

Kyoto Prefectural International Center



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Special Story on page 3:

Living in Kyoto Prefecture: are you only a mascot?

In this edition, we asked Liz Patrick to talk about her experience of being a foreigner working in Japanese schools. Learn what she enjoyed about cultural differences and read about the challenges she had to face.

Introduction of a new Coordinator for International Relations for Kyoto Prefecture



Hi! My name is Maia Hall and I am the new Coordinator for International Relations for Kyoto Prefecture.

I love Japan and am very excited to be living in the beautiful ancient capital (where it is also a lot warmer than in freezing cold Scotland ...)! It's becoming clearer to me every day how gracefully Kyoto maintains such a perfect balance between its historical roots and the modernity of Japan, something I find many cities fail to do.

I joined the JET Programme, as I wanted

to come and live in Japan as a contributing member of society and meet people outside of my normal social circles. I will be working mostly in the Kyoto Prefectural Office International Affairs Division but also once a week in the Kyoto Prefectural International Office. As CIR, I will be doing a lot of translation and interpreting, and getting involved in local events and communities as much as possible.

I am half English and half Japanese, but I was born in Bonn, Germany, which like Kyoto is a former capital city (1949-1990). Due to my parents' jobs, I moved around Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong as a child, before going to boarding school in the South of England for five years.

Afterwards, I studied Linguistics and Japanese at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland (Edinburgh is also a sister city of Kyoto Prefecture!), during which time I also did a Year Abroad studying at Keio University in Tokyo. My graduation was in July of this year and here I am now having moved to Kyoto at the beginning of August!

I love to travel and eat and write and am looking forward to meeting lots of different and interesting people and discovering some hidden places in Kyoto and the surrounding area in the coming months.

Hopefully I'll be able to pick up some Kansai-ben along the way to fit in better with the locals... Wish me luck!

Fieldtrip in Kyoto Prefecture : homestay experience to build close ties with locals

KPIC held a 1 night 2 day tour to Kyotango city for international students living in Kyoto prefecture. 36 participants from 22 different countries gathered at Kyoto station early in the morning and then went to Tango town by bus. Host families, locals and many volunteers participated and enjoyed interaction with the students. The first day a delicious buffet-style lunch made with local ingredients was prepared. Participants could exchange with Japanese people through various cultural experience such as tea ceremony or lavender stick making. In the afternoon we had a matching ceremony with the host families. Everyone was a bit nervous but soon very happy to meet his new family or guest.

The homestay experience lasted until the afternoon of the next day. Although it started raining the second day, it has not stopped anyone from discovering the life of normal Japanese people or enjoying what Kyotango can offer at its best: beach, nature, food, onsen.... On the afternoon of the second day, everyone



gathered at the Tango Kingdom "Miyako Food" to share a last moment with locals before going back to Kyoto. It was a short excursion, but both international students and host families were missing each other at the end.

Participant voice: "the stay in Kyotango was a lot of fun. We arrived at a little school, where locals prepared nice activities like the Tea ceremony, or the lavender crafting. We ate really good food,

even try locals specialities. Then we got dispatch in our respective host family. Mine, are amazing peoples, really caring and kindhearted. They showed me places around Tango like the „Ine no Funaya“ or the Museum of the Silk. We had dinner with their friends, made potteries, and did fireworks. I remember that I felt like I spend all my summer with them in just one day. And as the last Sparkles firework finished my perfect summer ended too." (from Vaitiare, 24 years old, student of Japanese language)



Roundtable for International students: Job hunting and career support

KPIC cooperates with organizations to set up small scale exchange events in order to bring together companies and international students so that they can know each other, exchange information and create a win-win situation.

The last 2 months, we organized no less than 5 meetings between companies and students. Usually participants are divided in groups and go around companies' booths. Each time we are offering in a casual atmosphere advice on job-seeking and answering any questions or worries students could have.

We will continue to organize sessions in the future so please check our website for dates and more information (in Japanese).



Special Story from Liz Patrick (ALT in Japanese elementary and junior high schools).

For several years, Liz work as an Assistant English Teacher in Kyoto Prefecture. Being a non-Japanese resident working in Japan is a source of excitement as well as cultural challenges when promoting internationalization.



I love sharing and discussing culture, respectfully learning about people born in a different place. It's for this reason that I came to Japan to become an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT). An ALT assists Japanese English Teachers and is meant to expose and accustom students to relatively rare foreign culture as well as motivate them to use English. The tagline of my recruitment company is "mutual cultural exchange through English education", while my own tagline for my experience would be "English mascot", ripe with all its positive and negative connotations.

As an "English mascot" my foreignness is an attractive mystery for students and indeed it motivates them enough to try speaking English. They are excited to learn about and engage with foreign culture through me, as well as spread their Japanese culture to a symbol of the outside world. Each attempt at conversation is an exciting experience for both of us. I am rooting for them not only because I hope for their success as students of English, but also because I am as eager to learn from them as they are from me.

However, in order to maintain this source of motivation for students, I must often play into the role of "fresh" foreigner --an empty vessel of knowledge to be perpetually introduced to Japanese culture and life. In adult society such automatic assumptions of foreigners as being so is something that I profoundly resent. I have tried my best to study and conform to Japanese culture as I have lived here over the years, coming to consider Japan my home. Yet I have never stopped receiving "welcome to Japan" remarks from strangers or condescending shock at my ability to use chopsticks. While meant kindly, it reminds me that I am viewed as an outsider and ironically makes me feel less welcome in thinking of Japan as my home.

These are my conflicted feelings working as being a "fresh" foreigner and "English mascot". I am grateful for the opportunity to help create moments in which students can share culture with a rare foreigner, and I hope that it will inspire students to think globally and seek engagement with other cultures. But it is also my dream that someday foreigners will not be perceived as so rare and exotic, ultimately making the "English mascot" job unnecessary. Until then, I will happily be taught Japanese jan-ken one more time.

Do you have an experience living in Kyoto Prefecture that you would like to share? We would love to hear from you. Chosen stories will be published in future issues or via other KPIC communications. Please share your story by sending us an email at main@kpic.or.jp



INFORMATION FROM KPIC

1 At KPIC, we recruit a native person who can translate from Japanese to Filipino.

Requirements Japanese skills must be equivalent to the JLPT 2 or higher
To have a permanent access to your email

If you are interested, please see the following web page for more details.

<https://www.kpic.or.jp/about/recruit.html>

Kyoto Prefecture CIRs common blog

<http://tabunkakyoito.wordpress.com/>



For more information, please refer to

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

GO

COUNSELING SERVICES for Kyoto's International Residents

① Support Desk for International Students

Our counseling staff will give you information and advice for daily life, preparation for jobs, contacts with graduates working in Japan, etc. This service is free of charge.

- **Consultation days and hours** : Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 10:00-17:00
- **Languages** : Interpretation in English, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Spanish and Portuguese available. Reservation required for interpretation.
- **Email** : counsel@kpic.or.jp ■ **TEL** : 075-342-0088

② Visa consultation

An expert can respond to your visa-related questions including those about changing or renewing your status of residence. Please make a reservation at least one week in advance by Web form or Fax.

Date: Fourth Sunday of every month, 13:00-16:00 (30 minutes/person)

Fee: Free of charge.

Details: <http://www.kpic.or.jp/english/residents/consul.html>

<http://www.kpic.or.jp/english/residents/consul.html>

COUNSELING Q&A for Kyoto's International Residents



Q

I am a 3 year university student and I struggle finding a job in Japan. Could you give me some advice about job hunting?

A

First, learn how job hunting works in Japan and get ready for it. Job hunting in Japan starts in March, a year before your graduation. Therefore you should be prepared in advance.

Moreover, on the economic front you need to have enough savings in order to buy business attire (suit, shoes, briefcase etc.) or pay for transportation.

Make sure to consult a career counselor regularly to adapt your job search techniques.

Lots of students give up when they don't get any positive answers. It's very important to try your best until the very end.

Create a network of Japanese students and gather information from old students who got a job or have already started looking for one.

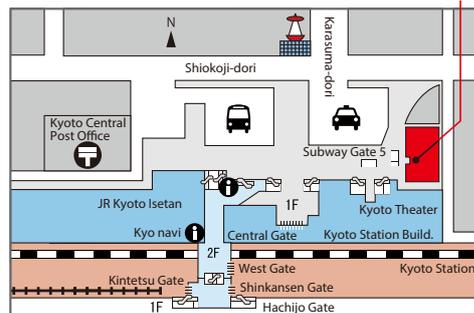
Living Info by Email

We send email messages full of useful living information twice a month. Please send your choice of language (English, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese or Japanese in the hiragana syllabary) to:

living-e@kpic.or.jp



Access information



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Closed : 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month, national holidays, 12/29-1/3



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