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【01】 Notices

Seeking Short Notice OPIX Language Volunteers

847 people are currently registered with OPIX as Language Volunteers, in a total of 22 different languages. They offer language assistance at international exchange events held by OPIX and other public organisations and foundations.

Up until this point the system for providing such support upon receiving the request followed the following pattern:

1. Posting of request for support to registered volunteers
2. Receipt of applications by post or fax
3. Selection.

This system was very time consuming, and we required organisations to inform us of their need for support at least 1 month prior to the event.

This made the system unworkable when interpreters were needed with a few days notice, or when translation of important materials (such as with the recent H1N1 Influenza situation) was required urgently. In order to better respond to such urgent cases we are now looking for new OPIX Language Volunteers able to respond to short notice requests, easily reachable by email or fax.

Further details (Japanese only):

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/news.html#volunteer>

【02】 Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

FAQ

With the age of Japanese men married to foreign women being comparatively high, we have a fair number of enquiries from widows regarding inheritance (when there is no written will), and residential

status in Japan after the death of their husband. One would think it is difficult to talk of the death of a spouse, however, we receive many matter of fact calls from people seeking information. Where inheritance is concerned, in general, if the deceased holds Japanese citizenship at the time of death, then matters relating to inheritance come under the civil law of Japan.

A number of foreign spouses do not speak Japanese well, which means that sometimes they are left out of discussions regarding division of the estate, and are wishing to double-check their legal rights in such a situation. Of course there is also the urgent matter of whether or not the partner of the deceased is legally entitled to stay in Japan. The residential status of "Spouse of Japanese National" does not change, therefore, if the person does not have permanent residence or a status allowing work in Japan, they must change their status to that of "Long Term Resident". Whether or not such a change of status is approved depends on a number of factors such as length of stay in Japan, whether there are children involved etc.

Three-Way Telephone System

The Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents makes use of a three-way telephone system when receiving calls. This enables the caller to be connected at the same time to the member of staff at the Service, and the interpreter based at home. This is how we are able to offer our services in not only Japanese and English, but in other languages such as Chinese and Portuguese.

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

Visit to Fish Auctioning Festival in Sakai!
Heyun Shen (China), OFIX Scholarship Student

Further details <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/shin2.pdf>

【04】OFIX Network

The Suntory FoundationThe Daiyukyo Foundation of International Exchange, Assistance, and Research

The Daiyukyo Foundation of International Exchange, Assistance, and Research was established in 1991 by a union of pachinko and slot machine establishments in Osaka, in order to assist exchange students living in Osaka Prefecture. The Foundation runs activities to assist foreign students adapt to life in Osaka, as well as scholarship programmes, as a way of assisting in the internationalization of Osaka.

Main activities:

- Advice service to foreign students in Osaka for a short period of study
- Assistance in the prevention of crime against foreign residents in Osaka
- Scholarship programme for foreign students in Osaka
- Cultural activities (tea ceremony, kimono etc) for foreign students.

(Homepage) <http://www.daiyukyo-kokusaikoryu.or.jp/index05.html>

(Email) info@daiyukyo-kokusaikoryu.or.jp

(Tel) 06-6710-0180 (Fax) 06-6710-0170

For photo click here:

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no13.pdf

【05】 OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

Election Time!

Hi everyone,
Richard here again! Well, August 30th will see a General Election held in Japan, so I thought I'd write about differences and similarities between Japan and the UK when it comes to electioneering and the like.

First and foremost the political systems in Japan and the UK are nigh-on identical. Not surprising really, since the modern Japanese system is a parliamentary democracy which was for the most part based on the British one when introduced in the late 19th century. Both Japan and the UK have two main parties. Japan has the Liberal Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Japan. The UK has the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. One difference is that whereas the UK does see changes in the governing party every 10 years or so, in Japan the Liberal Democratic Party has pretty much been in power for the last 50 years. Despite this party stability there have been 30 different Prime Ministers in Japan since 1945, as opposed to 13 in the UK.

The first thing that a newcomer to Japan would notice during the run up to an election is the sheer noise of it all! Election vans roam the street, mostly playing deafening recordings of political messages, and every now and then with the actual candidate speaking from the roof of the van. The big thing here seems to be waving at the electorate. Perhaps a wave is seen as more effective in garnering votes than actual policies. In any case I always make an effort to wave back. Not being able to vote, a wave is the least I can do!

I always feel slightly sorry for the lonely looking politicians standing outside stations shouting into megaphones. They are trying to garner attention from the passing commuters, but alas to no avail. I was even woken early one Sunday morning by a van parked right outside my flat! I have heard of a rooster giving a wake-up call, but a politician? In any case I am sure most people were too sleepy to actually take in what he was saying!

In the UK there is very little outdoor speaking, and politicians certainly don't roam about talking from loudspeakers at 9am on a Sunday morning! I can only imagine the number of angry residents that wouldn't stand for that! In the UK you will get election campaigners knocking on doors handing out leaflets (something which is actually prohibited in Japan), and lots of huge posters dotted about, but this is as far as things go really. As with Japan the big thing now is the Manifesto, with lots of media attention as soon as it is published, and even more pressure after the election to make sure promises are kept!

I have always had an interest in politics, and despite not being able to vote I look forward to watching the coverage of this election. I get the impression that many young voters in the UK and Japan are fairly apathetic about politics and don't vote at all. I always urge my friends to vote, and hope this election sees a respectful turnout. After all, taking part in the democratic process is a privilege that not everyone in the world enjoys.

【06】 International Student Hall News

Tutor Introduction

Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, Tutor at the Orion International House, wrote to us with the following introduction. There are two tutors living at the International House, who organise exchange events, and help foreign students settle at the House.

Hello everyone, my name is Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, and I come from Vietnam. I am currently a 3rd year student of Broadcast Media Studies at the Haboromo University of International Studies. (Although I have to say, even though I am a university student, I m not particularly young!)

I moved into the Orion International House two and a half years ago. There are many nice people living in the house, from all over the world, and I am happy to say everyone is very nice! Obviously nowhere is perfect, and opinions about the house will differ from person to person. But I think it is a really fun place to live. In your room you are in your own little world, but if you head to the kitchen you can hear lots of different languages, and meet many different types of people. If you are feeling peckish, just head to the kitchen and you are likely to find a delicious international dish to try. (Word of warning though, this is only on lucky days!)

At the moment male rooms are on the 2nd and 4th floors, and female on the 3rd and 5th. (Actually there are a fair number of cute guys on the 2nd floor, a friend and I did a spot of covert research!). We hold lots of parties and get to know each other, making life as a foreign student far from lonely.

Seeking Residents at the Orion International House!

The Orion International House is an hall of residence for international students in Osaka. All rooms come fitted with bath, toilet, air-conditioner, fridge, desk, bed etc.

A friendly caretaker is on hand to ensure students settle into life in the house. There are regular events at the house, including exchange events with local residents.

Monthly rent: 26,000 Yen (no deposit, includes all amenities)

Further details

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

For photos click here:

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no13.pdf

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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_no13.pdf
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