

NOSTALGIC MIGRATION: WHY ARE JAPANESE PEOPLE MOVING TO CHINA?



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China has the second largest number of Japanese residents in the world. Young Japanese move there to study Chinese, retirees take up teaching or consulting jobs, whereas single people find career opportunities. Businessmen's wives join their husbands who take up managing positions at Shanghai subsidiaries of Japanese corporations.

Since the main theories of migration emphasize economical motivations, they fail to provide sufficient explanation for this particular migration from Japan to China. Both Push-Pull models and Dual Labor Market theories are inapplicable as the migrants often accept income decreases but are not drawn to low status jobs typical in Dual Labor Market theories.

I examine the factors behind this particular migration and conclude that migrants' decision to move to China reflects rapid socio-cultural changes in Japan. The research findings indicate a strong inclination among migrants to preserve their current lifestyle, and delay progression to what they perceive as the inevitable next stage in which they would have to fit into social and family roles expected of them. Accordingly, young Japanese continue studying to postpone employment, retirees remain salarymen to avoid becoming pension receivers, and singles are able to keep their lifestyle and avoid pressure to marry. Businessmen enter the rapidly growing Shanghai market driven by 'bubble nostalgia', while their 'Showa nostalgic' wives focus on taking care of their Chinese households.

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All are welcomed**