



Kyoto Prefectural International Center

NEWS

Vol. 57 Winter 2011

Activity report 1

5th Annual Kyoto International Student Sports Festival

Announcing the Appointment of a New Chief Executive

CORNERS OF THE WORLD

Minsk
(Republic of Belarus)

Activity report 2

Classic Japanese Film Screenings

OPENING UP A BUSINESS IN JAPAN

INFORMATION FROM KPIC

Activity report 3

Japanese Manners and Etiquette Seminar

Counseling for Kyoto's International Residents

Living Info on Mobile Phone

Activity report 1 | November 14, 2010

5th Annual Kyoto International Student Sports Festival

KPIC recently co-hosted the 5th Annual Kyoto International Student Sports Festival with the Kyoto International Student Sports Festival Planning Committee, in the city of Nagaokakyo.

KPIC helped host this event in order to foster exchange through sports between prefectural residents, especially international students and Japanese students, and to encourage mutual understanding that transcends cultural differences and nationality. This event also

supports Kyoto Prefecture's efforts to increase the number of international students coming to Kyoto.

The Sports Festival has been held annually since the first Sports Festival in December 2006. This year, international students and others enjoyed games of basketball, soccer, tennis, and tug-of-war.

Since this year marked the fifth Sports Festival, KPIC awarded the winner's flag and medal to the Kyoto University group, which

Approx. 400 participants

won the prefectural university tug-of-war competition. The Governor of Kyoto and the Consul of the People's Republic of China in Osaka also greeted the participants and watched the games. Their impressions were widely reported in China by the Chinese news service, Xinhua News.



Announcing the Appointment of a New Chief Executive

On December 20, 2010, a special meeting of the KPIC 2010 Executive Board was held, and Kazuo Oike, Head of the International Institute for Advanced Studies, and former Kyoto University President, was elected as a New Chief Executive, the successor for the late Yasunori Nishijima.

Chairman Oike is a specialist in seismology, and served as President of Kyoto University from 2003 to 2008.

Regarding his appointment, Chief Executive Oike commented that, "Following the late Yasunori Nishijima, who has made such great contributions to the Center's development since its establishment, is a humbling experience. I plan to work hard towards further leaps forward."



CORNERS OF THE WORLD

Minsk (Republic of Belarus)



ABRAHIMOVICH Yuliya

I was born and raised in Minsk, the capital city of the Republic of Belarus, situated in the center of Europe. Located in the heart of the country, the city has a population of approximately 1.83 million people (as of 2010). Minsk is the largest city in Belarus and one in six Belarusian people lives in the city.

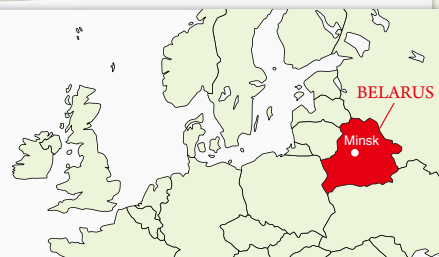
As the Kamo River flows through the city of Kyoto, the Svislach River flows through Minsk. The city stretches out on both banks of the river. In addition to parks, restaurants and cafes, the old city known as Troitskoe Predmestye, popular with tourists, lies along the river.



Troitskoe Predmestye

and joy to those who are looking at its beautiful street views or elegant architecture.

You will find something in tune with your heart when you visit Minsk, a European city with a Slavic soul in which tradition and modernity are in harmony. The endless blue sky of Minsk will sing a sweet melody to your heart. Please embrace the Minsk spirit by watching the sunset or breathing the fresh morning air. Please enjoy the rhythm of Minsk on busy weekdays or in a comfortable café on a Saturday evening.



There are a lot of old Orthodox and Catholic churches in Minsk. Among them, the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, known as the symbol of Minsk, and the Church of Saints Simon and Helen, are the most famous. You can also see new churches that were built recently scattered through the city.

Minsk offers a beautiful harmony between tradition and modernity. Clean and wide streets, verdant parks, and local people's hospitality make you feel at home and comfortable.

By embracing new people who shape our collective history, the city is adding new pages one by one in a living book named Minsk. Minsk says to tourists, "Welcome!" The city spreads its warmth



Minsk

Activity report 2 | September 11 (Sat.) October 8 (Fri.) November 26 (Fri.)

Classic Japanese Film Screenings

Throughout the fall, KPIC held an event series, "Classic Japanese Film Screenings with English Subtitles for International Residents," with the goal of making Japanese art more accessible to international residents, and providing an open forum for both

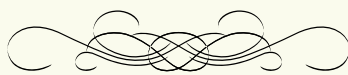


international and Japanese participants to reflect on Japanese culture. Three movies were screened at KPIC: "Rashomon," directed by Akira Kurosawa, on 9/11/2010, "The Munekata Sisters," directed by Yasujiro Ozu, on 10/8/2010, and "Twin Sisters of Kyoto," directed by Noboru Nakamura and based on the novel The Old Capital by Yasunari Kawabata, on 11/26/2010. All three films portray Kyoto onscreen, providing a multifaceted portrait of the city.

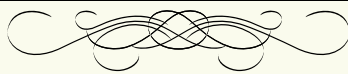
Each event began with a lecture providing background information, on the film, Japan's history, and relevant aspects of Japanese culture and art. After the screenings, participants shared their impressions of the films and how they represented Japanese culture and history. The participants were very thoughtful and lively, discussing thought-provoking topics

like what makes a film more "Japanese" or "Western" cinematically, what to make of the ambiguous endings in "Rashomon" and "Twin Sisters of Kyoto," and how the films reflected both Japan's unique history and culture and universal human emotions.

The film screenings were co-sponsored by KPIC and The Japan Foundation Kyoto Office, and run by three Coordinators for International Relations participating in the JET Programme in Kyoto Prefecture: Margaret Mann (Kameoka), Kai Weisner-Hanks (Seika), and me, Jennifer Krafft (Kyoto). Since Japanese cinema is one of my interests, I had a great time planning and participating in these events. I was very touched when several participants said these events made them feel more connected to Japan, and I hope to offer similar events in the future.



OPENING UP A BUSINESS IN JAPAN



The subject of this issue is how to start a business in Japan. Opening a new business and launching it in the market is always a big challenge in any country, and international residents usually face twice as many problems as national residents, from visa issues to language barriers and mistrust.

For this reason, we interviewed Mr. Shaheed Rupani, an experienced English teacher from Canada, who recently opened

his own English language school in Kyoto City.

Mr. Rupani talked with us about his personal experience, focusing especially on the difficulties he encountered and how he overcame them, and offered invaluable advice to international residents aiming to undertake this path.

Enjoy the reading!

KPIC staff

Resources :

Jetro (Japan External Trade Organization)

<http://www.jetro.go.jp/>

Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry

<http://www.kyo.or.jp/kyoto/e/index.html>

Interview with Mr. Shaheed Rupani



1. What brought you here to Japan?

I have graduated from university in the U.S. with a Biology degree. After finishing university, I considered all my options and realized that I neither wanted to work as a researcher, nor to continue my studies in graduated school. As I had been interested in Asia (and especially in Ninja!) for a long time, I decided to come in Japan for a while.

After one month I was already teaching English. My intention was to stay just three months and then go back, but in the meanwhile I understood that I really like teaching English, so I decided to extend my contract and stay longer. Since then, I am still here in Kyoto, working as an English teacher.

2. What do you do in Kyoto?

This year I have finally opened my own school, after working 11 years as an English teacher at many different institutions. I have felt that I wanted to start something new and wonderful, and there is a specific reason why I have chosen this year. The fact is that from April 2011 the Japanese Ministry of Education will implement a new guideline, and English education will be made mandatory at every public elementary school for fifth- and sixth-graders. I have thought that this is a nice chance, so I have decided to open up my own school.

3. Could you explain us briefly the process to open a school in Japan?

Basing on my experience, here is what I did and what I suggest to do.

1. Research to see if there is a market
2. Visit the local Chamber of Commerce to get information and ask questions
3. Get advice regarding insurance, taxes and legal fees
4. Find a good and accessible location and arrange to rent
5. Choose a name and get a hanko for your business
6. Register your business at the local tax office
7. Choose an opening day
8. Get some furniture and equipment
9. Send out or hand deliver pamphlets
10. List down all of the possible business ideas you have, as they can be concretized in the future

4. What do you think is the biggest hurdle for a foreigner who wants to start his own business in Japan?

First of all, you have got to get trust not only from your future clients, but also from the people or institutions (if that's the case) whom you are going to get help to start your business, and from the people in the neighborhood where you are going to settle your activity.

In the case of English school business, I recognize that after the bankruptcies of several big English schools settled all over Japan, now is a hard time because Japanese people have lost their faith in this kind of institution. But personally I am strongly motivated, I really want to make a good school, and I think that's the kind of spirit that must lead you always.

5. What was the most difficult thing for you?

I think giving up everything and starting from zero was very hard for me. Quitting my previous job, and consequently a secure and guaranteed income, was a big scary sacrifice.

But finding out practical information, especially in English, like where and how to register the business, was the hardest part. I must commend the Kyoto Chamber of Commerce, where I obtained very useful information and which I strongly suggest visiting.

I had also some problems in choosing a new insurance. When choosing, you have to be careful especially because your health insurance price will be based on the salary you received the previous year. So it comes without saying that if you had a high income, you might be asked to pay for a very expensive insurance.

6. Do you have any advice for international residents interested in starting their own business in Japan?

Do a lot of research. Research about places and people, and find out the market research about your future business.

Finding a good location is also important. I think that one of the strengths of major English schools is having the schools located in front of train stations (ekimaekou), and that is because people love to get off the train and go straight into the school.

Also find a good tax accountant, because you need someone you can trust and who can give you good advice about all the money and tax problems you will come up with. I think the best thing is to find someone that a person close to you knows.

I know also that visas represent a problem for many international residents. In that case, one option may be to do self-sponsor.

Timing is also very important. In the case of a school business, opening before April may help you to have more students joining your school, instead of other language schools or potential juku schools.

Consider also the possibilities to claim your first two years of business expenses (keihi), and to get a loan from the Japanese Government to start your business, only in the case you worked for five or more years in the same field.



INFORMATION FROM KPIC

Multilingual Guidance on Japanese School Life for Parents and Guardians

Date Sunday, January 23, 2011 – 14:30~17:30

Place Kyoto Prefectural International Center
(Kyoto Station Building 9th floor, accessible by the south elevator)

Fee Free of charge
Participants will receive one school item
(such as a bag for school notices)

Intended for
Parents/guardians whose first language is not Japanese.
Your children are welcome to participate as well.
(Parents/guardians of children in kindergarten, daycare, elementary school, middle school)

Details

[1] Presentation (Focused on elementary and junior high school)

Using the Guidebook for Starting School (published by MEXT) and a DVD, explanations of the school system and school life will be provided.

1. School education
2. Procedures for entering schools
3. School life
4. Education consultation

[2] Consultations in separate groups

Interpretation services will be provided for both 1 and 2. However, interpretation services may not be available for certain languages.

For more information, please refer to

Web <http://www.kpic.or.jp/english/>



Activity report 3 | October 31 (Sun.)

"Japanese Manners and Etiquette" Seminar

A seminar titled "Japanese Manners and Etiquette" was held on October 31 at KPIC. In the seminar, international residents learned about greetings, such as to new neighbors when moving in. The participants practiced the

three different levels of bowing, exchanging business cards properly, and also heard about the etiquette for attending weddings or funerals, as well as what kind of clothing to wear to a child's school entrance and graduation ceremony, through English and Chinese interpretation provided by volunteers



registered at KPIC. It was impressive to see them practicing how to bow very seriously and enthusiastically.

Counseling for Kyoto's International Residents

Q

I have a driver's license issued in my home country. Can I drive a car in Japan?

A

If you own a valid driver's license and can prove that you stayed in your home country for three months or longer after the receipt date of the license, you can convert it into a Japanese license.

You have to take an aptitude test, knowledge test, and skill test at KYOTO DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAMINATION CENTER Tel 075-631-5181 and provide necessary documents. (Certain countries's driver's licenses may exempt you from such tests.)

Our counselors provide the latest information for your needs and can introduce you to other specialists and services. Don't hesitate to ask for our help. All counseling sessions are strictly confidential and free of charge.

■ Consultation hours : 13:00-17:00

■ Language : Monday-English
Wednesday-Spanish, Portuguese
Thursday-Tagalog
Friday-Chinese
Saturday-Korean

■ Phone : 075-342-0088

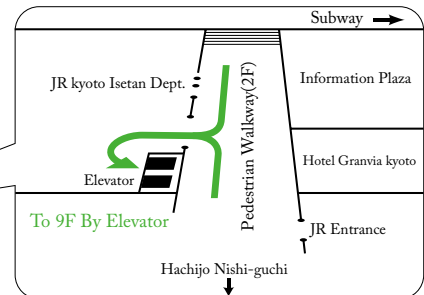
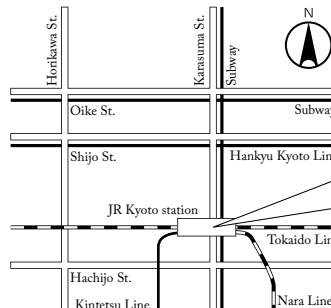
Living Info on Mobile Phone

We send email messages full of useful living information twice a month to your mobile phone. Please send your name, sex, and choice of language (English, Chinese, Japanese, or Japanese hiragana syllabary) with your mobile address to

"living-e@kpic.or.jp"

Please refer to

<http://www.kpic.or.jp/>



Kyoto Prefectural International Center

9F Kyoto Station Building Shiokoji Karasuma, Shimogyo-ku Kyoto, 600-8216, Japan

Please take the south elevator from the 2nd floor of Isetan Department Store.

Tel : 075-342-5000

Fax : 075-342-5050

E-mail : main@kpic.or.jp
<http://www.kpic.or.jp/>

Open / 10:00-18:00
Closed / 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month