

Contents**(1) Notices**

■ Seeking Participants for International Understanding Education Forum !

■ International Understanding Education Foreign Supporter Training!

(2) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

■ Medical Services over the New Year Period (FAQ)

(3) OFIX Programme Reports

■ Careers Information Day for Foreign Students/Residents

■ 19th Kansai Foreign Students Music Festival in Osaka!

■ 2009 Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association Kinki Block Meeting

(4) OFIX International Student Hall News

■ International Exchange Tea Ceremony for International Students

■ Sakai International House Winter Party!

(5) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

■ What Variety!

(1) Notices**Seeking Participants for International****Understanding Education Forum !**

OFIX will be holding this forum for school teachers and those working for international exchange foundations in Osaka. The international understanding education programme run by OFIX will be introduced, and a sample presentation given by some of our International Understanding Education Foreign Supporters. There will also be an introduction to the distance learning system, as well information regarding the various programmes run by organisations such as JICA and UNICEF.

There will also be a chance for participants to get to know each other and exchange ideas and information.

International Understanding Education Foreign Supporter Training!

Training for our new recruits, who will visit schools to introduce their home countries, took place on the 4th and 5th of December. Over 30 foreign students and residents from 10 different countries and regions took part in the training at which the basics of giving good presentations were outlined

[Date/Time] Sat 23rd January, 2pm-5pm

[Place] 8th Floor Meeting Room, MyDome Osaka

[Participants] School teachers and those working for international exchange related organisations in Osaka.

[Places available] 50

[Applications] Those wishing to attend please inform OFIX (06-6966-2400) of the following: Name of school/organisation Name Contact details

Deadline for applications: Friday 15th January

See flyer for further details (Japanese only)

http://www.ofix.or.jp/forum_panf.pdf

by OFIX staff. At the group discussion which ended the session the supporters actively exchanged ideas on how best to give presentations at schools. It was a great chance for the supporters to learn about different cultures themselves too.

The supporters will now go on to be active in our international understanding education school visits programme.



Example Presentation



Group Workshop



Group Feedback

(2) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

Medical Services over the New Year Period (FAQ)

Over the New Year period many medical facilities will be closed. If you become ill during this period the first thing to do is contact your local doctor. If his/her practice is closed, it is good to know of facilities that are open during the evening and on holidays. However, since most places do not offer services in foreign languages, it is worth having a reference book of useful words and phrases by your side.

Facilities open on holidays and at night: You can search for such facilities located near to your home using the Osaka Medical Facilities Information System. You can also gain information from the Osaka Prefecture Medical Information Centre (Tel: 06-6761-1199 Japanese only).

Infant Emergency Information Line

Open from 8pm ~ 8am. Information and advice for parents whose children have been taken ill at night (Tel: 06-6765-3650 Japanese only)

Dental treatment: Contact the Osaka Dental Association for details of out of hours services (Tel: 06-6772-8886 9am ~ 4pm, 06-6774-2600 9pm ~ 3am)

Osaka Dental Facilities Information System:

http://www.mfis.pref.osaka.jp/qg27scripts/qg/fm27qjkksm_in.asp

Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

Mon-Fri (closed 29th Dec ~ 3rd Jan and on national holidays)

Direct Tel: 06-6941-2297 (Hours 9:00 ~ 17:45)

Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Thai, Japanese

(3) OFIX Programme Reports

Careers Information Day for Foreign Students/Residents

The second Careers Information Day for Foreign Students/Residents of 2009 was held on the 30th November at the Osaka Central Public Hall.

A total of 31 companies took part, with around 550 students, graduates, and jobseekers coming along for information of possible job opportunities. The event included information on status of residence, careers advice, and individual booths run by the companies in attendance. It was a very productive event with much gained by all that took part.



Company Booths

19th Kansai Foreign Students Music Festival in Osaka!

This years Foreign Students Music Festival was held on the 13th December.

The event was held in Osaka in this, the first year of it being jointly held with Kyoto. 1150 people came to see the event which was full of traditional music and dance performed by foreign students based in Kansai.

The opening saw a performance of a traditional dance from Sakai, where the event was held. After this a total of 132 foreign students from 22 countries and regions took to the stage performing all sorts of exciting dances, songs, and music. The performances were all of a high quality and broke through cultural as well as language

barriers.

For the finale all of the performers got together on stage and sang Ayaka's song, "Power of Music" to rapturous applause. Next years event will be held in Kyoto.



2009 Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association Kinki Block Meeting

The Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association was established in 1962 to aid exchange of information between the families of those that emigrated from Japan (mainly to Brazil and other South American nations). OFIX acts as secretariat for the association, whose members include the families of emigrants, as well as those with an interest in exchange with foreigners of Japanese descent (Nikkei-jin).

The Kinki Block meeting was attended by representatives from emigrant associations from around Kansai (Osaka, Hyogo, Kyoto, and Nara) and held on the 18th December at MyDome Osaka. Representatives from JICA, and the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad also attended.

At the reception that took place after the meeting a

DVD showing some of the celebrations that took place last year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Japanese emigration to Brazil. The reception closed with a promise to meet again at next years meeting scheduled to take place in Nara.



(4) OFIX International Student Hall News

International Exchange Tea Ceremony for International Students

Over 100 people attended this event held at the Sakai International House on the 29th November. Students from Asia, Europe, and America took part, trying on traditional kimono's and experiencing the Japanese tea ceremony. Sitting in the traditional Japanese style on the floor was a little tough for some not used to it, but a fun time was had by all with everyone taking lots of photos. In an adjoining room there were lots of activities for the students to try out such as origami, shogi (Japanese chess), and mixing tea for themselves.



Tea Ceremony

Sakai International House Winter Party!

Around 100 people gathered to attend the annual "Winter Party" on the 12th December at the Sakai International House, which is run by OFIX. International students mingled with local residents and a good time was had by all. Members of the local residents association taught Japanese calligraphy and traditional songs to the students, and the students organized a fun bingo game replete with prizes. A representative of the local police also gave a short talk on local safety



Party in full swing!

Calligraphy

(5) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

What Variety!

Hi everyone, Richard here again.



Although I enjoy most aspects of living in Japan, I have to say the one thing I still can't get into is TV here. I always thought language was the barrier, but I think it has more to do with the nature of the programmes, and in particular the swarm of celebrities (geinoujin) that infest every single one of them.

The first time I watched a variety show here I was amazed to see the sheer number of people up on stage. There was an announcer (a bloke in a suit just providing the links via autocue), a host (an experienced looking comedian with free reign to do as he wanted), and then about 30 random people swarming around him with more than half not saying a word for the whole show. In the UK there will be a host and a few guests at most.

As I started to watch more TV I realized that this type of show is the mainstay of broadcasting here, and the 30 random people are the popular celebrities of the hour. I say hour, because they really do change overnight! Of course there are people who only enjoy 15 minutes of fame in the UK too, but the rate of change in Japan still amazes.

These shows can be about anything really but mainly focus on showing pre-recorded footage of weird things from abroad (with the celebrities pulling exaggerated faces in the corner of the screen), visits to restaurants

where celebrities stuff their faces, or random quizzes in which the celebrities do their best to outdo each other with increasingly stupid answers. Oh, and at the end of most of these quizzes the winners actually get to go home with huge cash prizes. Something I still find rather shocking. In the UK it is mainly members of the public that take part, but if it is a celebrity quiz, any money they win will more often than not go to charity.

Depending on the contents of the programme the celebrities are on hand to laugh, cry, or scream. It seems to me that they are basically there as a substitute viewer. Indeed the host will only really talk to the celebrities, and hardly ever directly to the viewers at home. The other thing that still surprises is how the world of celebrity is pretty much like any other work place in Japan. It has a strict seniority system, with all celebrities knowing where they stand on the pecking order.

There are really no comparable variety shows in the UK. Whereas in Japan whether it be a documentary, history show, medical advice show, or cooking show, all are under the umbrella of a variety show, in the UK they will be stand alone programmes, with no gaggle of celebrities to head back to for comment in the studio.

What we like to watch on TV is really ingrained. I have to admit, after a long day at work some of the variety shows here do bring a smile to my face, but after 10 minutes I find myself reaching for the remote, beginning the desperate search for something that won't leave me with less brain cells than when I started!

- Donations for Osaka exhibition at 2010 Shanghai Expo: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/news.html#syanghai>
- Information for foreign residents in Osaka <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/life/index.html>
- Seeking residents for the Orion International Hall <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/shien/index.html>
- Become a supporting member of OFIX <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/ofix/index3.1.html>
- Japan Times (English language newspaper) now available to read at OFIX Plaza!

Comments and suggestions for OFIX News: info@ofix.or.jp

Osaka International Club Reports: clubnews@ofix.or.jp

Register to OFIX News: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/index.html>

OFIX News Back Numbers: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber.html>

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