



# HELLO OKAYA

OKAYA INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ASSOCIATION

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This newsletter is distributed four times a year by the Okaya International Exchange Association, with the aim of providing local foreign residents with information necessary for daily life, as well as insight into aspects of Japanese culture. Please feel free to contact us with your feedback or any questions you may have.

## New Residence Management and Foreign Resident Registry System

In 2012, the Alien Registration System (Alien Registration Card or ARC) will be abolished. The government explains that to further strengthen the residency control, a new Residence Management System and Foreign Resident Registry System will replace the alien registration system. Under the new system, the Japanese Immigration Bureau will assume responsibility for the processing and issuance of Resident Cards, as opposed to municipal government offices, which are currently responsible for the ARC system. In this way, the foreign resident's information will be transferred to the new foreign resident registry system, freeing the municipal government from responsibility thus enabling the local government to provide better services to its residents. The new foreign resident registry system will register foreign residents on a household basis akin to the basic resident register for Japanese residents and will be linked to the "Juki Net" registry, a nationwide computer network containing demographic data on residents by municipality. Local governments across Japan will be able to share this information and Japanese spouses will have access to the information of his/her own household.

The municipality office can now access information on so-called "mixed" households, say for example, a Japanese husband living with a non-Japanese wife. Furthermore, the introduction of the new residence management system will ensure further convenience by extending the maximum period of stay from three years to five years and integrate statuses of residence of "College Student" and "Pre-College Student" into a single classification called "College Student." Currently, alien registration does not concern status of residence, that's why illegal aliens can still register even without permission to stay in Japan. However in the new foreign resident registry system, foreigners with legal permission to stay will be given "Residence Cards" by the Bureau of Immigration. Persons who do not have legal permission to stay will be stricken off and be removed from the new registry system. This means that illegal aliens will no longer be able to avail administrative services from the local municipality. Illegal foreign residents who are registered in the old system will be removed from the new system.

For foreigners who are special permanent residents, the local municipal government shall continue to provide services regarding foreign resident registration certificate and special permanent resident certificate.



## ★Japanese Traditions ~One point Japanese culture~

### Buddhism

Bukkyo came to Japan in the middle of the sixth century.

Supporters of bukkyo

subsequently won

a victory in the political power struggles of the time; building temples in every area under government patronage, it spread throughout the country. In the Kamakura Period (1185-1333), as a number of new leaders appeared and deepened its philosophy, bukkyo made clear its position of saving the weak. Zen Buddhism was brought to Japan in the Kamakura Period by priests who studied in China, and it flourished principally as the religion of samurai. At present, a culture in Japan that has bukkyo as its backdrop has laid roots deeply in the lives of the people and, together with Shinto, forms the spiritual culture of the Japanese people. Also, even today new sects of bukkyo keep emerging and gaining believers.



### Buddhist Temples

Buddhist temples are places where priests and nuns reside to practice ascetic exercises and hold Buddhist ceremonies and where Buddhist images are enshrined. At the entrances are two-story temple gates, then come buildings such as the main temple, an auditorium, a pagoda, a bell tower. Almost all roofs are tiled. Also, people's graves in Japan are generally located on temple grounds.

People go to temples during the Bon Festival and equinoctial week for making visits to graves of their ancestors, and relatives gather on the anniversaries of the dead and have priests recite sutras in the temple. On the other hand, there are numerous temples in Kyoto and Nara that have more than 1,000 years of history and have been identified as places of sightseeing interest. People visit such temples for the pleasure of appreciating the structures and the Buddhist images.



### Buddhist Priests

So are persons who renounce the world and enter the priesthood. They usually shave their heads and wear a Buddhist priest's stole. There are occasions when spiritual cultivation is continued through rigorous austerities, like being pelted by a waterfall, but most priests are also married at their choice. The majority reside in temples where they practice ascetic disciplines, maintain graves, and chant Buddhist sutras for memorial services held at their temples. They also go to homes to chant sutras for funerals and for some private memorial services.



# International Marriage



## International Marriage

Although the number of international marriages has been increasing in Japan, getting married to a person of different nationality is not as easy as you would think. For Japanese couples, getting married or divorced is as easy as signing a piece of paper at the local municipal office. If each party both agree to end their marriage, applying for a divorce will only take a single paper.

However, international marriage in Japan is not as simple. Recently, there has been an increase in consultations about marital problems at the OIEA office. The usual inquiry is “How do I get divorced?” In reality, this is not an easy process. As there are as many laws as there are countries in the world, there are a number of requirements that you need to fulfill depending on the time, place and laws applicable to your situation before you can get married. One such case is foreign partner who is remarrying. It would not be a total exaggeration to say that all procedures for international marriages are different considering that some countries do not have a system of divorce. Oftentimes, one needs to go the municipal office and embassy to apply for marriage or divorce. Some would seek advice from legal professionals regarding international marriage for much more complicated cases.

## Certificate of Legal Capacity to Contract Marriage

No matter what your situation is, if you are pursuing an international marriage in Japan, the first hurdle that you would encounter is the “certificate of legal capacity to contract marriage.” The country of the non-Japanese citizen party to marriage issues this certificate to prove that he/she is single and eligible to get married in accordance with the laws of his/her country.

Some countries do not issue the Certificate of Legal Capacity to Contract Marriage, but issue another document instead. It would be best to ask your own embassy regarding this matter.

It is important to understand that if you are not able to provide the necessary documents and satisfy the conditions required by the foreign embassy or consulate, the Certificate of Legal Capacity to Contract Marriage will not be issued to you.

### Steps to take when a Japanese and Non-Japanese get married

 <b>When submitting the documents first to a Japanese municipality office</b>	 <b>When submitting the documents first to a foreign embassy/consulate</b>
<p>Gather the required documents to be submitted to the Japanese municipality office</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p>Submit the documents to the municipality office</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recognition of marriage in Japan</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p>Entry of marriage in the family registry</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p>Submit the family registry as proof of marriage to the foreign embassy/consulate in Japan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recognition of marriage in the country of the non-Japanese spouse</b></p>	<p>Gather the required documents to be submitted to the foreign embassy/consulate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p>Follow the procedure for getting married at the foreign embassy/consulate in Japan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recognition of marriage in the country of the non-Japanese spouse</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p>Foreign Embassy/Consulate releases the marriage certificate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p>Have the marriage certificate translated and submit to the Japanese municipality office</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recognition of marriage in Japan</b></p>

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# Legal Requirements

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You have the right to get services provided by the government, but you also have some obligations. The following items are indispensable in making your life in Japan pleasant.

## ☆Alien Registration☆

### Applying for a New Registration

All foreigners who intend to stay more than 90 days are expected to register at the City Hall's Civic Affairs Division within 90 days of your arrival in Japan. You should report to the Civic Affairs Division (on the 1st floor of the City Hall) and present an application form with your passport and 2 passport-sized photographs (4.5cm x 3.5cm). The application form is available at the office. If your allowable period of stay in Japan is one year or longer, your signature is required, but if you are less than 16 years of age, you are not required to submit your photograph and signature. But if your allowable period of stay is less than a year, even if you are above 16 years of age, you only need to submit your photograph.



An alien registration card is issued after registration. It takes about 2 to 3 weeks to process at the Tokyo Immigration Office. You should carry this card at all times and show it when a police officer or other government official asks to see it.

### Moving to Okaya from another part of Japan

Present yourself at the Civic Affairs Division of the City Hall with your alien registration card within 14 days of moving in.

### Application for Confirmation and Replacement

Foreigners over 16 years of age must apply for confirmation within the application period stated on their alien registration cards. Foreigners turning 16 years of age must present themselves at the Civic Affairs Division within 30 days of becoming 16 and apply for confirmation every five years after that.

When your alien registration card is lost, stolen or becomes extremely faded or dirty, go to the Civic Affairs Division and apply for a replacement. You are required to bring your passport and two photos.

## Immigration

The conditions for residing and the period of stay in Japan vary according to the status of residence in your passport at the time of entry into Japan.

If you wish to apply for a change of status, extension of stay, permanent residence, re-entry permit, etc., present yourself at the immigration office with your passport, alien registration card, application forms and required documents.

Please make enquiries at the immigration office.

Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau Office 1-3-1, Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo Tel: (03) 3213-8111 (Japanese)	Immigration Information Center 1-3-1, Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 9:00 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 16:00 Monday - Friday Tel: (03) 3213-8523 (Chinese, English, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and Thai)	Nagano Branch of the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau 1108 Nagano Asahi-machi, Nagano City Tel: (0262) 32-3317 (Japanese)
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## ☆Registering Marriage, Pregnancy, Birth, Death☆

### Registering a Marriage

When getting married in Japan, you must make a marriage registration application at the Civic Affairs Division of the City Hall. All foreigners will need a Birth Certificate and an Affidavit of Competency to Marry (Konin Yoken Gubi Shomeisho), which affirms that you are legally free to marry. You can obtain this document from your country's embassy or consulate in Japan.

### Registering for a Child Health Handbook

If you are pregnant, obtain a pregnancy notification from a doctor's office or hospital. Submit this pregnancy notification at the Health Division of the City Hall and you will receive a Maternity and Child Health Handbook. This handbook will be the official record of the medical condition of the mother and baby.

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## Registering a Birth

When a baby is born in Japan, present a birth certificate, your seal and the Maternal and Child Handbook to the Civic Affairs Division of the City Hall within 14 days of the birth. Then register the baby for an alien registration card. If one of the parents is Japanese, alien registration is not required. In this case, Japanese nationality will be given to the baby. Request two copies of the birth registry certificate. These will be needed for the passport application at your embassy and for the acquisition of residence status at the immigration bureau. The parents must apply for and acquire residence status for the baby within 30 days after birth.

## Registering a Death

If a foreigner dies in Japan, the deceased's family or responsible person must present a death notice with doctor's diagnosis to the Civic Affairs Division of the City Hall. The alien registration card and insurance card have to be turned in at this time. Please also contact your home country's embassy.

## Applying for a Certificate of Registration (Birth, Marriage, Divorce, Death)

When you need a certificate of alien registration or registry of birth, death, marriage or divorce, make a request at the Civic Affairs Division of the City Hall. There is a 350 yen fee.



### ☆Taxes☆

In Japan, individual income is subject to income tax and resident tax.

### Income Tax

In filing a final income tax return, you must report your income for the previous year from January 1 to December 31 to the tax office by March 15. Note that your employer generally withholds income tax for those receiving a salary, so it may not be necessary to file a final income tax return. When leaving Japan, you must either designate a tax payment administrator or file a final income tax return before your departure.

## Residents Tax

Residents tax consists of prefectural resident tax and municipal resident tax. Resident tax is determined based on your income during the previous year. If you are a company employee, resident tax is deducted from your monthly salary from June through May. If you have income other than your salary, resident tax should be paid through the nearest financial institution in June, August, October and January. If you are leaving Japan in the middle of the year, you must pay the remaining tax due. If you are a company employee, notify your company. As for regular collections, notify the Tax Division at the City Hall that you will pay the amount due. For enquiries regarding income tax or resident tax, contact the Tax Division of the City Hall. Tel: 23-4811 ext. 1125 (Japanese)

## Leaving Okaya

If you are moving out of Okaya City:

1. Return your health insurance card to the City Health Division if you are enrolled in the National Health Insurance.
2. Return your seal registration card at the City Civic Affairs Division if you have registered your inkan (seal).
3. Settle all local taxes due.

If you are moving within Japan, inform the city office of your new location within 14 days of your move and have your address changed on your Alien Registration Card.

## Introducing a park in Okaya City

### Izuhaya Park      Izuhaya, Osachi, Okaya City

The spectacular autumn colors can be enjoyed at this park from the latter end of October until the beginning of November. It is said that the brilliant colors of the autumn leaves is quite a picturesque scenery thanks to the autumn sun that bathes the 240 kinds of plants, especially the maple trees. Also, the lush greenery of Izuhayaakohagi Shrine is designated by many cities as a natural treasure.

Although the Japanese dogtooth violets are popular in April, it's the maple trees spectacular changing of leaves in Autumn that makes it a park worth visiting. Behold the breath-taking view of Izuhaya Park located in Seiryuyokokasen's Senjochi, in the upstream portion of Yokokasen.