

Charity Bazaar Alert !

Fukagawa Church will be holding its Autumn Charity Bazaar on the following date :

Sunday, October 19th, 11:45 AM – 2:00 PM

Items at the bazaar include Afghan dried fruits, Aleppo soap, and mufflers, which support employment for women in North India. Additionally, we will offer a variety of foods such as "Okaasan's Mixed Rice" (mother's mixed rice), "Oyaji's Yakisoba" (dad's fried noodles), as well as various sweets and side dishes. We will also host an "Otanoshimi Workshop" (Fun Workshop), so please come and join us!

About the Donation

The Fukagawa Church Charity Bazaar dedicates a portion of its sales to people in need. This year, we will offer donations to the Domestic Refugee Support, Ukraine support, and Churches in heavy snow regions within Japan. Domestic refugee support will be donated through the [Japan Association for Refugees \(JAR\)](#), and Ukraine support will be donated through [World Vision](#). Please visit the respective organizations' websites for more details.

Hate, Exclusivism in Japan

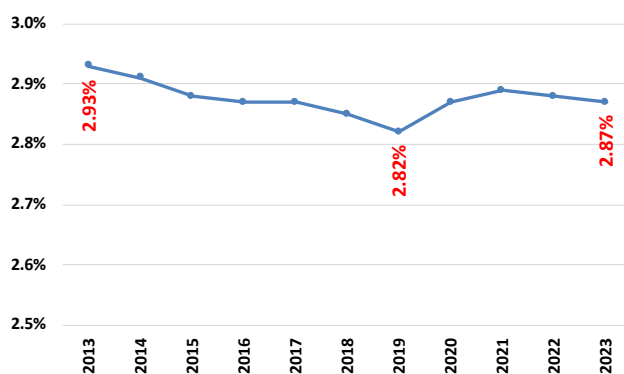
Recent newsletters have covered the status of domestic refugees, conflicts, earthquakes, and climate change. This time, we will focus once again on a domestic Japanese topic. In the recent election, policies concerning foreign residents in Japan were one of the main themes, as the slogan "Japan First" garnered significant attention. The backdrop was a chorus of voices asserting claims such as "Japan is only giving preferential treatment to foreigners," "the increase in foreigners is worsening public safety in Japan" and so on. Some even argued that regulations against foreigners are "not discrimination, but a distinction between Japanese and foreigners." However, how

accurate are these claims?

Are foreigners favored?

In the recent election, the following points were raised: "Foreigners are free-riding on Japan's healthcare system," "Foreigners are also receiving public assistance (welfare)," and "International students are receiving large amounts of scholarships." But are these claims based on facts?

First, the claim that "free-riding on Japan's healthcare system" is incorrect. Foreigners working in Japan are obligated to enroll in the National Health Insurance (NHI) system just like Japanese nationals. Moreover, tourists, short-term visitors, and foreigners without a residence permit are not allowed to enroll, meaning they must bear medical expenses. According to a report by the Daiwa Institute of Research, while the NHI premium payment rate for foreigners in 2024 was 63%, lower than the overall rate of 93%, the proportion of the total NHI medical benefit payments accounted for by foreigners remains at only 1.39%. This means that foreign residents are actually in a position where they support Japan's medical insurance system, as the medical expenses paid out to foreign enrollees are less than those paid to Japanese nationals¹.



Public Assistance Recipient Rate Among Foreign Households

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

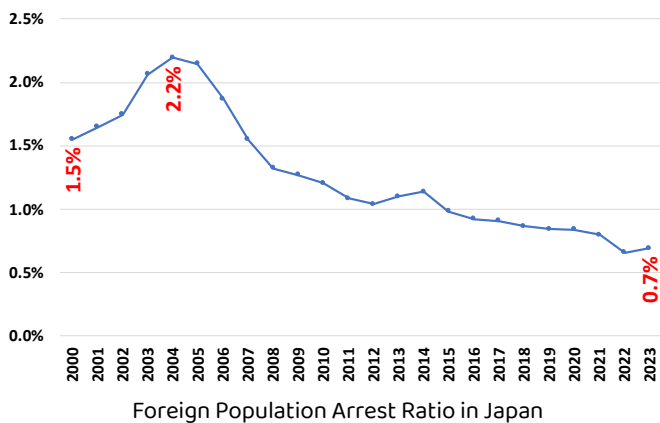
Next, the statement that "foreign nationals also receive welfare benefits" is true, but this is stipulated by law. However, the benefit is generally limited to permanent residents, long-term residents such as Japanese

¹ https://www.dir.co.jp/report/column/20250725_012295.html

descendants, and those staying on spousal visas. Furthermore, a review of the welfare recipient rate among foreign households reveals that they account for less than 3% of the recipient households, including Japanese nationals. This shows that over 90% of welfare recipients in Japan are Japanese nationals, and it is not easy for foreigners to receive benefits just because they are foreign.

Public Safety Disordering?

Another factor behind the increased focus on immigration policy is the rumor that “public safety has worsened due to the increase in foreigners.” However, statistical data reveals that this is also not true.



Source: National Police Agency

As of 2023, foreign nationals arrested for crimes accounted for about 0.7% of the total resident foreign population. Moreover, the overall number of arrests is trending downward. This indicates that while the number of foreigners residing in Japan is increasing, the number of those arrested for crimes is decreasing.

Some foreign nationals indeed fail to pay their insurance premiums or medical expenses, and some commit crimes. However, we must be careful not to generalize such isolated cases as a problem concerning all foreigners, as this prevents an accurate understanding of reality.

Distinction or Discrimination?

Regarding restrictions imposed on foreign nationals, we often hear, “It is a distinction, not discrimination.” Is this expression appropriate? Let’s consider the

difference between discrimination and distinction using the example of rights.

“Distinction” refers to a state where both parties possess an equal degree of rights and dividing them does not lead to an imbalance of those rights. In contrast, “discrimination” means that an inequality of rights already exists between the two parties, or that dividing them causes this imbalance.

What about the relationship between Japanese nationals and foreign nationals? Foreigners working in Japan pay taxes, including consumption, income, and social security contributions, just like Japanese nationals. However, foreigners cannot vote in Japanese elections, even when holding permanent residency status. They also face the risk of deportation for a single mistake. In this way, a clear disparity in rights already exists between Japanese and foreigners. Despite it, can further restricting the rights of foreign nationals truly be called a “distinction”?

Reconsider the Bazaar’s Meaning

We all want to cherish our own. But we must not forget that we do not exist solely. Who am I? What kind of person am I? How should I live? This “I” exists thanks to being with others, knowing others, and interacting with others. The Lord Jesus states:

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

We can cherish ourselves because God loves us. The Lord said that we, too, should care for others, just as God does. This is so that by valuing others, we can learn to love ourselves.

Regrettably, society has become increasingly harsh towards others in recent years. However, precisely because we live in an era of intolerance, this charity bazaar holds great significance. To think of those facing miserable circumstances through the bazaar and reach out a helping hand—that is an encounter between “I” and others, and a practice of cherishing “I” and others together.

(Text by Sho)