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Important Notice: Relocation of OFIX Office and Plaza

From the 1st April OFIX will be relocating its office and plaza. Our new address and contact details are outlined below.

Address:

5th Floor, MyDome Osaka, 2-5 Hommachi-bashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka-shi, 540-0029

T E L 06 - 6966 - 2400 F A X 06 - 6966 - 2401

E-mail info@ofix.or.jp

HP <http://www.ofix.or.jp>

} As before

~ OFIX Plaza ~

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



~ Access ~

- 800m from Exit 1 or 12 of Sakaisujihommachi Station (Chuo Line/Sakaisuji Line, Osaka Subway)
- 800m from Exit 4 of Tanimachi4chome Station (Tanimachi Line, Osaka Subway)

(1) OFIX Programme

Osaka Information Corner for Foreign Residents comes to OFIX (from April 1st)

~ Information/advice in 9 languages ~

From April 1st the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents will be run from OFIX. Advice for foreign residents will be available in 9 languages.

You can visit to talk directly, or get in touch by phone, fax, or email.

Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Thai, Japanese

Hours: 9:00 ~ 17:45 Mon-Fri (closed over New Year and on national holidays)

Contact: OFIX

5th Floor, MyDome Osaka, 2-5 Hommachi-bashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka-shi, 540-0029

Tel: 06-6941-2297

Fax: 06-6966-2401 (Japanese, English only)

Email: jouhou-c@ofix.or.jp (Japanese, English only)



(2) Osaka International Club

■ OFIX Scholarship Students Graduation Report

You Jun Chen (China)

I can't believe how quickly my time as a postgraduate student here in Osaka has gone. Looking back at my time here I have tried to put some of my memories into perspective. When I first came to Japan I couldn't speak Japanese too well, and in particular I didn't really understand the Kansai dialect. Actually, I tended to boast about my level of Japanese prior to coming to Osaka, but not understanding the people of Osaka and their dialect brought me down to earth somewhat. However, I made a lot of good friends here who helped me get used to life in Osaka.

Perhaps the most important thing during my time in Osaka was becoming an OFIX scholarship recipient. Thanks to the support of OFIX I was able to make the most of my time here, and learn about Japanese culture too. I am so grateful to all at OFIX because of this.

Also, thanks to OFIX I was able to broaden my horizons and take part in exchange with other foreign students, and learn about their cultures and histories. Also, I was given the opportunity to tell school kids and other foreigners living in Osaka about Chinese culture. OFIX acted like a bridge between us as foreign students and Japanese society. I am grateful also to all at OFIX that looked after us and to the various foreign student supervisors that helped us over the years. I shall remember your smiling and friendly faces forever.

I hope in the future to act as a bridge between Japan and China, and use what I have learnt whilst here to further deepen friendship relations between the two countries. Let me once gain express my sincere gratitude to all at OFIX and in Japan who helped me during my time studying here. Thank you.



Visit to TV station

Ana riwa (China)

I am from Inner Mongolia in China, and came to Osaka 4 years ago to study at the medical department of Osaka University. I was so happy to be chosen as an OFIX scholarship student.

My life as a research student was far tougher than I thought it would be, but with the help of OFIX I feel I was able to make the most of my time here. Being able to take part in international exchange events was something I really enjoyed. Through these activities I was able to learn more about Japanese culture and traditions.

My PhD studies were concerned with the search for antibodies for the avian influenza H5N1 Virus. Over the 4 years of study I successfully produced antibodies to the virus, and due to my analysis of these had two of my papers approved leading to my graduation this March. I truly believe that I was able to graduate in no small part thanks to the support of my teachers, and all at OFIX.

As I come to graduate I begin to look back over my 4 years. I have so many precious memories, from first arriving in Japan with a poor understanding of Japanese only to have a kind lady show me the way, to my first experience of cherry blossom viewing in Japan, and the great fun I had visiting schools with OFIX.

Although I mentioned that life as a research student has been tough, after graduating I will stay on at Osaka University as an honorary researcher. I will continue in my studies of the avian influenza virus, and hope to contribute as much as is possible to the field. I hope to let more Chinese people know about Japan, and in between studies, also tell Japanese people all about Chinese culture.



Ana and You Jun at Osaka Prefectural Government

(3) OFIX Network

UNICEF Japan (Osaka Branch)

The Osaka Branch of UNICEF Japan was established in August 2001 predominantly in order to support volunteer activities around Osaka. There are currently 200 volunteers registered with the organisation. The three areas of activity are promotion, education, and fundraising. Promotion work is done via the regular newsletter, and the homepage, along with the holding of seminars and photographic exhibitions. Education work is done through the organisation of school visits, the lending of educational material and holding of internships etc. Fundraising is achieved through events such as charity concerts, charity bazaars, and charity walks. The Hand in Hand fundraising event is held throughout the country once a year, with over 1000 people taking part, including students, girl and boy scouts, and members of regional organisations.

Office hours: 11am-4pm Tues-Sat
Address: 2nd Floor OCAT Building, 1-4-10
Minato-machi, Osaka-shi
Tel: 06-6645-5123
FAX: 06-6645-5124
[URL] <http://www.unicef-osaka.jp/>



Booth at the One World Festival

(4) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

Working in Japan

Hi Everyone,

Richard here once more! I do hope you aren't getting tired of my monthly ramblings! This month I thought I would write about the differences between office life in Japan and the UK, something I feel I am well qualified to do! I first came to work in Japan over five years ago, fresh out of university. It was my first real job and as such I was rather nervous. Not only was I beginning work, but in a foreign country to boot!

The first and most obvious things that struck me as different were the bowing and exchange of business cards that take place at the start of meetings. It took me a while to get used to this, and even now I will try and go for a handshake, or forget to hand over my card straight away. Of course business cards are used in the UK but not to the extent that they are in Japan. They are exchanged perhaps at the end of a meeting rather than right at the start prior to discussion.



Another thing that I continue to find interesting is the formality of calling everyone by their surname in a Japanese office. In a UK office for the most part people will go by their first names, and this is why I have always gone by Richard in Japan also. For me I don't believe that being called Mr. Kelner

by my workmates is conducive to close office relations. Since they aren't used I probably couldn't even tell you half of my workmates first names!

The way decisions are made in a Japanese office also varies greatly from that of a British office. Although also important in the UK, the focus in Japan is placed pretty much entirely on collective decision making and the method for approving something illustrates this. First of all the junior staff member will be asked to put together a proposal. He does this and then it is circulated, with each member placing his/her name stamp (inkan) on the cover page to indicate approval has been given.



Name stamp (inkan)

Although this process ensures very few mistakes are made, I can't help but feel it is a very time-consuming process, and one which perhaps does not foster initiative and original thinking amongst employees as much as it should. I have often been asked by Japanese friends and colleagues how decisions in the UK get made without this type of system in place. All I can say is that important decisions are of course made after consultation with colleagues, but the emphasis is on

individual responsibility for decisions made. The system in Japan does not have this emphasis, which has been an interesting eye-opener and clearly illustrates the group identity still prevalent in Japanese society.

Of course there is no right and wrong where these things are concerned. Each country and culture has its own way of doing things, and working in Japan has been a truly enriching experience. My only worry is that when I come to work in the UK it may take me a while

to stop bowing!

Tell us about your country!

In the May edition of OFIX News I am hoping to put together an article about wedding traditions around the world. Please get in touch at the following address and let me know all about the customs and traditions in your country!

clubnews@ofix.or.jp

(5) Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association News

Paraguay Information Seminar

On the 9th February, the Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association held a Paraguay Information Seminar at which Mr. Katsuyuki Takahashi, the Director of the Association gave a presentation.

Mr. Takahashi emigrated to Paraguay in 1957 with his family. Travelling to a far away country full of dreams, when he arrived he found the land to be covered entirely in untouched forestry. This meant that his family had to work day and night in order to make the land farmable. With stifling heat, all the while battling insects, it was backbreaking work, not to mention the regret and feelings of uncertainty when thoughts turned to his friends back home in Japan. Mr. Takahashi was a keen learner and studied after work by himself from the textbooks that his family had brought over with them. Youngsters in present day Japan are not as enthusiastic with regards to

study, which made Mr. Takahashi's endeavors as a child all the more impressive. Upon returning to Japan in 1966 he enrolled in university, and after graduating became a teacher.

Everyone at the seminar listened intently to the talk, and wanted to hear more stories once it was over.

The Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association was established in 1972, and works to promote information exchange between emigrants and their families in Osaka. It was with this aim in mind that the seminar was held. OFIX acts as secretariat for this association.



- Information for foreign residents in Osaka <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/life/index.html>
- Seeking residents for the Orion International Hall <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/shien/index.html>
- Become a supporting member of OFIX http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/ofix/index3_1.html

Comments and suggestions for OFIX News: info@ofix.or.jp

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

Register to OFIX News: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/index.html>

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5th Floor, MyDome Osaka, 2-5 Hommachi-bashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka-shi, 540-0029

TEL:06-6966-2400 FAX:06-6966-2401


