

# PLAZA NEWSLETTER (November 2023)

When I went to Aso via Kikuchi the other day, I saw beautiful Japanese silver grass and cosmos. The weather suddenly has become more autumn-like. The temperatures in morning and evening have dropped and the sun is setting earlier and earlier, it's dark when I go outside after work. Be careful not to catch a cold as it is the season when you easily get into bad shape.

The Plaza received 64 consultations in September. We share some of them with advice from us. \*Some content has been edited so that individuals are not identified.

Q : I would like to switch from my home country's license to a Japanese one, but I do not speak Japanese. Is it possible to switch my license?

A : There are several conditions for switching. Your address must be in Kumamoto Prefecture, have a valid foreign driver's license, have stayed in the country where you got your license for a total of at least 3 months after getting your license. Even if you meet the requirements, you may not be able to switch depending on the results of document screening, etc. In addition, the exam is by appointment only, so call first to make an appointment. At that time, you will be briefed on the procedure, the flow of the test day, and the necessary documents. (Phone number: Driver's License Examination Section 096-233-0116) If you have difficulty with Japanese language, have someone who speaks Japanese when you call and go to exam. If you are a TSMC-related person and want to switch licenses, please check with the company first.

Q : My child is enrolled in an international school. Can I have my child learn Japanese at Orugatta Station (Japanese language classes for children with foreign roots)?

A : Orugatta Station's activities include follow-up for students who are receiving Japanese language support at public schools. We also provide Japanese language support for textbooks and other materials taught at the schools. Textbooks used in international schools are different, and Orugatta Station's not for purely teaching Japanese in the first place.

Q : I am an international student. I am planning to buy a plane ticket to go home temporarily next year. However, I cannot pay in cash because the airline does not have an office in Japan, and when I purchase on the web, I have to pay by credit/debit card. I want to get a credit card, but all my applications have been turned down.

A : You could ask the airline to issue an invoice and see if you can transfer the money from your current bank? Since you have a bank account, you could apply for a debit card? You could also ask your school teachers and friends, or family and friends in your home country who can pay the bill on your behalf? I

If you have any problems, please contact the Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents.

We are pleased to introduce two new CIRs from Germany and Canada who arrived in August.

## Maria Wohnig



● **From : Berlin, Germany**

● **What is Berlin like? :**

Since it is the capital of Germany, it is quite a large city. It is very green and many people from all over the world live. It is a culturally diverse and historically interesting place.

● **How did you become interested in Japan?**

I loved Pokemon when I was younger. I felt that Japan was a Pokemon paradise, and it was my childhood dream to visit Japan someday. Through playing Judo and Go, I have learnt more about Japanese culture and history. After I first came to Japan in 2019, I enrolled in college and studied Japanese properly.



● **What is your favorite Japanese word or phrase?**

"~te kureru" and "~te morau". There is no word in German that conveys gratitude without saying thank you.

● **What surprised you when you came to Kumamoto (Japan) :**

When I first came to Japan as a tourist, I felt that the atmosphere in Germany and Japan was the same and the countries were very similar. But after living there, I noticed lots of small differences. For example, in Japan, it is often the opposite of Germany. I am not used to driving on the left side of the road (we drive on the right in Germany). And when you lock the door, the key must be turned in the opposite direction when locking the door. I was very surprised.

● **Places you would like to visit in Kumamoto/Japan :**

I love hot springs, so I would like to stay at a nice ryokan in Kyushu and enjoy the hot springs. I have never been to the north of Japan and would love to see Hokkaido when I get the courage to drive.

● **What you would like to do in Kumamoto/Japan :**

I really like Japanese sweets, cakes, and Japanese-style confections, and I want to eat a lot of them. Since I just arrived in Kumamoto, I haven't found a hobby yet, but I would like to sing in a choir if possible. Japanese art is also very beautiful and I would like to try ink painting.

● **What you like about Kumamoto :**

I have just arrived in Kumamoto, but I have already met many kind people. I like places with lots of nature, so I like to visit Suizenji and Kumamoto Castle. I enjoyed experiencing the wonderful fireworks.

● **Message to foreign residents in Kumamoto:**

If you have any concerns or worries, come to the Plaza. We will do our best to help you.

## Jonathan Vuong



●From : Brantford, Canada

●What is Brantford like? :

It is a very ordinary medium-sized city that can be found anywhere in Canada, but in recent years it has been thriving in terms of business, and urban development tends to be gradual. The first long-distance telephone was connected in Brantford in 1876, it is therefore called the "City of Telephone".

●How did you become interested in Japan? :

I have been interested in Japanese culture (food, anime/manga, etc.) since I was a child. After entering university, I began studying Japanese and decided that one day I would live in Japan.

●What is your favorite Japanese word or phrase? :

I don't know if it applies to Japanese, but in Soshi Sakiyama's new song "Akari", the words "Kodoku (solitude) under crying" I don't know what it means, but it has a nice sound and I can't get it out of my head.

●What surprised you when you came to Kumamoto? :

Wherever I go, I see Kumamon.

When I turn around on my way home at night, It is right behind me.

●Places you would like to visit in Kumamoto :

Aso. I want to ride my bike and enjoy the cool breeze and the lush greenery.

●What you would like to do in Kumamoto/Japan :

It is to stay at Kurokawa Onsen.

Preferably 3 days and 2 nights, I would like to do it in the fall or winter, but my budget is low at the moment, I am also having trouble finding a convenient way to get there. But I would like to go there someday.

●What you like about Kumamoto :

Despite being a big city, Kumamoto City is really nice, with not too few people, not too many people, and a pleasant cityscape. Even in the city, you can see natural scenery from everywhere, and in a way, it is much different from where I come from.

●Message to foreign residents in Kumamoto :

Even if this is not your first time living abroad, you may feel uneasy due to cultural or language differences. Even though I have been studying Japanese for five years and should have gotten used to life in Japan, there are times when I get stressed out. If you have any problems or just want to speak English, come to the Plaza every Friday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. and talk to me.



## Information on Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents

The Plaza offers professional consultations including legal affairs, residence status issues, job hunting, housing and life affairs support in multiple languages. Consultants who speak English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Spanish and Nepali are available at the Plaza as the schedule below.

### November Schedule

| Monday    | Tuesday                     | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday  | Sunday   |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| 30        | 31<br>·Chinese Consultation | 01<br>·Immigrational Consultation<br>·Vietnamese Consultation<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·German Consultation   | 02<br>·Korean Consultation                                   | 03<br><b>Culture Day</b><br>·Spanish Consultation<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·English Consultation | 04  | 05<br>·Vietnamese Consultation<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese                      |
| 06        | 07<br>·Chinese Consultation | 08<br>·Job Consultation<br>·Mental Counseling<br>·Tagalog Consultation<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·German Consultation  | 09<br>·Korean Consultation                                   | 10<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·Spanish Consultation<br>·English Consultation                       | 11  | 12<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·Educational Consultation<br>·Orugatta Kids   |
| 13 closed | 14<br>·Chinese Consultation | 15<br>·Housing Consultation<br>·Vietnam Consultation<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·German Consultation  | 16<br>·Korean Consultation                                   | 17<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·English Consultation  | 18<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·Free Legal Consultation | 19<br>·Immigrational Consultation<br>·Vietnamese Consultation<br>·Nepal Consultation |
| 20        | 21<br>·Chinese Consultation | 22<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·German Consultation<br>·One-stop Consultation Service for International Students   | 23<br><b>Labour Thanksgiving Day</b><br>·Korean Consultation | 24<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·English Consultation  | 25  | 26<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·Educational Consultation<br>·Orugatta Kids   |
| 27 closed | 28<br>·Chinese Consultation | 29<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese<br>·German Consultation  | 30<br>·Korean Consultation                                   | 01  | 02  | 03   |
| 04        | 05                          | Note: Consultations 1:00pm~5:00pm (apart from the ones below)<br>·Life Consultation in Chinese 1:00pm ~ 6:00pm<br>·Immigrational Consultation 1:00pm~4:00pm<br>·Free Legal Consultation 2:00pm~4:00pm (Reservation required)<br>·Orugatta Kids 10:30am~12:00pm (Reservation required)<br>·One-stop Consultation Service for International Students 1:00pm~4:00pm<br>·Job Consultation 10:00am ~ 6:00pm<br>·Mental Counseling 3:30pm~5:30pm<br>·Educational Consultation 10:00am~3:00pm |  |   |   |  |

※ Consultation service could be cancelled due to consultant's personal reasons. Please e-mail or call us beforehand to check if the consultant is available.

Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents' Facebook

We regularly update information useful to you.

Follow us and be one of the first one to be informed!



Plaza's FB

We are offering variety of information useful to your life. Please check us!



Our website



Our Life affairs guidance

### Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents

**Location:** 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Kumamoto City International Center

**Address:** 4-18 Hanabata-Cho, Chuo-Ku, Kumamoto City, 860-0806

**Tel:** 096-359-4995

**E-mail:** [soudan@kumamoto-if.or.jp](mailto:soudan@kumamoto-if.or.jp)

**Opening hours:** Between 10 am and 6 pm

**Closed** on second and fourth Mondays and between December 29 and January 3

★If second or fourth Monday is a national holiday, the plaza will be closed the following day instead.

