

「OFIX News」 Issue 20 (March 2010)
~E-Newsletter distributed by the Osaka Foundation of International
Exchange~

Contents

- 【01】 Notices
 - Becoming an OFIX Volunteer!
 - Seeking Short Notice Language Volunteers!
- 【02】 Osaka International Club News
 - ~OFIX Scholarship Students Graduation Reports~
 - Shen Heyun (China)
 - Ivy Ang (Malaysia)
 - Estelle Thouverez (France)
- 【03】 OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report
 - Manner Mode
- 【04】 OFIX Programme Reports
 - Medical Interpreting Skills Improvement Training
- 【05】 OFIX International Student Hall News
 - Introduction to Sakai International Hall
 - ~Christoph Mittmann (Germany)~
 - Seeking Residents at the Sakai International Hall!
- 【06】 OFIX Network
 - Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
 - ~Recruiting JICA Volunteers~

【01】 Notices

Becoming an OFIX Volunteer!

OFIX operates this system to enable citizens of Osaka to further international understanding and contribute to international cooperation. There are three types of volunteer:

1. Host Family

Foreigners are welcomed to the volunteers home, where they learn about Japanese culture and everyday life.

Most visits are either a one night stay, or a daytrip, making it easy for those new to this type of activity to take part.

2. Language Volunteers

Interpreting or translating services offered to assist foreign residents.

3. Culture Volunteers

Volunteers assist in cultural activities (kimono, tea ceremony events etc), and at international exchange events at schools. By becoming an OFIX volunteer you can learn about foreign cultures, and help to support foreign residents in Osaka. For information on registering see the OFIX homepage (details in Japanese only)

http://www.ofix.or.jp/boran/index3_1.html

Seeking Short Notice Language Volunteers!

Last August we recruited a group of language volunteers, to act as short notice interpreters and translators in times of urgency. We were delighted to have 36 people sign up, and they have since been involved in activities such as translating the Osaka Prefecture website, and interpreting at symposiums. We are currently looking to recruit some extra volunteers to assist

with the following languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Thai, Filipino, and others as required.

Number of volunteers required: 3~5 people per language.

Further details (Japanese only):

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

【02】Osaka International Club News

~OFIX Scholarship Students Graduation Reports~

Three of our scholarship students have written to us as they prepare to graduate from their respective universities in Osaka.

To read their reports click here:

Shen Heyun (China) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/shen>

Ivy Ang (Malaysia) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/ivy2>

Estelle Thouverez (France) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/estelle>

【03】OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

Manner Mode!

Hi everyone, Richard here again.

Although I have been in Japan for a few years now, and do my best to blend in on a daily basis, I am sure there are things that I do which are considered weird, if not plain rude. Japan has a reputation as a society focused on politeness, and as such, I would say a large number of visitors to Japan come here with worries about not doing the right things, and offending people.

So I thought that this month I would say a few words about manners in the UK and Japan. The first thing most visitors to Japan come across is the custom of taking off one's shoes when entering a house. After 6 years of living here I am proud to say I am just about used to this one! Although the looks of horror I received when I used to forget still keep me awake at night every now and then! In the UK many people take their shoes off and pop slippers on when in the house. However, a big difference with Japan is that it is considered rude to wear slippers or have no shoes on when guests are visiting your house.

Another thing I remember my mother being worried about when visiting Japan was not blowing her nose in public. I think she had read somewhere that it is considered the height of rudeness. Anyway, I certainly have never found this the case, but if it is true it makes the endless distribution of tissues here rather ironic! On a related topic, I still find it strange that if someone sneezes here no one says a word. In the UK it is rude not say "bless you".

Eating and drinking is the most fascinating area for differences in manners. Although I try and live by the phrase "When in Rome, do as the Romans", I still find it hard not to revert back to my western ways! For starters I still can't quite bring myself to make slurping noises when eating noodles. The noise of everyone around you slurping can be quite deafening sometimes, but I pride myself on never making a sound! Lifting plates and saucers to the mouth is also the norm here, but frowned upon in the UK. Eating and drinking in the streets and on public transport is very rarely seen in Japan, and something that the UK would do well to emulate!

Speaking of public transport one rather embarrassing thing the UK and Japan has in common is the lack of courtesy shown to the elderly and disabled. It always shocks me how everyone pretends to be asleep when someone quite obviously in need of a seat gets on the train here. I suppose the very fact that both countries require priority seating

in the first place shows that levels of courtesy are not what they should be.

Of course cultural differences come into play with things such as slurping noodles, or taking shoes off, but I don't believe things such as the common courtesy of holding a door open for someone or offering a seat on a train can be so easily brushed aside. In both the UK and Japan keeping quiet is the social norm. Speaking up to offer someone a seat is for some people rather embarrassing. In my opinion not speaking up and doing the right thing is far more embarrassing.

【04】 OFIX Programme Reports

Medical Interpreting Skills Improvement Training

This training was held as part of OFIX's drive to support foreign residents when receiving medical treatment in Osaka. The training took place on the Sunday 7th March, with 44 people taking part, many of whom are already active as medical interpreters. Matters discussed included current trends in medical interpreting, medical and welfare services, and general advice on interpreting.

There was also a group workshop during which participants shared advice and know-how, as well as discussed matters to be aware of when interpreting. The questionnaires that participants filled in after the training were full of comments such as "the training gave a real insight into how to go about solving problems that may arise", and "it was a great opportunity to share ideas and learn new things". All in all the training proved of great benefit to all that took part.

For photos click here

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no20.pdf

【05】 OFIX International Student Hall News

Introduction to Sakai International Hall ~ Christoph Mittmann (Germany) ~

Christoph Mittmann (Germany), a resident at the Sakai International Hall, wrote to us about his life there.

Click here for further details:

http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no20.pdf

Seeking Residents at the Sakai International Hall!

For further details click here:

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

【06】 OFIX Network

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) ~ Recruiting JICA Volunteers ~

This is a government run volunteer programme led by JICA. It gives volunteers a chance to utilize their skills to assist in developing countries, and promote mutual understanding. The programme lasts for 1 or 2 years.

Applicant Requirements

- Youth Volunteers: 20-39 years of age, with Japanese citizenship
<http://www.jica.go.jp/activities/jocv/>
- Senior Volunteers 40-69 years of age, with Japanese citizenship
<http://www.jica.go.jp/activities/sv/>

Application Period
1st April-17th May 2010 Information sessions to be held across Japan.
Further details (Japanese only):
<http://www.jica.go.jp/osaka/enterprise/volunteer/>

Enquiries: JICA Osaka TEL 072-641-6904
JICA Homepage: <http://www.jica.go.jp/>

Osaka Prefectural Government E-Newsletter

『G E O (Global E-net Osaka) 』

Full of information about events in Osaka, and fun facts about the area.
<http://www.pref.osaka.jp/kokusai/geo/index.html>

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.

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_no20.pdf

Back Numbers

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