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(1) Activity Report

■ Interpretation Training, Emergency Drill and Multilingual Support Center Set-up Training for International Students

On June 16, an Interpretation in times of emergency Training and on June 30, an Emergency Drill and Multilingual Support Set-up Training for international students was conducted at the Osaka Prefecture Sakai International Hall/Orión International House.

About 40 people, including residents of Orion Dormitory, joined the Interpretation Training and about 50 people, including international students, school staff and OFIX volunteers participated in the emergency drill. The participants learned about the basic knowledge and necessary terminology during disasters after which they acted as interpreters in the training for setting up a multilingual support center.

The emergency drill was conducted with the scenario that a powerful earthquake struck, houses collapsed, there were continued aftershocks that it was dangerous to stay indoors and evacuating to evacuation centers was necessary.



The participants were divided into two groups. One group played the role of the victims, while the other group played the role of members of the multilingual support center. The group playing the victims was instructed to act calmly and first protect themselves, then check the gas valves in the event of an earthquake. They were taught the importance of evacuating to an evacuation

center and checking the safety of others. International students who were not familiar with the evacuation center commented that it was a good to actually experience being in a group with other people they don't know and lining up to receive food rations, and being able to learn about the rules in an evacuation center.

The multilingual support center group selected information that they thought victims of the disaster



would need from a large pool of information and translated them in various languages. They also experienced what it is like to go from one evacuation

center to another and offer interpretation and support to the victims there. International students also experienced how to give support to the victims together with the Japanese volunteers.

With the cooperation of the Sakai City North Fire Department, taught what things to do in the event of an earthquake, such as calling 119, putting out a fire using a fire extinguisher, using an AED, and doing CPR.

Although the participants seemed tired after the 1-day program, they went home saying that it was fun and learned a lot from it.

OFIX will continue to provide projects for the support of foreigners during a time of disaster.

■ Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association 2012 General Meeting • Video Showing

On July 7 (Thursday), the Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association held its 2012 General Meeting and Video Showing, which was attended by 26 members.

At the meeting, a settlement of accounts and report of activities of the previous fiscal year, and the budget and plan for the current fiscal year were discussed. Guests from JICA Kansai and Osaka Prefecture who were also present said a few words. Also, congratulatory messages from Governor Matsui and Director Tanaka of the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad were read.

After the General Meeting, Honorary Chairman Mr. Okui introduced a video about Bunshi Katsura's visit to a Nikkeijin Community in Brazil. The title

of the video was "The Power of Travel, The 224th Modern comic story work Comic storyteller Bunshi Katsura makes his last comic story in Brazil." It is a documentary where Bunshi Katsura visited San Paolo's Japanese towns, large families who managed orange orchards, and Nikkei Senior's Society, and recorded his exchange with the local Nikkeijin. It was a very interesting movie showing.

After the General Meeting and Video Show, there was an exchange meeting where everyone exchanged stories and sang songs remembering the Japanese immigrants.

☆The Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association was created in 1962 to help facilitate the

exchange of information between the families of Japanese emigrants (in South America, mainly in Brazil, Paraguay). OFIX is currently the Secretariat and aside from the emigrant's families, people who

are interested overseas and active in exchange also participate. Interested parties are asked to please contact the Secretariat for details.

(2) Special Series on Immigration Law

■ Immigration Law has changed

New Residential Status Management System

This is a large change in the system related to many foreigners living in Japan. There are many necessary procedures and documents to submit that have been added, so please get the precise information and act accordingly. For reference, the main points of the new system will be explained here.

Issuance of the "Residential Card" (Some people will not be issued the card)

The Alien Registration Card has been replaced by the Residential Card.

People whose residential status is "3 months" or less, "Short Term Stay", Diplomats, Special Permanent Residents, and those without a residential status will not be issued a Residential Card. Special Permanent Residents will get a "Special Permanent Resident Card".

The maximum period of stay has been increased to 5 years. (Application for Permanent Residency has not changed.)

The condition of giving a 5-year residential status has just been added, but it does not mean everyone will be able to get 5 years.

In the guidelines on Permanent Residency in the homepage of the Ministry of Justice, it was added that, (Note)(omitted) "For the time being, those with a residential status of "3 years" (omitted) will be considered as "residing with the longest period of stay".

So for the meantime, there is no change in the application for Permanent Residency.

The Re-entry Permit System has changed. (It is convenient, but please be careful.)

The "Special Re-entry Permit" system will be introduced. For someone who leaves Japan and will be returning in less than a year do not need to get a re-entry permit.

Those leaving Japan under this system cannot extend the period overseas. If they do not return to Japan within 1 year, their residential status will be lost. Please be careful.

Also, people with a re-entry permit valid for 1 year or more and leave Japan under the "Special Re-entry Permit", if they return to Japan after a year, they will not be able to re-enter Japan. They should check this when they leave Japan. You can easily choose "Special Re-entry Permit" by checking the box provided, so there is a need to be careful of this.

This rule does not pertain to the following. So if you think you are one of them, please consult beforehand.

- Those whose residential status are being cancelled
- Those applicable for Deferment of Confirmation of Departure
- People who have been detained
- People with status of "Designated Activities" and applying for recognition as a refugee.
- Those authorized by the Ministry of Justice

The Alien Registration Card has been abolished. (There is

Public Notary Kazuhisa Manabe

no need to hurriedly change to a new card.)

The Alien Registration Card will continue to be used for a certain period of time until a Residential Card is issued, so please keep your card for some time. It will be replaced with a Residential Card upon visa renewal or change of visa status. Those who wish to have their Alien Registration Cards replaced by then, please apply with the Immigration Office.

The seal will not be placed on the passport.

Considered Period	
Permanent Resident	July 8, 2015
Other Residential Status	Expiration date of Residential Status (In the case of 5 Year Designated Activities * 5, at the longest, until July 8, 2015)
Younger than 16 yrs. old	Expiration date of Residential Status, until 16 th birthday, whichever comes first

There will be necessary procedures and documents that have not been asked before. Please find out what those necessary procedures are and do them within the designated period.

"Procedures at the Municipalities"

- Newcomers to Japan Notice of Place of Residence (within 14 days)
- A person who is moving Notice of move to the municipal office of the area you live before the move (by the time of move)
- Notice of move and change of address to the municipal office at the area where you moved (within 14 days)

"Procedures at the Immigration Office"

- Name, birth date, gender, change of area or nationality (within 14 days)
- Residential Card Renewal Application, Re-issuance Application
- Application regarding affiliated institution or dependents

(applicable to people who have renewed or changed status after July 9)

- Application regard affiliated institution (within 14 days)
- Persons with the status of "Specialist as Humanities/International Services" and "Student" must go to the immigration office or Tokyo Immigration Office if there is a change in affiliated institution (employment or school), change in place or location, disappearance, separation (contract completion), transfer of affiliation (new contract).

○Application related to Dependents (within 14 days)

Those with the status of “Dependent” “Designated Activities” “Japanese Dependent” or “Dependent of Permanent Resident” need to go to the Immigration Office or mail a Notice to the Tokyo Immigration Office in the event of divorce from or widowed by spouse. “Permanent Residents” are not obligated to do this.

About the Cancellation of Residential Status, Reason for Deportation, Penalties

The following are newly established so it is necessary to know about them.

■Cancellation of Residential Status

○If Residential Special Permission is obtained by unlawful means

○If possessing a status of “Japanese Dependent” “Permanent Resident Dependent” but without any valid reason has stayed in Japan and not engaged in activities as a dependent for over 6 months. ○If the Notice of Place of Residence is not done and there is no valid reason for it or if false information is provided

■Reason for Deportation

○Falsification of Residential Card

○Sentenced to imprisonment with hard labor due to false notification, etc.

■Penalties

○False notification of any of the notifications filed, Failure of Duty of Notification, Failure of duty to receive/carry/present the Residential Card

○Falsification or alteration of Residential Card

■ Immigration System and the Foreigner: What will happen to the Foreigner's Life with the New Immigration System? Rights of Immigrants Network in Kansai (RINK) Director Naomi Hayasaki

From July 9, the Residential Management System of Foreigners has greatly changed, but a period of 3 years is being given for the transition from the Alien Registration Card to the Residential Card (or Special Permanent Resident Certificate), so there is no need to immediately have a change. Also, for foreigners who are already in Japan who need to do procedures, such as a change of work or school, divorce or death of spouse, instead of the 14 day period after the change, if they have applied for a renewal or change of their status from July 9, they can do the procedures after the residential status renewal has been approved.

In this way, there is a grace period for a part of the new regulations and there is a possibility that the implications of this new system to the life of foreigners may not immediately be known. However, for organizations like us who receive consultations from foreigners daily, we fear that the lives of foreigners in Japan will become unstable and that their human rights will be more difficult to protect.

Among the consultations that we receive are consultations about residential status under the new Residential Management System. Up till now, we have encountered cases where the lives of foreigners have become greatly worse because status of residence was not approved, and cases where children are very much influenced. What will happen from now on?

With the new legal amendment, the Ministry of Justice can manage the residential status of foreigners living in Japan unitarily and continuously. All of the notifications that foreigners are obligated to do, including notification of place of residence to the local authorities, will be done with the immigration office and there are times that an investigation will be conducted to check the correctness of the information. Surveillance, management of the activities of foreigners, whether they are doing the activities that they should be doing, has been strengthened.

There are many unexpected things that happen in life, and in the case of foreigners, if they won't be able to meet the conditions for their residential status because of that unexpected event, their residential status will not be approved. The result of strengthening residential management will result in an increase of foreigners who are left with no choice but to return to their own countries.

Foreigners who work with the residential status of “Engineer”, “Specialist as Humanities/International Services”, and “Skilled Labor” tend to hesitate to change their place of work even now being conscious of the next renewal of their

residential status.

That's because their application will not be approved if they don't have a job. If it is a vicious employer, they will use the fact that workers will not be able to resign easily to their advantage and cut down labor conditions. Strengthening of the residential management may create a situation where employers will exploit the foreign employees.

Obligating the notification of divorce and “not conducting activities as dependent for more than 6 months” as a reason for cancellation of residential status will further make it more difficult to solve the DV problems, many of the victims being foreign women. DV assistance to victims supports the victim from divorce to life renewal over a comparatively long time. With the old system, there was enough time, but with the future system, we have to bear in mind that only “6 months” is available. Foreigners who have a status as dependents may change their status to “Permanent Resident” after divorce from or death of spouse, but will the short period of time be enough to meet the conditions? If DV victims think about these things, they may hesitate to ask for support and just endure the abuse.

Foreigners married to Japanese and Permanent residents need the cooperation of their partners when renewing their status. They are pressured and their lives controlled by making use of this. The amendment of the law will only strengthen this tendency.

Under the present circumstances, Even if a foreigner becomes a victim of human rights abuse by DV, or exploitation, etc. and tries to act to solve the problem, the road to solving the problem becomes narrow because of the status of residence, which Japanese people do not have. That's because when the time comes to renew their status, renewal will not be approved and they will be given a “Short Stay” status instead, which will not allow them to work. It is difficult to solve the problem over time without any income. As a result, there are many foreigners who are forced to give up. To protect the human rights of foreigners, the residential status system should be flexible, but the new amendment is exactly the opposite.

Originally, Japan only had a law to manage foreigners, but there is no law that gives consideration to their individual situation and protects their human rights. In that light, with the strengthening of only the residential status management, we are afraid that the human rights situation of the foreigners will only get worse.

(3) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

■ National Health Insurance

The condition for applying for a foreigner's National Health Insurance is "a person with residential status of more than 1 year, or those who are deemed to reside in Japan for more than 1 year". However, with the start of the Foreigner Basic Resident Register System on July 9, there has been a change in the conditions. The condition is now "a person who has a Residence Certificate (Period of stay of more than 3 months, etc.). And even if a person does not have a Residence Certificate (Period of stay is less than 3 months) there are cases when people with residential status of "Entertainer", "Technical Intern Training", "Dependent", "Designated Activities", who may be approved to stay for more than 3 months through objective documents, may apply for a National Health

Insurance. People with no residential status or those with "Specific Activities", specifically "Receive medical treatment" will not be able to apply for a National Health Insurance. Also, those with a status of "Official", even if they are staying for more than 3 months, they will not be given a residential certificate, but they are applicable for the National Health Insurance.

©Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents
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Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Thai, Japanese

(4) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

■ Changing Culture, Culture to Preserve

Hello! This is your OFIX International Coordinator Alvin. Thank you for reading this month's International Exchange Coordinator news article. Recently, it has been very hot, so be careful not to get heat stroke.

This month's theme is about culture and the times. It has been 15 years since I came to Japan. I stayed in Japan 3 years as an international student and 12 years as a working professional. I have thought that the culture of Japan has changed with the changing times. I asked the people around me and some said that there are fewer people who do arranged dates to look for a wife or husband, fewer people are actually cooking new year traditional food at home, and that there are fewer women who wear kimonos. The time I felt that culture was changing was when I moved to my new apartment after I graduated from Graduate School. There was a house beside the apartment building I moved into and there was an old lady who lived there with her husband. She would usually be out in the garden tending the plants or talking with the other neighbors. Every time I meet her, I would greet her or engage in conversation with her. Then one day, the lady told me, "Out of all the people living in this apartment, you're the kindest". I was curious what she meant by what she said so I asked her about it. She replied, "There are some people who greet me and others don't say anything. You're the only one who talks with me." I thought that there was not much of a relationship between

neighbors. I think that long ago in Japan, neighbors knew about each other and frequently had conversations with each other. I like that kind of culture. One time, I gave some of what I had cooked to the lady next door. Later, she came back with fried chicken. When she needed help, I helped her out and when I needed help, she helped me out. When I was about to move to Kyushu, she even gave me some dumplings as a parting gift.

8 years has passed and it seems that culture has further changed. For example, there are fewer people who introduce themselves to their neighbors after moving into their new dwelling, especially those who live in mansions. Also, as compared to 10 years ago, I see fewer people who wear kimonos. Seeing that, I feel sad. And I think many foreigners who love Japan also feel the same way I do. And that is why many foreigners want to learn about Japanese culture so they could make it their own. These foreigners become more "Japanese-like" than the Japanese.

Culture changes with the times. Please do not lose the good culture. I think we have to treasure it. We can't do anything about culture that disappears, but if we can save something, let's save it. Let's treasure the culture that has been handed down from long ago.

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