

Consultation Record Report

In September 1991, the “Osaka Consultation Service for Foreign Residents” was established to provide information for daily living and consultation services to foreign residents of Osaka. In April 2009, this service was outsourced to OFIX and is now called the “Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents” .

During the 18 years after its establishment, there have been great changes in the situation regarding Osaka Prefecture’s internationalization. Now, there are about 210,000 registered foreigners from over 160 countries who are living in Osaka.

The “Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents” is open on weekdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, with services in English, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese., Spanish, Thai, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Japanese to be able to provide foreign residents from different countries information necessary for daily living in their mother language. Furthermore, you can find on our website the “Essentials for Living in Osaka” , which serves as a guide to living in Osaka, and “FAQ” , which explains in detail the various systems and institutions.

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

For 2011, there were 1,242 consultation cases. Here is the breakdown in terms of nationality, language and content.

In terms of nationality, Chinese nationals, who make up 20%, come in second to the Japanese. About 11% come from Europe, America and English speaking countries. Brazilians, Peruvians and Filipinos each make up 5% of those who consulted. In terms of language, 550 cases were in Japanese, which make up most of the consultations at 37%. As more and more foreigners are permanently residing in Japan, foreigners are learning Japanese enough to be able to ask for consultation in Japanese. We were able to reconfirm the importance of being able to explain using simple Japanese. However, on the other hand, 73% of the foreigners consulting (897 people) wanted to use languages other than Japanese. There were 156 cases where languages other than English and Chinese were used. Spanish consultations, especially, increased compared to the decreasing number of consultations last year and is returning back to normal this year. Half of those who consulted in English were not native speakers so it is equally important to provide information in simple English.

In terms of content, consultations on living and residential status both make up 25% of the consultations. With regards to living, there were many who asked for a detailed explanation of various systems and payment of taxes, National Medical Insurance and pension. There are some systems that are difficult to understand in one explanation even for Japanese people who can understand Japanese. So it is even more difficult for the foreigner. There are many services that foreigners can avail of, but since there is no information in their languages, it is necessary to have knowledge of institutions that provide multilingual information to avoid inconvenience and disadvantageous situations. Furthermore, inquiries about the new immigration law to be implemented this July have been increasing. This shows that foreigners are starting to gain access to information on new systems. With regards to marriage and citizenship consultations, there are many serious consultations, such as consultations by victims of domestic violence and how they could be admitted to a shelter, requests for interpretation, divorce procedures in the case when the spouse is missing, etc. It is a field where cooperation with respective institutions is necessary. There were also some cases where foreign couples want to adopt a Japanese child. In terms of medical and social welfare consultations, there were many consultations from foreigners who have financial difficulties. The deterioration of the economy has influenced foreigners’ life greatly.

[03] Call for Participants

■ The Community Interpreter Volunteer Training

Foreigners living in Osaka will be able to overcome the language barrier and live safely if community interpreters to become bridges of communication between foreigners and staff of city hall, etc. To train community interpreter volunteers, OFIX will be holding the training as follows:

[Schedule]

	Session 1	Session 2	Theme
Day1	May 22	May 24	
	18:10-18:30	13:40-14:00	About the OFIX language volunteers' activities
	18:30-19:20	14:00-14:50	Lecture:Manners and attitudes of a community interpreter
	19:30-20:40	15:00-16:10	Case-Study
Day2	May 26	May 30	
	9:40-11:00		Lecture: Resident status
	11:10-12:30		Lecture:Assistance system for DV victims
	13:30-16:00		Interpreting Training
Day3	June 2	June 6	
	9:40-11:00		Lecture: Admitting foreign students
	11:10-11:30		Lecture: Maternal and child health
	13:30-16:00		Role-Play

[Venue] My Dome Osaka 8th Floor Meeting Room

[Eligible Participants]

・ Persons who have language proficiency in Japanese and a foreign language (for foreigners, native language) necessary for daily living.

・ Persons who can participate in a 3-day Training etc...

※Those who have already attended the community interpreter volunteer training held by OFIX last year cannot apply this year.

※All languages will be accepted. (At least 3 people are needed for the role-play. If there are less than 3 people for a language group, that language will not be included in the training.)

[No. of Participants]

Approximately 60: 30 participants for each session (regardless of nationality Lots will be drawn if there are too many applicants)

[Deadline]

May 6, 2012(Sun) (* We might move the deadline depending on the application status.)

Please visit OFIX Homepage for the specific details of guideline and application form.

http://www.ofix.or.jp/news_test.html#community_volunteer3

■2012 Osaka Invitational Program for Short-Term Overseas Trainees in Architecture and Arts Osaka Foundation of International Exchange Call for Participants

In May 1992, Mr. Tadao Ando, a world-class architect from Osaka, was awarded the Carlsberg Architectural Prize and received a prize money of 30 million yen. Mr. Ando donated all of the prize money to the Osaka Prefectural government with the intention of making it useful for furthering international exchange between Osaka and other countries. OFIX received this donation through the Osaka Prefectural government and, in accordance with the wish of Mr. Ando, established the "Osaka Invitational Program for Short-Term Overseas Trainees in Architecture and Arts" as a Memorial Program of Tadao Ando winning the Carlsberg Architectural Prize. Also there are companies who support with the objective of inviting about 8-10 graduate students majoring in architecture and similar courses or architects from various Asian countries. This program is held every autumn for a period of one month.

This year will be the 20th Program since it started in 1993, has had 177 participants from 19 countries. During this program all trainees experience about 10-days of practical on-the-job training at the representative construction companies in Osaka.

During the job training, trainees are taken to on-site review of buildings which are under construction and are lectured about updated technology in the architecture field. Furthermore trainees have a discussion time with Japanese students who are majoring in architecture and art. There is also a one-day study tour in Kyoto and Osaka when some buildings designed by Tadao Ando are also visited. Aside from the training, all trainees will experience home-stay with a Japanese family for two-days, so the trainees can deepen exchange with Japanese people. Every year, this event is popular among all trainees because they can experience international exchange with a "REAL" Japanese family.

OFIX is also now accepting applications of this program and will be selecting 8 participants.

For application forms and this year's schedule, please visit:

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/aprogram/overview.html> (Japanese)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/aprogram/overview.html> (English)

[04] OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

■ Holy Week

Hello! This is your OFIX International Relations Coordinator, Alvin! It has finally become warmer and cherry blossoms have bloomed. I was able to go see some cherry blossoms and I hope you were all able to see some cherry blossoms, too. Well, even if it has become warmer, Japan is still cool right now, but it is "summer" in the Philippines, so it is very hot. I would like to introduce the most famous event held in the Philippines during this time.

80% - 85% of the Philippine population are Catholics and most of the festivals and events are related with their belief. One of those main events is held in April and it is called "Holy Week". Holy Week is a very important event for Filipinos. Most shops are closed during this time and some television stations stop airing programs, too. If there are some programs, most of them are related to the "Passion of Christ".

Holy Week begins 1 week before Easter. (Easter is the day when the resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated.) The first day of Holy Week is "Palm Sunday". On this day, believers bring palm fronds to church to be blessed by the priest. After the Mass, they bring the palm fronds home and put them over windows and doors to ward off evil. After Palm Sunday is "Maundy Thursday". On this day, the last supper of Jesus and Jesus washing the feet of his disciples are commemorated. Next is "Good Friday". This day is a holiday in the Philippines. There are many events on this day. There is a procession from church where believers bring the images

