

Sekai wa Hitotsu

Gifu International Center (GIC)

**International Exchange &
Multiculturalism Information Magazine**



November 2024 No.160

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In order to support Gifu Prefecture's growth as a multicultural region, the prefecture has been continuing its cultural exchange with many countries and regions around the world.

This year's "Gifu: Land of Clear Waters" Cultural Festival marks the 39th National Culture Festival and the 24th National Disabled Persons Arts and Culture Festival. At this festival, which opened on October 14th, Gifu Prefecture welcomed the participation of many countries, including Poland (Silesia region), Lithuania, and China (Jiangxi). This event encouraged a lot of conversation.

Silesia region, Poland

Śląsk Ensemble's song and dance on stage. After the closing song, a choral rendition of Miyuki Nakashima's "Jidai", the curtains closed while the audience gave a standing applause.

Cultural exchange between Gifu Prefecture and Poland began at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, when Poland's canoe team lodged in Ena city before the competition. In 2023, the two regions signed a memorandum as a symbol for future friendly relations and exchange. Currently, Gifu Prefecture and Poland are continuing exchanges in the fields of economics, tourism, sports, and art.

In the "Gifu: Land of Clear Waters" Cultural Festival 2024, the Śląsk Song and Dance Ensemble from Poland visited Ena city and Gifu city, and performed in the opening ceremony.



Lithuania

Gifu Prefecture and Lithuania are connected by the vice-consul and Gifu native Chiune Sugihara, who is known for issuing Visas for Life for thousands of Jewish refugees in World War II. Honoring this connection today, Gifu and Lithuania are continuing their cultural exchange in a variety of areas.

This year, at the 7th annual 'Lithuania NOW' cultural introduction event, the Nemunas Folk Dance Ensemble of Kaunas University of Technology held performances in Gifu city and Yaotsu town and performed in the National Culture Festival's 'Here and Abroad Great Cultural Exchange Program'.

Together with a special performance by the students of Yaotsu Elementary School, the ensemble joined in a choral rendition of the cultural festival's theme song.



Jiangxi, China



Exchanges between Gifu and Jiangxi began in 1980, when the Gifu Prefectural Assembly Members Association for Japan-China Friendship visited Jiangxi. Commencing from the 1988 signing of the Friendly Partnership Contract, an extensive cultural exchange has been occurring not just on the prefectural level, but also on the level of cities, towns, and individual groups. In 2023, the 35th anniversary of the Friendly Partnership Contract was celebrated.

At the National Cultural Festival, a Jianxi art group gave a performance of puppet theatre.

A Greeting from the New CIRs (Coordinators for International Relations)

At the Gifu International Center and the Gifu Prefectural Office Tourism and International Policy Division, four new members step into the role as CIRs.

Avery Hodge (United States of America)

Hello everyone! My name is Avery, and I am from the United States. I have been working at the Gifu Prefectural Office since August of this year, mainly assisting in international exchange events. It brings me great happiness to interact with cultures from around the world on a daily basis.

I hope that through my work, not only will people around the world learn about the natural beauty and cultural traditions of Gifu, but also that prefectural citizens will get more chances to experience cultures from around the world.



Pham Phuong Hien (Vietnam)

Xin chào! My name is Hien, and I am a CIR coming from the city of Hanoi in Vietnam. I came to Japan in August and am currently working at Gifu International Center. Gifu is a peaceful land with beautiful mountains and clear rivers, one where the changing of the seasons can be fully experienced. The famous crafted goods, as well as the history and culture of Gifu is all deeply intriguing. I want to get to know Gifu even more and hope to get the people of Gifu interested in Vietnam. It's nice to meet you!

Belharat Manyl (France)

Bonjour ! It's nice to meet you! My name is Manyl, and I am from France. I have been serving as a CIR since August of this year. I studied Japanese for 5 years at Strasbourg University (3 years bachelor's degree, 2 years master's degree). Previously, I studied abroad at Doshisha University in Kyoto, so this is my second time coming to Japan. I am so excited to be able to come and work in Gifu Prefecture, which has deep history and beautiful expansive nature.

I believe that many people in Japan are already very familiar with French culture, but I am looking forward to sharing some little-known parts of France. I'm looking forward to meeting you!



Ryan Sandiford (United States of America)

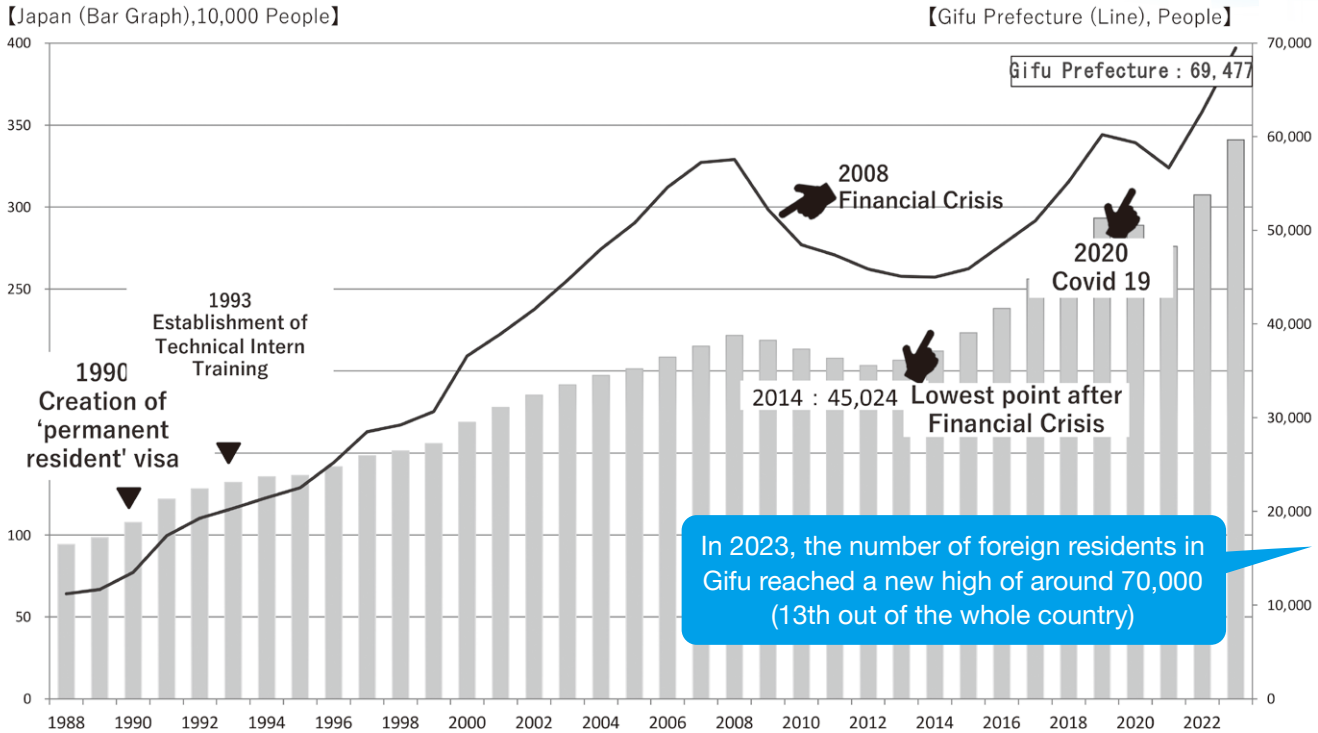
Hello everyone, my name is Ryan Sandiford and I'm from the USA. I've been working as a CIR at the Prefectural Office since August. As part of the Tourism Promotion Division, I work with my team to share Gifu with a worldwide audience.

I've had an interest in Japanese culture since I was a kid. I love reading about Japanese history and did Kendo for 4 years. When I was in High School, I started learning the language, and majored in Japanese in university. I got married to my wife, Katie, this April, and we are in the JET program together. I've lived in Tokyo for a year as an exchange student, but this is my first time in Gifu Prefecture. I'm really looking forward to living and working here!

In this corner, we will introduce the current status of foreign residents in Gifu Prefecture.

Change in the Number of Foreign Residents in Gifu Prefecture and Japan

(Ministry of Justice 「Statistics on Foreign National Residents」)
As of December of each year



Due to the amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1989 (implemented in 1990), the descendants of Japanese nationals (including married partners up until the 3rd generation) were granted status of residence without a working permit. Furthermore, due to the foreign technical intern training program, the number of foreign nationals living in Japan continued to increase. The 2008 global financial crisis and the 2020-2021 Covid 19 pandemic caused a slight downturn of the foreign resident population, but the recent economic recovery and plans for opening the border to foreigners brought on another increase. At the end of 2023, the foreign resident population reached a record peak of 3,410,000.

Concurrently, in Gifu Prefecture at the end of 2023, there was also a record peak of 69,477 foreign residents. Looking forward, it is estimated that with the rise in job openings, the acceptance of foreign individuals, and an increase in exchange student hirings, this increase is likely to continue for some time.

The Gifu Prefecture Multicultural Co-Existence Policy Promotion

Gifu Prefecture recognizes the local international community as being made up of 'foreign prefectural citizens'. Through the encouragement of respect for cultural values and the facilitation of communication between all prefectural citizens, the Multicultural Co-Existence Policy aims to create a community in which all members can live and work in peace and harmony.

For more information, see the prefecture home page: (<https://www.pref.gifu.lg.jp/page/3558.html>)

< Promotion Plan >

- (1) Facilitating Communication Within the Region
- (2) Provide an Environment Where Foreign Workers Play an Active Role
- (3) Creating an Educational Environment for Children
- (4) Creating a Safe and Stable Environment

The Gifu International Center (GIC) is a center based in the local community, which aims to establish a cultural exchange that draws on Gifu's prosperous natural environment, rich history, and other resources. Through these exchanges, it hopes to assist in the creation of a multicultural society and contribute to mutual understanding and friendly relations with other countries.

In 2012, the GIC transitioned to being a Public Interest Incorporated Foundation and is continuing cultural exchange and multinational collaboration efforts.

Creating a Multicultural Region

- Support for the children of foreign residents as well as for parents and guardians; Career education and support
- Foreign residents consultation desk, conversations with an administrative scrivener
- Japanese learning assistance and consultation; Assistant language teacher volunteer training
- Natural disaster preparations

Designing an Multinational Environment

- "Sekai wa hitotsu" multicultural information magazine
- International culture teaching programs (language, foreign culture lessons)
- Multicultural education (school visits)
- Japanese and foreign residents cultural exchange event

Promotion of Volunteer Group Activities

- Training and mediation for medical translation volunteers
- Natural disaster translation volunteer training
- Natural disaster support network creation
- Assisting multicultural co-existence/international exchange organizations
- Registering volunteers; Introducing volunteers to institutions and groups

Searching for Supporting Members

The center is currently searching for individuals and groups who are interested in working together to support the center's activities.

- Annual membership: minimum payment of 1 unit
1 unit (Individual): 3,000 yen (2 units = 6,000 yen)
1 unit (Organization): 5,000 yen (2 units = 10,000 yen)
- Membership benefits: Delivery of magazine "Sekai wa hitotsu", a membership discount for active participation, etc.

[Hello Gifu, Hello World 2024]

Come learn about the music and dances of the world, as well as the culture and history of different countries!

- Date: Saturday December 7th, 2024 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
- Location: 'Minna no Mori' Gifu Media Cosmos (Gifu City 40-5 Tsukasa-machi, Gifu City, 500-8076)
- Contact : Gifu International Association : Ichiki san
TEL : 058-214-7703
E-mail: giagia200711@yahoo.co.jp

We are currently open for questions and consultations, so contact us at the address below.

Editing and Publication

Gifu International Center (GIC)

Gifu Prefectural Consultation Center for Foreign Residents
Gifu Prefectural Japanese Learning Support Center

Gifu Chunichi Building 2F, 1-12 Yanagase dori, Gifu shi, PO 500-8875

Phone +81-58-214-7700 FAX 058-263-8067

E-mail gic@gic.or.jp

URL <https://www.gic.or.jp/en/>

Opens Sunday-Friday 9:30 ~ 18:00

Closed Saturdays, Holidays, New Years

Languages: English, Chinese, Portuguese, Tagalog, Vietnamese

