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(1) OFIX Programme/Event Reports

■ One World Festival

The One World Festival was held at the Osaka I-House on the 20th-21st December. This was the 16th time it has been held. The aim of the festival is to promote international exchange and cooperation work to citizens of Osaka Prefecture. Over 100 groups ranging from NGOs and NPOs to international organisations and businesses took part and introduced their activities through booths, symposiums, and workshops.

Participants were able to get a taste for issues relating to international cooperation through the many booths, ethnic music and dance shows, and environmental awareness programmes such as making aroma-candles out of waste oil. The ethnic food stalls where visitors could try lots of tasty dishes such as Sri Lankan curry, Turkish kebabs, and Vietnamese Coffee were particularly popular.

In the main auditorium the former Sumo Wrestler Konishiki gave a keynote speech entitled "Children, the Future of the World".

OFIX had a booth at the festival, and also ran a programme entitled "World Walker", at which students from China, the UK, and Malaysia spoke about the culture, food, festivals of their home countries. The event was a great success with participants furthering their international understanding.

Over the two days 12,300 people visited the festival. Participating organisations were also able to exchange information and network, making it a truly valuable and meaningful two days.



Booths at the festival



OFIX's Programme "World Walker"



Ethnic Food Stalls

(2) Osaka International Club

■ OFIX Scholarship Student Heyun Shen (China)

Heyun wrote to us recently about New Year celebrations in China.

The Chinese New Year, the most important holiday in the Chinese calendar is just around the corner. This year it falls on the 26th January. This day is the equivalent to the 1st January in Japan. The Chinese year falls according to the Chinese calendar, therefore the date according to the Gregorian (western) calendar changes from year to year. However, it is generally at the start of February.

The New Year period is of course a national holiday in China, and every year the exact dates of end of year school exams are changed accordingly. Many people return to their hometowns during this period so trains are extremely crowded. The Chinese New Year is also celebrated in Korea where it is known as Seollal. It is also celebrated in places such as Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia where there are also national holidays. In China the Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival (5th of May and 15th August respectively according to the Gregorian calendar) are also national holidays. During the Dragon Boat Festival people eat rice dumplings called Zongzi, and during the Mid-Autumn Festival people eat pastries called Mooncake.

The Chinese calendar was created by the ancient Chinese, with the seasons divided into 24 parts, and shows the appreciation that the ancient people had of astrology. For example, at the time of the Mid-Autumn Festival the moon is at its roundest, and on this day families gather to eat round rice cakes and pray for a harmonious family life.

When one mentions the Chinese New Year immediate thoughts of dumplings, red coloured calligraphy posters, and firecrackers spring to mind. China being such a

large country different foods are eaten at New Year depending on the region. In the north regular meat dumplings are eaten, but in the south dumplings made from sweet beans and sweet rice cakes are eaten to symbolize wishes for a sweet new year. The dumplings are shaped like money from the olden times, and therefore are eaten in the hope that they will bring about wealth in the coming year. Chicken (in Chinese the word for which shares the same sound as the word for good luck) and fish (sharing the same sound as the word for lasting health and happiness)

The red coloured calligraphy posters are hung on walls and over entrances, and filled with phrases and sayings suitable to the season. Also, the character for "good luck" is displayed above doors and gates.

Up until the Meiji Period (1868) Japan also celebrated the same New Year as the Chinese, however Japan now celebrates the same New Year as the West on the 1st January. I have been in Japan for 3 years now, and whenever the Chinese New Year comes along I feel slightly lonely and homesick thinking about all the celebrations that are taking place back home, despite it being a normal day in Japan.



Heyun at Yokohama China Town

(3) OFIX Network

■ Japan Asian Association and Asian Friendship Society

The Japan Asian Association and Asian Friendship Society (JAFA) is an NGO established in 1979 with the aim of constructing wells and water pumps in areas of Asia short of water. The slogan of the organisation is "Water to the World and Asia". This October sees the organisation celebrate its 30th anniversary. Over 1.8 billion people across the world do

not have access to fresh drinking water. With the world's population at 6.75 billion this means that 1 in 4 people are without fresh water. The Japan Asian Association works together with its network of 46 related organisations in 18 countries to best fulfill the needs of each respective area. At the present time the aim is to foster understanding and cooperation between the peoples of Asia, and support water

provision, educational and environmental projects alongside assisting in the development of volunteer organisations across the region.

In Japan the main focus is on promoting the activities which take place abroad. Increasing understanding of the work done by NGOs, alongside participation by volunteers in international understanding education, environment protection work. There are many opportunities to assist in such things as support for foreign projects, participation in work camps and study tours, Asian cooking lessons, volunteer translators,

office assistance etc, so please get in touch for further information.

Homepage http://www.jafs.or.jp/index_e.html

Email: asia@jafs.or.jp Tel:06-6444-058 FAX:06-6444-0581



Indian girl drinking fresh water



Cambodian water pump

(4) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

■ Christmas and New Year in the UK

Hi Everyone,

Richard here, Coordinator for International Relations at OFIX. Last month I headed back to London for the first time in a year to spend the holiday season with my family. It was wonderful to be back spending time with friends and family, although I have to say I had forgotten how cold London can get in December! Having said that, it didn't rain once in 10 days! All in all it was a wonderful break, and good to see London again in all its winter glory. Going skating in Hyde Park was a highlight, albeit a rather scary one! I had also forgotten exactly how cosmopolitan London is. Walking around town the number of different languages I heard people speaking was amazing, and very different to Japan.

Christmas Eve (24th) is a normal working day, but many people spend the day buying last minute Christmas presents to pop under the Christmas tree. Families wake up early on the 25th to open their presents, and prepare for Christmas lunch. In the UK this normally consists of roast turkey with stuffing, alongside roast potatoes and vegetables. It really is a feast! If that weren't enough all of that is usually followed by Christmas Pudding, which is a rich and tasty fruit cake. For an added bit of fun brandy is poured over it

and the whole pudding is set alight! It was a bit tricky to take a photo but I did my best! My family is not Christian, so we don't go in for present giving on Christmas Day, however, not needing an excuse to eat lots of nice food we always make a point of having a nice big turkey for lunch!

After eating all of that it becomes very difficult to move, which is a good thing because from 3pm Queen Elizabeth gives her annual Christmas speech on TV. She takes a moment to sum up the previous year and offer her best wishes to all of us for the forthcoming one. To be honest it isn't too interesting, but I suppose it is a nice bit of tradition which is no bad thing!

The period between Christmas and New Year is made up of normal working days, but many people take time off work to enjoy the festive season. New Years Eve in the UK is a time for partying, with people heading into town with friends and family for drinks, and all singing Auld Lang Syne as the clock strikes midnight. Actually this year I had a fairly quiet one visiting a friend's house for a sushi party! I suppose I was missing Japan! The 1st of January is usually spent with people nursing hangovers, and on the 2nd January most people are back at work! I much prefer the nice long New Year holiday in Japan!



Christmas Pudding



Trafalgar Square



Skating in Hyde Park

(5) Osaka News

■ Osaka PR at the Shanghai World Expo!

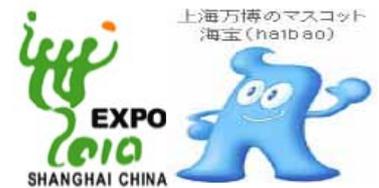
Osaka Prefecture and Osaka City will put together a booth at the 2010 World Expo to be held in Shanghai, in order to further relations with Shanghai and China, and promote all that Osaka has to offer.

Many cities from around the world will promote themselves at the "Best City" display area. Last December OFIX took part in the committee meetings at which it was decided that Osaka would put together a display under the theme of "Osaka: Environmentally Advanced River City". Osaka has a rich history of trade and development along its canals going back 1400 years. Furthermore, with positive results seen in efforts to alleviate flood damage and air pollution over the years, Osaka is a river city proud of its environmental advances.



The Governor of Osaka Prefecture and Mayor of Osaka City presenting the official plan for participation in the Shanghai World Expo

At the Expo pavilion the appeal of Osaka, its people, places, and industries will be



The Expo Mascot

promoted not only to the people of Shanghai and China, but to the people of the world as well. It will be an opportunity to experience some of what Osaka has to offer as a river city, bringing to mind visions of the famous age old Chinese river city portraits. The Shanghai World Expo will be held from the 1st May ~ 31st October 2010, with the theme 「Better City, Better Life」. Over 200 countries and international organisations will take part, and it is expected that over 70 million people will visit. Earlier this year saw the official signing of the participation contract in Shanghai, and preparation work for the display is going smoothly.

Official Expo Homepage

<http://en.expo2010china.com/>

Information for foreign residents in Osaka

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/plaza/index3.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/jigyuu/index4.html>

OFIX Volunteer Information (Japanese only)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/boran/index2.html>

Seeking New OFIX Supporting Members

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

(Japanese only)

Comments/Suggestions: info@ofix.or.jp

Osaka International Club reports: clubnews@ofix.or.jp

To register to OFIX News: http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/register_e.html

For back numbers of OFIX News: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber.html#english>

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