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Introducing our new CIR!



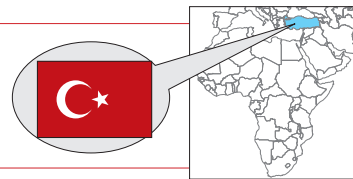
Hello everyone in Gifu, nice to meet you! My name is Sevgi Cevik, and I started working as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) at the Gifu Prefectural Office in August 2014. I come from Istanbul, in Turkey.

I started living in Istanbul when I began university, but I was born and raised in a city called Kayseri, which is near the World Heritage site Cappadocia in central Turkey. Kayseri is a large city that is famous for its sujuk (traditional Turkish sausages) and manti dumplings. Manti dumplings are made by wrapping minced meat in pastry and boiling them in a pot, and eaten with a sauce made from garlic yoghurt and tomato paste. I studied at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, which looks out over the incredible scenery of the Bosphorus strait, the border between Europe and Asia. I started learning Japanese there in my second year, and have been studying Japanese for 5 years overall. In my second year of studying Japanese, I attended

Shimonoseki City University as an exchange student. After graduating from university, I worked at the Japanese company IHI Infrasytems as a field worker up until I came to Japan again as a CIR. During my time at IHI, I worked on a construction project carrying out repairs on two bridges along the Bosphorus strait. I am really happy to have the opportunity to get to know people in Japan during my time here as a CIR. At the moment, I am the only Turkish CIR in Japan, but I want to work hard so that people in Gifu can learn more about Turkey and its culture. I look forward to meeting you all!

About Turkey

Official Name: The Republic of Turkey	Currency: Turkish lira
Official Languages: Turkish	Population: 77,695,904
Capital: Ankara	GDP: \$1.508 trillion



Close up

Introducing groups and individuals active in the Gifu area

The Japan-China Community Promotion Association

What is the Japan-China Community Promotion Association?

The Japan-China Community Promotion Association is an organization that aims to contribute to friendly relations between Japan and China on the grass-roots level, as well as promote communities in both countries. Its activities follow on from those of its former organization, the Japan-China Youth Exchange Association, and it carries out projects that provide the citizens of both Japan and China with the opportunity to meet with and get to know each other.

- Established: 2013
- Representative: Kan Matsumura
- Address: 13 Gotanda-cho, Gifu-shi (within 3 MH)
- TEL: 058-253-4433
- E-mail: nichukomi@nichukomi.com
- HP: <http://nichukomi.com/>



Cleaning the Nagara River

Activities

•Communication

The association regularly carries out Japanese classes and lifestyle consultations, with the aim of supporting Chinese residents to communicate effectively and live independently in Japan, as well as improving multicultural awareness.

•Community Service

The association is also actively involved in environmental volunteering in the region, and collects rubbish along the Nagara River after the fireworks festivals. It also distributes a newsletter (published 3-4 times a year) for free, in order to share information about multiculturalism.

•Japan-China Exchange

The association carries out volunteer interpreting in areas relating to Japan-China relations in order to revitalize regional cultures and build a multicultural society, as well as assisting exchange between China and Japan.

•Supporting Cultural Experiences

In order to improve understanding of other cultures, the association is developing programs that offer real-life cultural experiences, by providing young people in both countries with opportunities for cultural education.

PICK UP!

Introducing the New Japan-China Travel Memoirs project for youth development: — "Embark on a journey and share your experiences!"

This project aims to bring up a generation of young people who can calmly approach and understand Sino-Japanese relations, as well as strengthen friendship between China and Japan. It does this by providing opportunities to experience real day-to-day life in both countries as part of a dispatch program for young people. These experiences, including visits to family homes, businesses, schools and tourist facilities, provide young people with the opportunity to understand their destination country in a way that cannot be achieved simply by going on holiday or relying on information broadcasted on television.

Supported by GIC

Message to the Readers

Two years have passed since we have begun our activities, with the help and support of the general public and private corporations.

Recently, relations between Japan and China, and the sentiment of the people living in our two countries, have not been going as well as desired. However, we don't think that these circumstances give us any reason to give up hope. As can be seen from the reports written by participants in the New Japan-China Travel Memoirs project ("Embark on a journey and share your experiences!"), it can be said – no, established with certainty – that if we can only get to know and learn from each other, all hatred and prejudice will naturally disappear. This firm belief does not stop with the young students who took part in our project, but is something that we believe can be applied to anyone.

Using this belief as our motto, and with the hope that the relationship between the people of China and Japan will return to the warm friendship it once was, our association will continue its activities in the local area. We ask for your understanding and support, and urge you to take part in our activities. Thank you.

What is Multiculturalism? Interviews with Foreign Residents

Let's find out more about what foreign residents living in Gifu think about multiculturalism!



- Name: Rajeev Rahela
- Nationality: British
- Occupation: ALT

What does multiculturalism mean to you?

I believe that multiculturalism is the understanding and acceptance of varied cultures. I don't believe that throwing together a handful of cultures, is enough to be multicultural, and that the beauty of a multi-faceted society lies within the appreciation of others.

Would you describe your own country as multicultural?

I'm from a country that is nothing but multicultural, which comes with its perks and problems. The United Kingdom is a diverse country and takes pride in that. This means there is a better understanding of surrounding and distant cultures and a chance to engage with people and ideals that one may not have the chance to. However, when there is a lack of knowledge about these cultures, fear of the unknown can lead to resentment towards them, which in turn can alter how cultures view one another in society.

Have you ever experienced culture shock?

Yes. I never thought it would be something that I would have to deal with, as I thought I was stronger than that. However, I soon realised that it was not about strength, but about adaptation. I believe that it is something that can sneak up behind you, and catch you when you least expect it! For me, that period of time was living through the Japanese winter. Having come from the city and a country that has a relatively short winter in comparison to Japan's, I found myself struggling a great deal. I live in the Japanese countryside, so coping with the snow, the extreme cold and the lack of human communication, really took its toll on me.

How does your own culture differ from Japanese culture?

Having a dual cultural identity, being British and having an Indian heritage, means that I have a large spectrum of what I believe culture is. An example of this is that there will be times I feel like my British working culture differs from the Japanese (in regards to the larger amount of hours put into the Japanese office hours). However, my Indian homely behaviours are similar to Japanese culture (such as removing one's shoes when entering a house).

Have you had any difficulties with participating in your community?

Being in the countryside means that I have a very small community to work and live with. My Japanese language skills are relatively low, and so the people of my town and I, must find other ways to communicate. I feel that this requires more effort, and therefore makes the relationship that little bit more special. For this, and many other reasons, I feel as though I am integrating well, even if I do make the odd mistake, like saying "Ohayo Gozaimasu" instead of "Arigatou Gozaimasu"!

Have you ever been treated differently to others because of your race or culture?

Unfortunately, yes. In Japan, despite living here, I can still be expected to only speak English. It can be a little unnerving for both parties when they ask me a question in English and I respond in Japanese. However, I do believe this is an act of respect and interaction; many people in Japan know some basic English, but don't always get the chance to use it, or engage with an English speaker. So the situation can be interesting for the Japanese speaker!

Do you think that Japan is becoming more multicultural?

I believe so! Now that people are investing time and money to travel, paired with the increase of interest into Japanese "niche" culture from around the world, more people are able to experience all that Japan has to offer, which can lead to more expatriates. Also, with ever-increasing teaching programmes that offer the chance for foreigners to spend time here, means that there are more likely to be new cultures engaging with one another here.

What could be done to help foreign residents feel like part of the community?

I have found that by shaking off all reservations and cultural stereotypes of what we, foreigners and Japanese people, think of each other's cultures, and immersing yourself within that culture, is a great way to join the community. People are people. Communication can start with a smile to a daily "Good Morning" (as long as it's said correctly!). As a foreigner in any country, there is no way you will blend in straight away, or even at all. We are foreign after all. I believe in understanding your limits, and what can be expected of you. I won't be on the front line beating a Taiko drum at any local festival any time soon. But I have been asked to be there, take photos and introduce myself as a way for this small mountain community to get used to my large beard, but beaming smile.

What is multiculturalism?

Multiculturalism refers to "a regional society in which its residents can respect each other's cultures and ways of thinking, whilst allowing them to live comfortably with peace of mind in their everyday lives", recognising foreign residents in Gifu Prefecture as "prefectural residents with foreign nationalities" who contribute to regional society.

The permanent settlement of foreign residents is underway in Gifu Prefecture, and foreign residents with diverse cultural backgrounds are expected to lead towards making Gifu Prefecture a more bountiful and appealing place by living and working in regional societies and actively participating in a range of areas.

(From the Gifu Prefecture homepage)

Information for Foreign Residents

Introducing the My Number System!!!

What is the My Number system?

A My Number is a 12-digit number that will be issued to every resident of Japan with a residence card from October 2015 onwards. The 'My Number system' is a nickname, and the system is officially called the 'Social Welfare and Tax Number System'. The number bears no relation to your address or date of birth, and prevents individuals from being identified by that kind of information.

A My Number will be issued not only to Japanese residents, but also to mid- to long-term foreign residents, as well as those with special permanent residency.

The My Number system will be put into practise from January 2016 onwards. It can only be used in the social welfare and tax systems and during disasters and emergencies, following rules decided by the law and local government authorities (see the chart below).

The specific situations in which residents of Japan are likely to use their My Number include the tax office, regional public authorities, their place of work, financial organisations, pension/medical insurers, and Hello Work, amongst others.

You will be asked to fill out your My Number in various documents, such as pension, employment insurance and health insurance paperwork, documents required for livelihood protection, childcare benefits and other welfare benefits, as well as in paperwork for taxes, such as your final tax returns.

What are the merits of the system?

The system makes life more convenient for residents of Japan by reducing the amount of paperwork needed in the social welfare and tax system, as well as providing a My Number Portal information service. It also improves administrative efficiency and directs more human and financial resources towards services that benefit the population, as well as enabling the design of a new social welfare system specifically catered to individual needs, by ensuring the accurate acquisition of information.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact the call centre listed on the homepage described below. You can also ask for more details at your local municipal offices.

Website: (on the Cabinet Office homepage)

<http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/bangoseido/index.html>

Call centre:

0570-20-0291 (English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese)

【From 1st October 2015 to the 31st March 2016】

Monday to Friday 9:30 ~ 20:00

Weekends and holidays 9:30 ~ 17:30

(not available during the New Year period)

*Calls will be charged

From January 2015 onwards, your My Number will be needed in the following situations:

Social welfare paperwork

Obtaining/confirming pension qualifications, receiving pensions
Obtaining/confirming employment insurance, receiving it
Hello Work administration
Health insurance bills
Receiving livelihood protection & other welfare, etc

Tax paperwork

Submitting tax returns, listed on notifications & legal record totals
Displayed on tax returns/salary reports submitted to local authorities, etc

Disaster relief

Disaster prevention and relief administration
Receiving disaster relief funds
Registering disaster victims, etc

How the My Number System will be implemented

From October 2015 onwards	A notice is sent to your address (as registered on the census) A 12-digit My Number will be issued to everyone registered on the census (including foreign residents) from October 2015 onwards.
January 2016	The My Number System begins to be used Your My Number will start to be used in tax, pension, medical insurance, employment insurance and other social welfare paperwork. Applicants will also begin to receive their Individual Number cards.
January 2017	The My Number Portal site becomes available for use You can confirm when, who, and for what purpose your information (including your My Number) is used on this site. You can also receive notices from administrative bodies.
July 2018	Information begins to be shared with regional public organisations Information sharing results in smoother and more accurate administration, reducing the burden on the public. Everyday life becomes more convenient.

Notices from Gifu International Center

Disaster Workshops for Foreign Residents – now recruiting participants!

GIC will be holding disaster prevention and relief workshops aimed towards foreign residents. The workshops involve sampling emergency food rations and a tour of the local area, introducing nearby emergency shelters and other disaster-related facilities. There will also be an evacuation drill, during which we will ask participants to play the role of foreign residents who have become victims of a disaster. Please come along and use these workshops as an opportunity to learn more about what to do during disasters and emergencies with your friends and family members.

Disaster Workshops for Foreign Residents	
Who?	Foreign residents (30 places available)
What?	Emergency ration tasting, tour of local disaster facilities, playing the role of foreign disaster victims during an evacuation drill
<Ogaki City> Venue: Gifu Keizai University (5-50 Kitagatacho, Ogaki)	Sunday 29th November 2015 12:00 – 16:00
<Kani City> Venue :Kani Multicultural Center Frevia (1185-7 Shimoedo, Kani)	Sunday 6 th December 2015 Time: To be decided

We are also recruiting volunteers!
Your skills are needed in
emergency situations - please
come and give your support!



* The details listed above, including the workshop times and contents, may be subject to change. Please refer to the GIC homepage for more details.

* We will also be holding a workshop in Gifu City on Sunday 17th January 2016, at Minna no Mori Gifu Media Cosmos. Once the workshop details have been confirmed, we will begin recruiting participants on our homepage.

*This project is being carried out in cooperation with the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR).

How to Apply: You can apply for the disaster workshops by contacting GIC by telephone or FAX.

Multilingual Disaster Guides for foreign residents

GIC has published a Multilingual Disaster Guide. Please write down your emergency contacts and other details in the booklets and carry them with you at all times, so that you can remain safe during an emergency or disaster.

Multilingual Disaster Guide Contents:

- What to do during an earthquake
- Important points to remember when evacuating
- Emergency shelter guide (evacuation points and shelters, what to bring during an evacuation)
- Earthquake Early Warnings
- What to do during rainstorms and typhoons
- Safety confirmation (using disaster message boards)
- Information sources (internet, radio, multilingual service counters)
- Space to write down the name of your nearest emergency shelter and your emergency contacts

Languages:

- There are two editions available – Japanese/English/Chinese and Japanese/Portuguese/Tagalog.

Size:

- The booklets are pocket-sized, so that you can write down any info you may need during a disaster and carry the booklet with you in your notebook or wallet at all times.



Please contact GIC if you are in need of a Multilingual Disaster Guide (stocks are limited).

The guides can be downloaded from our homepage: <http://www.gic.or.jp/foreigner/disasterguide/>

*These guides were produced in cooperation with the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR).

Foreign Resident Advice Corner

GIC Consultation Services

GIC provides a multilingual consultation service for foreign residents having trouble in their day-to-day lives.

Have you found yourself experiencing any problems like these?

- I want to live in prefectural housing, but I don't know how to apply.
- I missed the deadline for paying my car tax, and I don't know what to do.
- My husband/boyfriend/partner is abusing me, and I need help.
- I'm involved in a dispute with my dispatch company/workplace over my wages/contract.
- I'm pregnant, and I want to know more about child benefits and maternity leave.

If you have experienced anything like this, please contact GIC for advice. We will work together with the relevant organisations to provide you with a solution.



Languages available: English, Portuguese, Chinese and Tagalog

Public Notary Consultations

We also provide consultations for problems that need specialist advice:

- I gave birth to a child, but didn't apply for a residence card.
- I had a child with a Japanese man, but he won't acknowledge the child as his own.
- I am heavily in debt and want to apply for bankruptcy.
- I want to start a new business.
- I want to bring my family over to Japan.
- Paperwork for international marriage/divorce.

In order to help people with problems that require specialist advice, GIC provides specialist consultations with a public notary twice a month. If you need advice about visas, international marriage/divorce, bringing over family members from overseas, naturalisation, business licenses, debt, or similar issues, then please call us at GIC. Please also let us know if you need interpreting when you call for advice.

Issued
by:

Gifu International Center (GIC)

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

Opening hours: Sunday to Friday 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

Closed: Saturday, Public Holidays, New Year Period

Language support available in English, Portuguese, Chinese and Tagalog

