

# Research Note on SUJCD and Foreign Residents in Hadano, 1987-2007: Preliminary Contextualization<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Sophia University Junior College Division (SUJCD) is located in Hadano City, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, and has a relatively long-standing relationship with its host community. This research note looks at the junior college's relationship with one part of the Hadano community, namely, the foreign residents. It focuses on two groups of foreign residents: those who came to Hadano as refugees through the Yamato Resettlement Center from what is known as Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam) and those who came from South America, particularly Peru. It considers some of the individuals involved in the Japanese language classes and other support for foreign residents including the junior college's In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program.

## Introduction

We started this research in 2017 as part of a Sophia University intramural team research project on the role of churches and civic institutions in welcoming refugees to Japan. In that year, the worldwide refugee crisis was reaching new limits, and anti-refugee sentiment was fueling the election of populist governments in different places around the globe. On a local level, our interest in this topic was also motivated by the long-standing involvement of many members of the Hadano campus community with refugees in the Hadano area. We desired to use this research project as an opportunity to take stock of what had been done, what was being done, and where potential needs might be. Several members of the research team at the Yotsuya campus had considerable experience collecting data from interviews in video format and creating video archives. This kind of video ethnography was new to many of us at the Hadano campus but seemed an exciting method to collect data which we believed needed to be collected.

We used a “pick the low-lying fruit” method and started by interviewing people we could easily get a hold of, and from these people understood little by little the names of people who were connected to their stories and whom we also tried to contact with their assistance. We did not assume that people had immutable roles and that some

people were always “helpers” and other people were always “being helped.” This kind of pigeon-holing did not naturally appeal to us, and we did not use it, with the result that we looked into the stories of both people who were at one point on the receiving end of support as well as people who were on the giving end. In fact, many people on the giving end of the support for the years we were studying were foreign missionaries and thus could be considered foreign residents themselves. And those who received help in the beginning years of the study period later helped those who arrived after them. This study therefore includes data we gathered concerning both those supporting foreign residents and those being supported as foreign residents. Both sides are represented, and in the case of Hadano, the boundaries sometimes are quite porous.

Two particular groups of foreign residents we are studying, those from Indochina and from Peru, were not always numerically the most represented in Hadano from 1987 to 2007, but they came into contact more often with the institutions we studied. They received more language support from the institutions we examined than the more numerous groups from Korea, China, and the United States.

This research note presents some preliminary background studies we conducted for the interviews as well as some early findings and intuitions. This note consists mainly of contextualization of some main institutions and people. Contextualization is important because partnerships between people and also institutions are often shaped by the history, culture, and mission of each of the parties.<sup>2</sup> Knowing the history and culture of the institutions and people is therefore valuable for understanding their relationships.

## **1. Some demographics of the foreign population in Hadano for the years 1987-2007**

Hadano City in Kanagawa Prefecture enjoys a green, relatively low-lying location between the Tanzawa Mountain range to the north and Sagami Bay to the south. It is about one hour by train to either Tokyo’s Shinjuku Station or to the center of Yokohama. On a clear day, Hadano’s view of Mount Fuji well deserves notice. It is here that several groups of foreign residents have been able to resettle since the 1980s.

Political, economic, and social upheavals in southeast Asia in the 1970s contributed to the displacement of peoples. People trying to escape from Vietnam by boat became known as “boat people,” while those escaping by land from Cambodia and Laos became known as “land people.” Collectively, displaced persons from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam were also called the “Indochina refugees,” and, following the first landing of boat people in Japan in 1975, the Japanese Cabinet eventually finalized

a plan to officially resettle 500 such refugees from Indochina.<sup>3</sup> The plan included the establishment of centers which would train the refugees in the Japanese language and in the basics of living in Japan, as well as facilitate their insertion into Japanese society through vocational and housing assistance. The first resettlement center was opened in Himeji in Hyogo Prefecture in 1979, and a second center opened in 1980 in Yamato in Kanagawa Prefecture. The opening and operation of the centers was entrusted to the Foundation for the Welfare and Education of Asian People (FWEAP).<sup>4</sup>

The Yamato Resettlement Center in Kanagawa Prefecture operated for eighteen years from 1980 to 1998 and helped a total of 2,641 people to resettle to Japan.<sup>5</sup> By 1994, the original quota of 500 refugees had been expanded to include 10,000 people and the framework set up by the Japanese Cabinet to welcome them was then terminated.<sup>6</sup> Following the decision to phase out the framework, the Yamato center continued to operate until its final closing in 1998.

Hadano City was a destination for some of the Indochinese refugees from the Yamato Resettlement Center. While not all the Indochinese residents of Hadano came through the Yamato Resettlement Center, the presence of some residents attracted other compatriots who later came to settle there, too. Table 1. shows the number of registered foreign residents from Indochina:

Year		Cambodia	Laos	Vietnam	Total Foreign Residents	Total Population
S61	1986	35	13	2	478	145,086
S62	1987	43	21	2	566	148,469
S63	1988	40	44	8	600	151,184
H1	1989	33	45	17	672	152,801
H2	1990	37	49	22	1,050	155,620
H3	1991	38	47	27	1,516	158,212
H4	1992	39	58	41	1,663	160,146
H5	1993	48	79	34	1,778	161,692
H6	1994	55	77	53	1,745	163,244
H7	1995	52	103	73	1,937	164,722
H8	1996	58	115	92	2,046	165,395
H9	1997	65	130	112	2,238	166,512

Table 1. Foreign residents in Hadano City, 1986-1997 (Source: *Tōkei Hadano* [Hadano Statistics], 1991-1997)

In 1987, for example, there were a total of 566 foreign residents registered in Hadano City, of whom 43 were from Cambodia, 21 from Laos, and 2 from Vietnam. Before 1986, the largest foreign resident populations were from Korea and China and those from Indochina were not numerally significant enough to appear in the detailed statistics. By the year 2001, after the Yamato Resettlement Center closed, the number of foreign residents from Indochina living in Hadano had remained about the same with 57 people from Cambodia, 132 people from Laos, and 189 people from Vietnam registered in Hadano.<sup>7</sup>

Kanagawa prefecture’s economy had performed well in the early 1980s, and the prefectural governor could proudly claim that “Kanagawa has become Japan’s industrial nerve center” (Kanagawa ken Kenmin Sōmushitsu, 1985). Moreover, Hadano City’s open spaces and location close to Tokyo and Yokohama made it a convenient site for factories belonging to several manufacturers. The factories and services catering to them were able to employ a considerable number of workers. The registered businesses in Hadano ran the gamut from food corporations to makers of electronics with the highest group represented being makers of electronics. Table 2 shows the businesses in Hadano and the number of people they employed.

Year		Businesses in Hadano	People employed by Hadano Businesses
S61	1986	339	17,885
S62	1987	340	18,183
S63	1988	367	19,245
H1	1989	363	19,716
H2	1990	510	21,360
H3	1991	381	19,755
H4	1992	378	19,694
H5	1993	367	18,991
H6	1994	344	19,910
H7	1995	342	19,615
H8	1996	350	19,695

Table 2. Number of businesses in Hadano City and the people employed by those businesses (Source: *Tōkei Hadano* [Hadano Statistics], 1991-1997)

A spotlight was shone on the Indochinese refugees by a tragic incident in February

1987. The incident involved a Cambodian refugee living in Hadano. On February 8, he killed his wife who had been in the hospital since the previous day and scheduled for surgery. She died on her hospital bed right after the neighboring patients heard a scream (*Asahi Shimbun*, February 9, 1987, 23). When the refugee's house was investigated, the couple's three young children were also found dead. Newspapers reporting the incident at that time gave different katakana versions of the man's name including: *Boi Mūn* ボイ・ムーン, *Bui Mūn* ブイ・ムーン, and *Bui Muan* ブイ・ムアン. At the time of the incident, he was 34 years old, his wife was 26, the eldest girl was 8 years old, followed by a boy 6 years old, and a young girl who was 4 years old. The couple had arrived in Japan less than 2 years before the incident and had stayed at the Yamato Resettlement Center before moving to Hadano (*Asahi Shimbun*, February 9, 1987, 23).

Newspapers at the time connected the killings to the man's inability to learn the Japanese language. They reported that the man originally held a job with a company in Isehara, but that he had quit that job since January and was staying at home (*Asahi Shimbun*, February 9, 1987, 23). The 6-year-old son was also reported to have talked with the Yamato center around noon on February 7 and told them that the father was sitting in front of the television and drinking alcohol (*Asahi Shimbun*, February 10, 1987, 23). Newspapers and others interpreted the killings as the result of the man's inability to keep a job due to his not being able to speak Japanese.

Several newspapers including *Asahi Shimbun* and *Mainichi Shimbun* covered the incident with *Asahi Shimbun* publishing several articles on it. Nevertheless, the news was not on the front page of either of these two major-circulation newspapers. In Hadano, the news made a larger stir, and it mobilized several people in the Hadano community and at the junior college to want to start Japanese language classes to support foreign residents.

In the 1990s other groups of foreign residents grew in number, particularly those from Latin America. Table 3 shows the number of residents in Hadano from Peru and Brazil. No data is available for Peru for the years 1989 to 1992 since the numbers were not significant enough to be counted as a distinct group.

Year		Peru	Brazil	Total Foreign Residents	Total Population
H1	1989		65	672	152,801
H2	1990		286	1,050	155,620
H3	1991		563	1,516	158,212
H4	1992		539	1,663	160,146
H5	1993	72	568	1,778	161,692
H6	1994	68	556	1,745	163,244
H7	1995	92	640	1,937	164,722
H8	1996	119	661	2,046	165,395
H9	1997	168	799	2,238	166,512

Table 3. Hadano foreign residents from Peru and Brazil  
(Source: *Tōkei Hadano* [Hadano Statistics], 1991-1997)

By the year 2000, the number of residents from Peru and Brazil increased dramatically. Table 4 shows the data for the years 2000-2007.

Year		Peru	Brazil	Total Foreign Residents	Total Population
H12	2000	257	762	2,551	168,142
H13	2001	298	877	2,952	168,323
H14	2002	325	899	3,069	168,431
H15	2003	344	944	3,265	168,505
H16	2004	393	965	3,402	168,540
H17	2005	420	1,006	3,578	168,317
H18	2006	433	964	3,556	168,587
H19	2007	443	920	3,576	169,067

Table 4. Hadano foreign residents from Peru and Brazil (Source: Kanagawa kenai gaikokujin tōkei [Kanagawa prefectural statistics on foreign residents]<sup>8</sup>)

## 2. Some institutions working with foreign residents in Hadano including SUJCD

Several institutions were involved in supporting foreign residents. Here we will focus on three of them: the NGO Ayumukai, the In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program

of Sophia Junior College, and Hadano Catholic Church.

## **A. Ayumukai**

The Hadano NGO “Tōnan Ajia no Hitobito to tomoni Ayumukai [Walking together with the People of Southeast Asia Association],” henceforth, Ayumukai, was begun as a direct response to the February 1987 incident. In 2018, to commemorate their 31 years of operation, the NGO issued a 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of their publication *Ayumi*. In it, they clearly link the NGO’s founding to the February 1987 incident (Tōnan Ajia no Hitobito to tomoni Ayumukai 1).

Ayumukai was closely connected to people in the Hadano City Hall. One of the personnel of the Hadano City Hall, Shinji Harada, recalls in a 2007 article on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NGO that he was shocked upon learning what had happened and asked the mayor of Hadano to begin a volunteer support structure to help the refugees. In the same article Harada is credited with being a founder of the NGO (Kikuchi 2007).

The main way in which the Ayumukai NGO tried to support refugees was to hold Japanese language classes. These classes taught Japanese and also provided consulting for daily life in Japan. Classes were set up as early as March of 1987, one month after the killings, and the NGO was officially launched one year later in 1988 (Tōnan Ajia no Hitobito to tomoni Ayumukai 10).

## **B. Sophia Junior College In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program**

The junior college was involved early on with members of what would become the NGO Ayumukai. Junior College students began volunteering to teach Japanese classes on Sundays. One of the pillars of the Ayumukai NGO, Seiji Imafuku, was himself graduate of Sophia University and this facilitated the collaboration with the junior college. According to a 2005 internal publication about the junior college volunteer program, it was after this first experience of the students at the Sunday Japanese classes that the need was felt to do in-home volunteer tutoring. It was then that the junior college partnered with the Ayumukai NGO and launched the In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program (kateikyōshi borantia) on weekdays. The in-home volunteering began in May of 1988 and ten junior college students participated that year.

The In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program begun in 1988 expanded year by year and in 2004 received a “Good Practice” award from the Japanese Ministry of Education. The number of junior college volunteers grew from 10 students in 1988, to more than 70

volunteers per year for the years 1998 to 2003. For the years 2003 to 2005 the number of student volunteers was over 100. As the program grew, the geographic area to which the tutors were sent also expanded and households as far as Hiratsuka, Isehara, and Hon-Atsugi were receiving tutors. In general, the tutoring was in the evening for one hour with a start time sometime between 5 and 7 p.m. depending on the learner's scheduling needs.

The program, which originally focused on providing service to families from countries in Indochina residing in Hadano City, also began to help other groups of foreign residents. It began working with another NGO called "Chūnanbei no Hitobito o Kangaerukai [Thinking about People from Central and South America Association]." By the end of 2005, according to an internally published 2006 guidebook, the largest group receiving the student tutors was from Peru. Significantly, the 2006 guidebook intended for prospective families seeking in-house tutoring was published in eight languages: Japanese, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Lao, Khmer, and Chinese. The guidebook notes that there were no fees for the families either for the tutoring or for the materials. The families were given the possibility to share their cooking at a booth during the yearly school festival as a way of giving back to the school.

Part of the success of the In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program in terms of its durability and the number of students and community members involved might be attributed to the good fit between the junior college's goals as an education institution and the Hadano community's needs and assets. On the junior college's side, its educational goals were based on three founding principles: a training in Christian humanism, an international training, and language training. On the side of the Hadano community, there was a need for further Japanese language and daily life support for the foreign residents and this was also an asset because it meant that the foreign residents brought their own international experience to the Hadano community and to those who would be doing service for them. By volunteering in the tutoring program, the junior college students who helped the foreign residents of Hadano were also meeting their school's goal by getting a training in the Christian value of helping their neighbors, by getting an international experience by going into the homes of the foreign residents, and by improving their own language skills through teaching language.

### **C. Hadano Catholic Church**

Hadano Catholic Church was entrusted to several foreign missionary priests over the course of the years. The church opened its doors and allowed the use of its facilities



for the Japanese language classes. Some of the tutoring done by the In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program also took place in the Hadano Catholic Church facilities which are located a few minutes' walk away from the Hadano train station. When in 2000 and also again in 2006, Masahiro Raphael Umemura, bishop of the diocese of Yokohama to which Hadano Catholic Church belongs, began issuing plans and guidelines for Yokohama diocese with regards to the foreign resident faithful, the members of Hadano Catholic Church found the support to start their own Japanese language classes on the church premises on Sunday mornings after the morning Mass. These classes, begun in 2006, originally targeted several Vietnamese residents who were also Catholic.

### **3. Role of individuals in working with foreign residents as well as the kind of support they gave**

As Barbara Jacoby insightfully noted about developing and sustaining partnerships between campuses and the community, “partnerships between institutions start as relationships between individuals” (61). This is especially the case with beginning of the junior college’s In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program and other activities in the Hadano community.

One individual involved with the Hadano Community was Sister Maria Maldonado (1931-2009) of the Company of Mary Our Lady, in Latin *Ordine societatis Mariae Dominae Nostrae*, a Roman Catholic religious order founded in the early seventeenth century by Saint Jeanne de Lestonnac. Sister Maria Maldonado came to Japan from Spain in 1961. The Company of Mary had been working in Japan since 1959<sup>9</sup> and operated the dormitory for women adjacent to the junior college where several of the sisters also taught.

Sister Maria Maldonado did not formally teach at the junior college. She had a training in social work and performed various services. She personally knew many Hadano residents and took an interest in those living in Hadano. One informant for this study, a resident of Hadano from Peru, explained how Maldonado, better known as Sister Maria, actively helped her settle in Hadano in the early 1990s.

According to this informant, Sister Maria played a key role in helping her break out of a vicious cycle. The situation was that the informant and her husband had recently come from Peru. A son was born to the couple in Japan, and when the child grew older, the couple wanted to put the child into daycare so that both parents could work. Yet without daycare for the child, it was difficult for the mother to look for a job, but it was also not possible to get the daycare without both parents already working. Once the

mother was finally able to get a tentative job offer from a company, another obstacle was the long waiting list for child daycare. The informant insisted that it was Sister Maria's speaking to the city hall on her behalf that speeded up the process.

Sister Maria had also helped the informant when she was pregnant, and her baby was born in the hospital. On that occasion, Sister Maria, who was from Spain and spoke Spanish, served as the interpreter between the informant and the doctor. After that, Sister Maria helped other foreign residents in hospitals with her interpretation skills: "After this first experience she started helping other people in the hospitals, mainly for translations."<sup>10</sup>

The informant was also aware of Sister Maria's activities to help foreigners in prison in Japan. This is because Sister Maria would ask people to contribute magazines and other reading materials they no longer needed for the prisoners: "if you have newspapers or the latest thingummy to take to the people in prison," she would ask. "She wouldn't talk much about this kind of situations with us but, she let us know that she was committed to these people, too."<sup>11</sup>

Sister Maria Maldonado became relatively well known in Hadano and several publications highlighted her multiple activities in Kanagawa. Among other publications, she was featured in the Hadano City edition of the free paper *Town News* (number 364) for her volunteer work in the national hospital in Kanagawa and her organizing student volunteers from the junior college dormitory to come help as well. The Kanagawa Prefecture based Tomoshihi Undō o Susumeru Kenmin Kaigi [Prefectural Conference Commending Bright Activities] also included her in an album of inspiring personalities.

Another individual connected to the junior college's involvement with foreign residents was Sister Rosa María Cortés Gómez, ODN (1940-2015). She came to Japan from Spain in 1962 with the same Roman Catholic religious order, the Company of Mary Our Lady. She was on faculty at the junior college and appears in the yearbook with the first graduating class of 1975. Immediately after the 1987 incident in Hadano, she was instrumental in organizing the student volunteers for Japanese language classes which later became the In-Home Volunteer Tutoring Program.

One informant for our study who came from Laos to Hadano through the Yamato Resettlement Center in the early 1990s described the kind of hands-on help that Sister Cortés provided. Sister Cortés would bring the informant to the school grounds and provide driving lessons to help the informant pass the driving test and get a driver's license. To do this, they would drive on the extensive convent and school grounds when the grounds were not being used.<sup>12</sup>

Sister Cortés also formally studied the problem of foreign residents in Japan and in 2005 completed a doctoral dissertation entitled, “Minority Groups in Japan: A Historical and Cultural Approach” (Cortés 2006). Some of the findings in her dissertation appear summarized in the junior college faculty bulletin from 2006.

## Conclusion

This preliminary research contains some of the context to the interactions between SUJCD and the foreign population in Hadano City. We found that individuals had a big impact in putting programs together. We also noticed that many of the individuals were foreigners themselves. Areas of further research include interviewing more informants about their experiences as supporters or receiving support. A look at the experiences of the second generation of foreign residents might also yield interesting data.

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> See Ramalay, 2000, 240.

<sup>3</sup> See Foundation for the Welfare and Education of the Asian People (FWEAP) site. <http://www.fweap.or.jp/history%20of%20RHQ.htm>

<sup>4</sup> See the FWEAP site. <http://www.fweap.or.jp/history%20of%20RHQ.htm>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.pref.kanagawa.jp/docs/k2w/cnt/f4695/index.html>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> See <https://asiaodn.org>.

<sup>10</sup> Interview, September 2018.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Interview, March 2019.

