

「OFIX News」 Issue 12 (July 2009)
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Exchange~

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【01】 Notices

OFIX Supports for International Understanding Education

Support for NPO International Understanding Education Programmes

In order to enhance international understanding in Osaka Prefecture, and to support the activities of NPO s involved in international exchange, OFIX offers assistance to cover travel expenses incurred by NPO s during school visits.

Eligible Organizations

NGO s and NPO s based in Osaka Prefecture, Municipal International Exchange Associations etc

Eligible Activities

International understanding lessons undertaken by NPO s etc at schools within Osaka Prefecture (elementary, middle, high schools, etc)

Maximum funding available

5,000 Yen per person per school visit

Further details (Japanese only) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/boran/index2.html>

Support for International Understanding Education Programme

OFIX makes arrangements for OFIX staff, international students/trainees, JICA international cooperation promoters to be dispatched to classes and exchange activities at schools and educational facilities in Osaka. This is completely free of charge.

Further details <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/jigyuu/index.html>

International Understanding Education Search Engine

On the OFIX homepage you will also find a search engine of NPO s which currently undertake international understanding lessons in Osaka Prefecture.

Further details (Japanese only) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/jigyuu/index.html>

【02】Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

FAQ

The Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents receives many enquiries regarding the National Health Insurance System in Japan. We have enquiries from both those not in the system finding it hard to pay for medical expenses, and those despite qualifying for entry into the system seeking to be made exempt from making the necessary insurance payments.

Eligibility to enter into the system very much depends on status of residence in Japan. A foreigner legally residing in Japan for a period of more than one year, and not entered into any other health insurance programme qualifies for entry.

Also, even if you hold the necessary qualifications required for entry into the National Health Insurance System, if you don't undertake the necessary application process, you may be eligible to pay a maximum of 2 years worth of insurance premiums. (The US-Japan Totalization Agreement was put in place in order to stop double entry into pension and health insurance programmes, meaning that in certain cases US citizens resident in Japan are exempt from joining the National Health Insurance System in Japan).

Furthermore, from April of 2010 there will see a revision in the guidelines for changes to residential status and period of residence, meaning that in cases where enrolment into the national insurance programmes is compulsory, foreign residents must present their health insurance card to the immigration office.

Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents
(Mon~Fri, not open on weekends and national holidays)
Tel (direct line) 06 6941 2297 (Hours 9:00~17:45)
Languages : English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish,
Vietnamese, Filipino, Thai, Japanese

【03】Osaka International Club News

Recipe Special- Food from around the World

OFIX scholarship students from China and Korea have written to us with delicious summer recipes to try out!

Further details <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/recipe1.pdf>

【04】OFIX Network

The Suntory Foundation

The Suntory Foundation was established by the Suntory Corporation in February 1979 to celebrate its 80th anniversary. This year sees it celebrate its 30th year since it was established. The aim of the Foundation is to promote internationalization, the flow of information, the seeking of fresh new talent, and pioneering research. Through which it is hoped that we will be better equipped to cope with the ever changing environmental challenges faced in Japan, and contribute towards international understanding between Japan and the rest of the world.

The Foundation offers research grants to research being undertaken in the field of humanities and social science, as well as publication grants to assist in the translation of research publications related to Japan. The four areas of activity undertaken by the Foundation are classified as "Politics and the Economy", "Art and Literature", "Society and Customs", and "Thought and History". It is in these fields that the Suntory Prize is given to gifted researchers and thinkers. The Suntory Prize for Community Cultural Activities is also given to groups or individuals who have played a part in developing cultural understanding at a regional level. The recipients of the prizes continue to be active in various circles as regional leaders and as researchers representing Japan.

【05】OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

Funny Bones

Hi everyone! Richard here again!

This month I thought I'd write about something that everyone around the world likes to do, laugh! The Japanese love to laugh, and none more so than the people of Osaka. Osaka is seen as the centre of the *owarai* (comedy) tradition in Japan. The Yoshimoto Company, an entertainment company based in Osaka, produces an endless stream of *manzai* performers (comedy duos) who more often than not make the leap to national success soon after.

The art of *manzai* is an interesting one. There are two roles, the *tsukkomi* (straight man) and the *boke* (funny man). The two trade jokes at great speed, often revolving around puns and misunderstandings. The *tsukkomi* will often hit the *boke* on the head, correcting the numerous errors being made. Even if some of what is being said is tough to understand, there is no mistaking the skill and timing needed to pull a successful act off.

One thing I have noticed is that a lot of Japanese comedy is very heavy on slapstick. There are many programmes in which comedians are placed in embarrassing, painful, or just plain ridiculous situations, and the viewer is left to laugh at it all. One recent programme involves comedians going to a different restaurant each week and literally sitting there for 2 days straight doing their best to eat everything on the menu in order. Cue "hilarious" (there's your first dose of sarcasm! More on that later) scenes of gluttony, indigestion, not to mention comedic barfing. It's the type of programme that I could see primary school kids liking in the UK, but in Japan this is a primetime show!

In the UK stand-up comedy is popular, and tends to be a lot more political, focusing on current affairs and the lampooning of public figures and politicians. A particular characteristic of UK comedy is its use of sarcasm and dry humour. I have something of a fondness for sarcasm, but it has gotten me in trouble in Japan with people taking what I am saying at face value! Arriving for a barbecue in the pouring rain saying "Ooh, looks like we got lucky with the weather then!", was a recent one that got funny looks from friends.

Also particular to the UK, are the large number of sitcoms revolving around desperate, socially inept, unpleasant, and downright depressing characters. I often wonder why this is. Is it because we like laughing at people less fortunate than ourselves? I'd rather think it's because we like to do our best to make light of desperate looking situations. As Monty Python so astutely said, "always look on the bright side of life".

Although I have brought up some of the differences between the UK and Japan,

I am not really a believer that where humour is concerned each nation is alien to the next. On the contrary I think a sense of humour, and what one finds funny, is unique to each person regardless of nationality. I have British friends who love manzai, and Japanese friends that can't get enough of Monty Python! If we are looking for something that has the ability to bring people of all nationalities together, comedy is no bad starting point. (And I'm not being sarcastic!).

For photo click here:

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no12.pdf

【06】 OFIX Programme/Event Reports

Careers Information Day for Foreign Students

Following on from its successful holding last year, a Careers Information Day for Foreign Students was held on Friday 26th June at the Umeda Crystal Hall. The event included one to one advice by careers counselors, status of residence advice, various seminars, alongside 20 booths run by individual companies. A total of 500 foreign students from varying countries visited the event, and took the opportunity to talk directly with staff from companies looking to recruit overseas students.

Two Chinese language OFIX volunteers came along to assist in interpreting for the students, and they commented that seeing the students reminded them of being in the same position a few years back. A similar event will be held on Monday 30th November, and we hope that it will act as a positive link between students and companies, as well as for the future benefit of Osaka as a whole.

For photo click here:

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no12.pdf

【07】 OFIX Volunteer Activity Report

Home Visit Report

We recently received a report about a recent homestay from one of our OFIX Homestay Volunteers.

For the report and photo click here:

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no12.pdf

OFIX Volunteer System Introduction

OFIX is always looking for people to sign up to become OFIX Volunteers. There are three types of volunteers:

1. Home Stay Volunteers
2. Culture Volunteers
3. Interpreting Volunteers

For further details please see our website (Japanese only)

http://www.ofix.or.jp/boran/index3_2.html

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Information for foreign residents in Osaka

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/life/index.html>

Event Calendar (Japanese only)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/cgi-bin/calender.cgi>

Seeking residents for the Orion International Hall

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/shien/index.html>

Seeking New OFIX Supporting Members

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/ofix/index3_1.html
The Japan Times now available to read at OFIX Plaza.

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Comments/Suggestions: info@ofix.or.jp
Please send Osaka International Club reports to the following
address:

clubnews@ofix.or.jp

To cancel your registration or change your registered email
address

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/index.html>

Print-out version (PDF) of OFIX News with photos

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no12.pdf

Back Numbers

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