



Farewell messages from two of our CIRs

Farewell from Misao Anderson Morishita, Brazilian CIR



Having reached the final year of my contract, I will be leaving Gifu International Center in March. Looking back on my time here, I have enjoyed a fulfilling five years as a CIR, having had the opportunity to meet with and get to know everyone in Gifu Prefecture through my work promoting regional internationalization and supporting foreign resident communities. I would like to thank all of those who have helped and supported me from the bottom of my heart.

When I arrived in Gifu shortly after the Tohoku earthquake disaster, I felt like there was no justice left in the world, having witnessed a Japan faced with serious challenges. However, I now believe that Japan is gradually reclaiming the cheerful energy it once had, with more and more causes for celebration in the news every day. Nadeshiko Japan's victory in the FIFA Women's World Cup, the completion of Tokyo Sky Tree, the opening of the Hokuriku Shinkansen, and the rise in Japanese astronauts and Nobel prize-winners have all given us hope for the future. There have also been many causes for celebration within Gifu Prefecture, such as The 67th National Sports Festival held in Gifu, the registration of Minowashi Japanese paper as a UNESCO Intangible World Heritage, and

the recognition of Gifu in the Japan Heritage list. Alongside these events, current affairs in Brazil also became more prominently broadcast in the media as a result of the World Cup, and cultural exchange between our two countries has been more active than ever.

Although my work in international exchange has been modest, I feel that I have had the valuable opportunity to discover the wonders of countries other than Japan and Brazil, such as Australia, China, and the Philippines. I will never forget the beautiful nature and kindness of people from all over Gifu Prefecture, and I want to treasure my precious experiences I have had here for the rest of my life. I am indebted to all of you. Once again, thank you for everything.



Farewell from Liu Chunlan, Chinese CIR



It feels as though it was only yesterday that I arrived in Gifu and wrote an introduction for this magazine, and now that I am saying farewell, I can't help but be reminded of how much time flies.

When I first arrived at the centre, I had trouble adjusting to the work environment, which is very different to the school I work at back in China. However, thanks to the cheerful, friendly office and the passion of my co-workers, I gradually got used to the way of things, and have discovered how interesting this new work can be. Through school visits, language classes, culture salons, international events and the other kinds of work I have been involved in that link China and Japan, I have met and befriended many people, and made many wonderful memories during the days that I have spent with them. Teaching people about Chinese culture has also helped me to learn more about my own country myself. Whilst my work back in China involves teaching students Japanese and my own knowledge of Japan, I am glad to have had the opportunity to introduce China to Japanese people this year, and help build upon relations between our two countries, though my contributions have been modest. I have also been lucky

enough to have had the opportunity to find out more about relations between Japan and other countries, like Brazil and the UK, and broaden my knowledge.

There is not much time left before I will be saying goodbye, and although I feel sad and lonely, I believe that saying goodbye to people means that we will be able to be reunited with them again. In Chinese, the word for goodbye, *zaijian* (再見), literally means "to meet someone again". I am sure that I will be able to meet everyone here again too. It is thanks to everyone I have met here that I have been able to enjoy my year in Gifu as much as I have.

I hope to continue bridging the gap between Japan and China, as well as between Gifu Prefecture and Jiangxi Province, even after I return home, and I will teach my students and my friends around me about what Japan is like in more detail. If you ever have the chance to visit China, please come see me in Jiangxi Province! *Zaijian!*



~Interviews with people from around the world~



There are around 43,000 foreign residents living in Gifu Prefecture. We carried out interviews to find out what people from all over the world, including countries like China, Brazil and the Philippines, are doing here in Japan, and how they feel about their lives here!



- Name: Alex Lonnygan
- Nationality: Canadian

Please introduce yourself!

Hello! My name is Alex, and I am currently employed as an Assistant Language Teacher in Shirakawa-go, Gifu-ken, Japan. I come from Canada where I studied international relations at the University of British Columbia while concurrently serving as an infantry soldier in the Canadian Forces.

What do you do here in Gifu? (If you're working, what's your job?)

I teach English as the primary instructor for two nursery schools and elementary grades one to three. I am an assistant language teacher for elementary grades four to six, and junior high school grades one through three.

Tell us a little bit about your home country.

Canada is surprisingly similar in climate to Japan, only with a much lower average humidity level. While immediate differences are difficult to spot between Canadian and American culture or language, some do exist. One example is the Canadian conversational use of "Eh" which is extremely similar to the Japanese particle "Ne."

Why did you decide to come to Japan?

I strongly desired an international work experience, for which the JET Programme was an excellent option. I am not a large fan of anime or otaku culture, but rather I was drawn to Japan for its historical martial arts, religious practices, and the language itself.

What is your opinion on Japan in general?

It is a wonderful country that has answers to questions that other countries don't even know to ask.

What do you think about life in Gifu?

Transitioning to life in Gifu has been very smooth for me. In Gifu I am able to hike to my heart's content while enjoying rainy weather that might otherwise be a challenge for some.

What do you find difficult or challenging about living in Japan?

Recycling and banking are extreme challenges given that they are only open during mid-day working hours.

What are the differences and similarities between your home country and Japan?

The work culture is the only extreme difference that I have found. In Canada, work hours are strictly adhered to and to ask an employee to spend extra time without compensation is nearly unthinkable. That being said, the meticulous attention paid to process in Japan does ensure that nobody "falls through the cracks" as is a common problem in western bureaucracies.

Do you have many opportunities to meet and hang out with Japanese people? If you don't, would you like to have more opportunities to do so?

I am virtually the only person between the ages of 17 and 25

in the town that I currently live in. I greatly enjoy the company of coworkers and neighbours of any age, but it is difficult to relate to many people when the conversation turns to life circumstances specific to my age group.

What do you think could be done to help promote multiculturalism in Japan?

Since arriving in Japan, outside of the classroom I haven't seen any examples of multicultural communities portrayed in a positive light. Certainly positive foreign cultural experiences are available to the public such as restaurants or plays, but they appear to be devoid of any cross-cultural interaction. If people living in Japan were given the opportunity to see that multicultural communities peacefully and prosperously exist without threatening the host culture's integrity, perhaps more receptive feelings would be allowed to grow.

Based on your experiences, do you have any advice for people learning foreign languages, or on integrating with unfamiliar cultures?

If you wish to practice your foreign language skills with a foreigner, please let them know so that they can use their language rather than reverting to Japanese right away. Otherwise, they will likely assume that communication is the end goal of all conversation. I know I did when I first arrived.

*A note from GIC:

Sometimes, approaching foreign residents suddenly in a foreign language because you want to practise your language skills can come across as impolite. Of course, we're sure that many people who speak to foreign residents in a foreign language do so because they want to make friends with and get to know them, and speak to them in a foreign language because they think that their Japanese won't be understood. However, if your main aim is to practise your language skills, it's best to tell the person you're speaking to about this so that they understand where you're coming from, and it may be a good idea to offer something in return, like the opportunity to practise Japanese with them too. This makes it a more mutual exchange.

Do you have a message that you'd like to send out to Japanese people?

Thank you for being a gracious host to people like myself while we stay in your country. If you would like to visit Canada, there are many opportunities to work or study there from as early as high school age.

Thank you for your co-operation!



Facts about Canada

Official name: Canada

Capital: Ottawa

Largest city: Toronto

Surface Area: 9,984,670 km²
(2nd in the world – it's 27 times as big as Japan)

Official languages: English, French

Population: roughly 35,400,000

Currency: Canadian Dollar

GDP: \$1.779 trillion

Flag: The symbol of Canada, the maple leaf, takes up the centre of the flag. The two vertical lines on either side of this represent the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. (The red bands on either side of the flag stand for the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, and the 12 corners of the maple leaf represent the 10 provinces and 2 territories that make up the country.)

*Data is taken from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Information for Foreign Residents

What should I do if I fall ill or have an injury?

An Explanation of the Japanese Medical System

In Japan, there are two main kinds of medical facility - large general hospitals offering in-patient services and diagnostic tests with a wide range of medical departments, and smaller, neighbourhood clinics and doctor's offices that are more specialised. For minor illnesses like colds, it is best for patients to first go to their nearest relevant clinic or doctor's office (e.g. those that offer internal medicine services) and be examined by a doctor there, and only go to receive specialised treatment at a larger hospital if the doctor says that it is necessary to do so. Make sure that you know what kinds of medical facilities are available in your neighbourhood, so that you know what to do and don't feel panicked if you fall ill or have an accident.

Glossary of Medical Departments/Clinics

- 内科** (Internal medicine): For common illnesses such as colds
Go to a clinic offering internal medicine services if you feel under the weather, or if you're not sure which medical department or clinic to go to.
- 小児科** (Paediatrics): For illnesses affecting children (primary school age or younger).
- 耳鼻咽喉科** (Otorhinolaryngology (ears, throat and nose clinic)): For ear, nose and throat problems, as well as hayfever.
- 眼科** (Optometry): Examinations of general eye problems (eye pain, itchiness, styes etc) and eyesight tests
- 皮膚科** (Dermatology): For people experiencing itchy skin, rashes, swelling and nail problems etc
- 歯科** (Dentistry): Treatment for tooth decay and periodontal diseases, etc.



What to bring with you to the clinic/hospital:

When you visit a clinic or hospital, you will need to bring a patient ID card (診察券) (unless it is your first time at the clinic) and your health insurance card (健康保険証). Providing your health insurance card to the clinic means that you won't have to pay the full cost of your treatment (it will be partially covered by insurance).

Public Health Insurance

There are two main kinds of health insurance in Japan: *social insurance* (社会保険) and *national health insurance* (国民健康保険). If you have insurance, you only have to pay 30% of your medical fees (or 20% for children below primary school age), but if you are not insured, you will have to pay the full costs and this can be very expensive. Please make sure that you get insured, so that you can easily access medical treatment in case of a sudden illness or accident. Once you are insured, you will receive a health insurance card (健康保険証) – take care of this and be careful not to lose it.



◆Health insurance for employees (social insurance, 社会保険)

People who work for companies or other employers can apply for social insurance, and the paperwork is carried out by your employer. The cost of the insurance is taken out of your wages, and the amount you pay is decided upon your salary. Half of the insurance costs are covered by your employer.

◆National health insurance (国民健康保険)

People who do not have social insurance can apply for national health insurance. As a rule, anyone who has been in Japan longer than 3 months must apply for national health insurance. To apply, visit the health insurance counter at your local village, town or city hall.

Tax Information

It's fair to say that not many people have a particularly positive image of the tax system. However, it is used for things that are necessary in our daily lives, by providing money for public facilities, the police and fire services that keep us safe, litter removal and the construction and repair of our roads. In this article, we're going to explain a little bit about how tax works in Japan.

Income Tax

Anyone who lives in Japan and receives an income over a certain value must pay income tax, even if they are foreign nationals. The amount of income tax paid by an individual is decided by how much they earn in a one-year period, measured from 1st January to 31st December.

◆People who are self-employed, farmers, or freelancers:

Income tax for people who are self-employed, or work as farmers or freelancers, is calculated over a one-year period. All self-employed individuals are required to confirm and pay this amount of tax by visiting their local tax office during the period between the 16th February and the 15th March of the following year, during which time they must also apply for returns on any overpaid tax. This process is known as a *final tax return* (確定申告) – if you are self-employed, you must carry out a final tax return each financial year.



◆People who are employed and receive a salary:

For company workers and other employees receiving a salary, income tax is paid to the government by deducting it from their monthly salaries and any bonuses they receive. At the end of every year, companies and other employers must calculate the amount of income tax and any excesses or deficiencies, and this is known as the year-end tax adjustment (年末調整). Because of this, paid employees do not usually have to carry out a final tax return. However, people who have worked for 2 or more different employers within one year, or people who are sending money to their families overseas who do not have their own source of income, must carry out a final tax return each financial year this is applicable. For more information, please visit your local tax office.

Vehicle and light vehicle tax

All vehicle owners in Japan must pay vehicle tax. This includes vehicle weight tax, which is paid when buying a new car and during shaken (車検) vehicle inspections, and vehicle/light vehicle tax, which must be paid before the end of May every year. This section will explain how vehicle tax works.

◆Vehicle tax (paid to your prefectural office):

Vehicle tax applies to anyone who owns a car on the 1st April every

year. Vehicle owners pay the year's tax as a lump sum once they receive their tax notice (納付通知書) for that year. People who buy a new car from April onwards pay their vehicle tax for that financial year (i.e. until the following March) on a monthly basis rather than as a lump sum, and the tax notice for this is sent by post in late May. Upon receiving this tax notice, the vehicle tax must be paid (via bank transfer or at a convenience store) by the deadline written on the tax notice. People who fail to pay their vehicle tax within the deadline must pay an additional fine, so make sure you pay your tax within the deadline. For more details, please contact Gifu Prefectural Motor Vehicle Taxation Office at 058-279-3781

◆Light vehicle tax (paid to your village/town/city hall):

Light vehicle tax applies to anyone who owns a moped, a light car (aka 軽自動車 - a car with a capacity of 550 cc or less) or a two-wheel light vehicle such as a motorcycle or scooter on the 1st April every year. After receiving a light vehicle tax notice, the tax must be paid within the deadline written on the notice. Unlike vehicle tax, light vehicle tax can only be calculated on a yearly basis, and as such, anyone who purchases a light vehicle on the 2nd April or later does not have to pay light vehicle tax for that year. However, if a vehicle is scrapped on or after the 2nd April, tax must be paid in full for that financial year (as if the vehicle were still in use). Further, if ownership of the vehicle is transferred to another person's name, the light vehicle tax for that financial year must still be paid by the person who was the owner on the 1st April, so please be aware of this when transferring light vehicle ownership. For more details, please contact the motor vehicle taxation department at your local village/town/city hall.

◆Please note:

If you give your vehicle to someone else, scrap your vehicle, or if your vehicle has been stolen, you must visit your nearest transport bureau or office and change the registered name of the vehicle's owner, or fill out the relevant vehicle disposal forms. If you don't fill in this paperwork, you will be obliged to pay tax on the vehicle, even if you no longer use it yourself.



GIC Projects

◆ Developing Multicultural Communities

Advice and Consultations

Training Sessions for Foreign Resident Advisors



GIC held a training session for advisors who offer consultations with foreign residents, with the aim of supporting foreign workers and helping them to feel safe and secure in their work environment. The training provided participants with the opportunity to develop their knowledge of social insurance, labour laws, and common labour issues, and also helped them learn more about methods for carrying out consultations effectively.

Date/time: 13:30 to 16:30, Tuesday 15th September, 2015.

Venue: Gifu Prefectural Library
No. participants: 23

Health and Medicine

Follow-Up Training for Medical Interpreter Volunteers



GIC also held a follow-up training day for medical interpreter volunteers registered by the centre, following interpreting training that was organised previously. The training included an opinion exchange session, and the opportunity to share challenges and concerns faced by volunteers with each other and receive advice on these from a specialist.

Date/time: 13:30 to 16:30, Sunday 2nd August 2015

Venue: Gifu Fureai Plaza
No. participants: 23

Medical Interpreter Volunteer Training



We held two training days for volunteers in our medical interpreter dispatch system, in order to provide them with and build upon the basic skills and techniques needed in medical interpreting, so that foreign residents who have trouble speaking Japanese can feel at ease when they use medical facilities in Japan.

Date/time: 10:00 to 17:00 on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th October 2015

Venue: Gifu University School of Medicine
No. participants: Sat 3rd: 40, Sun 4th: 41 (including Brazilian, Chinese and Filipino volunteers)

Disaster Prevention

Drop-In Disaster Prevention Lectures for Foreign Residents



To help raise awareness of the basic knowledge needed during emergencies and disasters, and to ensure that foreign residents know what to do when a disaster strikes, GIC organised drop-in lectures on disaster prevention for foreign residents at churches in cities with high foreign populations.

Dates: ①② Sunday 2nd August 2015
③ Sunday 23rd August 2015
④ Sunday 27th September 2015
⑤ Sunday 25th October 2015

Venues: ① Gifu Alliance Evangelical Church
② Igreja Evangelica Graca e Vida
③④ Catholic Ogaki Parish
⑤ Catholic Tajimi Church

No. participants: ① 68 ② 64 ③ 46 ④ 37 ⑤ 74

Training for Foreign Resident Disaster Support Volunteers

Disaster Prevention Workshops for Foreign Residents



GIC held training sessions for multilingual disaster support volunteers. The training involved setting up a mock multilingual support centre, to ensure that foreign residents have access to accurate information and support in the event of a natural disaster. We also organised a safety walk for foreign residents and a hands-on lecture on disaster prevention.

Dates: ① Sunday 29th November 2015
② Sunday 6th December 2015
③ Sunday 17th January 2016

Venues: ① Gifu Keizai University
② Kani Multicultural Center Frevia
③ Minna-no-Mori Gifu Media Cosmos

No. participants:
① Training: 24, Workshop: 28
② Training: 18, Workshop: 23
③ Training: 28, Workshop: 33

Education

Careers Advice for Brazilian School Pupils



We carried out career guidance for pupils at Hiro Gakuen Brazilian School, to provide students who are living in Japan permanently with stability in their future lives.

Date/time: Thursday 14th January 2016
Business Manners Class 9:30 to 12:00
Life Planning Session 13:00 to 15:00

Venue: Hiro Gakuen Brazilian School
No. Participants: 23



Issued by:

Gifu International Center (GIC)

Gifu Chunichi Building 2 F, 1-12 Yanagase Dori, Gifu City, 500-8875

Tel: 058-214-7700 Fax: 058-263-8067

Three-way Call Civic Interpreter Service (Trio-phone): 058-263-8066

E-mail gic@gic.or.jp URL <http://www.gic.or.jp>

Opening hours: Sunday to Friday 9:30 am - 6:00 pm

Closed: Saturday, Public Holidays, New Year Period

Language support available in English, Portuguese, Chinese and Tagalog

