Introducing the New Head Office

The TPIEF Head Office relocated to the 3rd floor of the Tottori Kenritsu Shougai Gakushuu Center (Fureai Kaikan) on 1 April 2018. The office now enjoys a prime location near Tottori Station's south exit, and will help deepen our connection with local institutions to better serve you. We can now offer you language support and human resources training, as well as promoting cultural outreach in other regions, closer at hand than ever before. Come over and visit us!

▲Entrance to Fureai Kaikan

▲On the 3rd Floor

▲Reception Counter

▲Full of Japanese Study Materials & More

Renewal Opening Ceremony

Ceremony and lectures marked the occasion of the Head Office relocation on Saturday, 7 April 2108. The event was attended by some 80 volunteers and others representing local institutions working with us on a daily basis.

Lecture: Life in Tottori from a Foreigner's Perspective: Multicultural Symbiosis in Practice

Venue: Large Mtg. Room 3F, Fureai Kaikan
Lecturers: Fei Fei Kawaguchi (Taiwan; chair of the Sun-in Taiwanese Club & head of Nikka Friends multicultural learning center)
Remy Brissois (France; bread artisan)／Lin Zuzai (China; office employee)

Fei Fei Kawaguchi

As a member of the working group for multicultural symbiosis network sponsored by TPIEF, I've come to grapple with the idea of the various difficulties faced by residents from overseas and how longtime residents can best aid those new to life in Japan. The group features residents from six different countries representing each region in the prefecture sharing their experience and exchanging ideas. For the past two years we have been discussing the utility of multicultural symbiosis, without overreliance on governing bodies or local people.

The language barrier faced by many non-Japanese in Japan also creates a psychological barrier. Words are fundamental. The expression my senpai taught me at college was Hai, gambarimasu! This simple phrase got me through some things. There's also the need for residents to find work in order to settle in Tottori. There are some businesses in the prefecture that owe their success to the efforts of foreign labour, but it's difficult for someone to set one of these up.

This past January, TPIEF reached out to each section of the prefectural government to bring multicultural symbiosis managers from Shimane to form a committee for this purpose. For us, this was groundbreaking. I hope the administration will help make it easier for people from overseas to settle here. Let's affect a renewal of Tottori Prefecture itself! *Hai, gambarimasu!*

Remy Brissois

When I first came to Japan, the only thing I knew about was kimono. I didn't know how to use a floor toilet. My wife told me, 'Just persevere. With perseverance you can accomplish anything.' I had a lot of concern over my hearing impairment, but thanks to meeting my wife I got a good start with life in Japan. After that I got to meet someone who could teach me Japanese and Japanese sign language, and I commuted to a teacher's house every day. Then I met someone else who taught me Japanese grammar. It was these two people that truly gave me a start with living here. I studied Japanese for a year and a half.

When I got my Japanese driving license, the next day I got pulled over by a police officer. Apparently there was a sign on that road forbidding through traffic between 7 and 9 in the morning, but at the time I didn't understand what I had done wrong and wasn't able to get through to the policeman. After struggling for 15 or 20 minutes I managed to ask, and I understood why I was pulled over. I've had all sorts of experiences since then, but effort leads to results.

Lin Zuzai

I came to Japan when I was 15. I made it through my first year of middle school without knowing a word of Japanese. I couldn't follow 2nd-year classes at all. But I happened to discover a school that taught Japanese to students from overseas, and twice a week—starting with the five vowel sounds—I took lessons at that school for about a year. The teacher assigned a journal as homework, and corrected it for me every time. I filled up six notebooks over the course of that year, and I still have them. The teacher also took note of how much trouble I was having with communication, and contacted my homeroom teacher at school, who got my classmates to take turns writing the readings of the kanji words in my textbooks. This way I could finally communicate with the other students.

There is also support for Japanese language learners in Tottori, and I hope it's as helpful for the youths now as it was for me. It's also essential that they be proactive in their own efforts, not just waiting for someone to help them. Japanese culture can be a bit out of reach when you come from overseas, but it's certainly a plus that the Japanese are so willing to help.

I still remember my Japanese language teacher's words to me even now: We're all earthlings. I hope that when meeting someone from overseas people won't think about what country the person is from, but that we will have a society that recognizes diversity.