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## Introduction

Migration is as old as mankind itself beginning with the movements of the first human groups from their origins in East Africa to their current location in the world. In today's context, we talk about moving across political boundaries from one place to another for the purpose of permanent or semi-permanent residence. There has been an undisputed increase in the importance of migration over the past decades, in general, and of migration of workers in Asia, in particular. It is one of the effects of an increasingly globalized world, where capitalism and free trade are gaining prominence.

In the past, Asians migrated mostly to Western countries or the Middle East. While Chinese migration to Southeast Asia goes back centuries, migration of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole started to grow in the 1990s. This trend was defined mainly by moves from less-developed countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam) to fast growing newly industrializing countries (Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan). Malaysia and Thailand are an exception in this regard, and experience both significant immigration and emigration. While most migration in the region is temporary, trends toward long-term stay are becoming evident in some places.

In the first half of the 20th century, migration flows from Asia were low due to restrictive policies of colonial powers, and most movements within the Asia-Pacific region were usually connected with political struggles. The movement to the West started to grow in the second half of the 20th century. In the early 21st century, more than 20 million Asian migrants lived outside their home countries, six million (including illegal migrants)