

Kyoto City Council on Multicultural Policy

Newsletter No.9

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The third council meeting of FY2012 was held.

<Time and Date> 1:00 to 3:00P.M. Mon. Nov. 26th, 2012

<Venue> Kyoto YWCA

<Agenda> Interaction between foreign residents and community residents

~Japanese classes for foreign residents ~



In the third meeting, Kyoto YWCA reported about the Japanese class called “Rakuraku”. “Yasashii nihongo yushi-no-kai” reported their program which provides information on daily life in easy Japanese. After the reports, the members exchanged their opinions.

Report

Japanese language study hosted by Kyoto YWCA

~Kyoto YWCA and Japanese class “Rakuraku”~

Located in Kamigyo Ward, Kyoto YWCA have the multilingual consultation service, Japanese classes and child rearing support programs for those whose mother tongue are not Japanese. The Japanese class called “Rakuraku” has about 40 students whose mother tongues are Korean, Chinese, Tagalog and many other languages.

After FY 2009, Kyoto YWCA opened a nursery room for those mothers who attend the Japanese classes so that they can concentrate on their study while their children are taken care of at the nursery room. In the Japanese classes they learn expressions related to “marriage/birth”, “health/security”, and “childrearing/education”.

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~Aims of Japanese classes~

1. Provide information on daily life

Through Japanese classes, students will learn Japanese customs, rules and manners.

The themes cover how to use hospitals, how to apply for the nursery, knowledge and terms about disaster prevention and evacuation centers.

2. Platform for learning different cultures

Japanese classes are not only for teaching the language, they also provide a platform for interaction between people of different cultural background. In the classes students sometimes point out some strange Japanese customs which incites teachers to rethink about their own customs.

For example:

If some Japanese tells you “Please come to my house anytime” or “Don’t hesitate to come to my house”, you should better ask him/her beforehand if it is alright to visit him/her. You must also be careful to choose a proper time for the visit.

~Problems of the Japanese classes~

◎The number of people of foreign origin is expected to increase in the future. Therefore, we must respond to their needs for basic Japanese conversation used in daily life such as job seeking, child rearing and taking care of the elderly.



◎Foreign residents have a lot of problems in their daily life in Japan. Therefore, Japanese teachers should support such people by sharing and solving their problems.

◎The relation between teachers and children should not be limited to teaching. They must help creating a community that consists of people with different nationalities and cultures.

- Members' Opinions -

◎It is comparatively easy for foreign residents to learn basic Japanese conversation such as expressions used for shopping. However, they have few opportunities to learn higher level Japanese such as expressions used in dealing with customers. There are some people who want to take the Japanese Proficiency Test, and to learn Japanese which is useful for getting a job or being used at the office. Therefore, various levels of Japanese classes must be prepared for them.

◎It is necessary to provide the list of Japanese classes in Kyoto along with their venue, tuition fee and levels on the website so that the students can easily compare and choose what they want.

◎Some of those who live and work in Japan for a long time, and speak Japanese, don't read and write Japanese. They have difficulty in understanding letters they get from public offices, and in applying for some public services at the ward offices. This is a serious problem for them.



◎Those who operate Japanese classes need to provide, not only teachers, but also advisers who can give advice to the students about daily life in their communities and how to use services offered by public offices.

◎It is preferable that teachers and students of Japanese classes in Kyoto get together and interact with each other, sharing opinions and information so as to expand their network.

Kyoto *Nihongo* Rings

“Kyoto *Nihongo* Rings” is a network consisting of 16 organizations who are engaged in teaching Japanese and promoting multicultural symbiosis in the communities in Kyoto Prefecture. The Kyoto city network consists of seven organizations such as Kyoto International Foundation, Kyoto Prefectural International Center and Kyoto YWCA “*Rakuraku*”. They hold joint training programs for Japanese volunteers and support those who wish to open a Japanese class.

“Kyoto *Nihongo* Rings” website: <http://k-rings.holy.jp/wp/>

Providing information at the time of disaster using “Easy Japanese”

At the time of disaster, concerned authorities tend to use technical terms and unfamiliar phrases. During emergencies, information is indispensable. It is essential to provide such information in easy Japanese as well as in some foreign languages such as English and Chinese so that the foreign residents can understand them.

Phrases often used during emergencies, with their easy Japanese version:

Gaishutsu o hikaeru → *Dekirudake gaishutu o shinai*

Anpi o kakuninsuru → *Daijobu ka douka o kiku, shiraberu*

Hi no moto o kakunin suru → *Hi ga kietairukoto o tashikameru*

Mi no anzen o kakuho suru → *Jibun no karada o mamoru*



Report

The program carried out by “Yasashii Nihongo

Yushi-no-kai”

When providing information for those whose mother tongue is not Japanese, it is effective to use easy Japanese as well as English and Chinese.

1. “Easy Japanese”

When Hanshin Awaji Earthquake occurred, disaster information was not well provided to those whose mother tongue was not Japanese. Based on this experience, the program to provide the information in “Easy Japanese” was launched. There are some rules for “Easy Japanese” such as using a short sentence, avoiding honorifics, onomatopoeia and complex expressions, and using simple Kanji which are taught in the 2nd grade of elementary school.

2. “Yasashii Nihongo Yushi-no-kai”

After its founding in 2008, “Yasashii Nihongo Yushi-no-kai” has been providing information on disaster prevention and disaster news in easy Japanese through Japanese classes in Kyoto Prefecture.

Working together with Kyoto Prefectural International Center, they published the “Kyoto Prefectural Guidebook for Disaster Prevention” in easy Japanese, in 2011. This guidebook won the Miyako Universal Design Award of Kyoto City.

“Kyoto Prefectural Guidebook for Disaster Prevention” can be downloaded from the website below.

http://www.kpic.or.jp/f_nationality/consul_life_03.html

For further information, contact “Kyoto Prefectural International Center”
9th floor, Kyoto Station Bldg, Karasuma-Shiokoji sagaru, Shimogyo-ku,
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Notice

If you have any opinion regarding the newsletters and the council, please contact us at the following address. Anyone can take part in the meetings as an observer.
For the back numbers, please contact us below.

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Back numbers in English: <http://www.city.kyoto.lg.jp/sogo/page/0000087864.html>