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Abstract	Marriage migrants are frequently found in Japanese families not only in urban areas but in rural areas as well. However, international marriages in rural areas have been regarded a priori as a "problematic phenomenon". It is said that marriage migrants are victims of the system of the patriarchal stem family and economic differences between Japan and their countries of origin. Therefore, they are seen as weak and passive, and as being under pressure to assimilate into Japanese society. Recently, however, some researchers have discovered opposite cases, seeing marriage migrants as strong individuals who can help transform Japan into a multicultural society. This newly discovered image of marriage migrants runs contrary to their stylized image as weak and passive. What led to this gap between the two images of marriage migrants? This is difficult to understand as long as we restrict our analysis to their individual capability. In other words, the characteristics of the adaptation process of marriage migrants depend on the social characteristics of the communities that accept them. It is possible to establish two hypotheses. One is that rural communities are in a process of adjustment to new socioeconomic conditionsthat make it easier for marriage migrants to settle. The other is that the existence of marriage migrants and their experience of going through an adaptation process are much more complex than the available interpretations that see them as either victims or opportunity-seekers who use marriage to Japanese men to earn money. Based on investigations in Minami-Uonuma-shi, Niigata Prefecture, this paper demonstrates that the premises of previous studies do not necessarily reflect actual socioeconomic conditions and the changes that are giving individuals a freer way of life even in rural areas. Minami-Uonuma-shi has undergone major changes in response to globalization since the 1980s. Against the background of socioeconomic and cultural changes, marriage migrants have created new social networks within and beyond their communities which did not previously exist. In other words, the female marriage migrants and their children are establishing a new identity that goes beyond nationality. Regarding social networks in rural communities, traditional bonding-type social networks are characterized by strong mutual trust among the members of the community but that are exclusive and largely closed to newcomers. But by the end of the 1990s, an important change began to take place in rural communities. New socioeconomic conditions emerged that encouraged the development of a new type of social network, a bridging-type that is accommodating and open to newcomers. The development level of bridging-type social networks is a key parameter that determines whether or not marriage migrants can become agents who enhance the transformation process of rural communities and create new life patterns. In order to examine changes in network types, in this paper I analyze case studies of two civil society organizations.

Civil Society Organizations and Changes in Female Marriage Migrants in Rural Japan

Satoko Takeda

Abstract

Marriage migrants are frequently found in Japanese families not only in urban areas but in rural areas as well. However, international marriages in rural areas have been regarded *a priori* as a "problematic phenomenon". It is said that marriage migrants are victims of the system of the patriarchal stem family and economic differences between Japan and their countries of origin. Therefore, they are seen as weak and passive, and as being under pressure to assimilate into Japanese society. Recently, however, some researchers have discovered opposite cases, seeing marriage migrants as strong individuals who can help transform Japan into a multicultural society. This newly discovered image of marriage migrants runs contrary to their stylized image as weak and passive.

What led to this gap between the two images of marriage migrants? This is difficult to understand as long as we restrict our analysis to their individual capability. In other words, the characteristics of the adaptation process of marriage migrants depend on the social characteristics of the communities that accept them. It is possible to establish two hypotheses. One is that rural communities are in a process of adjustment to new socioeconomic conditions that make it easier for marriage migrants to settle. The other is that the existence of marriage migrants and their experience of going through an adaptation process are much more complex than the available interpretations that see them as either victims or opportunity-seekers who use marriage to Japanese men to earn money.

Based on investigations in Minami-Uonuma-shi, Niigata Prefecture, this paper demonstrates that the premises of previous studies do not necessarily reflect actual socioeconomic conditions and the changes that are giving individuals a freer way of life even in rural areas. Minami-Uonuma-shi has undergone major changes in response to globalization since the 1980s. Against the background of socioeconomic and cultural changes, marriage migrants have created new social networks within and beyond their communities which did not previously exist. In other words, the female marriage migrants and their children are establishing a new identity that goes beyond nationality.

Regarding social networks in rural communities, traditional bonding-type social net-

works are characterized by strong mutual trust among the members of the community but that are exclusive and largely closed to newcomers. But by the end of the 1990s, an important change began to take place in rural communities. New socioeconomic conditions emerged that encouraged the development of a new type of social network, a bridging-type that is accommodating and open to newcomers. The development level of bridging-type social networks is a key parameter that determines whether or not marriage migrants can become agents who enhance the transformation process of rural communities and create new life patterns. In order to examine changes in network types, in this paper I analyze case studies of two civil society organizations.

I. Introduction

Twenty years have passed since female marriage migrants from Asian countries began to make their appearance in rural Japan. The phenomenon caught the attention of the mass media due to the fact that local governments were helping male residents suffering from a "shortage of brides" to meet and find female partners from Asian countries.[1] While this unprecedented government action turned out to be short-lived, due to widespread social criticism in the media, the inflow of foreign brides from Asian countries into rural Japan continued. The major criticism focused on the old-fashioned idea of marriage that gave priority to the succession of the "ie" under the system of patriarchal stem family, disregarding women's human rights. Early coverage and studies of marriage migrants emphasized their isolation and vulnerability, and also referred heavily to the problems of rural communities (Shukuya 1988; Sato ed. 1989). Some researchers such as Nakamura (1994) presented another view on the influx of "Asian brides" into rural areas. While criticizing the concept of "imports of Asian brides," they pointed to the possibility that these women could become a driving force for transforming rural communities into multicultural societies if their living conditions were to improve. However, this possibility was not sufficiently deepened by subsequent research. On the contrary, international marriage[2] in rural areas was considered a problem or deviation, as seen by the frequent mention of "fake marriages" in the mass media. Consequently, the possibilities arising from different cultures and values which marriage migrants subtend were underestimated.

Recently, marriage migration in Japan has drawn renewed academic attention from researchers such as Chris Burgess (2004), Masako Watanabe (2002), and Nicole Constable, ed. (2005). They grasp marriage migrants as active agents and discuss their potential role as agents who can help to transform Japan into a multicultural society. However, they have not succeeded in elucidating why marriage migrants can be active agents. This is difficult to understand as long as we restrict our analysis to their individual capability. In other words, the characteristics of the adaptation process of marriage migrants depend on the social characteristics of the communities that accept them. One critical issue is that the previous studies on "Asian brides" are premised on an image of rural areas which was formed before

Japan's rapid economic growth from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s. Tsutsumi ed. (2010) argues that farming communities in Japan today are at a turning point from various viewpoints such as the formation principles of the community, marriage and family norms, women's social status, and agriculture in Japan.

There is a gap between reality and discourse on international marriages in rural areas. For example, researchers and activist groups frequently state that "foreign brides" are imported in order to make up for the female labor shortage in agriculture. However, most families that accept "Asian brides" do not need them as labor force, since they carry out agriculture part-time. Further, currently about 90% of residents of rural villages are in non-farming households.

This paper focuses on the fact that many marriage migrants have succeeded in settling in rural areas despite the difficulties described in previous studies. It is possible to establish two hypotheses. One is that rural communities are in a process of adjustment to new socioeconomic conditions that make it easier for marriage migrants to settle. The other is that the existence of marriage migrants and their experience of going through an adaptation process are much more complex than the available interpretations that see them as either victims or opportunity-seekers who use marriage to Japanese men to earn money.

Regarding the former, social networks[3] in rural communities are examined. Traditional bonding-type social networks are characterized by strong mutual trust among the members of the community, but are exclusive and largely closed to newcomers. But by the end of the 1990s, an important change began to take place in rural communities. New socioeconomic conditions emerged that encouraged the development of a new type of social network, a bridging-type that is accommodating and open to newcomers. The development level of bridging-type social networks is a key parameter that determines whether or not marriage migrants can become agents who enhance the transformation process of rural communities and create new life patterns. In order to examine the above-mentioned hypothesis on changes in network types, I analyze the case studies of two civil society organizations.

Regarding the latter, I use a qualitative approach and place emphasis on the women's own interpretations of their experiences and perceptions of marriage migration. At the same time, I explore their relationships and social networks with their family members and Japanese people in the communities. In relation to the former, it must be emphasized that the adaptation process of marriage migrants is closely linked to changes in social networks. Twenty members of international families, including 14 marriage migrants I interviewed, told me they had overcome the difficulties they faced with the assistance of social networks, though one couple ended up divorcing.

Before entering into the main discussion, I would like to offer a brief history of international marriage in rural Japan and present an outline of marriage migrants in Minami-Uonuma-shi, Niigata prefecture, based on two surveys.

II. Brief History of International Marriage in Rural Japan

The number of foreign residents in Japan has continued to climb year by year, reaching 2,217,426 in 2008, accounting for 1.74% of population. Migrants are not only becoming more visible in Japan, but are also increasingly tending to settle. Each year, about 60,000 migrants change their resident status to permanent resident and about 15,000 become naturalized.

Along with this change, the number of "international marriages" in Japan has increased dramatically since the latter half of the 1980s[4] (Figure 1). Many "international couples" are having children who can legally hold dual nationality, although most children have not taken the necessary procedures for acquiring dual nationality. As shown later in a concrete example, parents do not always fully understand the system. Foreign brides in Japan have consistently been more numerous than foreign grooms, and now outnumber them almost four to one (Figure 1). This ratio began to be increasingly lopsided in 1975, accompanying the rise of the presence of Japanese companies overseas. A large majority (80 percent) of female marriage migrants are of three nationalities: China, the Philippines and South Korea (Figure 2).

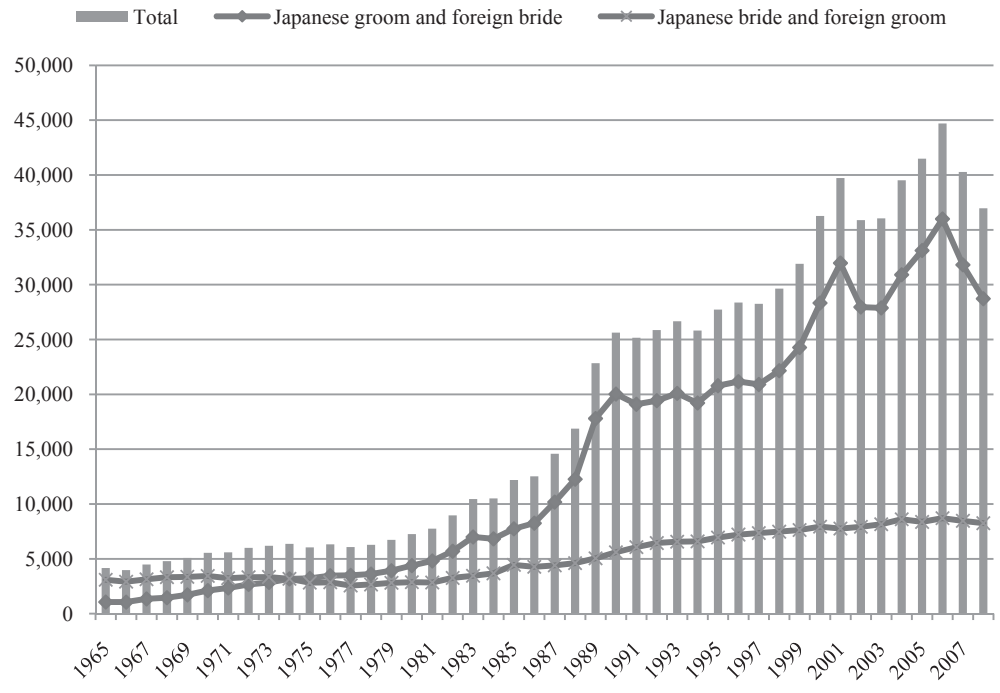

Figure 1. Number of "International Marriages" in Japan from 1965 to 2008
Source: Population Survey Report by Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare

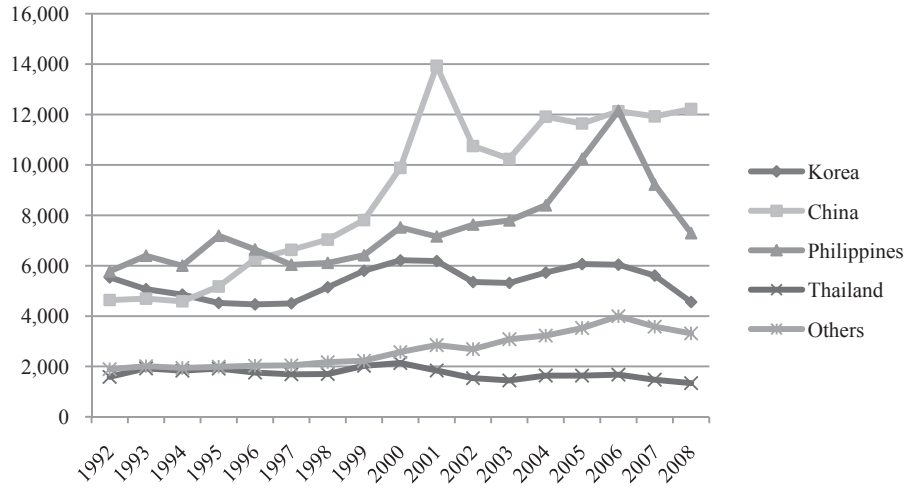

Figure 2. Female Marriage Migrants Classified by Nationality from 1992 to 2008
Source: Population Survey Report by Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare

Table 1 compares the number of international marriages in 1975 and 2005. In 30 years, the number of international marriages increased nine-fold. The increase in the six north-western prefectures of Japan (Tohoku region) and Niigata prefecture has been even more remarkable: 125 times for Yamagata, 35 times for Fukushima and 20 times for Niigata. This rapid increase is not the result of a simple process, but is due to the influence of various factors such as introductions by marriage brokers and/or acquaintances who are often themselves marriage migrants who settled earlier.

Table 2 shows the status of foreign women (aged 15 years or older) who visited Japan during the 1995-2000 period. “Wife” in the table indicates a woman who was living with a Japanese husband in a nuclear family, while “Son’s Bride” refers to a woman living together with her in-laws. It can be pointed out as a feature that the percentage of “Son’s Bride” in the seven northwest prefectures (15.1%) is significantly higher than the national average (3.9%) in Japan.

Table 1. Comparison Between 1975 and 2005 of the Number of International Marriages in the Six Prefectures of Tohoku and Niigata Prefecture

	1975			2005		
	Total Number of Marriage	Int'l Marriage		Total Number of Marriages	Int'l Marriage	
		JPN hus. & Foreign wife	JPN wife & Foreign hus.		JPN hus.& Foreign wife	JPN wife & Foreign hus.
Japan	941,628 (0.64%)	3,222	2,823	714,265 (5.81%)	33,116	8,365
Aomori	11,695 (0.26%)	15	15	6,584 (3.22%)	128	84
Iwate	10,409 (0.19%)	11	9	6,446 (4.10%)	245	19
Miyagi	16,776 (0.31%)	35	17	12,820 (3.88%)	443	54
Akita	9,432 (0.07%)	3	4	4,884 (2.74%)	121	13
Yamagata	9,149 (0.05%)	2	3	5,729 (6.27%)	346	13
Fukushima	15,065 (0.13%)	11	9	10,606 (4.52%)	445	34
Niigata	18,022 (0.23%)	19	22	11,484 (4.57%)	476	49
Subtotal of above 7	112,652 (0.16%)	96	79	58,553 (4.22%)	2,204	266

Note: The figures in ( ) are the percentage of international marriages within all marriages.
Source: Population Survey Report by Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare

Table 2. Composition of Foreign Women Living in Japan Classified by Social Attributes in 1995 and 2000 (Aged 15 or Older)

	Wife		Son's Bride		Other Status		Total
Japan	82,563	(43.6%)	7,460	(3.9%)	99,423	(52.5%)	189,446
Aomori	160	(24.2%)	40	(6.1%)	460	(69.7%)	660
Iwate	390	(27.5%)	240	(17.4%)	760	(55.1%)	1,380
Miyagi	1,200	(42.3%)	260	(9.2%)	1,380	(48.6%)	2,840
Akita	100	(7.5%)	380	(28.4%)	860	(55.1%)	1,340
Yamagata	1,000	(43.5%)	520	(22.6%)	780	(33.9%)	2,300
Fukushima	1,040	(39.4%)	340	(12.9%)	1,260	(47.7%)	2,640
Niigata	960	(32.4%)	360	(12.2%)	1,640	(55.4%)	2,960
Subtotal of above 7 prefectures	4,850	(34.3%)	2,140	(15.1%)	7,140	(50.5%)	14,130

Source: Ishikawa, 2007, p. 276. Original source is National Census in 2000

III. Minami-Uonuma-shi, Niigata Prefecture

Minami-Uonuma-shi, Niigata prefecture, which I used as my research site, is located

approximately 200 kilometers northwest of Tokyo. It is an agricultural area and is famous for the rice called Uonuma Koshihikari. It was established as a city in 2004 by a merger of two towns (Muikamachi Town and Yamato Town), with Shiozawa Town being added in 2005. The population of the three towns peaked at 71,581 in 1955, fell to 61,670 in 2009 and the depopulation has not stopped. In 2005, the population density (112 people/km^2) was considerably below the national average of 343 people/km^2. The ratio of people aged over 65 is 25% and the ratio of households with people aged over 65 is 52.5%. Table 3 shows the unmarried rate by age class and the number of unmarried persons in 2000 and in 2005. Out of 18,937 households, 13,142 (69.4%) are non-farm households. This is still lower than the national average of non-farm households (90%), and the growing heterogeneity of the members of the community is inevitably leading to changes. Marriage migrants with different cultural backgrounds and gender roles in society are the most remarkable expression of the heterogeneity. It is estimated that there are approximately 180 marriage migrants in Minami-Uonuma-shi, as calculated by the number and resident status of foreigners with alien registration. Out of these 180, the village of residence of 105 has been confirmed.

Table 3. Unmarried Rate Classified by Age Class, and Number of Unmarried Persons in Minami-Uonuma-shi

	2000				2005			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
Age	%	People	%	People	%	People	%	People
25-29	62.0	1,239	42.8	812	64.8	1,184	50.8	907
30-34	39.2	684	19.7	338	41.1	807	23.6	429
35-39	24.5	446	9.1	157	29.9	501	13.6	228
40-44	19.6	421	4.3	88	21.0	370	8.0	139
45-49	14.7	400	3.6	90	18.0	386	4.3	87
Ave.& subtotal	32.0	3,190	15.9	1,485	35.0	3,248	20.1	1,790

Source: National Census in 2005
Note: The average of unmarried percent in Japan is male 34.0% and female 21.9% in 2000, and male 38.1% and female 26.2% in 2005.

The reasons I chose Minami-Uonuma-shi as a research site are as follows: (1) it was the most active area of Niigata prefecture in organizing international marriages at the time of the first international marriage boom in rural areas in the late 1980s. In 1988, 44 out of 122 female marriage migrants in Niigata prefecture were living in Minami-Uonuma-shi (Niigata-Nippou-sha, 1989, p. 27). This was recorded in a report submitted to the Niigata prefectural assembly. Two routes for the recruitment of foreign brides have been confirmed in Minami-Uonuma-shi: one targeting the Philippines by the Agriculture Committee and the other targeting Korea by private agencies. (2) However, until recently the local government did not provide any support for the settlement of marriage migrants. It was not until July 2006 that a Japanese language class initiated by the city office was established. (3) Therefore, it can be assumed that families and the community played important roles in their set-

tlement.

As I mentioned earlier, the aim of this paper is to explore the adaptation process of marriage migrants based on changes in community and the family. How can we recognize changes in communities? In Section V, I examine the functions of two civic organizations founded in the 2000s. Before doing so, I touch upon changes of voting behavior in the 1992 mayoral election in (the no longer existing) Yamato-town. The city of Minami-Uonuma-shi, to which Yamato-town belongs, was the support base for former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka who was in office from 1972 to 1974, and who was the most influential member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) until the mid-1980s. He maintained his grip on power by attracting various public works projects to benefit loyal constituents. One out of three households in (the no longer existing) Muikamachi-town was working for the construction companies.[5] In return, people connected to the public works voted for the candidates of the LDP. This political structure controlled the overall community until the late 1980s.

In 1992, two candidates ran in the mayoral election of Yamato-town: one was the incumbent mayor who was aiming for a third term. He was supported by the local branches of the LDP and Japanese Socialist Party, 20 out of 21 members of the town assembly, and the union of local government employees. The other was the director of the town hospital who had quit his job and was running for the first time. He was only supported by individuals who shared his policies. People expected that the incumbent mayor would win by a huge margin, but the difference ended up being a mere 2,200 votes. There was shock at the election result because it showed that conventional campaign tactics had lost their effectiveness. People voted according to their own ideas, despite the restrictions in work places and communities. This change was largely caused by the emergence of individualism and the bridging-type of social network in the community.

IV. Outline of Marriage Migrants in Minami-Uonuma-shi, Niigata

The data used in this article were collected from two city-wide surveys implemented from October 2006 to February 2007 in cooperation with Minami-Uonuma-shi, the UONUMA Association for Multicultural Exchange (UMEX),[6] and two faculty members of the International University of Japan (IUJ)[7] and based on the narratives of 14 international families I interviewed from 2007 to 2009.

4.1 Features of the 45 Marriage Migrants:

The purpose of the two city-wide surveys was to seek the opinions and views of foreign residents on the social conditions in Minami-Uonuma-shi that affected their ability to fully participate in community life regardless of their nationalities, ethnicities, religions and language handicaps in Japanese. The survey was sent to all registered foreign residents aged 16 or older in Minami-Uonuma-shi. Of the 148 responses, 45 that were by female marriage

migrants married to Japanese were analyzed for this research (for details, refer to Report of the Toyota Project in 2007).

The 45 selected marriage migrants, accounting for 25% of total marriage migrants, were divided into three groups based on the period of arrival: the 1st term from 1987 to 1996, the 2nd term from 1997 to 2001, and the 3rd term from 2002 to 2007. The 1st term was the period when the people were surprised by the sudden international marriage phenomenon, and when marriage migrants quickly became invisible due to social criticism. In the 2nd term, although people raised concerns about cross-cultural education at schools, those interests did not touch upon the existence of marriage migrants. During the 3rd term, people finally began to create links with marriage migrants through civil society organizations.

The following is a brief outline of the features of the 45 marriage migrants based on the survey. Figures in parentheses are the number of respondents.

(1) Nationality by Period of Arrival
The 1st term: Korea (10), Philippines (7), USA (1), Brazil (1)
The 2nd term: China (6), Philippines (3), Romania (1), Russia (1), Sri Lanka (1)
The 3rd term: China (9), Philippines (5)
The arrival of brides from Korea had almost stopped, and instead China became the main sending country of marriage migrants in the 2000s. The inflow of marriage migrants from the Philippines has remained constant.

(2) Method of Marriage
Nine out of 43 respondents who answered this question had become married through the introduction of a marriage broker, nine persons through love marriages, four persons through the introduction of acquaintances living in the country of origin and 22 persons through the introduction of acquaintances living in Japan.

(3) Family Structure
Out of the 45 respondents, 25 (56%) were living together with in-laws. Five persons were living with children from an earlier marriage.

(4) Future Plans
Of 40 respondents who answered this question, 27 planned to settle permanently, and 13 planned to become naturalized. It seems that they wished to maintain their nationality as a base for their identity.

(5) Husbands' Occupations
Of 42 respondents who answered this question, 24 were company employees, six were self-employed, five were civil servants and teachers, and three were farmers. As these were replies by the marriage migrants, there is high possibility that the result does not give a full

picture of the profession of their husbands. Some of them may have been farming on the side.

(6) Marriage Migrants' Occupations

The years of education received by marriage migrants differed greatly from 6 to 21 years. Their occupations before they were married were: civil servant (3), specialist such as teacher or nurse (8), company employee (13) and employee in the service sector (6). Their current occupations were: housewife (12), part-time employee (11) and others. It turns out that for marriage migrants, the marriage put them in a weak position in terms of vocational and economic independence.

4.2 Adaptation Process of the 14 Marriage Migrants

Table 4 shows the main events in the adaptation process of the 14 marriage migrants I interviewed. It is clear that the adaptation process differed depending on the timing of their arrival. The 14 marriage migrants were divided into the three groups outlined above according to the period of arrival (1987 to 1996, 1997 to 2001, and 2002 to 2008). The adaptation process was also divided into three categories by length of stay of the individual: the first stage from arrival to the fifth year, the second stage from the sixth to tenth year, and the third stage from the eleventh year onward. All of the marriage migrants except Ph2 and Ch4 had lived or were living with their in-laws.

The members of the first group in the first stage were all involved in child-rearing with the exception of Th2, who had no children. In contrast, the life events of marriage migrants in the second and third groups were varied and their orders of life events were varied as well. When Sr1 and Ch2 gave birth to children, their mothers came to Japan to take care of their daughters and grandchildren. Low transportation and communication costs made it easy for the women to maintain and use the social network of their natal family. Another characteristic of this group is that in the 2000s, some marriage migrants, such as Ko3, Th2, Sr1 and Ch4, started to work running massage shops, teaching their mother tongue, or running ethnic restaurants. Ko1, Ko2, Ko3 and Ch2 obtained positions teaching their native language at a high school, a class for local people, and at a junior high school offering instruction for foreign students who were brought to Minami-Uonuma-shi by remarried mothers.

After the late 1990s, the life events of the marriage migrants became more flexible than they were in the 1980s and the early 1990s. What caused this change? I assume that positive changes for the marriage migrants were taking place in the communities. First, a change that involved finding value in different ethnicities was taking place. It provided marriage migrants with various opportunities to present their cultures at schools and/or at community events. The other was the establishment of two civil society organizations (UMEX and the Japanese language class). The formation of civil society organizations that provided support for foreigners may have been an enormous change for the rural communities. It means that the social network of rural communities dominated by the traditional

bonding-type social networks began to change into the bridging-type network which is accommodating and open to newcomers.

Table 4. Life Events of Marriage Migrants by Time of Arrival

Arrival Period	Bride	First Stage	Second Stage	Third Stage
		1987~1992	1993~1996	1997~
1987 ~ 1996	Br1	Delivery, Delivery	Join civic group, Naturalized	Two children independent
	Ko1*	Delivery, Death of Mother-in-law	Hus. Hospitalized, Joined Women's association	Gave speech in public, Taught Korean, Hus. retired
	Ko2*	Delivery, Delivery	Part-time, Travelled to Europe alone	Gave speech in public, Taught Korean at high school
	Th1	Delivery	Part-time, Helped brother's business in Thailand for 2 yrs	Full-time
	Ko3*		Delivery, Lived apart from in-laws, Studied aboard	Began Korean & English classes, Joined civic group , Hired as ALT
	Th2	Part-time		Hus. retired, Opened massage shop
		1997~2001	2002~2006	2007~
1997 ~ 2001	Sr1*	Part-time, Lived apart from in-laws, Delivery, Lived together with in-laws, Delivery	Taught cooking in public, Delivery, Opened restaurant	Joined Japanese class
	Ph1*	Delivery, Part-time job, Divorce	Remarried, Delivery, Part-time	
	Ph3	Part-time	Full-time, Delivery	Joined Japanese class
	Ch1*	Part-time	Fertility treatment in China	Death of Mother-in-law
	Ch2*	Japanese class in other city, Delivery	Part-time, Joined civic group	Taught Chinese students
	Ph2	Delivery, Delivery	Divorce	
		2002~2006	2007~	
2002 ~ 2008	Ch3*	Japanese class, Part-time, Brought over son from China		
	Ch4*	Delivery, Brought over son from China, Japanese class,	Opened massage shop	

Note: * means an arranged marriage by a private marriage brokerage or acquaintance.
Abbreviations: Br (Brunei), Ko (Korea), Th (Thailand), Ph (the Philippines), Sr (Sri Lanka), Ch (China).

In respect to the possibility of creating a transformation, the existence of children of

international couples including children brought by remarrying mothers is important. Most of the children of the international couples I interviewed did well in school and some were attending universities in Tokyo. Ko3's daughter was 12 years old and spoke three languages: Japanese, Korean, and English. Ko3 was planning to have her daughter study at an international school in Korea when she reached high school age, and then to have her take an entrance examination for a Japanese university by using the system for returnee students. In accordance with this plan, Ko3 was sending her daughter to stay with her sister in Seoul every summer vacation to interact with her cousins. She said she regretted not having applied to the Korean Embassy to get Korean nationality for her daughter when she was born. Neither she nor her husband had been aware of the system of dual citizenship at that time. If she had taken advantage of it, her daughter could have gone to Korean school during her stay there. Although the rest of the children were monolingual, it seemed that they had some sense of their mothers' native language because they had the chance to visit their mothers' country and interact with maternal relatives. Those transnational networks seemed to have the potential to produce an unexpected effect in the future.

In terms of future plans, we must focus attention on the fact that some marriage migrants are thinking of returning to their home countries after finishing child rearing and/or entering old age. Since many of the marriage migrants are much younger than their husbands, they feel anxious about widowhood. Th2, who has no children, said to me, "I plan to return to Thailand together with my husband when I cannot work, though I have not discussed this with him. His pension is not large, but it will be sufficient to live in Thailand." We should not overlook the fact that the marriage migrants feel uneasy about their old age in Japan.

V. Case Studies of Two Civil Society Organizations

Putnam (1995) argues that the existence of social associations and the degree of participation are indicators of the extent of social networks in a society. These associations and participation promote and enhance collective norms and trust, which are central to the production and maintenance of collective well-being. In addition, it is recognized that nursery and elementary schools play a key role in allowing marriage migrants to expand their social network among Japanese. Coleman (1989) argues that "looking after" children by adults in a vicinity is a kind of social capital which does not exist in most metropolitan areas of the United States, and which is useful for preventing students from dropping out of high school. It is an advantage of small-sized communities and is useful by providing the function of "looking after" not only to children, but also to marriage migrants and their foreign-born children. Compared with children of international couples in urban areas, children of international couples in Minami-Uonuma-shi do not have too many problems with Japanese proficiency. The function of "looking after" provided by the community and their grandparents function well as social capital in the process of their growing.

In order for marriage migrants to smoothly participate in the community, they need counterpart individuals or organizations. Two civil society organizations are considered in this section: UMEX, which was founded in 2002 with the aim to promote exchanges between international students of IUJ and local people, and the Japanese language class founded in 2006 to help marriage migrants improve their ability to communicate with Japanese. The social education division of Minami-Uonuma-shi is in charge of the secretarial duties for the class. The establishment of these two organizations is a form of evidence that the community is in a process of change toward a multicultural society because non-Japanese were seldom seen in rural areas in the past.

5.1 UMEX and Marriage Migrants

Approximately 260 international students are studying and living in Minami-Uonuma-shi, accounting for about 35% of the city's foreign residents. This large population of students is a unique feature of the city. UMEX provides a "place" for linking international students and the local people, and a wide variety of activities including Japanese language programs which connect the local people and marriage migrants. The current president is a full-time farmer who organizes events related to agriculture such as rice planting and rice reaping for international students. At these events, international students sometimes meet marriage migrants who come from the same country. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the diversity of UMEX members. The sex composition is 191 female (66%) and 97 male (34%). From the viewpoint of supporting marriage migrants, it may be said that UMEX nurtures human resources who have experiences communicating with foreigners, teaching Japanese, and a belief in the need to oppose discrimination by nationality or race. The following cases show how UMEX acts as a gateway for marriage migrants to expand their social network.

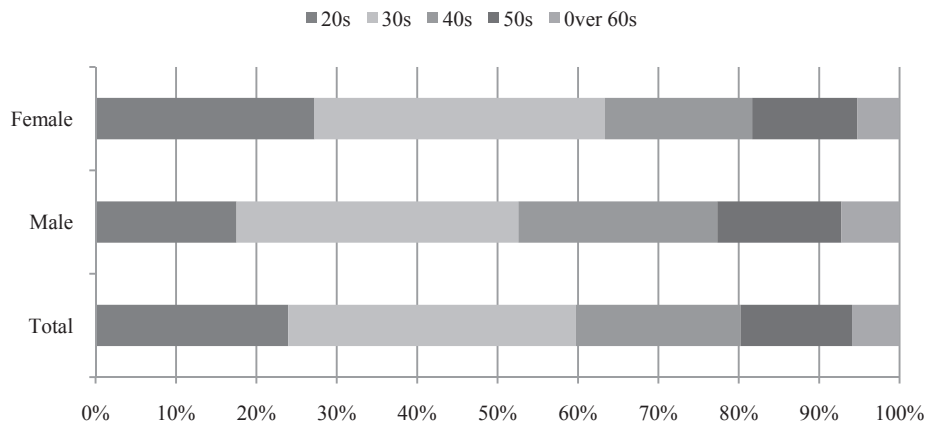

Figure 3. Composition of UMEX Members by Age
Source: UMEX, August 2009, N=288

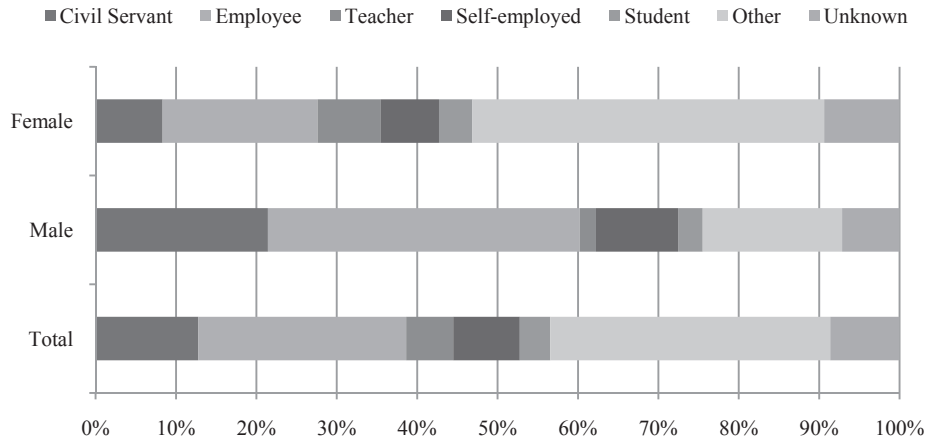

Figure 4. Composition of UMEX Members by Occupation
Source: UMEX, August 2009, N=288

After her arrival, Sr1 demonstrated how to cook Sri Lankan curry at an event of the PTA in the city. This happened after one woman, a UMEX member, introduced her at a PTA meeting. The curry cooking event served as a catalyst for expanding Sr1's social network in the community, finally leading her to open a Sri Lankan curry shop in 2005.

The case of Ko3 demonstrates the importance of social networks. Her husband, the eldest son in his family, held an M.A. degree. He received permission to enter university from his father, on condition that he would return home to inherit the "ie" (household) under the system of patriarchal stem family that is a characteristic of Japanese rural families. However, he was deprived of his position as heir by the father because of a serious conflict between Ko3 and his parents. Ko3 had a strong desire to become economically independent by securing her identity. Who supported her? She received support from the people she met at UMEX. She has gradually expanded her network and, in 2004, obtained a position as an assistant language teacher (ALT) provided by the school board. She emphasized the fact that she had gained the position without the help of her husband.

Ch2 married through the introduction of a marriage broker. At the time, she made being a full-time housewife a condition for the marriage. This seems to reflect the current Chinese value that being a stay-at-home wife is a perquisite of the rich. However, this view seems to have changed soon after she started her life in Japan. Before coming to Japan, she had worked as a translator of Chinese and English at a foreign company in China. She thought that it would be impossible to find an appropriate job in Japan, and for that reason she requested to be a full-time housewife. In fact, however, the number of non-Japanese children brought to Japan by their remarried mothers was gradually increasing in Mina-

mi-Uonuma-shi. Since these children typically could not speak any Japanese when they arrived, the school board needed a person who could speak both Japanese and Chinese. Despite the fact that it was generally difficult to find such a person, Ch2 was the optimal candidate, and was introduced to the school board by one UMEX member. This is an example that demonstrates the strength of even weak ties in a job-hunting activity.

On the other hand, we must note that the relations between marriage migrants and civic organizations have just been forged and are not yet sufficiently developed. Table 5 shows whom marriage migrants consult when they have a problem. In response to the question, nobody cited a civil society organization as an answer. International exchange associations provide a good entry point for broadening one's view of things, but do not automatically expand their activities to assist foreign residents. A gap exists. This implies the necessity to establish a specific support system for marriage migrants, especially one with the function of consultation if needed. At the same time, we should not underestimate the possibility that civil society organizations will contribute to the development of a new type of social network.

Table 5. People/Organizations That Marriage Migrant Consulted

People/Organization	Number	%	People/Organization	Number	%
1. Family and relatives in Japan	28	30.4	8. Organization such as ethnic group from the same country	1	1.1
2. Neighbors	6	6.5	9. Church/temple	1	1.1
3. Colleague at workplace	6	6.5	10.Volunteer group	0	-
4. Preschool or school teacher	4	4.3	11.Administrative agency such as city government	2	2.2
5. Acquaintance/friend, except for the above 1-4	7	7.6	12.Nobody	1	1.1
6. Family or relatives in native country	17	18.5	13.Others	2	2.2
7. Acquaintance/Friend who came from the same country	17	18.5		92	

Source: The Report of Toyota Project in 2007

5.2 The Japanese Language Class

A Japanese language class was established in Minami-Uonuma-shi, but only in 2006, despite the fact that marriage migrants had been entering from the late 1980s. Learning the language of the destination country is indispensable for migrants. Figure 6 shows how marriage migrants learn Japanese. They mainly learn with support from family members and their own efforts through watching TV and movies, reading newspapers, and so on.

In the middle of the 1990s, some individuals tried to start a Japanese language class, but failed because they could not find a sufficient number of volunteers. The former Yama-

to-machi town office had provided a class exclusively for Chinese brides in 2003 and 2004. The difference between the two trial programs and the class established in 2006 is the leadership of the city office. There are two reasons why the city office chose to provide leadership. One was an attempted murder in November 2005, in which a Chinese bride assaulted her father-in-law. This came as a great shock to the people, who did not know that there were marriage migrants who had such serious problems. The other was strong demands from the people, mainly members of UMEX. As they accepted marriage migrants into their Japanese programs, the UMEX members felt uneasy because the necessity for studying Japanese was different between international students and marriage migrants. International students stay at IUJ for two years at the longest, and they only require minimum communication skills. On the other hand, marriage migrants need more advanced Japanese to take appropriate action in various situations of social life. The members of UMEX thus asked the city office to set up a Japanese class for the marriage migrants under its own initiative.

The women's association played a very important role in registering marriage migrants for the class. Its networks and ability to collect information were outstanding. It succeeded in gathering 57 learners (29 Chinese, 25 Filipinas, one Sri Lankan, and one Taiwanese) within a short period of time. About 50 volunteers registered in 2006. Although there were many registrants, there were not many attendees because of scheduling conflicts as well as mismatches between the level of Japanese of the learners and the level provided in the class. Furthermore, there were no Japanese teaching specialists and no program for systematically improving the volunteers' Japanese teaching skills. Though it is still in a process of establishment as a place for learning Japanese, the class provides precious opportunities for marriage migrants to expand their social networks through their classmates, Japanese volunteers, and various social activities such as cooking, hiking and gatherings. The Chinese New Year party, organized mainly by Chinese women, became an annual event in collaboration with the Japanese class in a neighboring city. Compared to the past, the existence of marriage migrants gradually became socially recognized.

Figure 6. Method of Learning Japanese

Method	Number	%	Method	Number	%
Japanese Language Class by Minami-Uonuma-shi	7	8	Taught in workplace	12	13.6
Japanese program offered by UMEX	0	-	TV, newspapers, movies, etc.	24	27.3
Japanese program offered by IUJ	0	-	Others	3	3.4
Taught by family	25	28.4	Nothing special	7	8.0
Taught by friends	10	11.4		88	

Source: The Report of Toyota Project in 2007

VI. Conclusion

Marriage is a pervasive social institution, and patterns of marriage alter in response to other societal changes. This paper has explored the important transformation that has begun to take place in the Minami-Uonuma region by examining cases involving two civil society organizations and the social network of female marriage migrants. Nursery schools, elementary schools and civil society organizations play an important role in allowing the marriage migrants to expand their social networks. Ordinary associations such as the women's association are also helpful, but the relationships among those agencies are not well developed. On the other hand, it was confirmed that the transnational networks which the marriage migrants maintain even after coming to Japan may have the potential of contributing to the development of new horizons by, for example, making it easy for members of the second generation such as Ko3's daughter to study abroad and for migrants such as Sr1 to launch ethnic businesses.

To examine this possibility, it is indispensable to reexamine the stylized view of marriage migrants which was formed at the beginning of their arrival in the late 1980s. They were regarded as weak and passive, and seen as being under the pressure of assimilation into Japanese society. The indication is correct in some ways. However, it is necessary to recognize that it only presents a partial picture of marriage migrants. Examined from the viewpoint of time course of development, it turns out that a significant number of marriage migrants are accumulating power and rebuilding social networks. The first generation of marriage migrants in rural Japan are beginning to be relieved from the responsibility of child rearing and are confronting their own life again. The problems are that their stereo typical image is still dominant and their existence is largely invisible in public.

More than 20 years have passed since marriage migrants began to appear in rural Japan, and their existence has become increasingly multifaceted. At the same time, it is confirmed that the characteristics of the adaptation process of marriage migrants depend on the social characteristics of communities that accept them. The cases from two civil society organizations depict a change in the characteristics of communities' social networks from bonding-type to bridging-type. In the arguments over whether Japan stands at a crossroads toward becoming a multicultural society, rural areas are often overlooked. The on-going revolution in rural Japan caused by marriage migrants should be given more attention. The everyday experiences of these migrants provide important clues for getting rid of the nature of Japanese/non-Japanese boundaries. Furthermore, their children, as they grow up, have internalized foreign cultures through their exchanges with the transnational network of their maternal relatives. The social networks of the second generation and awareness of different cultures have great potential for opening up a new Japan. The views of mixed children toward their nationality and identity could be a significant research topic in this area.

Notes

[1] A number of young people from rural areas have moved to urban areas to compensate for the labor shortage there during the rapid economic growth period starting from the late 1950s, and have not generally returned home with the notable exception of those who are responsible for taking care of parents and assets. These are usually eldest sons. As a result, a problem of "bride shortage" emerged in the late 1970s. What is worse is that it became impossible for most farming households to maintain a life in agriculture due to agrarian policies intended to promote large-scale farming (Kawate: 2009).

[2] "International marriage" in this paper refers mainly to marriage between Japanese men and foreign women particularly from Asian countries through the introduction of marriage brokers and/or acquaintances.

[3] "Social capital" can be used as a concept for social networks which emphasizes the aspect of being supported by mutual trust. However, social capital has not yet been adequately defined, and scholars use it in different ways. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, I use "social network" in this paper to refer to the networks that help marriage migrants settle in rural communities through interactions with Japanese people.

[4] These figures may actually underestimate the extent of the increase because persons with dual nationality, others who married abroad, and those in de-fact relationships are not included.

[5] "Fukamaru Doken Ohkoku no Hizumi," *Asahi Shinbun,* July 8, 1987.

[6] For details see in section 5-1 of this paper and refer to http://umex.ne.jp.

[7] IUJ was established in 1982 as the first university in Japan specializing in the graduate curriculum and using English in all classes. The fact that among the 300 regular students, approximately 80% come from outside Japan and represent about 50 countries and regions of the world shows that it offers an unique environment for education. Refer to http://iuj.ac.jp for details.

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