

職業紹介所 があった頃

The Employment Agency Period

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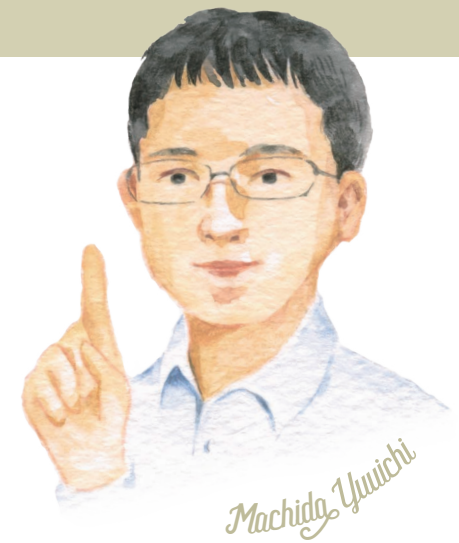
子供の頃、建物の外まで
行列ができるほど
求職者がいたのを覚えています。



Tokyo
Arts and Space

TOKAS本郷について

トーキョーアーツアンドスペース (TOKAS) は、同時代の表現を東京から創造・発信するアートセンターです。展覧会や公演を開催しているTOKAS本郷の建物は、1928年に職業紹介所として建設されました。翌年には、1階と2階に婦人少年職業紹介所、3階に知識階級を対象とする本郷職業紹介所が開所し、求職者に仕事を仲介しました。1949年からは職業訓練校として使用され、2001年にアートセンターとして開館しました。



昭

和初期の日本は、長引く不況を背景にした失業や生活難の深刻化と、政治家や資本家に対するテロ事件の発生と軍部の台頭、対外関係の悪化に象徴される暗い時代でした。

TOKAS本郷があるこの施設は、1929(昭和4)年に、「知識階級」(中学卒業から大学・専門学校卒業程度の高学歴層)を扱う東京市本郷職業紹介所と、婦人および少年を対象にした東京市婦人少年職業紹介所を集めて、開所しました。

公立の職業紹介所は、1911(明治44)年に東京市が浅草と芝に開所していましたが、規模は小さく、紹介先も男性の工場や日雇労働の紹介が中心で、民間の営利職業紹介所の規模には及びませんでした。

1918(大正7)年の米騒動、1920年の第一次世界大戦後の恐慌により失業問題が深刻化してくると、公立の職業紹介所は都市部で増えていきます。国際的にも、公立職業紹介所の整備、営利職業紹介所の廃止の方向性が示される中、1921年に「職業紹介法」が公布され、市町村営に

よる公立職業紹介所の設置が全国に奨励され、組織も整えられていきました。

しかし、長引く不況の中で失業者は増加していきました。この中に、大戦景気背景に増えた高等教育機関卒業生の就職難や、役所や会社を蹴首された「知識階級」の失業者、雑用の多い徒弟制や年季奉公などを嫌った婦人や少年労働者の離職者も多くいました。本郷職業紹介所と婦人少年職業紹介所は、こうした状況への対策として設置が推進されたものでした。

当時の新聞報道などを見ると、この紹介所に来所した人々が、自分にあつた、よりよい条件の職業を求める様子がうかがえます。しかし、不景気に加え、民間の営利職業紹介所が中心であった都市の労働市場で、そうした希望は中々叶えられませんでした。二つの紹介所が本格的な対応の必要から分離、移転し、施設も改称されたことはその表れでした。

1937(昭和12)年の日中戦争の全面化後は、国家総動員体制下で戦争に活用される日雇労働の紹介、炭鉱労働の紹介を主な業務としていきます。第二次世界大戦の敗戦後は再び日雇労働の紹介機関として復活しますが、その後は職業技術を学ぶ人々を対象にした職業訓練校としての役割を担い、1991(平成3)年にその役割を終えることになりました。

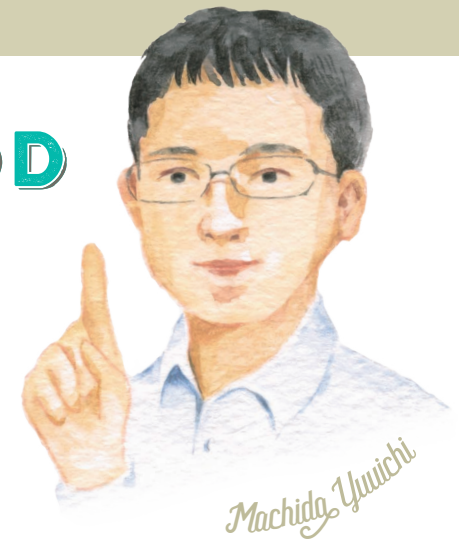
歴史を振り返ると、この建物には、その時々々の経済事情に翻弄されながらも、新しい活躍の場を求めた、近代東京の人々の記憶が刻まれていることがわかります。この地を訪れた人々をめぐる歴史にも思いを馳せて頂ければ幸いです。



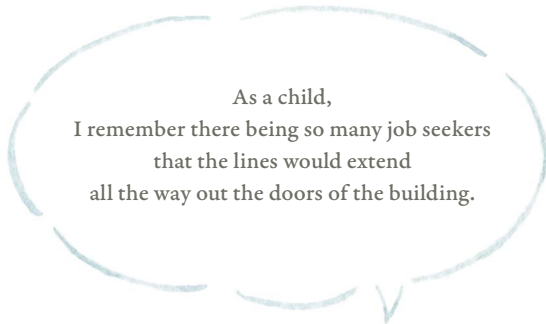
THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY PERIOD

MACHIDA Yuuichi | text

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Machida Yuuichi



As a child,
I remember there being so many job seekers
that the lines would extend
all the way out the doors of the building.



The early Showa period was a dark time in Japan, symbolized by worsening international relations, the rise of militarism, and terrorist attacks against politicians and capitalists, while prolonged economic stagnation led to further increases in unemployment rates and the difficulty of living.

The TOKAS Hongo building was opened in 1929 to house the Tokyo City Hongo Employment Agency, which catered to “educated people” (graduates of junior high schools, vocational schools, or universities), and the Tokyo City Women’s and Youth Employment Agency.

Tokyo City had opened public employment agencies in Asakusa and Shiba in 1911, but these could not compete with private commercial employment agencies. They were small and most of the work they offered was factory work or day labor suited for men.

The unemployment situation worsened following the rice riots of 1918 and the post-World War I depression of 1920, which led to an increase in public employment agencies in urban areas. The trend of public employment agencies replacing commercial employment agencies could be seen internationally as well, and in Japan the Employment Placement Law was enacted in 1921. The establishment of municipally operated public employment agencies was promoted nationwide, and the formation of related organizations moved forward.

However, the number of unemployed continued to increase among prolonged economic stagnation. This included a wartime economy-driven surge of graduates of institutions of higher education who then found it difficult to find a job when conditions worsened, “educated people” who had been dismissed from government office or company positions, as well as many youth and women workers who had left odd-job and apprenticeship-type positions they were unhappy with. The creation of both the Hongo Employment Agency and the Women’s and Youth Employment Agency was driven by the need to address this situation.

Newspaper reports of the time suggest that the people who visited these two employment agencies came in search of jobs with better conditions that were a good personal fit. However, the poor economy and the fact that private commercial employment agencies still dominated the urban labor market made it highly unlikely that such hopes would be fulfilled. This was evidenced by the split, relocation, and renaming of the two employment agencies, resulting from a need for more comprehensive support.

After the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the focus of the agencies shifted toward offering work to coal miners and day laborers who would benefit war efforts as part of Japan’s national mobilization system. The agencies returned to offering normal day labor jobs after the end of the World War II, but they also eventually began to function as vocational guidance centers meant to teach occupational skills, which lasted until 1991.

Looking back over history, we can see that while the fate of this building has lain at the mercy of changing economic conditions, it has been etched into the memories of modern Tokyo residents as a source of new opportunities. I invite you also to contemplate the history of this place and the many people who have visited it over the years.



Tokyo Arts and Space

Tokyo Arts and Space (TOKAS) is an arts center dedicated to the creation and promotion of contemporary artistic expression from Tokyo. The TOKAS Hongo building, which hosts exhibitions, performances, and more, was built in 1928 to serve as an employment agency. By the following year, the Women’s and Youth Employment Agency had opened on the first and second floors and the Hongo Employment Agency, which catered to educated people, had opened on the third floor and both had begun offering work to jobseekers. After functioning as a vocational guidance center for some years beginning in 1949, the building was reopened as an art center in 2001.

