

Theater Project for Multicultural Societies in Kani Public Arts Center

23 November 2009

Sin Titulo (Japan)

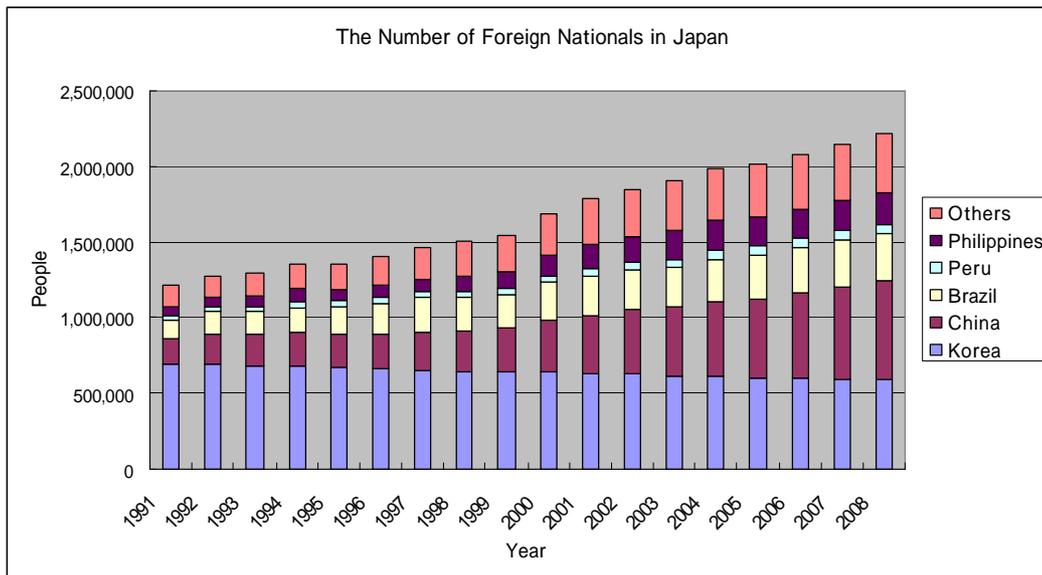
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1. Background of the Project

1) Migrant Workers in Japan

It is estimated as of the end of 2008 that some 2,212,000 people from overseas live in Japan. They make up 1.75% of the whole population. 500,000 foreign residents have a status of residence called "special permanent resident", those include people forced to immigrate to Japan from Korea and China, two countries which were colonized by Japan, and their offspring. They are called "old comers". The other 1.7 million foreign residents are those who came to Japan mainly after 1990, including migrants, and are called "new comers". The migration of foreign nationals to Japan was a sudden phenomenon that happened in and after the 1990s.

Due to the revision of the law in 1990, those of Japanese descent have been given a resident status permitting them to work without limits. So, many Japanese-Brazilian, Japanese-Peruvian and Japanese-Filipino persons came to Japan to work in the manufacturing industry.



2) Kani City in Gifu Prefecture

Kani City is located near Toyota-city, Aichi prefecture, where the car manufacturing giant TOYOTA has its headquarters. Kani city is home to many TOYOTA subcontractor factories and a great number of migrants started to work there since 1990. Foreign nationals have represented about 7% of the population these past few years. The largest number is from Brazil, about 64%. Next come the Filipino, about 23.7%, and the Chinese and Korean, about 5% each.

2. The Theater Project for Multicultural Societies

After almost 20 years of coexistence, Japanese and foreigners have still limited exchange opportunities and no special place where to meet together. In 2008, Kani Public Arts Center decided to offer them a place where to meet and entrusted Sin Titulo with the task of producing a drama for multicultural societies.



Kani Public Arts Center



1) Project in 2008 “East Gate”

Participants: 15 people (8 Brazilian, 6 Chinese, 1 Japanese)

Audience: about 200 people

2) Project in 2009 “By the Skin of Our Teeth”

Participants: 39 people (19 Japanese including 9 children, 8 Brazilian, 4 Filipino, 2 American, 2 Jamaican, 1 Chinese, 1 New Zealander, 1 British, and 1 Bosnian)

Audience: about 350 people

3. Achievements

- The participants were able to communicate and build a strong friendship through the process.
- After watching the performance, members of the audience applied to participate in this project.
- It was watched with keen interest not only by domestic organizations but also by representatives of the Council of Europe.



“By the Skin of Our Teeth”

4. Hurdles to be cleared

- It takes time and expenses to make a performance.
- There are few specialists to organize it due to the language barrier in Japan.
- The project attracts the attention mostly as a tool to help the weak, but there is a failure by some to recognize the creativity of the minorities.
- Resident’s diversity should be respected and used as a helpful source of dynamism, innovation, creativity and growth for the city.

Sin Titulo <http://www.sin-titulo.org/>

Kani Public Arts Center <http://www.kpac.or.jp/>