

Contents**(1) Notices**

Request for Donations

(2) Event Report

Medical Interpreter Volunteer Training

(3) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

Earthquake related Information

(4) Event Report

Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family

Association

(5) OFIX Scholar Report

U To (2009 Scholar), Graduate School of Medicine/Faculty of Medicine, Osaka University

(6) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

Learning a Language: From My Japanese Language Learning Experience

(1) Notices**We are requesting donations for the areas stricken by the Tohoku area Pacific offshore earthquake.**

We have been from many people who wish to help victims of the Tohoku area Pacific offshore earthquake. To accept donations for the disaster victims, Osaka Prefecture has **centralized the receipt of donations through the Japanese Red Cross**, so please send your donations to them.

Osaka Prefectural Government Department of Civic and Cultural Affairs Osaka Promotion Bureau

○Donation Acceptance Desk **Japanese Red Cross Osaka Prefecture Branch Office** (<http://www.osaka.jrc.or.jp>)
Telephone 06-6943-0707

○Receiving Account **Japan Post Bank**

Account No. 00140-8-507

Name of Account **日本赤十字社 東北関東大震災義援金 (Japanese Red Cross Tohoku area Pacific offshore earthquake Donation)**Accepting Period: **March 14, 2011 (Monday)-September 30, 2008 (Friday)**

No transfer fees if transfer is done through the post office.

Earthquake related information and consultation is also available at the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents (06-6941-2297). Websites with multilingual earthquake related information are also posted on the OFIX homepage.

(2) Event Report**Medical Interpreter Volunteer Training**

On March 2 (Wed.) and March 6 (Sun.), this fiscal year's Medical Interpreters Volunteer Training was held at 3rd floor Lecture Hall of

Osaka General Medical Hospital, located in Sumiyoshi ward of Osaka city. The Osaka Foundation of International Exchange has been holding this training project since 2008. In 2008, we cooperated with the "AMDA International Medical Information Center" and "Rinku General Medical Center" and held the training to train people who wanted to become Medical Interpreter Volunteers. In 2009, we held a brush up training basically for those who underwent the training in 2008 to further improve and brush up

the ability of those who have started to become Medical Interpreter Volunteers.

This year, we interviewed people involved in medical interpreting and we found out that even if people are registered as volunteers there are many people who do not have the chance to be in the actual field. So the training this year was planned again for those people already registered as volunteers.

This year, especially, we were able to cooperate with Osaka Prefectural Hospital Organization. We contacted the volunteers registered with the organization and received more applications to participate as compared to last year or the year before that.

The training was for 2 days, starting before 10:00 am until after 4:00pm. The training included many activities. The first day started with a lecture on the medical problems and medical system surrounding foreigners, followed by a workshop on the coordination work of the medical

interpreter. On the 2nd day, a role playing session was held to experience actual medical interpretation and a panel discussion on the current state and tasks of medical interpreting. There were 71 people who participated in the training and everyone thought that the training was very good. In a questionnaire given, up to 80% rated the training as "Very good". Also, there were 13 people who newly registered with

Osaka Prefectural Hospital Organization as interpreter volunteers.

Through the active role of medical interpreter volunteers, we hope to achieve the situation that foreigners living in Osaka or those visiting Osaka would be able to overcome the language barrier and be at ease when they receive medical treatment.

(3) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

Earthquake related Information

There are many people who have been victims of the recent Tohoku area Pacific offshore earthquake and tsunami that came after that. In addition to that, an accident at the nuclear plant also occurred. Foreign residents in Osaka may be worried because of these events, but we would like to ask you to get correct, accurate information, and remain calm. There are presently different kinds of information related to the earthquake disaster available in different languages on the internet, so please try to access them. Please try to get the most recent and accurate information and not be deceived by false rumors.

Information on Survivors:

Google Site

<http://japan.person-finder.appspot.com/?lang=ja>

Red Cross International Committee

<http://www.familylinks.icrc.org/>

Earthquake related Information Desks:

Pacific offshore earthquake Multilingual Support Center

<http://tabumane.jimdo.com/>

Information for Foreigners on 2011

Tohoku-Pacific Ocean Earthquake (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication)

http://www.e-gov.go.jp/link/disaster_en.html

Earthquake related information:

NHK World News 17 Languages:

<http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/english/info/select.html#Research>

Institute for World Languages:

<http://riwl-disaster.info/>

Disaster Prevention and Nuclear Safety Network for Nuclear Environment (Nuclear Plant)

<http://www.bousai.ne.jp/eng/index.html>

Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

(Mon ~ Fri, not open on weekends and national holidays) (Hours 9:00 ~ 17:30)

Tel (direct line) 06-6941-2297

E-mail:jouhou-c@ofix.or.jp

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

(4) Event Report

Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association

A Training Program entitled "Thinking about the present of South Americans of Japanese Descent in Japan"

The Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association (President: Mr. Hisashi Yamaguchi, Secretariat: OFIX) held its 2010 Meeting on February 24 in a Meeting Room on the 8th floor of My Dome Osaka.



It was attended by 12 members, 2 friends of a member, 3 OFIX language volunteers and OIS interpreters, JICA Osaka Director Mr. Sakai, JICA Osaka Coordinator for International Cooperation Ms. Nakagawa, and Osaka Prefectural

Government Department of Civic and Cultural Affairs Osaka Promotion Bureau International Relations and Tourism Division Relations Group Chief Examiner Mr. Akasaka. After the Opening speech of JICA Osaka Director Mr. Sakai, Osaka Prefectural Government's Mr. Akasaka gave the message of Sub-director and section chief Mr. Okada.

For this event, Ms. Emi Emilia Tamada, a Brazilian of Japanese descent currently living in Nara Prefecture and working as an OIS Portuguese interpreter for The Nara International Foundation—Commemorating the Silk Road Exposition— was asked to be the lecturer.

Ms. Emilia Tamada came to Japan in 1989 and after much experience, has become a

Portuguese interpreter up to this day. This event's lecture has been entitled "Thinking about the present of South Americans of Japanese Descent in Japan". Ms. Tamada mentioned about the suffering of immigrants who moved to Brazil 100 years ago, whose efforts were able to win the high appraisal in Brazil for the people of Japanese descent today, and then about the problems for Brazilians of Japanese descent when Japan started accepting them back 25 years ago. One problem that is especially asking for attention from the government is the problem of education for the children of those returning to Japan. Also taken up is the problem of Japan's society and how it must understand more about cultural diversity.

In the exchange after the lecture, the participants showed appreciation to Ms. Tamada's hardships and agreed to work together as one Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association in future activities.

There was also a song presentation from the families from Paraguay who returned to Japan. In all that excitement, the meeting ended with a friendly atmosphere.

For OFIX, we would like to actively have these kinds of meetings in the future.

The Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association is currently looking for new members to help support overseas emigrants of Japanese descent and their families. For details, please contact the Secretariat.

(5) OFIX Scholar Report

U To (2009 Scholar), Graduate School of Medicine/Faculty of Medicine, Osaka University

I would like to offer my prayers for those who have passed away in the March 11 (Friday) Northern Japan Tohoku area Pacific offshore earthquake and also give my heartfelt sympathies to the victims of this tragedy and their families.



My name is U To, a 2009 Scholar of OFIX. Presently, I am doctoral student at the Graduate School of Medicine/Faculty of

Medicine, Osaka University, conducting research on iPS cells. I will be graduating in March next year, so I am also looking for a job.

As a scholar of OFIX, I became the Chairman of the Chinese International Students of Osaka University Student Association, which has over 1,100 members including graduates, from April 2010, with the desire of being able to contribute to International exchange. We hold different events for international students so they may be able to understand Japanese culture better and make their lives in Japan a rich one. The Association is successful in its activities, for example, in April 2010, there were 100 people who participated in the Wakayama Momoyama Festival, 120 students participated in the Okayama Setouchi Naikai Trip in July, 240 students in the Autumn party in September, and 260 students in the Spring party in January 2011. Actually, there were a lot of people I met who worked in the background, helping out in planning events, managing funds, etc. Meeting and working together with these people was enjoyable. In the various activities, everyone worked together and overcame various hurdles. With different viewpoints, we worked together and made events that could contribute to international exchange. Through this experience, I was able to feel the satisfaction of being able to

accomplish something by working together. I was also able to meet people from various countries with various values, deepen mutual understanding while absorbing many things, improving my communication ability, widen my vision, and I could look at things from different points of view. I think I was able to do my part as a scholar.

Through events like these, as the chairman of the student association, I could help international students with exchange, their life and study, and through exchange with Japan-China Friendship Organizations (Osaka Prefecture, Suita City, Toyonaka City, Ikeda City, Takatsuki City, etc. Japan-China Friendship Association), Japanese friends, Chinese in Japan, I am putting effort in developing future friendly relations between the people of Japan and China. From this experience, I could understand first-hand the importance of Japan-China friendly relations. I could also understand well enough the importance of teamwork when planning an event and the importance of taking into consideration the various points of view. I would like to further value the trust between one another.

I came to Japan in April 2003 and it will soon be 8 years now. In my 8 years as an international student, there were lots of difficult and sad events, but from these experiences I learned that if I actively challenge myself, I can widen my possibilities. Especially after being the Chairman of the Chinese International Students of Osaka University Student Association, I could immediately get the trust of everyone, surpass the language barrier and increase my communication ability. Through meeting people



of different values, I could mature more, absorb the good points and changing myself. From now on, I would like to improve on my faults and strengthen my strong points. In the future, I would like to make use of the knowhow I have

learned from meeting foreigners of different backgrounds and viewpoints, and my experience from international exchange activities to contribute to promoting a society of friendship.

(6) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

Learning a Language: From My Japanese Language Learning Experience

Hello everyone! Alvin from OFIX here.

First of all, I would like to send my deepest sympathies to the victims of the recent earthquake. I pray that this crisis would end soon and that no more casualties come out of this.

This month, I would like to talk about "Language Learning". I think there a lot of our readers who are studying Japanese, English, or another foreign language. And I think that there are people who would like to know how to study a language. There is no effective way of studying a language that can be applied to all as each one is different and there is a certain way of learning fit for him or her. However, this time I would like to talk about my experience and how I learned Japanese.

Have you ever wondered how a baby learns a language? First, the baby listens to the sounds that he/she hears and tries to discriminate between the sounds. Then, the baby tries to mimic the sounds. After that, the baby realizes that the sounds have meanings and correlates sounds with meanings. This is what we call baby talk. The baby's vocabulary increases and

slowly understands the structure of the language as it makes mistakes along the way. Finally, the baby learns to talk using proper grammar. After learning how to talk, the next thing the baby learns is how to read, and then how to write. So, the process for learning language is in the order of "Listening→Speaking→Reading→Writing". Today, I will talk about "Listening→Speaking".

Listen to music, watch movies and get used to the sounds of the language. It doesn't matter if you don't understand what you're listening to. If you can distinguish from what sound to what sound is one word, then that is enough. When I was studying Japanese, I used to

listen to Japanese songs. I repeatedly listen to songs, especially those that I like. And even if I didn't know what the song meant, I wanted to sing along. So, I tried to transcribe the song. I later showed what I transcribed to my Japanese friend. I made a lot of mistakes, but it was a good practice for me.

Remember first the things you usually use. Language is something that you must use a lot, or else you won't remember it. That's why even if you try to remember a lot of vocabulary, if you don't use it much, you'll just forget it. Remember words for things you can find around you, conversations that you can use every day and try to use them every day.

Try to look for opportunities to immediately use what you've learned in one day.

Don't try to remember just vocabulary, but sentences. Most people remember grammar and then vocabulary. Vocabulary is, of course, important, but it is better to remember whole sentences instead of just words. It will help you communicate more naturally.

Mimic a sentence just the way you hear it. Language is like a song. The sounds go up and down, they become loud and soft. Take note of the changes in the sound and let's imitate it.

Don't be embarrassed. If you don't use language, you won't improve. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Don't mind your pronunciation. You cannot move forward if you do these things.

Well, that's how I learn language. Until the next report, do your best and try to learn a lot.

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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