

Preface

The Intercultural City does not view diversity as a threat, nor simply “cope” with it, but utilizes it as a source of dynamism, innovation, creativity and growth. Based on this latest idea, the Council of Europe has started the “Intercultural cities” programme with 12 cities in Europe to exchange expertise and experience among each other.

In Japan, in order to facilitate peaceful co-existence between indigeneous and foreign inhabitants in a community, various policies are being carried out with the idea of “multicultural symbiosis” (Tabunka-kyosei). Some of these policies present strong pararell cases with those in the intercultural cities, where diversity is regarded as strength and participation in community activities are encouraged all across the ethnic landscape.

However, these initiatives towards integration at regional and community levels in Europe and Japan did not been fully introduced to each other, let alone studied comparatively.

The Japan Foundation and the Council of Europe invited to Japan a group which was consisted of the representatives of Tilburg / the Netherlands, Neuchâtel / Switzerland, Patras / Greece, among the member cities of “Intercultural cities” programme, Mr. Phil Wood, a co-coiner of the term “Intercultural city”, and other experts. They made a study visit to Kani city and Minokami city of Gifu pref. and Kobe city of Hyogo pref. to have seen demonstration of typical “multicultural symbiosis” in Japan, then participated in an open symposium in Tokyo.

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We sincerely hope that this report which contains a summary of the study tour and the whole text of the symposium would contribute to a certain aspect of the issue of social inclusion of foreign residents in Europe and Japan.

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