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(1) Activity Report**■ Disaster Prevention Seminar (Joint Project with the Association for Toyonaka Multicultural Symbiosis)**

As its Disaster Prevention Project, OFIX has held Emergency drills and Multilingual Disaster Center Set-up Drill for foreign residents, but the key to disaster prevention is cooperation. Therefore, to promote community-based foreigner support during disasters and improve the strength of the local areas and disaster prevention, starting this fiscal year, OFIX will implement its Disaster Prevention Project together with the international associations of the various areas.

We would like to introduce a Seminar, the first of these activities, which was held with the collaboration of Association for Toyonaka Multicultural Symbiosis.

“Disaster Prevention Seminar”

Date July 27, 2012 (Fri.) 10:30-12:30

Venue Association for Toyonaka Multicultural Symbiosis Center

With the help of the Toyonaka City Fire

Department Headquarters, after watching a DVD about what to do in case of a fire, a fireman talked about the importance of a fire alarm. After that, an evacuation drill was conducted with the scenario that a fire broke out at the Center.



After the drill, participants were also taught how to use a fire extinguisher. It was an educational day not only for the foreigners who participated, but also for the Japanese.

We will continue this project and are looking for organizations who would like to hold joint activities with us.

Interested municipalities and local international associations are requested to contact OFIX.

■ Northern Japan Report

On July 5 and 6, I participated in the Disaster Prevention Symposium and inspection of the devastated area (Minamisanriku Town), which was sponsored by the International Associations of the 3 Prefectures, Iwate・Miyagi・Fukushima.

At the symposium, as the song “Mangetsu no Yube” was being played, we watched scenes projected on a screen; scenes of the day when the Hanshin Awaji earthquake hit, scenes that cannot be forgotten, that should not be forgotten. There were scenes where you would want to turn your head away, scenes where even those, who were not victims of the earthquake, shed tears. Everything was strikingly imprinted on our minds. In that strained atmosphere, there was an introduction of the activities of the international associations of the 3 prefectures followed by a panel discussion. At the discussion, foreign residents of the 3 prefectures took the platform and narrated in detail the situation on that day. They sometimes found it difficult to speak. Judging from that, even though over a year has passed, I could feel that the great earthquake had casted a large shadow over the people who live in the Tohoku region.

On the next day, at Minamisanriku town, where we visited, the streets were cleaned up so that cars could pass, but in places where water came you can

ividly see the remains of the tsunami: boats on top of buildings, crushed cars piled up, folded paper cranes for the repose of the souls arranged in the town hall, a scene shown again and again on TV. A temporary shopping center was built and some life returned to the town. Also, some foreign residents, the local volunteers who guided us, and young volunteers from other areas were all working hard.

Through the 2-day stay there, although it may be common, but I felt the greatness of nature, which



could be a boon or a bane, and the strength of the people of the area who have lived together with that nature. When I was young, I heard that God only gives you difficulties you can overcome. If this were true, surely this unprecedented great earthquake will be overcome by the 3 prefectures of the Tohoku area. Proof of that is people are moving towards revival...slowly, but surely.

A true egalitarian will say that disasters do not choose people, time or place. So, Osaka is not an exception. At OFIX, we are re-thinking about

“Disaster Prevention” and will continue to promote activities that will lead to lesser disasters. (Planning and Promotion Group Yuka Yoshikawa)

(2) Special Report about International Students

■ Admission of International Students to Technical and Vocational Colleges and Thinking about the the Future of International Students in Osaka Osaka United Association of Technical Vocational Colleges

The admission of international students to vocational schools began in the later part of the 1980's. At first, it was the admission of Monbusho scholars, but soon Japanese language departments were created in some schools and privately funded students began to be admitted. In my school, the Japanese Language Education Department began in 1989 and we then started admitting international students. At that time, international students at universities and vocational schools were still very few and only some schools admitted them. It was also a time when students could not be admitted if they did not have a guarantor. Students also needed a guarantor to rent an apartment, which was very hard to find at that time as there were very few apartments that accepted international students.

I think it was only after the year 2000 that changes started. Universities and vocational colleges began actively recruiting international students. Probably it was because of the dwindling number of young people in Japan and the development of China which started this. However, there were many problems at that time since the number of international students admitted was suddenly increased. One problem is the increase of illegal immigrants. At that time, if you go anywhere in China, you will find many who would like to study in Japan. China could finally send out privately funded students and everyone wanted to study overseas. We were very strict in accepting students that we did not have any problems, but the international student admission office in many Japanese schools, universities and vocational colleges in Japan had much difficulty in managing them. It was this situation that the international students were admitted only after strict examination, as instructed by the Ministry of Justice from about 2004. By 2008, the admission of international students had finally become stable. It is common to see international students within the Prefecture and this is one reason why the local communities proceeded with a framework to admit international students. It had become easier to look for an apartment for students. Furthermore, support services of public organizations had also been prepared. Job hunting for international students started to be focused on and support for each field had been aggressively conducted. Recently, Job Fairs have been held many times.

5 years after that, another big change happened. It was about the situation of job hunting of students and their nationality. Thinking about job hunting all over Japan, the number of international students who work is increasing and reached its peak in 2008, after which it started to decrease. However, from last year, the employment of international students has started to go up again. Efforts in making a one-stop service by strengthening the admission system of international students had been fruitful. Actually, in March, we were able to have almost all of the international students in the Professional Course

Committee on International Students Makoto Sakimura

employed. We are confident that it is the result of giving job hunting instruction to international students at school. There is also the fact that there is an active overseas expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises because of a strong yen. The word “Bridge Human Resources” has recently been used often. Moreover, human resources needed by companies have become diversified and human resources from Southeast Asia are increasing. Adjusting to this trend, international students from Southeast Asian countries are also beginning to increase at the start of this year.

Exchange between schools and companies have also gone full-scale in international student employment. Even in our school, we are actively holding exchange meetings with companies. The picture that you see is this year's “International



Human Resources Utilization Network Meeting”. It was a very heated exchange participated by many companies, schools and international students.

Through these kinds of exchanges, internships and employment not only have increased, but cases where the utilization of international students in the local community also increased. Up till now, the local community has recognized the existence of international students and has worked hard to make their lives easier. However, this time, they are more aggressive in utilizing them. In last year's Naniwa-ku emergency drill, many international students participated and training in caring for seniors in wheelchairs was also done. Furthermore, international students are also cooperating with the local shopping centers by interpreting for foreign tourists who come to visit. Everyone is starting to realize the merit of utilizing international students to activate the local community.

Looking back, 25 years went by so fast and I felt the frightfulness of the change of the times. This age has become a time where international students, who were once treated as guests, are now accepted as part of society. Starting this year, Osaka Prefecture has started its “Osaka Internationalization Strategy Action Program” showing that even administration has started to act. This is a result of realizing that accepting international students will not only strengthen the international competitiveness of the region, but also promote it. I am glad that I am doing the work I do today.

※The writer, Mr. Sakimura, is not only a part of the Osaka United Association of Technical Vocational Colleges, but also a Board of Directors of Ehle Institute.

■ Admission of International Students in Osaka Prefecture

【The status of international students in Osaka as seen from the data of Japan Student Services Organization】

Number of Admitting Schools in Osaka Prefecture

School Category	# of Admitting Schools
University・Junior College	48
Vocational College, etc.	74
Total	122

Number of Government Scholars・Privately funded students

	University/Junior College	Vocational College, etc.	Total
Government Scholars	690	51	741
Private Students	7,050	2,534	9,584
Total	7,740	2,585	10,325

※as of May 1, 2011

Number of international students by housing classification

Housing for international students established or rented by the school	1,121
General student dormitory・housing	51
Housing set up by a regional public organization or Public Interest Associations	150
Private housing, apartments, etc.	9,003
Total	10,325

Top 5 Number of International Students by Country (Region)

Country (Region)	# of students
China	6,722
Korea	1,067
Taiwan	623
USA	218
Thailand	198

■ Introduction of Osaka Prefecture Sakai International Hall (Orion International House)

Sakai International Hall (Orion International House) was created in 1995 by Osaka Prefecture to invite international students who will become bridges of friendship in the future. After that, Osaka Foundation of International Exchange started managing it in 2009. There are 85 international students living in the dormitory. More than half are Chinese, followed by students from Korea, Germany, Taiwan, France, Vietnam and Laos. There are also international students from Russia, Australia, El Salvador, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. 2 managers work in the dormitory in turns and sometimes warmly, sometimes strictly watch over the residents. There are also 2 tutors, one male and one female, who act as a bridge between management and the residents. These tutors are responsible dorm residents who have taken the initiative in participating in OFIX activities. Here we will have an introduction of the kind managers and tutors.

Introduction of the Managers

● Manager Junji Taki

It has been 3 years since I started as Manager of Orion International House. At first, I thought it would be okay to have students from Spain and Portugal, but I was surprised that most of the students were from Asia. When I started with this job, the first thing that struck me was the high Japanese proficiency of students from Korea and China. I would normally speak and they would understand and respond back properly.

There are also many problems as there are 85 dorm residents (from different countries) living together. Everyday always something comes up. Most of the time, it is trouble in using the kitchen. The students are all very bright, but I could not say the same for their manners. I think that if only they would be more considerate to others, my job would be a lot easier. A happy experience for me as a Manager is when dorm residents came to me for advice about private matters or job-hunting. I would even talk about my awkward experiences, and we would try to find a solution to their problems.

I think my everyday will continue to have problems, but I would like to be careful in avoiding further breach of manners.

● Manager Hiromi Nakamura

At Orion International House, there are 2 Managers managing the dormitory. I became a Manager to this dormitory in April last year. Until then, I was an engineer handling machinery for a foreign-affiliated company for 33 years. When I started working here, I was at a loss, at

first, catering to young people, but I am used to it now. I think that newcomers to Japan are very hopeful and at the same time anxious as they still had very few friends. When I see residents leave and greet me “Good morning” “Good afternoon” “Good evening”, I greet them farewell “Itte rasshai” and welcome them home saying “Okaerinasai” when they return. These are very Japanese greetings and some students from countries without this culture may probably be puzzled and do not respond back. However, doing this everyday they finally respond and that makes me happy. I thought that this was multicultural communication.

Introduction of the Tutor

● Dewi・Kusrini (Indonesia Osaka Prefecture University)

Before, when I was living in a housing complex-like dormitory, I thought that the dorm was just a “place to relax”. When I moved to Orion International House, every day was fun. I could have exchange with other international students, adults and have access to the piano and table tennis equipment to broaden my hobbies. Since there are students who study at various educational institutions, such as Osaka Prefecture University, St. Andrew’s University, Vocational Schools, etc. I could immediately make many interesting friends. For those who want to concentrate on studying, they can use the OA room. Those who want to take a break from studying can go to the Meeting Room where there is a piano and a ping pong table and hula-hoop they can use to refresh themselves. You can talk with your friends as you watch TV in the Discussion Room or you can cook food from different countries and talk about studies or your country’s culture while you eat. If you have problems about life in Japan, you can tell your problems to the kind manager. Anyway, I feel it’s a place where you won’t feel sad or homesick.

Not just within the dormitory. You also have access to facilities outside the dormitory. Near the dormitory is a famous park called Oyama Park. You can jog, walk or do yoga on the grass. You can also enjoy sakura and momiji, depending on the season. And in Sakai City, Tea, bicycles and ancient tombs are famous. You can see the Nintokutenou tomb and the nearby bicycle museum, and you can also have a taste of green tea in the Japanese garden within the park. By living in Orion International House, I could study, go sightseeing and experience with my friends Osaka’s culture and thus,

we could widen our perspective. For those who will be living in Orion International House, won't you experience what I have experienced?

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Orion International House is collaborating with Osaka Prefecture schools to provide support for international students to prepare for disasters, such as, "Training for International Students on Interpretation/Translation during Disasters" "Emergency Drill and Multilingual Support Center Set-up Drill for International" 「Disaster Prevention Workshop for International Student Support Officers of Higher Educational Institutions», and support for job hunting, such

as career counseling, job hunting seminars, matching of companies and students, etc.

It is also being used as a venue for local community exchange events to promote friendship with the local residents, and exchange meetings of Osaka Prefecture University International Exchange Circle Orion with the resident students. International students!! Would you like to be a resident of Orion International House where it is fun and you can learn many things that will be helpful to your life as an international student? At present, there will be an opening of 10 rooms each for male and female prospective residents from October. Those who wish to apply, please apply with the person in charge of international students.

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

(3) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

■When a Child is Born (After the New Immigration System)

When a child of foreign nationality is born in Japan, it is necessary to register the birth of the child at the nearest city hall within 14 days after birth. Before, the child has to undergo Alien Registration within 60 days after birth, but with the new Basic Resident Register System, when you register the child at city hall after birth, the baby will have a residential certificate as a "Transitional Residents by Birth". Also, based on the immigration regulations, the baby can reside in Japan even without getting a residential status within the 60-day period. However, if you want the baby to have a residential status after the 60-day period, you have to make an application with the Immigration Office within 30 days

after the 60-day period. If the application is approved, and the baby becomes a mid to long term resident, a residential card will be issued. Other procedures, namely birth registration and passport application have to be done at the Embassy or Consulate of the newborn baby.

©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) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

■The Laughing Filipino

Hello everyone! This is your OFIX International Relations Coordinator Alvin. This year's summer was very hot, wasn't it? Were you fatigued from the summer heat? It is going to be autumn soon. I hope it becomes cooler. Well, this month, I will talk about the "Laughing Filipino".

I think first-timers to the Philippines will probably be surprised to see that Filipinos laugh a lot. Yes, Filipinos are famous for their cheerful character. Filipinos love to laugh and so they always tell jokes. That's why there are many jokes in almost every situation in the Philippines. There are many jokes about school life, daily life, politicians, government, etc. Filipinos can laugh at any time. For example, before, I saw a woman who slipped and fell down. If she were Japanese, what would she have done? She would probably stand up embarrassedly and try to leave the place as soon as she could. But the Filipina I saw just laughed as she stood up. You could also see people who live in slums. Even if their lives are not the best condition, they are all laughing.

Last August, I went back home to the Philippines. At that time, there was a typhoon. I hear that it had rained strongly and continuously for 3 days. It flooded and most areas in Manila were under water. In the area where I live, the water was more than 2 meters deep and vehicles could not pass through, so I was not able to go home. When the

waters subsided, many houses were destroyed, many things were lost. Walking around our neighborhood, even in that situation, there were many people who were laughing. They were people who lost a lot, but they were laughing. 3 years ago in a similar flood, even though the waters were quickly rising, many people were still laughing as if they did not mind the danger. The Japanese who were with me at that time were very worried, but they became surprised seeing the reaction of the Filipinos.

Why do Filipinos laugh? Is it personality? Is it culture? I don't know. However, I can say that the Filipinos encounter difficulties everyday and nothing will happen if they just mope around. So they laugh. Many pressured and stressed Japanese should learn from the Filipinos. Even in the most difficult times, you should laugh. Laugh and lessen your stress. If you cannot laugh, look at my picture on the left and laugh. Ha-ha-ha!!!



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