

SOURCES AND CAUSES OF JAPANESE EMIGRATION

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"Home, home, sweet home, there's no place like home." Yet, leaving the fatherland of mountains and waters, many a Japanese seeks a new life in a strange land across the Pacific. There must be strong causes for this movement.

The question arises whether there is any political pressure upon the emigrant. Japan is one of the most progressive nations in the world, and there exists no discontent with the present rule of the constitutional government. Is there any religious cause bringing him here? Article eighteen of the imperial constitution guarantees freedom of religious belief. No persecution for difference of religion exists, as neither Buddhist nor Christian is treated as heathen in Japan. Is there any race prejudice or animosity? The whole Japanese population is of one race, consequently there is no oppressed race nor one dominant over another. Does the strict operation of the law enforcing military duty drive a portion of her youths here? No people are more patriotic than this race of little brown men. The fifty millions of Japanese souls will gladly throw their bodies into fire at command of their Great Sire.

Then, what are the causes of Japanese emigration? I recognize and shall discuss three: increase of population, economic pressure, and inducement, or attraction.

Increase of Population

Increase of population is closely connected with economic pressure upon the laboring classes. But I shall describe here chiefly the former, and will discuss the latter afterwards.

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No statistics of Japanese population are reliable until 1872. The increasing rate since that year has been as follows:¹

Year.	Per Cent.	Year.	Per Cent
1872 .....	.57	1890 .....	.95
1873 .....	.98	1891 .....	.66
1874	1.11	1892 .....	.91
1875	1.00	1893 .....	.73
1876 .....	...	1894	1.03
1877 .....	...	1895	1.09
1878 .....	...	1896	1.04
1879 .....	.45	1897	1.22
1880	1.20	1898	1.24
1881 .....	.94	1899	1.14
1882 .....	.86	1900	1.25
1883	1.17	1901	1.39
1884	1.11	1902	1.29
1885 .....	.84	1903	1.54
1886 .....	.84	1904	1.14
1887	1.46	1905	1.13
1888	1.38	1906	1.14
1889	1.17	1907	1.15

The above figures show that population is increasing year after year, and if the increase continues at the present rate the population will be doubled after sixty years.

Population increases, but the area of the land is limited, consequently the density of population per square ri² has been increasing at the following rates: 1872, 1,335; 1882, 1,385; 1892, 1,657; 1903, 1,885.

According to the general statistics, Japan in density of population ranks below only Belgium, Holland and England. These three nations get their food materials by importation from other countries; Japan is feeding herself.

I have described the rapid growth of population in Japan as a whole, but, if we ask ourselves whether those districts where population is most dense are the districts which contribute the largest number of emigrants, our answer is negative. The districts of Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Wakayama and Fukuoka are not very dense in population, and their birth rates are also less than the average rate for the whole of Japan.³ Yet these districts always contribute the

¹"The Financial and Economic Annual of Japan," 1905, p. 3; 1907, p. 2.

²Square ri equals 5.9552 square miles.

³"Mouvement de la population de L'empire du Japon," 1905, Proportion, P. 1.

dominant number to Japanese emigration. The districts of Kinai, where the successive emperors fixed their capital for more than twenty-five centuries, and where consequently the population is the most dense in the country, are not sections which drive emigrants abroad. Because of these facts, some writers urge that there is no direct connection between increasing population and Japanese emigration.⁴

But I consider the density of population a cause of emigration if we take the country as a whole. It is not the cause if we take district by district. The reason is very evident. Although some districts are very densely populated, if their economic capacity is sufficient to maintain their population, then it is not necessary to migrate. Furthermore, the peculiar character and environment of the people differ by districts. For example, the region of Kinai, with charming scenery, although crowded with a toiling population, renders the nature of the people very strong in home affection. Moreover, the family system is very ancient, and the people are amiable and submissive. On the contrary, the people of the regions from Hiroshima extending towards the southwestern districts, are venturesome and enterprising. The districts in Kinai have been the home of poets, artists and men of letters, while the southwestern part has supported pirates and warriors. That the increasing population is a profound cause for emigration can be seen more clearly if we consider it in connection with the economic pressure upon Japan's lower classes.

Economic Pressure

In this world-stage of the twentieth century, where many nations are competing with each other to become the dominant power, the rapid growth of population is a rather happy and desirable thing for our island empire, situated on the Eastern Sea. But this great movement, necessary from the viewpoint of further expansion of the empire, has a bad effect upon the classes who are toiling at the bottom of the present community. "The more poor the more babies," the Japanese proverb frankly runs. It is from these lower class people that the largest number of children come, and consequently the increase of population brings more laborers. The competition among the working classes in a country where the

⁴T. Okawahira, "The Nippon Imin-ron," Tokyo, 1905, pp. 36-37.

area of land is limited, where no national labor organization exists, where no labor legislation operates, results in vast millions of struggling creatures spending their daily lives under the economic pressure of landlords and capitalists in a hopeless and stricken condition.

The area of the cultivated land was only 5,193,762 cho in 1904,⁵ that is, 17 per cent of the whole area. The average holding of land owned by one farmer is only 9 tan 8 se.⁶ The annual yield from such a small piece of land, less than three acres, even under the most perfect system of utilization, is absolutely insufficient to support a family according to modern standards of comfort. Under such an economic condition the peasant class, which constitutes the bulk of the Japanese emigration to the United States, are spending their days. The fact that the districts which contribute the largest number of emigrants contain always the greatest percentage of the peasant class is shown below.

Geographical Sources of Emigrants

Basing our figures upon the number of passports issued by each district during the five years from 1899 to 1903, the number of emigrants to foreign countries, excluding Korea and China, is as follows:⁷

TABLE I.

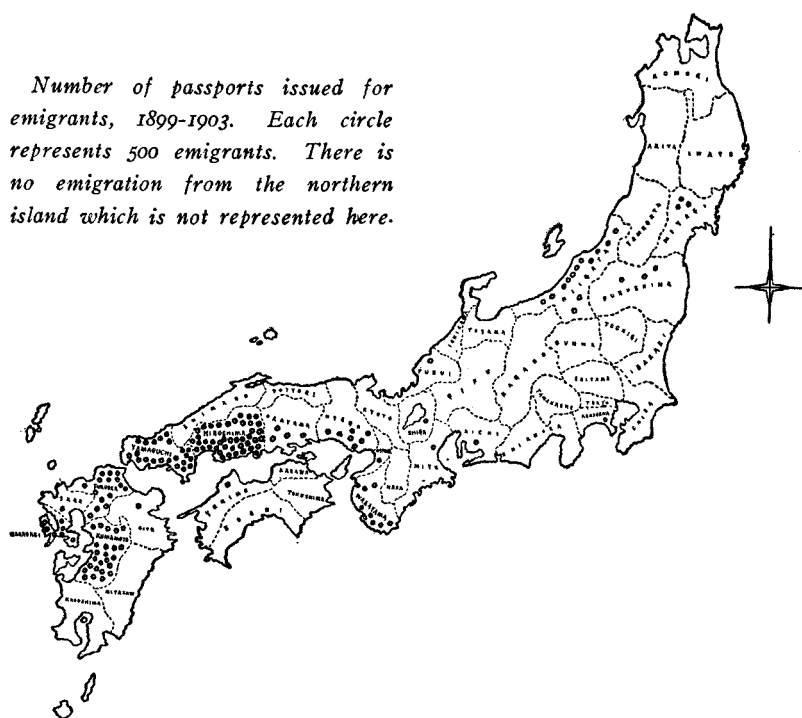
District.	No. of passports issued.	District.	No. of passports issued.
Hiroshima	21,871	Fukushima	1,613
Kumamoto	12,149	Yehime	948
Yamaguchi	11,219	Aichi	767
Fukuoka	7,698	Fukui	683
Niigata	6,698	Shiga	646
Wakayama	3,750	Saga	624
Nagasaki	3,548	Twenty-seven other districts.	5,041
Hyogo	3,532		
Okayama	2,176	Total	84,576
Miyagi	1,613		

⁵M. Togo, "The Nippon Shokumin-ron," Tokyo, 1906, p. 180. A cho equals 2.4507 acres.

⁶Tan equals 0.2451 acre, Se equals 119 square yards.

⁷M. Togo, "The Nippon Shokumin-ron," pp. 269-271; also Okawahira, "The Nippon Imin-ron," pp. 38-40.

Number of passports issued for emigrants, 1899-1903. Each circle represents 500 emigrants. There is no emigration from the northern island which is not represented here.



Although the above statistics include emigrants to all foreign countries excepting China and Korea, more than 80 per cent of the total number came to the United States. The area of farm land cultivated by the Japanese in the State of California in 1908, classified by their native districts, was as follows:

TABLE II.*

Cultivated by immigrants from the district of—	Area of farm land in California—acres.
Hiroshima	33,443
Wakayama	30,905
Fukuoka	14,833
Kumamoto	14,827
Yamaguchi	10,598
Aichi	10,268
Okayama	6,334
Other districts	33,594½
Total	154,802½

*"The Japanese-American Year Book," 1909, the first appendix, pp. 3-4.

The table indicates that the immigrants from the district of Hiroshima⁹ cultivate the largest area of farm land. Next comes the district of Wakayama. Each district controls about one-fifth of all the farm land cultivated by the Japanese in California. In 1905 nearly 50,000 of the 74,000 total Japanese population in Hawaii were from the three districts of Hiroshima, Kumamoto and Yamaguchi.¹⁰

I have already mentioned the geographical section of Japan from which most of her emigrants come. Then, what is the peculiar character of those people? What are the economic conditions in those districts? Generally speaking, the people of the Sanyodo, where the districts of Hiroshima, Yamaguchi and Okayama are situated, were warriors in the feudal ages; and, the districts being along the coast, the people were accustomed to go to sea, and were venturesome and eager to satisfy new wants. The fundamental cause of emigration is the economic condition of the districts. The percentage of small farmers in those districts is as follows:

TABLE III.¹¹

Districts.	Percentage of agricultural families which cultivate less than 8 tan.
Hiroshima	70
Wakayama	Unknown
Fukuoka	56
Kumamoto	Unknown
Yamaguchi	61
Aichi	Unknown
Okayama	66
Hyogo	73
Yehime	68

The number of small farmers is more than 50 per cent in all the above districts. Hyogo is the district which is populated with

⁹"Most emigrants in the district of Hiroshima come from the counties of Aki, Saeki, Takada, and cities of Hiroshima and Toyoda. When they start as emigrants, their land and houses are in the hands of landlords; their position is that of small tenant. But when they come back after four or five years' labor abroad, they usually buy a house and two or three tans of farm land, and become independent farmers, or merchants. . . . About six-tenths of all emigrants succeed in this way," etc.—"The Osaka Mainichi Shimbun," November 9, 1904, quoted by Okawahira.

¹⁰T. Okawahira, "The Nippon Imin-ron," p. 89.

¹¹These statistics are based upon an investigation made by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce of Japan in 1888; it is presumed that there is not much change in the present condition.

the largest percentage of small farmers of all districts in Japan. The district of Hiroshima, the center of emigration, comes next with its 70 per cent of peasant families. If we investigate the average area of cultivated land per capita of the agricultural population in the respective districts, the effect upon emigration can be seen with more clearness.

TABLE IV.¹²

	Tan.
Hiroshima .....	.11
Wakayama	Unknown
Fukuoka .....	.19
Kumamoto	Unknown
Yamaguchi .....	.17
Aichi	Unknown
Okayama .....	.15
Hyogo .....	.14
Nagasaki .....	.15
Yehime .....	.18

The average amount of farm land per capita in Hiroshima is not only the smallest among the above-mentioned immigrant districts, but also among all districts in Japan. Yamaguchi, Ohayama and Hyogo are also below the average.

A remarkable fact is noticeable here, that the district of Hiroshima, where the average holding of farm land was smallest among all Japanese districts in 1888, contributed the largest number of Japanese who cultivate farm land in America in 1908.

More than this, the wealth per capita in those districts is below the average amount of wealth per capita in Japan. According to Messrs. Igarashi and Takahashi,¹³ the average wealth per capita of Japan is 505.755 yen, while that of Hiroshima is 381.895, of Yamaguchi is 489.005, of Wakayama is 351.675, and so on.

Inducement and Attraction

No advertisement has ever appeared in the Japanese newspapers inducing emigrants to go to the United States. But the most effective advertisement is the stories of success of Japanese in America, which occasionally appear in the papers and magazines.

¹²M. Togo, "The Nippon Shokumin-ron," pp. 141-143.

¹³E. Igarashi and H. Takahashi, "The National Wealth of Japan," Table I.

Whenever certain Japanese return to Japan they talk with the newspaper reporter, telling how they struggled in a penniless condition, how they saved money, what industry they started, or how many acres of land they own in America. Such articles in a local newspaper, accompanied by illustrations, usually make a strong impression upon the young peasant or rough country lad. Thus, the account of success of Mr. Kinya Ushizima, the "potato king" in California, appeared many times before the public and, it seems, induced many emigrants to leave home, especially from the district of Fukuoka, from which Mr. Ushizima himself emigrated many years ago. The success of Mr. Domoto, as the greatest flower raiser west of the Rockies, attracted many young farmers from his native district of Wakayama.

There have been many pamphlets published, some printed in more than thirty editions, under such titles as "How to Succeed in America," "Guide Book to Different Occupations in America," "Guide Book to America," "The New Hawaii," etc. All these books are written by those who returned from America or are still resident in this country. Generally speaking, they have exaggerated the abundance of opportunities in the United States and have stimulated emigration in over-attractive descriptions. Correspondence with Japanese laborers who are already in this country has also some influence.¹⁴ But the sphere of this kind of inducement is very narrow, limited to the correspondent's relatives or friends at home. The inducements and attractions above mentioned are the result of the simple fact that labor earns more in America than in Japan.

The conclusion which can be drawn from the facts already mentioned in this paper is this, that a large proportion of the Japanese emigration comes from the peasant class in the districts of the south; and growing population, economic pressure and inducement or attraction combine to cause their emigration. No doubt there are countless minor causes operating on individuals, such as ill-luck in business, a bad crop of rice, sudden death of the devoted wife, frequent visits of the bill collectors, or simply desire to see great America. But the fundamental and principal causes are those already mentioned.

¹⁴"The Seventh Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of California," 1896, p. 103.

Motives of Japanese Emigration by Classes

During the year 1906 the Japanese government issued 8,466 passports to the continental United States and 30,093 to Hawaii. The purposes for which the passports were granted were as follows:¹⁵

	Official Duties.	Study.	Commercial Business.	Agriculture and Fishing.	Artisan.	Labor.	Traveling.	Miscellaneous.
To the continental United States.....	43	2,825	1,215	1,046	22	462	2	2,851
To Hawaii	7	17	132	28,756	7	1,051	0	423

Among the eight groups above quoted, I take for discussion only two which include the greater portion of emigrants: the farmers and the students.

Farmers: This class consists of those who are engaged in agricultural pursuits, either as tenants or as farm laborers. They belong to the lower classes of the Japanese community, if not to the lowest of all. They are the real corner-stone of the nation, but they are poor. In this class of emigrants the most conservative, uneducated and innocent persons can be found. The greater number of them being quite ignorant of foreign conditions, they are usually cared for and transported by the so-called "emigration companies."¹⁶ Farm laborers whose daily wages are an average of only thirty-two sen¹⁷ (sixteen cents), have hardly an opportunity to accumulate money enough to escape from their own group. The sole motive of this emigration is simply "to make money," and nothing more.

Generally speaking, when a European emigrant is bidding farewell to his home, his intention is, perhaps, to go to a new land where he can start a new life. His desire is to find a new society around him and to build up a new home. In short, he is going to be an

¹⁵"The Twenty-sixth Annual Statistical Report of the Japanese Empire," p. 67.

¹⁶There were thirty-six companies or individuals engaging in exporting Japanese laborers in 1903, with capital ranging from 1,000,000 yen to 20,000 yen.

¹⁷"The Seventh Financial and Economic Annual of Japan," 1907, p. 75.

American himself. The contrary is true of the Japanese whose only desire is to build up a new home, not upon American soil, but in his native land. He desires to save a certain amount of money by a four or five-year struggle, and then, coming back to his own land, to start in business or become an independent farmer. He does not desire to exhibit the fruits of his toil before an American audience, but only before his fellow-countrymen.

Students: Since 1870 Japanese students have been coming to this country, and between 1885 and 1890, the period of political transformation to constitutional government, many students and politicians who failed to realize their ambitions came to this country. They worked as "school boys" or domestic servants and studied in leisure moments. The students in those days were able to get kind assistance from the Board of Foreign Missions in this country.¹⁸ When they returned to Japan after several years' hard study, they were offered responsible positions in governmental service, as Japan was eager to adopt western institutions. Among those old "school boys" to-day many distinguished persons can be found: diplomatists, educators and writers.

At present many students are coming to this country, more than 90 per cent of them with scanty means, but with high ambitions, recalling the old days of their eminent forerunners. There were 951 students in a total of 2,261 Japanese immigrants admitted during the three months of April, May and June of 1907,¹⁹ and of the total number, 9,544, admitted to continental America in 1908, 2,252 were students.²⁰ Estimating from the above statistics, the number of students who have come to this country since the early period runs into the thousands.

These students are graduates of Japanese high schools or certain professional institutions. They cross the ocean with abundance of hope, determined to dare what those famous Japanese used to dare years ago. Their ambition is to study, but most of them, perhaps 999 in 1,000, after undergoing bitter experiences in isolation, usually lose their ambition and take up other vocations. Thus a Japanese servant confesses before the American public, that "Some say the Japanese are studying while they are working in the kitchen, but it

¹⁸I. Nitobe, "The Intercourse between the United States and Japan," Baltimore, 1891, pp. 165-6.

¹⁹"Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration," 1907, p. 76.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 1908, p. 90.

is all nonsense. Many of them started so, but nearly all of them failed."²¹

The difficulty of studying as self-supporting students changes those students to common domestic servants or farm laborers. Their intentions were laudable and their hopes were very high; but later these intentions and hopes, which they ever declared before parents and sweethearts, must be cast away after much discouragement. The man who fails of his expected goal in a strange land after a long struggle naturally becomes, in most cases, irresponsible. Among the gang of laborers which sail to Alaska every spring you may find many young Japanese who quitted their native land to study American civilization in college classes. They are "not only lazy and worthless, but are constantly raising a disturbance."²²

The two classes mentioned here are not the lowest people of the low classes, nor the worst and most unfit people. There is a certain defective class of people, such as tramps, beggars, ex-convicts and paupers, in Japan as elsewhere. They have no ambition to elevate their own standard of living by any economic means. They are spending a dull, changeless life in an ever-changing community. If any person in this country believes that the Japanese government sends or encourages these undesirable people to emigrate to this country it is a great mistake. This class of people has no relation to the dynamic side of the Japanese community. Even in dreams they would not desire to migrate far away over the ocean to the land of opportunity. Opportunity is worthless to them, for they are satisfied in their own condition.

²¹"The Confession of a Japanese Servant," *"Independent,"* Vol. 59, p. 667.

²²"The Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission," Vol. XXI, 1901, p. 185.