

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF INTER-REGIONAL MOVEMENTS OF THE LABOR FORCE IN RURAL JIANGSU PROVINCE, CHINA

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INTRODUCTION

DURING the summer of 1988 I made a field survey of inter-regional movements of the labor force in the rural area of Jiangsu Province. The present paper is a summary of that survey.

Selected for the survey were two areas in the province: the suburbs of Wuxi City, a city in Sunan (the southern part of the province), which is the place into which migrating labor flows; and the suburbs of Yancheng City in Subei (the northern part of the province), which is the source of the migrant labor (see Figure 1). These two places were selected since some objective conditions for labor migration seemed to be being formed there for the following reasons.

(1) The northern and southern part of Jiangsu Province are widely different from each other historically, economically, and culturally. Economically speaking, Sunan, the southern region, has been achieving economic development centering on industrialization, while the economic structure of Subei, the northern region, is largely characterized by agriculture. According to statistical data [2, Vol. 3, p. 107], per capita agricultural and industrial output of Wuxi Prefecture (Sunan)¹ in 1987 was 5,759.1 yuan as against a figure of 1,188.8 yuan for Yancheng Prefecture (Subei).² The considerably large gap between the two regions is also seen with regard to per capita income as indicated in *Zhongguo nongmin shouru yanjiu* [A study of Chinese farm income] [1, p. 200], which says that per capita income in 1985 was 616 yuan for Wuxi against 402 yuan for Yancheng Prefecture, meaning that the latter is only 65.2 per cent of the former.

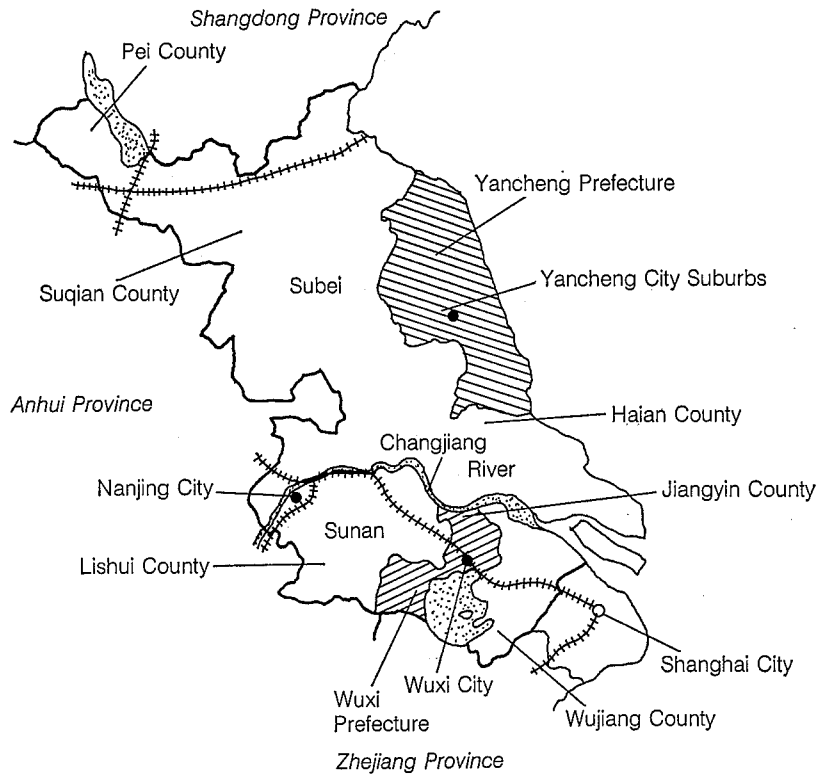
(2) The disparity between the two regions with regard to wages per worker is also considerable. *Xiaochengzhen quyū fenxi* [An areal analysis of small towns] [3] enables us to calculate the per head wage of workers employed in village or township enterprises (*xiangzhen qiye*).³ According to the data, the annual wages

¹ Wuxi Prefecture includes the cities of Wuxi, Jiangyin, and Yixing, and Wuxi County. It has a population of 3,955,000, of which the rural population accounts for 2,866,000.

² Yancheng Prefecture includes the city of Yancheng and counties of Xiangshui, Binhai, Funing, Sheyang, Jianhu, Dafeng, and Dongtai. Of its total population of 7,307,000, the rural population accounts for 6,455,000.

³ Village or township enterprises treated in *Xiaochengzhen quyū fenxi* [3] are confined to those run by villages (*xiang* or *cun*) or townships (*zhen*); the above definition is followed throughout this paper. Thus, other privately-run enterprises in townships or villages have not been included.

Fig. 1. Map of Jiangsu Province



Source: Prepared by the writer.

Notes: 1. +++++ lines show railways.
2. Subei and Sunan are divided approximately by the Changjiang River.

per worker in these enterprises in Jiangyin County (Sunan) was 761.2 yuan in 1985, while that for the suburbs of Yancheng City (Subei) was 533.7 yuan, or only 70.1 per cent of the former. Such wage differences have become noticeable in various parts of Jiangsu Province as shown in Table I.⁴

In addition to the above two reasons, I can cite my own findings in a survey of village or township enterprises in Wuxi County in 1986 [4], which revealed that a considerable number of people from Subei were already being employed there.

⁴ From *Xiaochengzhen quyū fēnxi* [3] it is possible to calculate wages at village or township enterprises, as well as agricultural and industrial output per worker in seven locations in Jiangsu Province. See Table I.

TABLE I
OUTPUT AND WAGES PER WORKER IN SEVEN COUNTIES
IN JIANGSU PROVINCE, 1985

	Sunan			Subei			
	Wujiang County	Jiangyin County	Lishui County	Haian County	Yancheng City Suburbs	Suqian County	Pei County
Wages per worker ^a (yuan)	659.3	761.2	652.1	519.8	533.7	564.1	557.6
Index	(126.8)	(146.4)	(125.5)	(100.0)	(102.7)	(108.5)	(107.3)
Output per worker ^b (yuan)	4,056	5,194	2,478	1,908	2,495	2,242	1,797
Index	(225.7)	(289.0)	(137.9)	(106.2)	(138.8)	(124.8)	(100.0)

Source: Based on *Xiaochengzhen quyū fenxi* [3].

Notes: 1. Indices are calculated with the lowest area as the base figure (100).

2. For the location of each county, see Figure 1.

^a Wages per worker in village or township enterprises.

^b Agricultural and industrial output per worker.

I. MOVEMENTS OF THE LABOR FORCE IN SUBEI

Towns and villages in Subei under survey can be divided into three groups classified according to natural conditions, social environment, and industrial structure (output structure), as well as the situation in relation to the migrant labor force. These factors should enable us to make a comparison between the three groups as to the actual state of movements of the labor force. The economic data on the areas surveyed such as per capita agricultural and industrial output⁵ and per capita income are shown in Table II.

A. Outflow of the Labor Force from the Rural Area

Dazonghu Village (*xiang*), though administratively a part of Yancheng City, the center of Yancheng Prefecture, is found in a rural area some 45 kilometers to the southwest of the city center. Since per capita income there in 1978 was only 83 yuan against the nation's average of 133.6 yuan, the village could hardly be considered well off. Apart from a small number of village enterprises, nearly two-thirds of the total output produced by the villagers comes from agriculture, forestry, and fishery (50.0 per cent) and their work as migrant labor (14.3 per cent)⁶

⁵ Because of the limitations inherent to the interview method, figures are not complete for some areas.

⁶ This figure concerns only the data available within Dazonghu Village. It was found from interview surveys in Yancheng Prefecture that in this village, as well as in many other villages, the wage income of villagers working outside the village is included in the total industrial output of the village.

TABLE II
ECONOMIC DATA ON THE REGIONS SURVEYED

	Per Capita Output for Agriculture and Industry (Yuan)	The Share of Agricultural and Industrial Output (%)			Per Capita Income (Yuan)
		Industry	Agriculture	Others	
All China*	947	31.5	53.1	15.4	424
Jiangsu Province*	1,892	52.0	34.5	13.5	561
Yancheng Prefecture	1,113	55.7	44.3	—	402
Dazonghu Village, Yancheng City*†	1,867	46.4	50.0	3.6	547
Dongxu Village, Jianhu County	1,640	29.7	70.3	—	
Huangjian Town, Sheyang County	4,194	66.9	33.1	—	
Longgang Town, Yancheng City	2,860	73.7	26.3	—	621
Dayang Village, Yancheng City*	5,257	65.9	4.1	30.0	1,050
Wuxi Prefecture	5,303	91.4	8.6	—	616
H Town, Wuxi County	7,597	93.8	6.2	—	1,050
Y Village, H Town, Wuxi County	14,734	96.8	3.2	—	1,167

Sources: Prepared from [8] [2] [1], as well as from findings of the writer's interview surveys.

Notes: 1. Figures for all China, Jiangsu Province, Yancheng Prefecture, and Wuxi Prefecture are those of 1986, except for per capita income in Yancheng Prefecture and Wuxi Prefecture which are those of 1985. Figures for other places are those of 1987.

2. Agricultural output includes sideline occupations.

3. Blank spaces denote data unavailable.

* Figures give total output for agriculture, industry, and commerce.

† Out of the total 26 million yuan industrial output of Dazonghu Village, 8 million yuan was earned by workers employed outside the village. Therefore, if we deduct this from the industrial output, the share becomes 32.1 per cent for industry, 50.0 per cent for agriculture, and 17.9 per cent for others.

as shown in Table II. Thus the village can be said to considerably lag behind other locations surveyed with respect to economic development.

Such a state of the village economy has caused a labor force outflow which began in around 1983. Today out of the total village work force of 13,000 persons, about 2,000, or 15 per cent,⁷ find work outside the village.

The outflow of the labor force from the village is generally organized in one of the following four forms:

⁷ This figure does not cover those engaged in the privately-run transportation business, our form (4), which is explained later in the text, because the village administration does not have sufficient information on this type of migrant worker.

(1) Organized and arranged by the village's construction agency (*jianzhu gongsi*) so that workers are dispatched in groups.

(2) Arranged by the *laodong fuwu gongsi*, a village committee dealing specifically with labor migration. The committee is an official organization under the village government set up to help villagers find jobs outside the village. In the case of Dazonghu Village, the committee collects a fee of 30–40 yuan for each worker from those enterprises to which labor is dispatched.

(3) Jobs found through personal contacts (in this case, migration occurs mostly in Sunan).

(4) Cases where a whole family engages in the transportation business in Sunan or some other place with its own small ship (20 tons or under). In such cases, workers mostly live on the water.

As to where and in what number workers flow out of the village, form (1) accounts for 1,000 persons, of which 600 go to the Daqing oilfields, 100 to Shanghai, and 300 to Huaiyin, a major city in Subei. Forms (2) and (3) account for 200 persons to Yancheng City, 100 to Suzhou and Wuxi, and a smaller number to various other locations. Data is not available for form (4).

As for job types and ranks, the workers who find jobs through the village construction agency, i.e., form (1), sign a contract with the agency to be either regular or temporary workers, while those who are offered jobs through the village committee or through personal connections, i.e., forms (2) and (3), are employed in enterprises outside the village as either contract (*hetonggong*) or temporary workers. Most of the workers in the latter group are between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age and are not married. Of these, those who work in Suzhou and Wuxi are said to be employed mostly as day laborers engaged in loading and unloading freight at the factories. The latter group includes 300 female workers.

As for wages and income, regular workers employed according to form (1) receive 2,000 yuan annually against 1,500-odd yuan for temporary workers. Under forms (2) and (3), those who work in Yancheng City, which has a lower average wage than Sunan, receive only 1,000-odd yuan, mainly due to their contract worker status. On the other hand, day laborers in Suzhou and Wuxi can get 15–20 yuan per day, and if they are able to work all the year round, it is possible to earn as much as 5,000 yuan or more annually. In the case of form (4), it is said that if a private ship operator manages to own a 50-ton ship, he will be able to earn more than 40,000 yuan a year.

Thus, working outside the village has become common, and many of young people of the village are said to prefer finding jobs at outside enterprises rather than being employed at home.

In the survey undertaken, no cases of labor force influx from the outside were observed. It has become clear that Dazonghu Village can be regarded as a pure source of migrant labor. Even within the borders of Yancheng Prefecture, Dazonghu villagers tend only to flow out of the village and no reverse movement is conceivable.

B. *Movements of the Labor Force around Small Towns (Xiaochengzhen)*

Longgang Town (*zhen*) of Yancheng City is found some 10 kilometers to the west of the city center. Due to its beneficial location, the town is more developed industrially than Dazonghu Village. However, as can be seen from Table II, Longgang Town is still in an unfavorable situation compared with, say, Dayang Village (*cun*), which is situated in the vicinity of Yancheng city center, or with H Town,⁸ Wuxi County. Thus the economic status of Longgang Town can be placed between Dazonghu Village and Dayang Village, which will be treated in the next section. While absorbing the labor force migrating from adjacent villages, the town's work force also tends to flow out in search of better jobs.

Out of the town's total working population of 18,000, 3,500 (19 per cent) find jobs outside the town. Applying the foregoing four forms of work force outflow, these 3,500 workers can be classified as follows.

(1) Through the arrangement of the construction agency, 1,800 persons migrated mostly to Shanghai, Nanjing, the Daqing oilfields, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, etc.

(2) Through the arrangement of the official labor migration committee, 300 persons emigrated. Among them, those who were originally registered as city dwellers (*chengshi hukou*) are employed as regular workers, whereas those who are registered as farmers (*nongye hukou*) are treated differently and have to work as contract laborers. One hundred people in the former category are employed in Yancheng City and another 100 in Suzhou, Wuxi, and Shanghai as regular workers, while people in the latter category generally work as contract workers in Shanghai (100 persons) and other places.

(3) Through personal connections 700 or more people found jobs mainly in Sunan.

(4) It is estimated that there are about 700 people engaged in the transportation business, but the exact number is not known.

As for the wages, workers classified in form (1) usually receive 6 yuan per day, or 1,800 yuan per year if they work all the year round. Wage data is not available for the other forms of migrant labor.

While the labor flows out of Longgang Town, there is also an inflow of about 1,000 workers from outside the town (such as the 200 immigrants from Jianhu County). However, many of the workers coming in are still registered as farmers at their places of origin and get an average annual wage of something more than 1,200 yuan.

C. *Inflow into Villages in City Suburbs*

Dayang is a village (*cun*) in the eastern suburbs of Yancheng City, located just outside the city center. Besides being favorably located, the village receives favorable treatment from the government, such as the granting of city dweller status to those whose land was expropriated by the state (this status is given to

⁸ The town is to remain anonymous in this study.

two persons for every mu [0.067 hectares] of land expropriated), or 10,000 yuan being transferred from the state into the village treasury for every mu of land expropriated. In this sense, the village is financially rather well off and is in a better position to secure employment for its residents than anywhere else in the prefecture. As can be seen from Table II, Dayang is the top village surveyed in Yancheng Prefecture in terms of the level of industrialization and income.

Out of the 2,000 village's working population about 300 persons work outside the village. This flow resulted from the above-mentioned expropriation of land by the state, in compensation for which they were assured jobs outside the village after being registered as city dwellers. Therefore, this does not constitute a usual case of labor outflow as defined in this paper.

On the other hand, Dayang experiences an inflow of something more than 400 people from outside the village, who are employed in village-run enterprises mostly as temporary workers.

Therefore the movement of the labor force in Subei takes place from lower-level wage and industrialization areas to higher-level areas. However, Yancheng Prefecture has not enough capacity to absorb all of its migratory labor force and consequently a considerable part of it leaves the prefecture in search of work. This indicates that Subei as a whole can be characterized as a source of emigrant labor.

II. INFLOW OF THE LABOR FORCE INTO SUNAN

A. *Industrial Development and Movements of the Labor Force in H Town, Wuxi County*

Sunan is by far the most industrially developed rural area in China. I have already discussed in an earlier paper [4] based on my former surveys of an area including H Town (*zhen*) (or H Village [*xiang*] before 1987), how rural development has been activated by the rise of village or township enterprises. As seen in Table III, the town is characterized by industry-oriented rapid economic development (centered around village or township enterprises) and resultant rises in villager income.

Such rapid industrial development has naturally brought about a great change in the employment structure of H Town. According to my interview data, while 80 per cent of the total work force was engaged in agriculture in 1978, industry now accounts for 75 per cent of work force employment. Since around 1986, by which time the majority of the male labor force in the town, especially the younger men, is considered to have moved over to the industrial sector, a labor shortage (especially for younger workers) began to be felt in all enterprises.⁹ Table IV shows that fathers and younger members of farm families are almost entirely employed in village or township enterprises and that only higher age groups remain in farming.

⁹ On the differentiation of employment structure in farming families in rural Sunan, see Ōshima [6, p. 94, Table 7].

TABLE III
AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT IN H TOWN, WUXI COUNTY
(10,000 yuan)

	Agricultural Output (Including Forestry and Fishery)		Industrial Output				Per Capita Income (Yuan)
	Total	Farming	According to Industrial Group			Private Enterprises	
			Town-Run Enterprises	Village-Run Enterprises	New-Type Cooperatives		
1980	4,211	1,079	448	1,557	1,576	—	148
1981	4,032	768	477	1,669	1,595	—	178
1982	4,970	1,099	607	2,088	1,783	—	292
1983	6,789	1,643	823	2,702	2,444	—	412
1984	10,662	1,762	872	4,032	4,456	323	748
1985	15,114	1,310	779	4,443	9,046	220	986
1986	22,521	1,929	703	8,009	12,583	—	966
1987	34,232	2,126	762	10,364	21,742	—	1,050

Source: Prepared on the basis of data provided by H Town.

- Notes: 1. "New-type cooperative" is an enterprise run by a partnership of several farmers. It is called *lianheti* in China.
2. Private enterprises include both individually (*getihu*) and privately managed (*getiqiye*) enterprises. The former employs less than nine people, whereas the latter more than ten.
3. Blank spaces denote data unavailable. Because of limited data, the agricultural and industrial outputs for 1986 and 1987 do not include production by new-type cooperatives and private enterprises.

TABLE IV
EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE OF C VILLAGERS GROUP (*Cunmin Xiaozu*)
AT J VILLAGE, H TOWN, WUXI COUNTY, 1986

Farm Household Identification Number	Family Size (Persons)	Family Work Force Engaged in: (Persons)		Working Family Members		Remarks
		Farming	Enterprises	Farming	Enterprises	
1	3	2	1	Fa.*, Mo.*	Ch.	Grain
2	4	1	0	Mo.		Grain
3	6	0	5		Fa., 4Chs.	
4	3	1	1	Fa.*	Ch.	
5	3	1	2	Mo.*	2Chs.	Grain
6	4	1	1	Mo.	Fa.	Grain
7	6	0	1		Fa.	
8	4	1	2	Mo.	2Chs.	
9	4	0	1		Fa.	
10	6	1	2	Mo.*	Fa.*, Ch.	
11	4	1	2	Mo.	Fa., Ch.	
12	4	0	1		Fa.	
13	3	0	2		Fa., Ch.	
14	4	1	3	Fa.	3Chs.	Grain
15	4	0	1		Fa.	
16	3	0	2		Fa., Ch.	
17	3	0	2		Fa.*, Mo.	
18	4	0	2		Fa., Ch.	
19	5	0	2		Fa., Ch.	
20	4	0	2		Fa., Ch.	
21	4	1	2	Mo.	2Chs.	
22	4	0	2		Fa., Ch.	
23	4	0	2		Fa., Ch.	
24	5	0	2		Fa., Ch.	
25	5	1	2	Mo.	Fa., Ch.	
26	6	1	2	Fa.	2Chs.	Grain
27	5	0	3		Fa., 2Chs.	
Average	4.2	0.5	1.9			

Source: Prepared on the basis of the writer's interviews at C Villagers Group (*cunmin xiaozu*) of J Village in H Town.

- Notes: 1. Fa., Mo., and Ch. stand for father, mother, and children respectively. Asterisked members are over sixty years old. The number given before Ch. (such as 2Chs.) means how many of the children work. Either the father or the mother is assumed to be the household head.
2. In the right-most column, "grain" denotes that the family is under contract with the government to produce staple food.

These were the circumstances which has prompted the phenomenal inflow of labor from outside the county.¹⁰ According to Table V, which shows the output

¹⁰ Mentioned hereafter as "migrant workers" (locally called *waidigong*) are workers from outside the county. As will be stated later on, they are workers to whom a temporary residence certificate is issued. Therefore, those from neighboring villages or towns, many of whom commute to their work places, are not included in the migrant workers. The term *cunneigong* refers to workers from the village proper.

TABLE V
INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WORKERS IN Y VILLAGE, H TOWN,
WUXI COUNTY, 1978-88

	Population (Persons)	Industrial Workers (Persons)		Industrial and Agricultural Output (10,000 Yuan)			Per Capita Income (Yuan)	
		Total	Of Which: Migrant Workers	Total	Industry	Agricul- ture		Percentage of Industry
1978	2,102	170	—	181	110	71	60.8	142
1979	2,120	195	—	268	198	70	73.9	198
1980	2,135	202	—	283	215	68	76.0	208
1981	2,142	215	—	217	151	66	69.6	247
1982	2,100	233	—	227	146	81	64.3	319
1983	2,156	385	—	339	231	108	68.1	456
1984	2,142	505	—	545	451	94	82.8	799
1985	2,100	581	—	1,164	1,073	91	92.2	829
1986	2,098	641	several	1,592	1,488	104	93.5	1,078
1987	2,064	803	50	3,293	3,187	106	96.8	1,167
1988	2,064	1,200	120					

Source: Prepared on the basis of data provided by Y Village.

Notes: 1. Agricultural output includes sideline occupations.

2. The number of migrant workers are given in round figures. All of them came from outside Wuxi County.

3. Blank spaces denote data unavailable.

and the number of workers in Y Village (*cun*) of H Town, industries there have rapidly developed in contrast to stagnating agriculture, resulting in a steady increase in the number of industrial workers. Workers coming in from outside the county began to be employed around 1986. Thus by 1988, against the Y Village's total population of 2,064 (working population, 1,200) the number of immigrant workers had grown to 120 (5.8 per cent of the total population and 10 per cent of the work force). As for H Town as a whole, with a total population of 45,058 and a work force of 22,159, the number of workers from the outside is something more than 1,500 (3.3 per cent of the total population and 6.8 per cent of the work force).

B. *Employment Conditions for Migrant Workers*

According to information supplied by authorities of Y Village, the number of workers coming from outside the county was something more than 120. Since migrant worker mobility tends to be relatively high, particularly so with day laborers, it is difficult to estimate their current numbers. For this reason, the exact total is not known even to the village people's committee (*cunmin weiyuanhui*).¹¹ However, we are fairly well informed about those working in village-run

¹¹ In H Town there are a considerable number of day laborers from outside the county, although their exact number is not known. They gather every day at a certain location (in the case of H Town around a bridge at the center of the town). They are said to be

enterprises as contract and temporary workers. The figures given in Tables VI-IX are based on information supplied by the village authorities with some compilation by the writer.

Table VI shows places of origin of workers migrating into Y Village. During the first half of 1988, out of a total of 107 workers from outside the county (including those who had already gone home), as many as 48 people (44.9 per cent) came from Sichuan Province, followed by 31 (29.0 per cent) from other counties in Jiangsu Province. Within the Jiangsu figure, workers from Subei accounted for 24 (22.4 per cent). Henan and Anhui provinces accounted for 20 and 7 workers respectively.

As the village authorities explained, the reason why the number of workers coming from Sichuan Province was markedly high was because most of the workers had found their jobs in the village-run enterprises through personal connections. As seen in Table VI, they came not from all over Sichuan Province, but from only three of its counties,¹² and their places of origin are limited only to certain villages of those counties. Moreover, the enterprises where they found jobs are concentrated into certain industries. In other words, they tended to be employed as a group through personal connections established on the basis of the same native place. If this is so, it is most probable that other towns and villages of Wuxi County, too, have been keeping close ties with particular villages outside the county or the province and recruiting workers through personal connections in those locations. With further surveying, this kind of information on movements in the labor force can be added to what we already know.¹³

Table VII classifies 107 migrant workers in Y Village by sex and age. From this table we can see that most of the workers from outside the county are between their late teens and twenty-five years of age, and that male workers constitute a large majority of 82.2 per cent. Differences in the age structure according to home provinces or counties are not observed, as far as data supplied by Y Village are concerned. Hence it may be said that the labor force flow into Sunan has been characterized by younger workers. This is probably because a farmer who is a household head cannot easily decide to leave his native village for he has to take care of his farmland which has been allotted to him under the contract system. The fact that the migrant workers are employed in groups arranged through personal contacts indicates that the labor market there is still undeveloped. In other words, it cannot be said to be open and wideranging.

Table VIII shows the educational background of Y Village's 107 migrant workers. From the table we can see that most of their education centers on lower secondary schooling and that compared with the nation's average or with the

hired by such employers as privately-run transportation enterprises for a daily wage of 8-10 yuan. Their mobility is said to be high, and they flow in and out of cities like Shanghai and Wuxi.

¹² The three counties (P, N, and another in Table VI) are located in the Jialingjiang River basin in eastern Sichuan Province.

¹³ As regards this view, I have as yet not been informed of the conditions in other villages, a theme I hope to cover in the future.

TABLE VI
PLACES OF ORIGIN OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN Y VILLAGE, H TOWN, WUXI COUNTY
(AS OF JANUARY-JUNE 1988)

Work Place	Total Number of Migrant Workers	Place of Origin														
		Jiangsu			Sichuan							Henan	Anhui	Zhejiang		
		Sunan	Subei	Total	P-J	N-G	P-Q	P	N	Others						
Kuang zhuang chang*	6	—	—	6	—	5	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Shipbuilding	7	—	2	4	2	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Painting	19	—	—	9	3	1	1	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Foundry	33	—	10	23	11	5	2	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dye	9	5	—	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Machinery	2	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gloves	14	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	2	—
Aluminum alloy	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Metals	10	1	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fire clay	5	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—
Total	107	7	24	48	19	13	4	7	3	2	20	7	7	1	—	—

Source: Prepared on the basis of the writer's interviews at the Y Village People's Committee and at enterprises in Y Village.
 Notes: 1. Figures given in this table are for the first half of 1988 and naturally include some of the workers who had already left H Town during the research period. Figures are given here with some compilation made on the basis of the village data.
 2. The alphabetical symbols such as P-J stand for J Village of P County in Sichuan Province. Those who came from other villages in P County are given under P.
 * Type of business unknown.

TABLE VII
SEX AND AGE COMPOSITION OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN Y VILLAGE, H TOWN, WUXI COUNTY
(AS OF JANUARY-JUNE 1988)

Work Place	Total Number of Migrant Workers	Males	Females	Under 15	Age							Above 46	Not Known
					16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45			
<i>Kuang zhuang chang*</i>	6	6	—	—	1	2	1	—	—	2	—	—	—
Shipbuilding	7	6	1	—	6	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Painting	19	19	—	—	3	9	1	3	3	—	—	—	—
Foundry	33	33	—	—	16	11	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
Dye	9	8	1	—	3	2	2	1	1	—	—	—	—
Machinery	2	1	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gloves	14	—	14	—	9	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Aluminum alloy	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
Metals	10	8	2	—	3	3	—	—	2	—	—	1	1
Fire clay	5	5	—	—	1	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Total	107	88	19	—	43	33	9	9	11	—	—	1	1

Source: Based on the writer's interviews at the Y Village People's Committee.

Note: Figures given in this table are for the first half of 1988 and naturally include some of the workers who had already left H Town during the research period.

* Type of business unknown.

TABLE VIII
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN Y VILLAGE,
H TOWN, WUXI COUNTY (AS OF JANUARY-JUNE 1988)

Work Place	Total Number of Migrant Workers	Educational Background				
		Illiterate	Primary School Graduates	Lower Secondary School Graduates	Upper Secondary School Graduates†	Not Known
<i>Kuang zhuang chang*</i>	6	—	5	1	—	—
Shipbuilding	7	—	1	5	1	—
Painting	19	—	2	16	1	—
Foundry	33	2	10	20	—	1
Dye	9	1	3	5	—	—
Machinery	2	—	—	—	2	—
Gloves	14	—	5	8	—	1
Aluminum alloy	2	—	—	—	2	—
Metals	10	—	3	6	—	1
Fire clay	5	—	3	2	—	—
Total	107	3	32	63	6	3
Percentage	(100.0)	(2.8)	(29.9)	(58.9)	(5.6)	(2.8)
Educational background of the rural labor force:						
National average ^a	100.0	25.0	38.4	29.4	6.8	—
Average of 7 counties in Jiangsu Province ^b	100.0	6.2	27.8	43.7	20.5	—
Yanqiaoxiang Village, Wuxi County ^c	100.0	2.1	23.7	59.5	13.6	—

Sources: Prepared on the basis of the writer's interviews at the Y Village People's Committee and [9] [10].

Note: Figures given in this table concern the first half of 1988 and naturally include some of the workers who had already left H Town during the research period.

^a Calculated on the basis of [9, p. 226].

^b The seven counties are those appearing in Table I.

^c Calculated based on [10, Table 6]. The source table includes a 1.1 per cent share for graduates from tertiary schooling.

* Type of business unknown.

† Includes those without graduation diplomas.

average of seven counties in Jiangsu Province, both the illiteracy rate and percentage of upper secondary schooling are rather low.

Table IX shows during which year the 107 migrant workers came to Y Village. As was shown in Table V, the inflow of workers from outside the county began around 1985 and reached its peak in 1987 and 1988. The figures given in both tables are roughly consistent.

As for job types and ranking of migrant workers, they are as a rule employed

TABLE IX
INFLOW OF MIGRANT WORKERS TO Y VILLAGE, H TOWN,
WUXI COUNTY BY YEAR

Work Place	Total Number of Migrant Workers	Inflow of Migrant Workers by Year				
		1985	1986	1987	1988	Not Known
<i>Kuang zhuang chang*</i>	6	—	—	3	3	—
Shipbuilding	7	—	—	6	1	—
Painting	19	—	—	7	12	—
Foundry	33	—	—	18	15	—
Dye	9	2	—	4	3	—
Machinery	2	1	—	1	—	—
Gloves	14	—	—	—	14	—
Aluminum alloy	2	2	—	—	—	—
Metals	10	—	3	3	2	2
Fire clay	5	—	—	—	5	—
Total	107	5	3	42	55	2

Source: Based on the writer's interviews at the Y Village People's Committee.

Note: This table is for the same migrant workers given in Table VI.

* Type of business unknown.

first as temporary workers (probationers) for a trial period of one to twelve months, after which they become yearly contract workers. As things stand, native workers of Y Village are rated as regular skilled workers, while migrant workers are treated as a supplementary work force, usually engaged in higher labor intensity jobs. As I myself found out from a visit to the work places, many of them were employed at foundries, which have comparatively high labor intensity (see Table VI).

However, although at present migrant workers are treated differently from native workers in terms of job type and ranking, there is no clear differentiation with respect to wages for the same job and ranking. This seems to be because migrant workers, though their influx has increased over the past several years, do not represent a great number in absolute terms. However, should their number continue to increase to such an extent that they would form a pool of migrant workers seeking jobs in H Town, the wage level might possibly be pushed down, thereby causing friction between native and migrant workers.

According to interviews of workers from Sichuan Province, many of them hoped to go back to their native places after several years of work in Sunan. One of the reasons given for that was the difficulty of transferring one's family register to one's work place. Moreover, village or township enterprises tend to regard migrants only as a supplementary labor force and do not expect them to work for long periods of time. Therefore, under the present family registration system, migrant workers, after working away from home for several years, seem to be forced to go back to their native places.

Besides migrant workers who are employed at factories, there are also in H Town agricultural laborers coming from outside the county (in number at least

100). Some of them are employed on a regular or temporary basis by full-time farmers (*zhuan'yehu*),¹⁴ who are operating at increasingly larger scales in recent years, for which they are subsidized by the village government. A large majority of the migrant farm laborers, however, are employed at town-operated farms.¹⁵ In Sunan recently, native farmers have tended to abandon farming due to low income and high labor intensity. It is almost impossible today to secure farm labor from the native work force. At the same time, since the township or village authorities are obliged to secure a continued supply of farm products to their own people who are registered as city dwellers, as well as make food deliveries to the government, they cannot afford a reduced agricultural scale.¹⁶ These circumstances have caused an increased demand for farm labor from the outside counties. For the migrant laborers, farming is familiar work easy to engage in and for some of them a job to take up for a short time while looking for some other higher paying job.

C. *Living Conditions and Registration of Migrant Workers*

Family registration restrictions have been relaxed to some extent in connection with the movement of the labor force between rural areas, but it is essentially impossible even now to transfer family registers in order to match labor force migratory patterns.¹⁷ Moreover, in the locations where migrants work, their

¹⁴ Concerning these full-time farmers in H Town, see Ōshima [5] [6]. These farmers are under contract to the state to deliver staple food. Since food production generally is not profitable, the local government subsidizes them.

¹⁵ In H Town during the years of Cultural Revolution, Lake Taihu was reclaimed as paddy and its management was entrusted to the surrounding villages. However, as will be stated later, local farmers increasingly have abandoned farming, to the extent that few people remain to take care of the paddy. In recent years, however, greater necessity has arisen for H Town to secure fruit and vegetables, fishery products, and food crops to be delivered to the government. It was therefore decided by the township authorities to reorganize the paddy land as town-operated farms.

¹⁶ For more details see Ōshima [6].

¹⁷ Transferring of family registers from rural areas to towns (some sixty thousand towns exist in China), excepting for county capitals, was basically permitted as announced in a State Council notification (*Guowuyuan guanyu nongmin jinru jizhen luohu wentide tongzhi*), dated October 13, 1984, on the condition that those who have their registers transferred from rural to urban areas are not to get their provisions at official prices (*pingjia*), but must buy them at market prices (*shijia*). Also the ninth point in the ten-point program of the CCP Central Committee and the State Council for stimulating the rural economy (*Zhonggong zhongyang, guowuyuan guanyu jin yibu huoyue nongcun jingjide shixiang zhengce*) states that to develop the rural economy farmers should go to towns and actively engage in commerce and industry. Such a change in policy seems to have prompted liberalization of the existing restrictions on the register transfer from rural to urban areas. Yet, as things stand in Wuxi County, workers from outside the county generally cannot transfer their family registers to the towns where they presently work. From my interviews of the workers and others, no case of such transfer was found. Therefore, it may be right to say that the aforementioned government notification does not necessarily mean that farm family register transfers to towns have been fully liberalized, but that register transfers of a certain number of farmers to towns may be permitted insofar as they serve the purpose of town development.

registration is very strictly controlled by the authorities. A migrant, when he or she finds a job with an enterprise, is obliged to report to the public security authorities, upon which the town government issues him a certificate of temporary residence (*zanzhuzheng*). Migrant workers are supposed to carry the certificate with them as an identification card. Moreover, when they report to the public security authorities they have to have some of their belongings registered.¹⁸ Although such control by means of the residence certificate seems not to be in full force in all towns at present, it is likely to be put into effect widely in Wuxi County in the future.¹⁹

For migrant workers, differences between their native places and where they work in terms of language, eating habits, etc., also present considerable barriers. As is well known, the northern and southern provinces of China are different from each other in staple foods eaten by the people, and dialects also vary considerably.²⁰ The language barrier easily causes trouble during working hours, hampering mutual understanding between native and migrant workers.

Moreover, migrants are found in a disadvantageous situation in purchasing staple food (mainly rice). Under the food control system, migrant workers who are registered as farmers cannot buy staple food at official prices (*pingjia*), but have to buy at market prices (*shijia*).²¹

Finally, migrant workers are provided housing by most of the enterprises, but in some cases the enterprises cannot accommodate all workers and so rent rooms from the local farmers for them. In addition, most migrant workers who are employed as temporary day laborers are said to rent rooms in the town at their own expense.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The characteristics of the inter-regional movements of the labor force that have become clear by the present survey may be summarized as follows.

(1) For the reasons given in the Introduction to this paper, a comparatively simple pattern in labor force movement from Subei to Sunan had to be assumed. However, the pattern turned out to be more diverse. The movement from Subei to Sunan was taking place, to be sure, but within Subei itself there were movements from pure farming areas to small towns or to farm villages located in the city suburbs. Also movement was observed not only from Subei, but from the provinces of Sichuan, Anhui, Henan, and Zhejiang.

¹⁸ This aims mainly to prevent them committing crimes such as theft.

¹⁹ I have heard that with the increase of migrant workers in Wuxi County in recent years, trouble has begun to occur in the form of gambling, theft, violence, etc. involving both migrants and natives, to the extent that the public security authorities are considering putting migrants under stricter control.

²⁰ In the case of Y Village, workers coming from Henan and Sichuan provinces can hardly understand the dialect of Wuxi, while only a few among the village leaders can speak *putonghua*, or Mandarin.

²¹ Many of the migrant workers buy their food at market prices and usually bring it in their mess kit to their work place, where they have it cooked at the canteen's kitchen for them.

(2) In Subei, which is one of the sources of migrant labor flow, 10–20 per cent of the working population of a number of farm villages has already moved out of their native villages, while in H Town, Sunan, a destination of this outflow, there is a considerable immigrant worker population growing. They come not only from other counties or prefectures within Jiangsu Province itself, but from as far away as Sichuan Province as well.

(3) Nevertheless, because of an undeveloped labor market, the employment of migrant labor is still confined to such forms as the employment of groups of persons from the same places of origin through personal connections. As for age and sex, the typical migrant worker tends to be a younger male.

Microeconomically speaking, such phenomena will have various effects on previously homogeneous rural areas in China, causing a wide class differentiation among them. This is largely due to the existing gaps between migrant and native workers with respect to job type, wages, living conditions, family registration status, etc.; and more problems are likely to arise as the labor force flow increases.

Looking at the problem macroeconomically, the relative concentration of capital and technology in particular regions (namely, the eastern coastal regions centering on Jiangsu Province), which has been growing at a rapid pace since the earlier part of the 1980s under current Chinese economic reforms, has triggered mass movements of the labor force toward these regions, resulting in greater and greater concentrations of labor there.²² Also, as things stand, this trend seems to be widening, rather than narrowing, the existing development gaps which exist among the rural areas.

It is yet to be seen whether current inter-regional movements of the labor force will take place on an even larger scale and lead to the formation of an extended labor market covering more parts of China.²³ As far as economic rationality goes, an extended labor market will make it possible to concentrate the labor force in particular regions, thereby prompting their economic development. However, this trend will be accompanied by the hollowing out of the family registration system, as a great number of farmers begin to be transformed into migrant workers, who would have no plots of land for themselves at their work places and, therefore, have to purchase their food in the market.²⁴ It remains to be studied whether China today could secure a food supply for these new types of farmers.

²² It should be noted, however, that since around the middle of 1988 the Chinese government has quickly begun to return to a policy of restraint—a policy that may affect in no small way the future development of village or township enterprises. See Ōshima [7].

²³ As was stated earlier in this paper, in H Town an area-bound labor market has already come into being and it has become routine to use such means as “help wanted” bulletin boards for an unspecified number of job seekers to be employed as day laborers or temporary workers. But as I have found, such job offers hardly went beyond the limits of the town.

²⁴ As I have found from interviews, some of the migrant workers brought their staple food with them from their native places (to last them for a month at the most), but there was none who had food sent from their homes. Hence most of them eventually had to buy their food where they worked.

As long as the Chinese government continues its negative attitude toward the flow of the labor force by maintaining the existing family registration system and, in regarding migrant workers only as a temporary supplementary labor force, continues to deny them the right to settle down at their places of work, unfavorable effects on labor force concentration and technological accumulation, both of which are necessary to the Chinese economy, will no doubt occur. In this sense, the recent genesis and expansion of movements of the labor force in rural areas certainly seems to represent a challenge to the present family registration system and thus constitute a problem of great consequence to Chinese society as a whole.

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