ブラジルから来た
UM SENHOR DO BRASIL visitando brasileiros no Japão
おじいちゃん
A Grandpa from Brazil

Study Guide

A Grandpa from Brazil

A Film by Nanako Kurihara

Version 1.1

http://nanakokurihara.com/

Letter from the Filmmaker

My friendship with Mr. Konno started in São Paulo when I joined my father on his business trip in 1976. I was a twenty year-old college student, majoring in Political Science. It was my first overseas travel.

Mr. Konno took me around the city of São Paulo, while telling me stories of Japanese immigrans to Brazil, a subject about which I barely knew anything. A lot of their experiences were painful. I was really shocked to hear from somebody who lived through them. We also had great fun discussing the world's politics and economy. We became friends despite the more than forty years age difference.

I felt so welcomed by Brazilian hospitality that I was reluctant to go back to Japan after two weeks, which was my original plan. Mr. Konno intervened, inviting me to stay with his family. So did I. I felt like a member of his family: I ate Brazilian food with them and his youngest daughter, Nelly, took me to dance samba on weekends.

When I came home finally, I started to exchange letters with Mr. Konno. No Skype, no e-mail existed in those days; international calls were prohibitively expensive.

Then, after more than a decade of life in the USA, I had a chance to visit Brazil again in 2003. I called Mr. Konno. There he was. He lived in the same house where I had stayed 27 years earlier. When I visited him, I discovered that he was returning to Japan for a month every year. I wondered what he was doing there. A flight takes at least 26 hours. What motivates a man in his nineties to take such a journey every year? I also wanted to hear his whole life story. That's why I decided to follow his trip to see what he was doing in Japan and also listen to his stories on the road.

And our journey revealed more about his character than I expected.

Nanako Kurihara, Filmmaker, *A Grandpa from Brazil*

A Grandpa from Brazil

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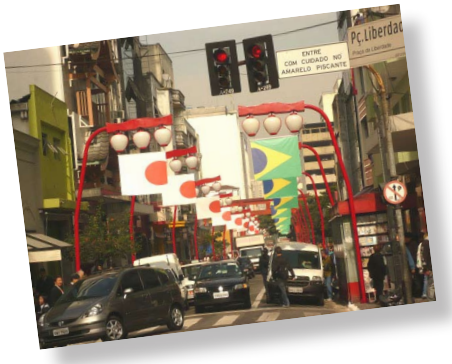


Overview

In this lesson, the class will watch a documentary, *A Grandpa from Brazil*, that features Mr. Ken'ichi Konno, a first generation immigrant to Brazil. Students will examine the history of Japanese emigration to Brazil and "return migration" of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan.

We recommend the following process: a class reads background essays, then watches the documentary. Afterwards, the teacher leads a student disucussion about the issues presented in the film. If a class is unaccustomed to free-flowing debate, the unit "Group Work for the Class" would be useful to loosen it up. Teachers can choose questions for students depending on which area they would like to emphasize. There is a homework sheet PDF to be downloaded too. Finally, this site offers some projects for follow-up study. Please feel free to utilize this guide ifor your best. We would love to get your reactions and comments on it so that can improve it further. I hope that you and your students will have a wonderful class time!

For more background information on emigrants to Brazil and return migration, please see this lesson's Background and Resouces.

Introduction: A Grandpa from Brazil

A Grandpa from Brazil focuses on the life journey of Mr. Ken'ichi Konno, a ninety-two-year-old Japanese citizen who migrated to Brazil in 1931. In telling Mr. Konno's story, *A Grandpa from Brazil* also traces the history of Japanese immigration to Brazil and the current "reverse immigration" from Brazil to Japan.

Mr. Konno traveled alone to Brazil in 1931 when he was nineteen years old to escape the financial crises of his homeland. During the Great Depression, the Japanese government promoted a policy of dispatching citizens overseas to reduce the pressures of overpopulation. Promised an easier life in Brazil, young Konno saw emigration as his only choice.

Through grit and good luck, he became the patriarch of a large, mixed family. Though he has found peace at the end of his long life, he does not forget that others are still fighting his old battles. In particular, he concerns himself with Brazilians of Japanese descent who have recently made the journey from Brazil to Japan in search of a more prosperous society. 320,000 Japanese-Brazilians have filled job vacancies caused by labor shortages in Japan, far exceeding the 250,000 Japanese who emigrated to Brazil over the last century.

When visiting Japan, Konno listens to these "new" immigrants talk about their problems and offers advice to them, as well as smoothing the path for their integration into Japanese society, even meeting with local school teachers. He also visits landmarks of his youth that inspire him to reflect upon the joys and sorrows of his life.

This timely, passionate tale follows a seemingly ordinary man on his extraordinary journey. As an engagement tool, it offers a springboard for dialogue about the history of Japanese immigration to Brazil and the return immigration to Japan and for further reflection on the ramifications of international migration in our daily life.

Potential Audiences

High school students
Academic departments or student groups at colleges, universities, and high schools
Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as your local library
Organizations that work with immigration issues

Key Issues, Subject Areas

Brazil, Japan, Social Studies, Globalization, World History, Multiculturalism, International Exchange, Transnational Culture, Migration, Education, Immigrants, Global citizenship

Background Information

Japanese Emigration before WWII

During most of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1867), Japan was almost completely closed to the outside world. Trade was minimal and there was no migration in or out of the country for nearly two and a half centuries. In 1854, Commodore Perry of the United States forced Japan to open trade. Japan, which had not advanced industrially during its period of isolation, suddenly began to modernize at a breakneck pace. These quick changes undermined the feudal Tokugawa warlords and led to the Meiji restoration in 1868. The new regime quickly incorporated modern advances in medicine and public health and labor-saving technology in farming, which all helped increase Japan's population rapidly. Soon there were too many people in the countryside for the available farmland. Also, many farmers could not pay the steeply higher land taxes, which mainly went to improve standards of living in cities and to support the large military. Some left their farms for the new industrial jobs in the cities, but there were not enough jobs for everyone. Faced with this growing population that threatened to destabilize society, the Japanese government sponsored Japanese emigration to other countries.

From 1885 to 1894, the Japanese government directly sponsored the emigration of almost 30,000 Japanese contract workers to Hawaii to work on the sugar and fruit plantations. These were mostly single men who hoped to save enough money to return to Japan after a few years and start a small business or buy farmland. After 1894, the flow of migrants increased because the government allowed private companies to manage the flow of workers abroad. Hawaii received the bulk of this flow until the turn of the century, but some workers were also shipped to Australia, Peru and Mexico. These workers were generally not settlers, and planned to return to Japan after they fulfilled their labor contract to their employer. But when the USA annexed Hawaii in 1898 and outlawed contract labor, the Japanese emigrants could choose to return to Japan, leave Hawaii as free emigrants, and even to settle in mainland America. Many chose the last option because wages were higher on the mainland, until two "Gentleman's Agreements" with Canada and the US severely curtailed Japanese immigration to these two countries in 1907-8.

With North America now hostile to new Japanese immigration, the Japanese government decided to target migration to countries where they would be more welcome. Peru and Mexico were also hostile to the small Japanese communities, so Japan reached an agreement with Brazil in 1907. Many of the migrants who went to Brazil travelled with their families and did not return to Japan. In fact, 93% of the roughly 140,000 Japanese immigrants to Brazil from 1908-1933 remained in the country. Most Japanese immigrating to Peru never returned to Japan either. Less than 20,000 Japanese signed up for work as contract laborers in Peru. Work conditions were much harsher in the country and most later moved to Lima for better opportunities.

Over time, the Brazilian government became increasingly uneasy about the influx of Japanese. By 1934, Brazil began to restrict Japanese immigration, and so Japan then focused on a new target for emigration: Manchuria. Manchuria is the northeastern part of China today but in 1931 the Japanese Army seized the area and declared a new country of Manchukuo although very few other nations recognized it as an independent state. Japan had effective military and diplomatic control of the country, but needed more Japanese citizens there to solidify their authority on the ground. Beginning in 1932, the government supported trial colonies, which eventually grew to become the "million households to Manchuria" program in 1936. By 1938, almost 420,000 Japanese resided in Manchuria, outnumbering the 170,000 in Brazil. Virtually all those Japanese fled Manchuria when Japan lost the Pacific War in 1945, leaving Brazil and the USA with the largest populations of Japanese ancestry living outside Japan.

Japanese in Brazil

Most of the Japanese immigrants (*nikkeijin=all people of Japanese ancestry living abroad, regardless of citizenship or place of birth*) landed on the Brazilian coast. Like earlier migrants, they hoped to return triumphantly to Japan after a few years. For most, this did not happen. Instead, Japanese slowly, haltingly, became part of the fabric of this immigrant-rich country while developing their own hybrid culture. They began work on the coffee plantations, but soon bought land to become independent farmers. Although the work was difficult, they were able to create communities because the groups included women and children.

But their communities were largely isolated from other Brazilians. The Japanese government subsidized the establishment of Japanese schools, newspapers and agricultural co-ops. By 1932, there were nearly 200 Japanese schools in São Paulo. The *nikkeijin* did not assimilate into the larger society, did not learn Portuguese and did not intermarry. Even many of the children who were born in Brazil saw themselves as Japanese rather than Brazilians.

This meant that the Japanese community was deeply affected by World War II, especially after Brazil joined the Allies against Japan. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Brazil broke off relations with Japan and halted new immigration from Japan . Brazil also attempted to forcibly assimilate the Japanese who were already living there by ending Japanese education and shutting Japanese newspapers, but these measures had limited effect. Official emigration to Brazil did not resume until seven years after the end of WWII, in 1952, but then 37400 new migrants arrived over the next decade. Their numbers dropped in the 1960s, when the Japanese "economic miracle" provided enough opportunities to keep Japanese in the homeland. Still, the *nikkeijin* community kept multiplying and also grew more integrated into the rest of Brazilian society. In the postwar years, for example, some Japanese-Brazilians began to intermarry with other Brazilians. By 2006, Brazil counted almost two million Japanese Brazilians.

Reverse Immigration to Japan

As Japan's economy soared throughout the 1980's, Japan traded the problem of excess labor for its opposite. Modern Japan had never before suffered a labor shortage, and so had never had to provide for large-scale immigration . Eventually, large industrial companies overcame some of the cultural resistance to immigration but, because both business and government leaders were still nervous about inviting foreigners to live in Japan, they looked for a group who seemed easy to assimilate. This desire led them to the overseas Japanese communities of Brazil, Peru and a few other countries.. The Revised Immigration Control Act of 1990 allowed foreigners who were the second and third generation of Japanese citizens and their spouse to stay and work in the country as teijusha with three year renewable visas. In general, foreigners could not get visas to work in factories but these "reverse immigrants" were eligible for unskilled labor, hence meeting the factories' demand for workers.

Brazil's economy was stagnant throughout the eighties, so many *nikkeijin* from Brazil (as well as Peru) jumped at the chance to earn higher wages. Many planned on staying a short time, and in fact many did just that, soon returning to Brazil. Some of these returnees made a second journey to work in Japan, or even a third or fourth. Their visa condition allowing them to go in and out freely out of the country converted them into work a malleable on-demend work force, convenient for Japanese industry.

Japanese policy hinged on two assumptions: 1. because the *nikkeijin* were of Japanese blood, they would easily assimilate to Japanese ways, and 2. the *nikkeijin* would stay for only short temporary contracts to return to Brazil, Peru and the Phillipines, among others. Although the second assumption proved true in many cases, the first assumption was proved largely false. Although many of the *nikkeijin* appeared Japanese, they didn't act like them. Rather, their attitudes and values were Brazilian. Lacking language skills and unfamiliar with Japanese mores, these Japanese Brazilians often settled in provincial factory towns which were perhaps less tolerant than in the larger cosmopolitan cities. This created major challenges for all the "return migrants," both those who worked in Japan for a few years and for those who decided to make their life there.

Nikkeijin and their Family in Japan

As of 2010, there were about 230,000 Japanese Brazilians in Japan. This means almost one out of every eight Japanese Brazilians lives in Japan. As its growth rocketed during the eighties, Japan has suffered acute labor shortages. Historically averse to immigration, the Japanese government restricted unskilled labor to Japanese. Factories demanded more workers, and the government responded with a compromise in 1990. Any foreigner with a parent or grandparent who was Japanese would be allowed to work as unskilled labor. Brazil' s economy was stagnant throughout the eighties, so many *nikkeijin* from Brazil (as well as Peru) jumped at the chance to earn higher wages. Many planned on staying a short time, and in fact many stayed for a limited period, only to return again.

Nikkeijin often take the "3-K" (*kitanai, kitsui, kiken* or dirty, difficult and dangerous) jobs unwanted by most Japanese. Although their hourly wages are comparable with those paid to Japanese, they are not generally covered by government pensions nor do they receive normal Japanese bonuses, which can reach 50% of the annual salary of their Japanese counterparts. Often they work uncovered by health insurance, even though all Japanese have national health insurance coverage. With lower social welfare and higher risks, *nikkeijin* are also underserved by the education system. Schools rarely have bilingual teachers and so they struggle with students who don't speak Japanese in the home. In areas where *nikkeijin* are most populous, such as Mie, Aichi and Shizuoaka prefectures, authorities have instituted some special schools to meet these challenges. But school attendance is not mandatory for non-Japanese, so many nikkeijin students drop out. Uneducated and unable to access all but the lowest jobs, some resort to petty crime. Others persevere despite little support from Japanese society

Following the financial crisis, many of the *nikkeijin* working on temporary contracts were terminated as the economy slowed. Responding to the temporary labor surplus, in 2009 the Japanese government offered 300,000 yen to each nikkeijin worker (and 200,000 yen for each family member) to give up their special visa to work in Japan and leave the country. Later it changed the condtion from giving up a visa to a three-year leave because of a criticism. As the economy of Brazil began to boom, many took the opportunity to leave a nation where they had never been fully welcomed. The Brazilian population of Japan dropped by over a quarter, more than 80,000 people, in just three years. Yet many families don't want to leave what has become their home. These are usually the ones whose children have managed to adapt to Japan despite the barriers, meaning that returning to Brazil would be just as hard as staying in Japan. Their children speak better Japanese than Portuguese and would feel alien in Brazil. Despite disadvantages, they are making the best of their adopted home of Japan.

Group Work for the Classroom

Benefits of this Module

1. Students pay closer attention to the movie don't treat it as an entertainment only
2. Looking for the items in the assignment, they will notice other things.
3. Small group discussion immediately following the film will jog their memory of scenes they viewed.
4. In the small group discussion expressing what they saw verbally will solidify their memory and encourage them to reflect on the film.
5. Simple tasks are included to build student confidence which is necessary for more difficult discussion questions that would follow.
6. This module provides intermediate steps for a teacher-led facilitated discussion that would follow.

Instructions to Teachers

Before the film viewing, give each assignment to one quarter of the students only
Immediately after the film ends have each of the question groups form a circle to discuss their answers and agree on a group answer. Let them present to the rest of the class
It is important to praise students' successful listings. If they miss one, point it out but do so gently.

A. Count and list the number of places that Konno-san visits to remind him of his past in Japan.

Write down the city each place is located in.
(answers)Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kobe.

What did he do there in the past? Write them down.

B. How many audiences does he speak to?

What does he say to those groups?

(answers)Akaoji community Center, family members of Masayuki in Shiga, restaurant customers at Restaurante Taiyo, teachers at Fabio's junior high school, teachers and students at Douglas' elementary school,

C. What do these people say in their conversations with Konno?

(answers)Fabio's father – He wants to do his business.

Owner of the restaurant – Difference between the life in Brazil and Japan
Yoriko in the kitchen – She talks about the long house she works.
Worker – He has a son who studies in Brazi.

D. Konno's life in Brazil
What were his jobs in Brazil?
(answers) House boy, baker's apprentice, works at a liquor company, farmer, shop owner, farm owner

Did he get rich?

Was he happy at his jobs?

Questions after Watching the Movie

General Discussion Questions

• If you could ask Mr. Konno any question, what would you ask?

• Who else would you like to ask a question? What would you ask?

• What surprised you the most about the movie? Why?

• What part of the movie did you like best? Why?

• What part of the movie was the most disturbing to you? Why?

Discussion Prompts

Nationality and Identity

• How is Kenichi Konno Japanese? How is Kenichi Konno Brazilian? Give a reason for each answer.

• Why does Kenichi Konno come back to Japan every year?

• Is Kenichi Konno loyal to Japan? Was Japan loyal to Kenichi Konno? Can you give an example of loyalty or disloyalty in the film?

• Why is the English title "A Grandpa from Brazil"? Does he act like a grandpa? For whom does he act as a grandpa?

• Is it adequate to call people from Brazil like ones in the movie "Burajiru-jin" ? If not, what do you think the right word to describe people like Fabio, Douglas, Roberto, Eliane, and the Narimatsu's?

History

• In the 1920s and 30s Japan was undergoing great changes in the society.
Population was soaring. So farmers often had to leave the country because the farm could no longer sustain their larger families. Where could they go? Konno started in Osaka. But he moved. Where did Konno go first? Why didn't he stay there? Do you think that other people made the same decisions? If so, did they make their decisions for the same reasons?

(Japanese wanted to get rid of people/promotion of emigration.)
(economic condition of the time)
(communism and socialism connected to an agriculture teacher)

• Mr. Konno tells the story about how the Rikkokai school president encouraged him to go to Korea. Why didn't he go? What would have happened if he had?

Adjustment of Brazilians to Japan Today

• Mr. Konno finds that some of the Japanese Brazilian who attend Japanese schools drop out after junior high school. Why? What is the official policy?
What effects does this policy have?

• Mr. Konno's friend Roberto has a bad limp. Where was he injured? Has he been able to get compensation?

• Mr. Konno says, "It takes three generations for Japanese to become fully integrated into the Brazilian society." What does he mean? Does this definition make sense to you? How would you define integration? What are the key things that would create smoother integration?

• Are all societies the same in this way? How long do you think it takes for immigrants to get integrated into Japanese society? So which country takes less time-- Brazil or Japan? Why do you think this is?

• Compare the difficulties faced by Japanese establishing themselves in Brazil and how they were received there with the difficulties faced by their descendants who returned to Japan and how they have been received in Japan.

Immigrants and You

• Was anyone here born in another country or is not a citizen? How many know someone who lives in this country who was not born here? Tell how you/they came to be here.

• If you were going to live in a different country, what might be some of your hopes? What might be some of your fears?

• If a group of people were to come to live in your area from another country, what might you expect from them? What might you fear about them?

• What are some reasons that immigrants travel to other lands?
What are some things and qualities that immigrants have to offer to the countries to which they migrate?
What are some reasons that countries encourage certain people to become temporary or permanent residents?
What are some reasons countries make it hard for foreigners to work and become naturalized?

• The Brazilian economy is now doing very well despite the slump in many advanced economies, including Japan. Also, its standing in world view is improving dramatically with the FIFA World Cup and Summer Olympics scheduled to be held there soon. Many of the Brazilians in Japan have returned.
What effects could these developments have on those who remain in Japan?
What effects could these changes have on the people of Japanese descent in Brazil?

• Discuss the dangers of opening Japan to allow more immigration and to allow those who have immigrated greater possibility of becoming naturalized citizens.

• Discuss the benefits of opening Japan to allow more immigration and to allow those who have immigrated greater possibility of becoming naturalized citizens.

Personal Reflection

• Has the movie changed the way you see something? How do you see the world differently now that you have seen the movie? Please make any other comments about the movie you wish.

Homework

Let each student write down answers to general discussion questions.

Give reading assignment regarding the topic such as articles and books in the resources section on page 16 and 17.

Homework sheet

Due on

I. Film Questions

• If you could ask Konno-san any question, what would you ask?

• Who else would you like to ask a question? What would you ask?

• What did you learn from this movie? What insights did it give you?

• Describe a scene or moment in the movie that you thought was very disturbing or moving. What about that scene made it most compelling for you?

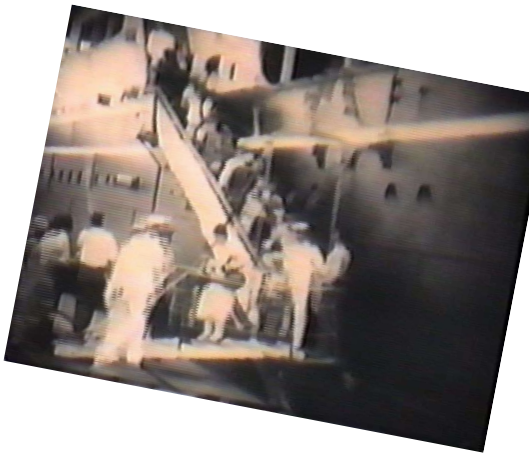
II. Reading Questions

What is the main topic of your reading?

Write five facts from the reading that you think are important.

Name **Student Number**

Projects after Viewing



• Visit Migration museums in Yokohama and Kobe (Resource section for the internet link to the museums)

• Write essays on what you learned

• Oral history project
Interview people in the community who have roots in foreign countries.

• Art project: Make ID
Mr. Konno said in the documentary, “If a nation disappears, it is just fine to dedicate yourself to humankind. That time has to come.” If that time comes, what kind of passport or ID would people have. Look at IDs in the below web site and pick five of your favorite. Show them to others and tell them why you like them. And finally make a passport/ID card for yourself.

The traveling exhibition “Your Documents Please” site:
http://yourdocumentsplease.com/pages/catalog.html

This is an exhibition of unique passports and IDs made by 270 artisits from 27 countries around the world. The organizers asked participants to make a small artwork (the size of a conventional passport or less) that functions visually or conceptually as if it were an identification document.

Resources

Related Articles in English on the Web

Bjorkland, Krister "Migration in the Interest of the Nation; Population Movements to and from Japan since the Meji Era"
http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/pdf/webreports25.pdf

Junichi Goto, "THE MIGRANT WORKERS IN JAPAN FROM LATIN AMERICA AND ASIA: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES"
http://cdi.mecon.gov.ar/biblio/docelec/indes/dt/I-13.pdf

Junichi Goto, "Latin Americans of Japanese Origin (Nikkeijin) Working in Japan– A survey" Junichi Goto
http://www.rieb.kobe-u.ac.jp/academic/ra/dp/English/dp185.pdf

Mitsuro Shimpo, "Indentured Migrants from Japan"
http://www.wadsworth.com/history_d/special_features/ext/world_hist/unbound/product/wawhm01c/content/whis/modules/worldmigration/historicaldocuments/mig_rd_iaiii_shimpo.html

Takeyuki Tsuda, "Migration and Alienation: Japanese-Brazilian Return Migrants and the Search for Homeland Abroad"
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/history/faculty/henryyu/Hist597/Takeyuki_Tsuda.pdf

Related Articles in Japanese on the Web

Chiemi Flavia Yanase, "Kojinteki taiken to nikkei burajirujin toshite no aidentiti Individual Experience and Identity as Japanese-Brazilian"
http://www.for.aichi-pu.ac.jp/tabunka/journal/2-1.pdf

A Nikkei-Brazilian college student's essay about experince of growing up in Japan.

Museums and Library

Museum and Library websites
Japanese Overseas Migration Museum (in Japanese)
http://www.jomm.jp/

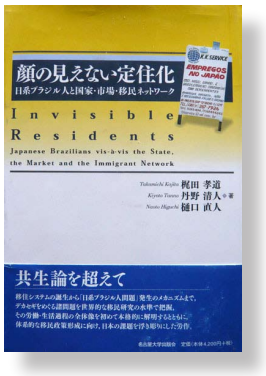
Kobe Center for Overseas Migration and Cultural Interaction (in Japanese)
http://www.kobe-center.jp/index.html

Hiroshima City Digital Migration Space (in Japanese)
http://dms-hiroshima.eg.jomm.jp

National Diet Library A Centennial of Migrants to Brazil site (in Japanese and Portuguese)
http://www.ndl.go.jp/brasil/index.html
Extremely useful site. Photos and photos of primary documents.

Books

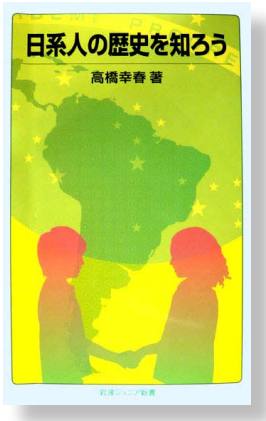
Takamichi Kajita, Kiyoto Tanno, Naoto Higuchi,『顔の見えない定住化 日系ブラジル人と国家・市場・移民ネットワーク Kao no mienai teijuka nikkei buarjirujin to kokka shijo imin nettowaku [Japanese Brazilians vis-à-vus the State, the Market ant the Immigrant Network] Nagoya daigaku shuppankai 2005



Yukiharu Takahashi,『ブラジル移民のことを知ろう Burajiru imin no koto o shiro [Let's Learn about Migrants to Brazil]』Iwanami shoten 2008

An author who used to live and work for the Japanese-Brazilian newspaper writes on the topic in an easy-to-understand manner for young people. But it's actually good for everybody.

Organizations for Brazilians and Foreigners in Japan



ABC Japan
http://www.abcjapan.org/index.php

Brazilian embassy in Tokyo
http://www.brasemb.or.jp/index.html

Center for Multicultural Information and Assistance
http://www.tabunka,.jp/

Communidade Brasileira de Kansai
http://www16.ocn.ne.jp/~cbk.bras/

Serviço de Assistência aos Brasileiros no Japão
http://sites.google.com/site/sitenposabjajp/

Solidarity Network with Migrants in Japan
http://www.jca.apc.org/migrant-net/Japanese/Japanese.html

Other Site

International Organization for Migration
www.iom.int

Credit for the Guide

Guide Producers and Writers:
Stephen Dalton, Associate Professor, Osaka Gakuin University
Nanako Kurihara, Ph.D. Filmmaker

Design: Ryoko Yoshida, Harvest Firm Inc.
Illustration: Rie Jatani

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Laura Hein Ph.D. Professor Northwestern University
Daniel Georges Artist, Exhibition Organizer

Credit for the Film

Director: Producer Nanako Kurihara
Cinematography: Nanako Kurihara, Helio Ishii
Editors: Takashi Saito, Yuichiro Konno
Music: Kazuhiko Michishita
Sound design: Takeshi Ogawa, Studio Cats

How to Buy the Film

To order *A Grandpa from Brazil*

go to: http://nanakokurihara.com/

For questions regarding domestic distribution of *A Grandpa from Brazil*, please contact angelos (at)nanakokurihara.com