the 1998 Basic Guidelines for Foreign Resident Policy.
17. Currently, the center offers information in seven languages—English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Thai, and Indonesian.
18. Based on materials compiled by the International House, Osaka.
19. For the concept of *minsai gaiko* and its development, see Suzuki et al. (1990) and Kanagawa prefecture (1995).
20. In April 2001, Kanagawa prefecture launched a housing support program for foreigners, according to which volunteer staff at the newly established Housing Support Center mediate between foreign residents and real estate agencies.
21. This assessment agrees with Pak's contention that local governments in Japan have created innovative programs to incorporate foreigners into the community by redefining the national government project for local internationalization (2000, 245–46). While recognizing that local governments have a degree of autonomy from the national government, this chapter emphasizes the constraints of the national policy framework.
22. In April 2000, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued an administrative circular instructing local governments to recognize NGOs and other citizens' organizations as central players in both international exchange and international cooperation, and to assist in their activities. However, there is no mention of foreign residents, indicating that anything related to them remains subsumed in the concept of international exchange.

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