

A Comparative Study on the Current Situation, Social Impact and Countermeasures of Aging Between China and Japan

Huanhuan Wang

Taizhou College, Nanjing Normal University, Taizhou, China

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Abstract: Although China and Japan have different social systems, they have many similarities in the characteristics of population aging, changes in population structure, welfare culture of the elderly and so on. Japan's laws and regulations on dealing with the aging society and the fine system design have important reference significance for China. This paper analyzes the current situation and social impact of aging in China and Japan, compares the Countermeasures of the two countries in dealing with aging, and believes that it is necessary for China and Japan to work together to deal with the problems and challenges brought by aging.

1. Introduction

Population aging is the inevitable product of social and economic development to a certain stage, and China and Japan are no exception. At present, the aging problem has become one of the important factors restricting Japan's future economic development and a difficult problem that Japan must face. Although the aging rate in China is lower than that in Japan, the problems faced by China are more complex because the rapid aging process is parallel to the reduction of the total labor force, and the corresponding security and management system is not in place.

2. Comparison of aging status between China and Japan

Japan is the country with the fastest and most serious aging development in the world. China's aging has developed rapidly in recent years. China and Japan have something in common in the trend of aging development. At the same time, they show different characteristics in the change of population trajectory. In addition, both countries belong to East Asian countries and are influenced by Confucian culture. Therefore, understanding Japan's rapid aging process can provide valuable experience and lessons for us to deal with aging. At the same time, through exchanges and mutual learning between the two countries, it is also conducive to our more accurate implementation of various policies.

2.1. Current situation of aging in China

China conducts a census every ten years. According to the data of the seventh census in 2020, China's total population is 14117.8 million, an increase of 72.053872 million over 2010, an increase of 5.38%, and the annual average growth rate is 0.53%. It is 0.04 percentage point lower than the average annual growth rate of 0.57% from 2000 to 2010. Among them, the population over 65 years old was 19063 million, accounting for 13.5% of the total population. Compared with 2010, the proportion of the elderly over 60 years old increased by 5.44 percentage points, and the degree of population aging further deepened. According to international customary standards, more than 7% of the population over 65 in a country is an aging society, more than 14% is an aging society, and more than 21% is a super aging society. In 2000, China's aging population accounted for more than 7% and entered an aging society, 30 years later than Japan. By 2020, the proportion of the elderly over 65 years old in China's total population will be 13.5%, which is very close to the standard of 14%^[1]. Moreover, with the decline of mortality and the gradual extension of life expectancy, the proportion of the elderly population will gradually increase in the future.

2.2. Aging status in Japan

Since 1920, Japan has conducted a national population survey (census) every five years. In June 2021, Japan released the national population survey data for 2020. The data showed that Japan's total population was 126.22 million, a decrease of 0.7% compared with 2015. Among the 47 prefectures (equivalent to China's provincial administrative regions), the population increased by only 9 and decreased by 38. The population of Tokyo metropolitan area increased by 800,000 to 36.93 million, accounting for about 30% of Japan's total population, which shows that Japan's population is further highly concentrated in Tokyo. From the change of Japanese population, since the so-called "second baby boom" increased by 7% in 1975, Japan's population growth has been slowing down due to the decline of birth rate. The 2015 census showed a decrease of 0.8%, which was the first decrease in Japan's population^[2]. Japan's aging population accounted for more than 7%, 14%, and 21% respectively in 1970, 1995 and 2000. At present, Japan has entered a super aging society. It is predicted that by 2060, the proportion of Japan's elderly population will reach 39.9%, that is, there will be one elderly person in 2.5 people, and the social structure is undergoing great changes.

2.3. Comparison of aging characteristics between China and Japan

According to Tong yufen, In terms of time process, China entered an aging society 30 years later than Japan^[3]. Japan began to enter the aging society in 1970, and it took 25 years to enter the aging society in 1995. It will take more than 20 years for China to enter the aging society in 2000. However, in the next few decades, China's population will age faster than Japan, and the proportion gap between the two will gradually narrow, Japan's aging population will gradually decrease after 2040, while China will increase.

One of the biggest characteristics of the aging difference between China and Japan is the different distribution regions of the aging population. Japan's national average, the highest aging population is Akita County 36.4%, the lowest is Okinawa County 21.6%, and the time gap between prefectures and prefectures is not large. In China, due to the great differences in the development of economic and social levels in various regions, there are great regional differences in the aging population. Shanghai entered the threshold of aging in 1979, while Ningxia entered the threshold of aging in 2012, with a time span of 33 years. The development process of Japan's aging population shows that the aging level of cities in Japan is generally higher than that of rural areas due to better urban medical and nursing services. In China, due to the development of urbanization in recent years, the labor force has rapidly moved to cities, and the elderly population has been "left" in rural areas, so the level of rural aging is higher than that in cities.

In terms of size and gender ratio, the number of elderly people over 65 in China is 64 million more than the total population of Japan, so the size of China's elderly population is large, but the proportion of super elderly population in China is relatively low, and the elderly population is mainly concentrated in the age group of 65 ~ 74. In terms of the proportion of men and women in the elderly population, Japan's elderly population is characterized by more women than men. The ratio of men and women over the age of 65 is about 3:4, and the ratio of men and women over the age of 75 is reduced to 3:5. There are also more women than men in China's elderly population over the age of 65, but it is far from the difference in Japan.

In terms of the relationship between aging and economic development, Japan's aging development speed is lower than that of social and economic development. When Japan entered the aging society in 1970, its per capita GDP was US \$1974, and its economy has developed to a very high level^[4]. When China entered the aging society in 2000, its per capita GDP was US \$946, which is only half the level of Japan. It can be said that it is "getting old before getting rich".

3. The impact of aging on society in China and Japan

The negative effects of aging, such as the reduction of the working population and the increase of social burden, have something in common in China and Japan, and the impact on all levels of society is obvious to all.

First, aging will affect labor supply^[5]. Aging will lead to absolute or relative decline in the number of labor force. With the adjustment of age structure, the age structure of the working population will gradually age, resulting in further deterioration of the population age structure. At present, China is still dominated by labor-intensive industries, and there is no labor gap like Japan, but it is expected that there will be a labor shortage in 2030, which has a great impact on China's economic development.

Second, the annuity system collapsed. Due to the emergence and intensification of aging, with the reduction of labor force population and the continuous increase of elderly population, it is difficult to support the increasing annuity expenditure only by collecting insurance fees. It can be operated in a short time only by increasing the age of annuity payment, increasing income and reducing annuity expenditure, If it goes on for a long time, it will inevitably bring a great impact to the existing annuity system.

Third, high medical costs. With the increase of age, the probability of the elderly suffering from various diseases increases gradually, which will lead to the increase of medical insurance costs. Like annuity, in order to cope with the increase of the elderly population, the amount of medical insurance will be increased, and the personal burden will increase. This is bound to happen in the future.

Fourth, the extension of working years. Raising the retirement age and prolonging the working years is one of the inevitable choices to deal with aging^[6]. Japan's current retirement age is 70, the highest legal retirement age in the world. China is 60 for men and 55 for women. With the growth of life expectancy and the deepening of aging, it is very possible for the two countries to continue to raise the retirement age in the future.

4. Comparison of aging countermeasures between China and Japan

If we only start from the two dimensions of social security and pension service system, we can see that there are great differences between China and Japan. Japan has laid the conditions for "being prepared to welcome the elderly" in its economic and social development. After entering the aging society, Japan has introduced a series of welfare systems. When Japan established a comprehensive elderly care service system, China mainly focused on the service system of home-based elderly care.

Both countries pay attention to formulating outlines, guidelines, policies and laws to deal with aging from the top. Since Japan entered the aging 30 years earlier than China, it is more reasonable and perfect than China in terms of top-level design and institutional system. China's old laws are relatively single and implemented late. In terms of policy documents, China lacks a core guiding program, and policy documents change rapidly and in various forms. Japan has a core document, which will be adjusted periodically in combination with the actual situation. The national pension law, the elderly welfare law and the elderly health care law constitute the three pillars of Japan's elderly welfare legal system. In 2014, in order to achieve economic regeneration and cope with population reduction, the Abe government introduced the "100 million total activity" plan with the new three arrows as the core, striving to achieve a fully participatory society. In 2015, China clearly put forward the goal of "a multi-level elderly care service system based on home, supported by community and supplemented by institutions", so as to establish and improve the long-term care system. Therefore, although China's Countermeasures against aging were issued late, they learned from the advanced experience of other countries and combined with the actual situation of our country.

In dealing with the shortage of labor population, both countries have given corresponding policies according to the actual situation of each country. Japan's response policies are mainly reflected in promoting the reemployment of the elderly population and women and attracting overseas labor force. Because there is no labor shortage in China for the time being, we should take precautions, mainly in liberalizing the birth of two children. There are similarities in promoting the reemployment of the elderly population, delaying the retirement age and introducing overseas talents, but the degree of implementation is different.

5. Conclusions

China's aging is developing rapidly. Unlike Japan, China is still in an era when the demographic dividend is about to disappear. The degree and speed of aging are slower than Japan, but it can not be ignored that compared with the world average, China's aging is accelerating. With the poor effect of family planning policy adjustment and the continuous extension of life expectancy, the aging trend in China will be greatly accelerated. The impact on all aspects of society has attracted the attention of many people. On the other hand, the Japanese government has a positive and positive attitude in dealing with aging from countermeasures to legislation, but its effect is far from the goal. We should consider the reasons in combination with the situation of Japan, strive to observe the actual effect when implementing various policies, and adjust relevant designs and policies according to the actual situation at any time, Strive to make a breakthrough in curbing the development of aging.

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