

Fixed-term Contract Domestic Labor in New International Division of Reproductive
Labor: “Foreign House Keepers” in Japanese National Strategic Special Zone

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The Japanese Government has planned for foreigners conducting housekeeping services in Japan Revitalization Strategy (2014) and has started to adopt these housekeeping services by foreigners employed as contract-based workers in Japan National Strategic Special Zones (NSSZ).

Japan has not yet ratified ILO-C189 - Domestic Workers Convention and directly hired domestic workers aren't recognized as workers in the Japanese Labor Standards Law. However domestic work has been historically done by women in Japan and migrant domestic workers have worked at foreigners' residences since 1966. They aren't recognized as workers in the Law because Japanese "Worker" means one who is employed at a business or office (hereinafter referred to as "Business") in Article 9 and they are directly employed or dispatched workers. In the case of NSSZ, foreign workers are just workers because of employment by housekeeping service companies and so a Philippine agency enters into a contract to train housekeeping services in Japanese style and Japanese language. There are differences of guarantee of status as worker and protection by contract between domestic workers in spite of doing the same labor.

This contract of housekeeping in NSSZ is fixed-term for 3 years, and it is prohibited that the 'user' of housekeeping services directly order or direct workers in the employment of contract-based workers. Therefore, they are required just to do housekeeping services which the user has already contracted with the company. It's become a commodity package through this manual of domestic works, but it also includes the dual emotional subordination to require a match with their employer and various individual users, and “supplement” subject to unstable employment like a disposable commodity would change unexchangeable value in reproduction that one might not trade.