

### *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*

**Article**    **China: Surplus Labour and Migration**

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**Abstract**    China has low unemployment, but a considerable problem with rural underemployment. Government policy encourages surplus labourers to transfer out of crop farming into agricultural sidelines or non-agricultural work. Peasants are urged to stay where they are, shifting jobs without shifting location; however, many rural areas are poorly endowed for providing alternative employment, so their surplus workers must also leave the village to find work. Many do not formally migrate, but rather move on a seasonal basis or set up "temporary" residence in an urban place. This "floating" population has been escalating rapidly in recent years. This article argues that China's cities and towns can absorb millions of surplus labourers from rural areas each year, to the mutual benefit of sending and receiving areas.

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