

「OFIX News」 Issue 7 (Feb 2009)  
~E-Newsletter distributed by the Osaka Foundation of International  
Exchange~

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Important Notice: Relocation of OFIX Office and Plaza

From the 1st April the Osaka Foundation of International Exchange (OFIX) will be relocating its office and plaza. Our new address and contact details are outlined below.

The office will not open officially until April 1st, but our new contact details will be in use from March 2nd.

Address: 5th Floor, MyDome Osaka, 2-5 Hommachi-bashi, Chuo-ku,  
Osaka-shi, 540-0029  
TEL 06 - 6966 - 2400  
FAX 06 - 6966 - 2401  
E-mail [info@ofix.or.jp](mailto:info@ofix.or.jp)  
Homepage <http://www.ofix.or.jp>

~ OFIX Plaza ~

Open space full of international exchange related information, books, and magazines. Please come and visit.

Map and directions: <http://www.mydome.jp/mydomeosaka/e/04.html>

## 【01】 OFIX Programme/Event Reports

New OFIX Homepage!!

The new and improved OFIX homepage has been unveiled. It is now easier to navigate, with up to date information on all of OFIX's activities and international exchange. URL: <http://www.ofix.or.jp>

Clear and easy to understand!

- New top page design and layout
  - Size of characters can be enlarged for easy viewing
- Now in 4 languages

- Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean  
Up to date list of organisations involved in international exchange (Japanese page only)
- Search according to type of activity or area making information easy to access.
- Useful for creation of links between international exchange organisations  
Link to list of organisations (Japanese only)  
<http://www.ofix.or.jp/group/index.html>

Seeking Residents at Sakai International Student Hall!

The Sakai International Hall (Orion International House), is a hall of residence for foreign students run by OFIX. All rooms come equipped with en-suite bathroom, air conditioner, and fridge. No deposit or key money are required. International exchange events with local residents are also held at the hall. Please visit for a tour of facilities.  
Address: 2-226, Higashi Uenoshiba-cho, Kita-ku, Sakai City, Osaka 591-8035 (about 400m from the Uenoshiba Station on the JR Hanwa Line to north-east.)  
Further Details: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/shien/index.html>

## 【02】 Osaka International Club

OFIX Scholarship Students Graduation Reports

Two of our scholarship students have written to us as they prepare to graduate from their respective universities in Osaka

Shi Chen (China) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/chin.pdf>  
Zhang Yue (China) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/chou.pdf>

## 【03】 OFIX Network

Pacific Research Exchange Center (PREX)

The Pacific Research Exchange Center (PREX), was established in April 1990 with the cooperation of industry, academic and government institutions. It aims to support the career development of those from developing countries in Asia and the Pacific region, and to further international exchange through the organization of study trips to Japan. PREX also organizes in the region of 40 foreign technical training study tours on behalf of JICA.

Themes of the training include business management, the development of small-scale businesses, regional and tourism development, and the environment.

It is now 18 years since the establishment of PREX, and in that time over 10,000 people have taken part in training arranged by the organization. PREX maintains a strong alumni network with events taking place in 13 countries and regions across Asia and Central America. In 2008 PREX received the Kansai Seminar Prize as well as a prize from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its contribution towards human resource development in developing countries and its promotion of mutual international understanding.

[Address] 502 pia NPO, 2-8-24 Chikko, Minato-ku, Osaka-shi  
[Tel] 06-4395-2650  
[H P] [http://www.prex-hrd.or.jp/index\\_e.html](http://www.prex-hrd.or.jp/index_e.html)

## 【04】 OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

## Romance, Japan Style!

Hi everyone,

Is Valentines Day a big thing where you are from? If so I hope you had a romance packed one! Valentines Day in Japan is slightly different from that of the UK so I thought I'd write this month and say a little bit about both.

Valentines Day in the UK is a day for couples to go out on a date, and have a fancy meal somewhere. If the husband/boyfriend is a romantic and thoughtful type of guy then he may also send his wife/girlfriend a bouquet of flowers to mark the occasion. Needless to say as a true English gent of the old school variety I make of point of doing so every year!

People also send cards to people they like, and if they are a bit embarrassed about it they will often leave them unsigned to keep their identity a mystery. When I was a kid I would always get a few anonymous cards which was very exciting. I would be at school the next day desperately trying to work out who it was that liked me! I found out later that for the most part it was just my mum or grandma having a laugh!

In Japan things are quite different, and came as a bit of a shock when I first experienced Valentines Day here. For starters the onus is pretty much entirely on women to make an effort in the romance stakes. All the guys need do is sit back, relax, and wait for their partner to give them some chocolates. Sounds like a good idea to me! This custom was more or less started by the clever marketing men at Morinaga, one of the biggest Japanese sweet companies, in order to sell more chocolate! The funniest part is that it has become an obligation for female workers to give male co-workers "giri-choko", literally meaning "obligatory chocolates". Then there are "honmei-choko", which are the more fancy chocolates given to actual loved ones.

I was actually out for dinner on Valentines Day this year and was amazed to see the majority of women paying for their boyfriends! Japanese men really have it easy don't they! I tried the same thing, but unfortunately didn't get away with it!

But let it be said that the men don't get let off completely from all of the "giri-choko" fun! The 14th March is called White Day, and is the day when men are supposed to return the favour to those that gave them chocolates on Valentines Day. And in case you were wondering, yes, this day was also the creation of the chocolate companies! Whilst all this chocolate fun is nice, all of these rules, and the somewhat silly addition of White Day only serve to take the spontaneity out of what is, after all, supposed to be a day of romance, not a day of filling the coffers of the multinational chocolate companies!

Tell us about your country

In the April edition of OFIX News I'm hoping to put together a comparison of spring traditions/customs from around the world. For example, in the UK we have Easter and spring cleaning, and in Japan there is the great "hanami" (cherry blossom viewing) tradition. Please get in touch with information about spring traditions in your country at the following address: clubnews@ofix.or.jp

Photos

[http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail\\_english\\_no7.pdf](http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no7.pdf)

## 【05】 Volunteer News

JICA Overseas Cooperation Volunteers Report

Ms. Mayumi Yamamoto from Osaka wrote to us while she was working

as a JICA Overseas Cooperation Volunteer in Bolivia.

Click here for article

[http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail\\_english\\_no7.pdf](http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no7.pdf)

Recruiting Overseas Cooperation Volunteers /Senior Overseas Cooperation Volunteers !

Application Period: 1st April ~ 18th May 2009

Requirements:

Overseas Cooperation Volunteers 20~39 yrs old

Senior Overseas Cooperation Volunteers 40~69 yrs old

Overseas Locations: Asia, Africa, Central and South America, South Pacific region, Middle East

Period: 1 or 2 years

Information sessions will be held around the Kinki region from April.

Further information: JICA Osaka

(TEL)072-641-6904 (URL)<http://www.jica.go.jp/>

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Information for foreign residents in Osaka

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

Seeking New OFIX Supporting Members

[http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/ofix/index3\\_1.html](http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/ofix/index3_1.html)  
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Comments/Suggestions: [info@ofix.or.jp](mailto:info@ofix.or.jp)

Please send Osaka International Club reports to the following address: [clubnews@ofix.or.jp](mailto:clubnews@ofix.or.jp)

To cancel your registration or change your registered email address <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/index.html>

Print-out version (PDF) of OFIX News with photos

[http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail\\_english\\_no6.pdf](http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no6.pdf)

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