

# Divided Community by Information Media: A Case of Japanese Community in Thailand

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**Abstract—This article is intended as a formation process and communication of the minority community through by an investigation of the character of media usage of minorities in abroad. For a case, I take up how a Japanese community in Thailand after 1990 changed through free paper, a paid magazine, the Internet media. In Japanese community study, few studies treated free paper. However, overseas Japanese community is not unification and, by the use and the moving of such media, can point out a phenomenon advancing in the direction of the division. In this article, I would like to perform a proof report about the use of the media and the formation of the community based on fieldwork from 1990.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

A concept of "Global Village" came up by McLuhan in 1962 (McLuhan:1962). For a half of century, a human being could travel the world by a plane in a short time, and they accelerated the moving of the things with a person to world each place. Also, the electronic media spread widely afterward without remaining only in moving of the things with a person. A limit of the time and space where it became the wall that people communicated was taken away, and it was global and talked and came to be able to live a life until then. According to McLuhan prediction, the spread of Internet changed into the village having one whole earth by the electronic mass media. When it removed a social difference, and it did people for an equal viewpoint that people obtained information freely in Global Village.

When the world became Global Village, moving of the information came to be carried out freely, but information ceased to circulate actually. The circulation of the information without the substance and the movement of a person and the thing having substance make a significant difference. By the moving of the information in Global Village, social scientist thought that the new public sphere was formed at first. About problems such as a race, discrimination, and the poverty, social scientist thought that information to circulate freely helped the mutual understanding of people. But such a thing has not happened. The moving of citizens also moves to the information with a lifestyle to be accompanied by moving of a pattern of behavior. The biggest factor prescribing the pattern of behavior of the immigrant is an economic condition of each person. As for the moving from the developed country in particular to the developing

countries, the people long to move without cutting down on their lifestyle. In Global Village where the free information moving is carried out for, the information does not produce the harmony of people and functions as a thing emphasizing the difference with others.

It was the times so that anyone easily obtained information. Information strengthens community and the network of the people who emigrated to each country and surely has the function to assist life. But the information that was dripped by the media which globalized rather causes division without joining an expat together. To the variety of the emigrant, the media is published, and the media divides community.

Under such a critical argument, I would like to argue about the role that the media achieves Japanese community in Thailand as an example in this study.

## II. THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY IN THAILAND

Thailand accomplished rapid economic development to a lever by foreign investment from the late 80s, but a current balance deficit expanded, and bubble economy appeared mainly on a real estate sector. Bad debts increased with bubble destruction, and pressure of the baht devaluation increased backed by economic deterioration afterward. In July 1997, the Thai government shifted to the floating rate system in exchange, but the baht mostly fell, and an economic crisis occurred. After several times of later coups d'état, the economy of Thailand has shown a sign of the recovery. The tendency to slow down includes the GDP growth rate from 2013, but still is one of the large countries in ASEAN gathering much investment from the foreign countries.

There are around 67 million people in Thailand in 2012, and more than four million of them (or one in every 16 people) are not Thai citizens. Most non-citizens were either born here (e.g. hill tribes) or enter from neighboring countries to escape persecution and eke out a living. And then there are the tourists. But there is also a substantial number of expats - in the order of 300,000 - 400,000 - drawn from distant countries all over the world. Although some agencies generate data concerning visiting and resident non-citizens, the most important source is the Thai Bureau of Immigration. Japanese community is one of such Thai non-Thailand community.

After the late 1980s, Japanese enterprises have come into Thailand backed by strong yen positively. At an economic currency crisis actualized in July 1997, Japan carried out large-scale financial human cooperation. After 1998, each government holds diplomacy, defense administration official discussion. Also, the economic partnership agreement (EPA) conclusion is accomplished between Thai and Japan on a day on November 1, 2007, and the economy of the two countries becomes close even today. The Bangkok Japanese Chamber of Commerce memberships exceed 15,000 in 2015, and the economic relations of the two nations become very close.

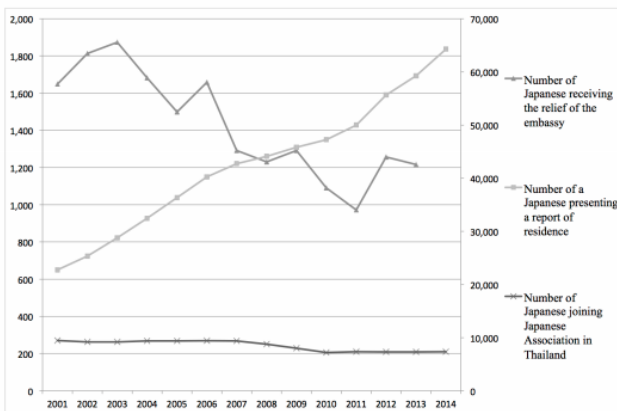


Fig. 1. Number of Japanese and their troubles in Thailand

The strong economic ties between such Thailand and Japan appear for the increase in the number of Japanese resides in Thailand. According to the Thai-Japanese Embassy consul part, the number that people submitted a residence notice was approximately 40,000 people in 2006. But the numbers increase to about 50,000 in 2015, too. Also, as for the report of stay, presentation to the Japanese Embassy is recommended, but there are also many Japanese of not- presentation.

The citizens of the non-Thai are divided into the five categories. Category 1 is Illegal entrants and visa overstayers. Category 2 is Refugees and resident non-citizens (for example hill-tribe people). Category 3 is employed expats with work permits. Category 4 is non-working expats, including retirees, students, and those supporting a Thai spouse/family. Category 5 is short-stay visitors entering on tourist visas.

About non-immigrant visa maintainers from Category 1 to 4, the Thai government and Japanese Embassy grasp the number exactly. But it is hard to know the number of the stayers included in 5 category exactly. For the positioning as the trip by the official tourist visa, the Japanese embassy can not count the number of long-term stayers. The researcher calculates the Thai-Japanese long stayer with 70,000 - 90,000 people.

The big Japanese residents abroad community is seen only in Thailand, and only this shall not be regarded in other countries. As a result, various troubles occur in such an enlarged Japanese community. For example, more than

1000 Japanese receive the relief of the embassy every year in Thailand. This number is the worst record in Japanese Embassy of the whole world after 2001. The cause that is such a trouble-prone has many things coming from the use of the language. Most of the Japanese people learn English by public education for six years, but the ability is not high at all. Most of the Japanese people come over to Thailand above all without being able to speak both Thai and English satisfactorily. However, service business for Japanese with economic power diversified in Thailand. The environment where the Japanese who cannot even speak Thai and English can live only in Japanese is prepared for in Thailand. The Japanese can perform shopping, sightseeing, every service such as the leisure only in Japanese in Thailand. The embarrassing thing is that many of Japanese can pay for sex only in Japanese.

The comfortable Japanese life in such a Thailand will gather the Japanese of many hierarchies more. Therefore, not only the generous person but also the poor Japanese have come to Thailand. For example, some people work as a temporary employee only for half a year in Japan and save money. They spend remainder one year modestly in a cheap hotel in Thailand using savings. In late years many elderly Japanese who do not get a public pension enough emigrate to Thailand. Hierarchies in the Japanese community were reproduced in Thailand by the Japanese of such a plural hierarchies entering Thailand.

About Japanese Community in Thailand, Osamu Akagi defines it as follows using three divisions; permanent resident local representative - international floats. Akagi pointed that Japanese seem to carry the bad habit that divides a countryman to be concerned with for some reason abroad into “authentic linkage” and “non-authentic linkage” on our back considerably for a long time. In other words, The Japanese in Japan assumes local representative is a friend, coming back to Tokyo and Japan. But permanent residents in Thailand who have no opportunity to improve Japan is not a friend with the Japanese in Japan. Besides, International floats are the people whom you should sympathize with poorly. The Japanese commit social ostracism on consciousness. Such a social exclusion is amplified by in the Japanese media in Thailand.

### III. THE JAPANESE MEDIA IN THAILAND

#### A. Direct Communication

Before 1980, the information for living in Thailand was transmitted by a Japanese stores and some of the books. They had formed the relatively faithful public sphere by constant criticism and examination. Japanese community like Japanese Association in Thailand (JAT) had a role to share information and reconstruct a community in abroad. But the Japanese community has collapsed by an appearance of the cheap Japanese media in Thailand. The Japanese traveler and residents in Thailand can obtain information without the acquaintance with Japanese community. Also, the division of the Japanese community

has deepened more and more because people use the plural media correctly.

The group is shown by the number of JAT member founded in 1913. As previously described, the number of individuals submitted a residence notice has increased remarkably, but the number of JAT member is roughly flat. Conventionally, local representatives and the staffs of the government office and the family occupied the most of the residents in Thailand. Today, there are many types of Japanese, a new college graduate, temporary employees and a worker in Thailand. They should include even knowledge to live first of all, and they do not need further knowledge about Thailand. As a result, a lot of newspapers, magazines, and free copies came to be published, and it was not necessary that acquisition of the information of the living became comfortable and depended on JAT.

A characteristic of three Japanese media is shown as follows.

### B. Internet Media

At first, it is the Internet media that it is thought as the Japanese simplest source of Thailand information. There are a lot of Wifi points in street and everybody can use it cheaply and efficiently. Everybody would input with "Thai Information" in Japanese by Google and can access 28 million information. For example, we can quickly know the method for purchase of the medicine, Japanese foods and some of particular goods. In Facebook, a lot of community about Thailand due to the Japanese has been installed, and Japanese people have shared much more information.

Such an Internet information is very convenient, but on the other hand, it has been mixed with wrong, old and malicious information. The information-intensive society system which information was supplied to was ever called "magic bullet model" or "hypodermic needle model". On Japanese community in Thailand, as for the excessive amount of the information to people through the Internet media, each was not able to make a rational decision by having given a lot of choices to anyone too much either. Therefore, much Japanese need to choose the information by themselves. And the people will want information using a filter from the enormous information of the Internet; for example, a company and the Parent-Teacher Association. These groups decide a behavior pattern of each person, and they choose the information.

"Two-step flow mode," the representation theory of the mass media-limited effect theory, by Lazarsfeld is active in the Japanese community analysis. Lazarsfeld pointed out that the information offered through the media does not act on people directly and gives communication action through some positive opinion leaders indirectly. The Japanese in Thailand does not make a political decision, assumed by Lazarsfeld. But, in daily life, the Japanese needs a choice of daily living consistently.

Of course, in the study on the effect of the current mass media, a new mass media substantial power effects theory such as "agenda setting theory" or "spiral of silence theory" that paid attention to longer-term influence plays a key role. But a theory of Lazarsfeld still has persuasive power about Japanese community analyze. The Japanese community has separated, and the people cannot have an opinion leader to be able to grasp it from a real image of the above-mentioned Japanese community. As a substitute of the opinion leader, Magazines and free papers functions.

### C. Magazine and Newspaper

The Japanese source of information for Japanese tourists and residents in Thailand was limited to magazines and some of the books until the 1990s. Tourist had read the "How to walk earth" guidebook such as "Lonely Planet Guidebook" and local representatives had read "Living in Bangkok" of The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) publication. Also, the Japanese immigrant enrolled in JAT and they had obtained information from JAT.

But, as for the information of the book published in such Japan, information updating is slow. So company published a newspaper with Japanese in Thailand. These media came up assuming a business use. Bangkok Shuho, the oldest Japanese paper media in Thailand, was released in 1976, and only 8,000 copies of newspapers are published in 2015. Many publishers had been established, but it is only two companies that it continues publishing even today. As newspaper publishers all over the world moved the base of the news release on the Internet, people was able to obtain news on the Internet quickly. Newspaper publisher would finish a role as the news media as of that purpose to sell papers.

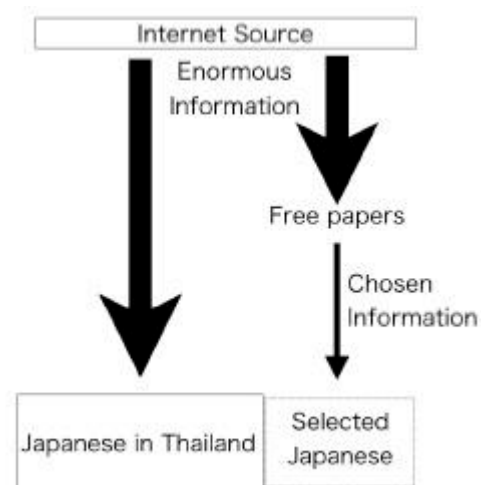


Fig. 2. Information Transfer Model in Japanese Society

There are the magazine increasing sales smoothly adversely with the decline of the newspaper. The magazine, which is the most characteristic in a pay magazine published in Thailand, is "G-Diary Magazine."

This magazine is a sex entertainment industry publication of 15,000 copies sold only in Thailand, and it introduces information of the sexual intercourse in Japanese. The Japanese man who cannot speak Thai and English enough are the readers of the magazine. It is a very disgraceful thing for all of the Japanese.

TABLE I. JAPANESE MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER IN THAILAND 2015

Magazine	Foundation	Type	Circulation	Topic	Price
Bangkok Shuho	1976	Weekly	8,000	Business	360B
Thai Economy	-	Weekly	Close	Business	2,000B
G-Diary	1999	Monthly	15,000	Night Life	220B

D. Free paper Magazines

From late 1990 when high yen advanced by an economic crisis in Thailand, numbers of Japanese people largely increased. Variety was born in the Japanese community in Thailand, and the business that targeted a Japanese particular group was taken much more. At the Japanese social individual target which diversified, the Japanese free papers were published. Besides, there was a technological progress of the computer in the background of the appearance of the free paper. When Microsoft released Windows Operating System in 1995, the publisher bought a cheap computer for the Furthermore, an illegal copy of the magazine editing software, like Adobe Page Maker and Illustrator, came to be available cheaply in computer shops and many free papers were published.



Fig. 3. Japanese Free papers in Thailand

As of 2015, twenty Japanese free papers are in Thailand. Free paper places the article that trained readers hard more to make differentiation with another magazine clear. For example, in the case of a women’s magazine, each magazine subdivides readers by a topic and forms the community every medium (e.g. mothering, shopping, cosmetic, etc.).

TABLE II. JAPANESE FREE PAPER IN THAILAND 2015

Magazine	Foundation	Type	Circulation	Topic
DACO	1998	Biweekly	22,000	Entertainment
WiSE	2006	weekly	30,000	Entertainment
bangkok madam	1998	Monthly	Close	Ladies
WOM	Close	Monthly	20,000	Ladies
newsclip	2002	Biweekly	16,000	News
U-MACHINE	2004	Monthly	11,000	Factory
Arays	2012	Monthly	20,000	Business
info Biz	Close	Monthly	15,000	Business
freecopy map	2011	Monthly	Close	Business
banmeshi	2014	Monthly	30,000	Restraunt
freecopy map	2011	Monthly	Close	Shopping
nico labo	2012	Monthly	20,000	Mothering
Arche+	2012	Monthly	Close	Ladies
Bangkok Guide	1995	Monthly	Close	Tourist
Thai Jiyu Land	1998	Biweekly	10,000	Family
Bangkok Life	1995	Biweekly	10,000	Family
Chao	2001	Biweekly	10,000	Family
OHAYO	2012	Biweekly	10,000	Family
Golf Style	2013	Bimonthly	Close	Sports
HOW!	Close	Monthly	Close	Night Life

WiSE Magazine, which is published most, publishes 30,000 copies in a week (in the month 120,000 copies). WiSE Magazine have a lot of contents (e.g. Japanese Star news, Japanese Sports, Japanese News and Japanese television programs). Because a number submitting a residence notice to of Japanese people is 65,000 people, approximately 50% of Japanese in Thailand would read WiSE Magazine. In Thailand, there is another free paper written in many languages. And they are distributed to the stores such as a supermarket and the bookstore. But most of the Japanese free paper are mailed to home and workplace at no charge. If it is the free paper of the Britain and the United States type that “a person reaches to information”, it is Japanese free article that “information reaches to a person”. Advertisements for Japanese came to concentrate on a free article without a newspaper. Naoya Akashi, Yindeed Co., Ltd., Managing Director and Founder, estimates an advertising market scale of the Japanese free paper of Bangkok at 197 million baht. Japanese free paper business has grown up in a huge market in Thailand.

Also, the advertisement placed in such a free paper targets local representatives and their family. For example, the letter of the Japanese restaurant set in the ad is a thing such as” the only 1,500Baht”. People are living by a Japanese salary system often have higher economic power than a permanent residence Japanese. The local representative can live a life of Japan and the standard to some extent even if a price is high. The free paper isolates a local agent and the family from the Thai society and the free paper forms the community only for local officials in Thailand. Japanese free paper is solved in life in Thailand and is crowded and am published for a local representative and family assuming the Japanese life after returning



home. Of course, for a Japanese “not to want to have an interchange with other Japanese”, it is not necessary to provide service. But you should understand the role that a characteristic of the media and the media achieve well. And, according to the indication of Akagi whom such a free paper mentioned above, it functions as the press promoting social ostracism.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In Thailand, Japanese community will have collapsed. Individual Japanese do not need cooperation. A lot of social problems have occurred between Japanese. The postwar Japanese community in Thailand was one of Japanese social model in abroad. But it is important to pay the attention to a fact that the media which should produce information sharing brings about Japanese social division in Thailand. Thongchai proved that a Thai nation concept was made by a map (Thongchai:1994). The idea of the Japanese in Thailand is formed today by free paper. Understanding the situation interpreted again by the different media like free papers in Japanese community will be to a clue understanding how consumption of the information is performed as for vast knowledge of the media.

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