

「OFIX News」 Issue 8 (March 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.

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

Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

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

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

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

## 【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

You Jun Chen (China) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/yushun.pdf>  
Anariwa (China) <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/ana.pdf>

## 【03】 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  
HP: <http://www.unicef-osaka.jp/> (Japanese only)

## 【04】 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. 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, which was 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

Photos

[http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail\\_english\\_no8.pdf](http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no8.pdf)

## 【05】Osaka Prefecture Overseas Emigrants Family Association News

### Paraguay Information Seminar

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

Further details and photo:

[http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail\\_english\\_no8.pdf](http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no8.pdf)

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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\\_no8.pdf](http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no8.pdf)  
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