



# Multicultural Library Services in Japan

— The Current Situation Based on the 2015 Questionnaire—

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## 1. History of multicultural library services in Japan

### a. The first step of multicultural library services in Japan

In 1988 the Ikuno Library, a Branch of Osaka City Library, opened a Korean Book Section to provide services to the community. Approximately 25 % of the population of Ikuno ward was comprised of long-time Korean residents.

### b. Impact of the IFLA recommendation (1986) and Japan Library Association

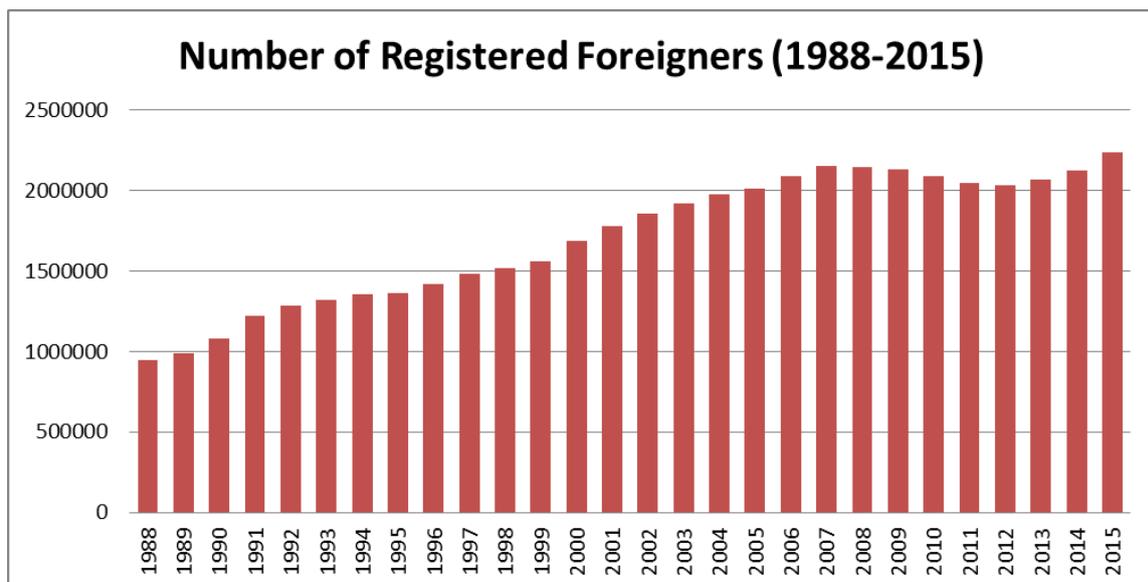
The 52<sup>nd</sup> IFLA Conference held in Tokyo in 1986 approved professional resolutions for the promotion of library services to the multicultural population in Japan. It had a great impact upon Japanese librarians. In 1988 and 1998, the Japan Library Association (JLA) carried out a research study on multicultural library services. This 2015 questionnaire is the third one in that series.

### c. Influx of immigrants

An amendment to the Immigration Control Law (1990) and labor shortage in Japanese industry boosted the immigration inflow and change Japanese society. The Japanese government opened the labor market mainly to the people from South America who have Japanese origins. By the end of 1990, the number of foreign residents exceeded one million; in 2005, the number was over two millions.

## 2. Multicultural populations in Japan

Chart 1

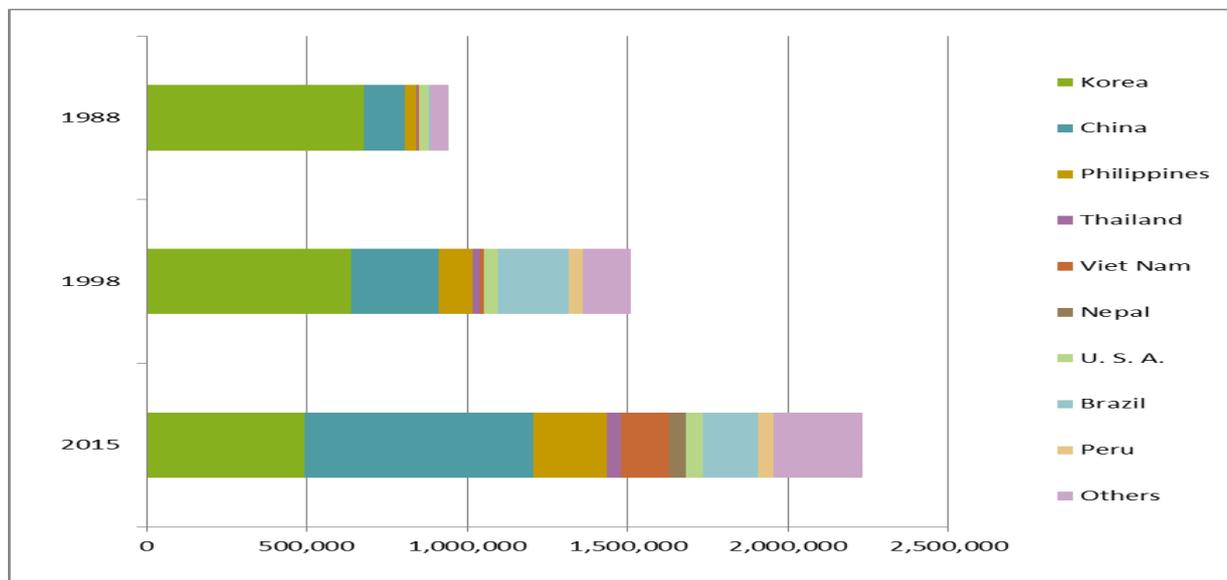


(Data from the Immigration Bureau)

In 1988, the first year studied by JLA, there were 941,005 foreigners. Then the total number is gradually increased to 1,512,116 in 1998, the second research year, and to 2,232,189 in 2015, according to the statistics by the Immigration Bureau.

Not only the number of foreigners, but also their proportional nationalities have changed over the years. While Korea was at the top in 1988 and 1998, China has taken the place of Korea. In addition, the inflow from Nepal and Vietnam has been drastically increased.

Chart 2



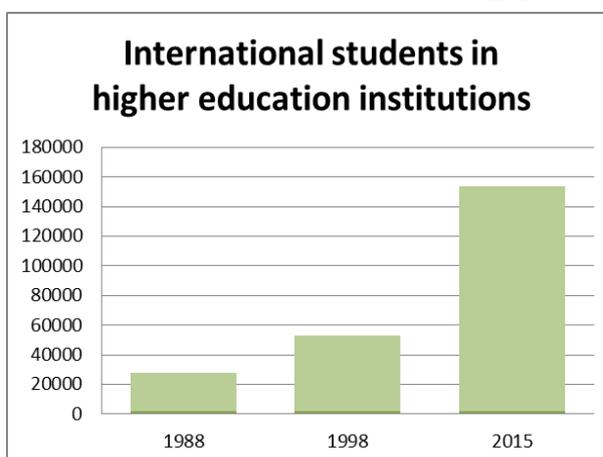
(Data from the Immigration Bureau)

Japanese colleges and universities have been actively accepting international students so that the number is increased from about 51,000 in 1998 to 150,000 in 2015. Most students are from Asian countries, such as China, Vietnam, Nepal and Korea.

The number of international students in Chart 3 does not include Japanese language school students.

(Data from the Japan Student Service Organization)

Chart 3



### 3. 2015 Questionnaire on library services to multicultural populations in Japan

JLA carried out the research studies on multicultural library services in 1988 and 1998. There are several purposes behind the new 2015 questionnaire. Among them are to determine whether multicultural library services have made progress since the last one; whether there are new services or technologies now being provided; what problems librarians are facing now in delivering on these services.

This research was conducted by questionnaire. They were sent to the main libraries of each local government, college, and university, asking for replies through the website.

## Questionnaire 1. Multicultural services in public libraries

- a. Research period: from October 9 to November 30
- b. Response: 1182 answers (1005 out of 1366 main libraries of local governments and 177 branches)
- c. Questions:

### Part I (Basic questions)

- About the multicultural service policies
  - Whether the library has a multicultural library service policy
  - Whether the municipal government has a multicultural information and assistance policy
- About the library staff
  - Whether the library has staff for multicultural services and, specifically, any staff from multicultural communities
- About the library collections
  - Whether the library has multilingual books, periodicals, and audio visual materials
- About marketing, publicity and promotion of multicultural services
  - Whether the library prepares guides to use of the library, signage, enrolment forms and other forms in minority languages
  - Whether the library provides events for their minority communities
  - Whether the library has a contact with minority communities
- About the partnership
  - Whether the library has a partnership with other sections in the same organization
- Determining the difficulties in providing multicultural library services

### Part II (additional detailed questions)

- About the library staff
  - Number of staff and descriptions of jobs
- About the library collections
  - Volume of collections and languages
- About cataloging
  - Whether the library system can handle multilingual cataloging
- About collection search
  - Whether users can search library collections in multilingual languages
- About marketing, publicity and the promotion of multicultural services
  - In what languages does the library provide services?

## Questionnaire 2. Multicultural services to international students in academic libraries

- a. Research period: from July 9 to August 31
- b. Response: 956 answers (751 out of 1,021 main libraries and 205 branch libraries)
- c. Questions:
  - About the multicultural service policies
    - Whether the library has a multicultural library service policy
  - About the partnership
    - Whether the library has a partnership with other sections in the same organization
  - About the library collections

- Whether the library has multilingual materials for the international students
- About cataloging
  - Whether the library system can handle multilingual cataloging
- About collection search
  - Whether users can search library collections in multilingual languages
- About marketing, publicity and promotion of multicultural services
  - Whether the library prepares guides to use of the library, signage, enrolment forms and other forms in minority languages
  - Whether the library provides orientation or guidance for international students
  - Whether the library prepares communications tools for the students who are not fluent in Japanese
  - Whether the library conducts a needs analysis
- About the library staff and staff training
  - Whether the library has staff with multicultural background
  - Whether the library provides language education to its staff
- Determining the problems in providing multicultural library services

#### 4. Toward the future development of services

Based on the result of the 2015 questionnaire (see the poster), JLA recommends:

- ☆ Collect and share information on multicultural library services and best practices in Japan.
- ☆ Do research on foreign users' needs.
- ☆ Develop staff communication skills with foreign residents or students.
- ☆ Attract multicultural populations to libraries.
- ☆ Establish a partnership with other sections in the same organization and local community.

#### Conclusion

The number of foreign residents in Japan will be increasing in the future. Although there have been many conflicts with residents, immigrants, and refugees in various countries, libraries should play a role of bridging between different cultures. Multicultural library services in Japan are still being developed. Base on study of the 2015 questionnaire, the JLA committee will publish a detailed report next spring. We hope it will help libraries to plan effective multicultural services.

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