



OFIX official  
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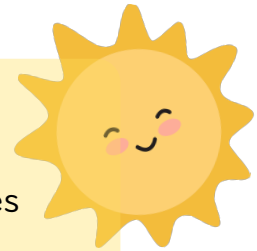
## OFIX's Efforts for "Plain Japanese"

### Have you heard of "Plain Japanese"?

"Plain Japanese" is Japanese that is easier for non-native speakers to understand. Yasashii or Plain Japanese is written in hiragana to contain the meaning of the homonyms easy (易しい) and kind (優しい).

#### The "Three Ss" for Plain Japanese

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Short    | "Short" Keep sentences short                          |
| Simple   | "Simple" Change difficult into simple for non-natives |
| Straight | "Straight" Avoid vague expressions                    |



(Reference from Tokyo Intercultural Portal Site)

### What is "difficult Japanese" for foreign residents?

I think it depends on the person as to what is exactly difficult in Japanese, but a lot of foreign residents find vague expressions (subject omission, this/that expressions etc.) and honorifics difficult. Please try looking at the expression below and think about why this Japanese may be difficult.

つか もんだい  
「使っていたいただいても問題ありません」

※ Non-native Japanese speakers please also try thinking about why this Japanese may be difficult.

This phrasing makes it easy to interpret this as: okay to use the thing or okay to not use the thing. Either way is okay. However, after checking later on, the original speaker wanted the thing to be used.



There are a few different reasons why this Japanese is difficult. It is difficult to understand the speaker's intention because of the **honorifics** (specifically kenjyogo and sonkeigo) and also difficult because of the **vague** phrasing.

This example comes from the experience of someone with a higher level of Japanese, but Japanese beginners who just arrived in Japan may have trouble understanding Japanese that is easier than this. "Plain Japanese" is useful to reduce this kind of miscommunication.

# Why make efforts to promote Plain Japanese?

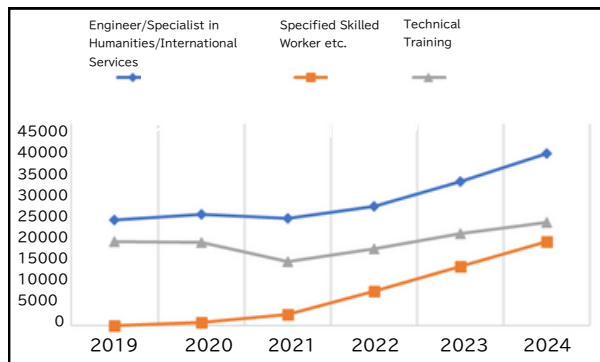
At the end of June, 2024 the foreign resident population in Osaka Prefecture was 317,421, and more than half of those foreign residents are from countries or regions that do not have English as the main native language (Table 1 Foreign Resident Statistics). Furthermore, as the number of foreign residents that can understand at least a little bit of Japanese is increasing, OFIX thinks using “Plain Japanese” is a very effective tool for communication.

Table 1 Foreign Resident Statistics

Country	No. of People
South Korea	87,808
China	81,499
Vietnam	58,529
Nepal	17,398
Philippines	11,835
Indonesia	10,063
Taiwan	7,629
Myanmar	7,446
Korea	3,764
USA	3,706
Other	27,744
<b>Total</b>	<b>317,421</b>

## OFIX's Efforts Up Until Now

Figure 1 Changes in Residence Status



▲Reference: Ministry of Justice  
“Foreign Resident Statistics”



▲February, 2025  
Plain Japanese Training

▲Reference: Ministry of Justice  
“Foreign Resident Statistics” (as  
of the end of June, 2023)

Starting in the 2018 fiscal year, OFIX has been holding “Plain Japanese” trainings 3 or 4 times a year for employees of international associations and prefectural government agencies. In the 2023 fiscal year, in addition to training for government agencies, OFIX started to offer “Plain Japanese” training for companies to facilitate communication with the increasing number of foreign personnel (see Figure 1 Changes in Residence Status).

## OFIX's Efforts in the Future

For this fiscal year, the first plain Japanese training session was held on Wednesday, June 25 for employees of government agencies and international associations in the prefecture. The second training will be held on Wednesday, July 23 for general companies. Further training sessions will be held as needed.

### Would you like to know more about “Plain Japanese”?

“Plain Japanese” was created after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 to provide easy-to-understand information in times of disaster, and is now used in a variety of fields, including government and media, to provide information for everyday life. If you would like to know more about “Plain Japanese” please see the websites below.

#### • Agency for Cultural Affairs Website

Plain Japanese Guidelines for Supporting Foreign Residents

[https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/kokugo\\_nihongo/kyoiku/92484001.html](https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/kokugo_nihongo/kyoiku/92484001.html)



#### • Osaka Prefecture Website

“Let’s use Plain Japanese! - Techniques for Communicating with Foreigners”

<https://www.pref.osaka.lg.jp/o070090/kanko/easyjpn/index.html>



※These two websites are only in Japanese.

# What troubles do foreign residents face during a disaster?

This will be part 2 of the series that began in OFIX News Vol. 112. For part two we interviewed Ms. Nguyen who is from Vietnam and is currently a research student in graduate school.



## OFIX Volunteer Interview ★Part 2★

(OFIX Supporter Ms. Nguyen)

### During a disaster I want information in my native language.

#### -Do you have any experience with disasters?

There have not been any big disasters in my home town Hanoi, but last year in September there was a lot of damage caused by typhoon "Yagi". There were roofs blown off of buildings and also flooding that occurred up to floor level.

#### -Do you do anything to prepare for a possible disaster?

I live in my university's dorm so I was given a disaster prevention bag and pamphlets about disaster prevention. In the disaster prevention bag I added medicine, water, personal ID documents, and also cash for if the power goes out.

#### -Is there anything you are worried about for if a disaster was to occur?

Earthquakes. I have never experienced an earthquake before and since coming to Japan I hear a lot about the Nankai Trough Earthquake which makes it scary. My family in Vietnam also worries about me.

The Nankai Trough earthquake is scary.

#### -Is there any words on the news that you don't understand?

I understand most of it!

#### -For example, do you understand the following Japanese words?

- ・高台へ逃げてください。⇒ Yes
- ・余震⇒ Yes
- ・初期消火⇒ No
- ・炊き出し⇒ No

(Ms. Nguyen's Japanese level is very high so I added difficult words)

#### -What kind of support or consideration do you think foreign residents need in times of a disaster?

No matter how much Japanese I can speak, during times of panic like a disaster, I want to hear information in my native language.



Ms. Nguyen is from Hanoi, Vietnam. She is also a research student in the department of humanities at her graduate school.

▼For more about the interview with Ms. Nguyen please see our note account.

→[https://note.com/ofix\\_jp](https://note.com/ofix_jp)



## Plain Japanese Mini Lesson

During the interview, Ms. Nguyen understood most of the difficult Japanese words that may come up during times of a disaster. However, it is good for us to get use to using words that are easy for everyone to understand. Please try changing the following sentences into plain Japanese.

1. 高台へ逃げてください。

Please run to higher ground.

⇒ 高いところに逃げてください。

2. 余震がきます。

There will be aftershocks.

⇒ 地震のあとにまた地震がきます。

3. 非常口はこちらです。

The emergency exit is this way.

⇒ 逃げる出口はこちらです。

※English translation added for reference only.

# Future Consultation and Event Information

## Consultation Service for Foreign Residents

Izumisano

Free

Date & Time: Thursday, July 24th  
1:00pm~4:00pm

Place: Shappy House

1-16-5 Onishi, Izumisano City

Topics: Law, visa, welfare, money, raising children,  
health, daily life, etc.

Languages: English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino,  
Sinhala, and Japanese

How: Face-to-face (Please make a reservation below,  
Priority is given to those with an appointment)

Inquiries: Izumisano Cross-cultural Association (ica)

Phone: 072-429-9741

Email Address: ica@ica.gr.jp



◀ See here  
for more  
information!

## Mental Health Workshop for Foreign Residents

Free

We will invite a counselor from Ritsumeikan University to hold a workshop to support foreign residents' mental health!

- Part 1: Thursday, July 31, 2:00pm~4:30pm
- Part 2: Thursday, September 18, 2:00pm~4:30pm

Place: MyDome Osaka 8F No. 5 Meeting Room

Target Participants: International students, foreign residents living in the Kansai area



▲ See here for  
more information!



Editors Note: The Expo is already halfway over. Every time I go I discover something new. By the way, have you heard of the boardgame "Mancala"? ("Mancala" was displayed in the African and Asian pavilions.) I was impressed that this simple game is connected from country to country!

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For comments and suggestions, go to  
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## Access



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