

Changes to the International Driving Permit Regulations in Japan

Changes have been made to the International Driving Permit (IDP) regulations, as of June 1st, 2002. These changes affect those American residents who live abroad in Japan for more than one year consecutively.

The period in which one can use an IDP in Japan is one year from the date of entry into Japan or until the IDP expires, whichever comes first. However, after revision, the date of entry into Japan excludes any re-entry date for those (with Alien Registration) who leave Japan and re-enter Japan within three months.

Prior to June 1st, if an individual left and re-entered Japan within three months, the date of re-entry was considered to be the date of entry, thus driving on a renewed IDP was possible.

However, this is no longer applicable. In effect, participants entering their second or third year will not be able to drive legally with an IDP unless they have left Japan for three months or longer before re-entering. In these cases, participants may want to obtain a Japanese driver's license.

To obtain a Japanese driver's license, the individual must possess a valid driver's license issued by an overseas authority, contact the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre (Menkyo Shaken Senta) of the Prefectural Police and pass the necessary examinations, which may involve a written test and/or practical road test. Please note that you may need proof that you have resided in the country where your overseas license was issued for at least three months (e.g. documents such as a passport indicating period of stay). For more details con-

cerning examination locations and times, application procedures, necessary documents, fees and examination languages, please contact your prefectural Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre.

Optional Automobile Insurance

In the event of a car accident resulting in injury to another party due to negligence on your part, amount of compensation to the victim(s) can reach an astronomical sum. The compulsory third-party automobile liability insurance (*jibai seki hoken*) may not cover the total amount of compensation required. Therefore, in addition to compulsory liability insurance, it is strongly recommended that you take out optional/voluntary insurance (*ninni no jidosha hoken*) to cover the costs that compulsory insurance does not. Please check to see which insurance policies you are covered by.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT (IDP)

If you have a driving license from any of the following 20 countries, submission of documents and an eye examination only are needed to obtain the equivalent Japanese license:

- France
- Italy
- Luxemburg
- Ireland
- Portugal
- Iceland
- New Zealand
- Germany
- Belgium
- United Kingdom
- Greece
- Sweden
- Finland
- Austria
- Switzerland
- Netherlands
- Denmark
- Spain
- Norway
- Australia

Rules of the Road

It is your responsibility to be aware of the rules of the road. To obtain a copy of the Rules of the Road manual, please contact:

Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) Headquarters

3-5-8 Shiba-koen, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0011 JAPAN

Tel: +81-3-3436-2811

<http://www.jaf.or.jp/e/list.htm>

The book is available in English, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese and Persian and costs 1,000 yen (tax included), plus postage.

SPOTLIGHT: Yokosuka Internship, Summer 2002

A Summer of Surprises

By Norman Eaton

Last summer, I had the opportunity to participate in the Summer Internship Program sponsored by the Japan Local Government Center in New York. Although the internship wasn't quite what I expected, it turned out to be a lot of fun and a great learning experience.

The objective of the Program was for the intern to learn about local government in Japan. I interpreted this to mean that I would spend time talking with various officials in City Hall to learn about local government structure and practices. Also, since I was studying for a master of business administration (MBA), I was particularly interested in what types of policies were being implemented in Yokosuka to support the local economy.

My supervisors in Yokosuka had a different concept about what I should learn and how I should go about learning it. They held the view that I should get a well-rounded understanding of the entire administration before concentrating on any one part. While I was eager to focus on economic policies and business issues, they suggested that I also learn about uses of information technology, environmental

policies, and emergency procedures.

As soon as I arrived at the airport, I assisted in a conference hosted by Yokosuka City on electronic government that showcased how the Internet was being used to increase efficiency, save money, and develop services



The author, Mr. Norman Eaton (right), is unaware of the peril that awaits him as he tries out a high-pressure fire extinguisher at the fire station in Yokosuka.

in the city. The participants who had come from all over Japan and the guest speaker from the United Kingdom were all extremely impressed by how Yokosuka was blazing the trail to utilize the Internet to improve everything from the public works bidding process to local elections.

Later, I took a tour of the local recycling plant called "Aicle" (nicknamed by the citizens: meaning "love recycling" in Japanese), which is one of the most technically advanced in the world. I was

fascinated by the efficiency of the plant and amazed by the infectious enthusiasm of the director as he led us through the facility. I had no idea that Yokosuka had one of the most strict and comprehensive waste-reduction and recycling programs in Japan.

Near the end of my internship, I spent a day learning about disaster prevention systems and emergency response procedures. The firemen at the fire station seemed to enjoy it when I turned pale as they raised me up 20 stories on the rescue ladder or when I almost fell over trying out the high-pressure fire extinguisher. The tour of the fire station was definitely the most fun and memorable

part of the internship. I was also impressed by the realistic and exciting disaster training facility that Yokosuka operates.

Looking back, some of the things that I wasn't very interested in proved to be the most educational parts of the internship. Thanks to my "unfocused" supervisors, I ended up learning much more last summer than I had ever expected. I also discovered that too much structure and concentration results in missed opportunities.

JETAA Chicago

Update of Recent Activities

by David Shumaker
JETAA Chicago President

On behalf of the Chicago Chapter of JETAA, I would like to thank JLGC and CLAIR for giving us this opportunity to update other chapters on our recent activities.

This past year has been an exciting one here in Chicago. We were fortunate enough to host the first ever JETAA US National Conference in June with delegates from 14 of the 18 US chapters in attendance. With the support of CLAIR, the JLGC, and our local Consulate, we were able to build a more cohesive national organization and resolve some long-range goals that will help guide us as a group down the road. In November, Chicago was pleased to send a representative from our Wisconsin sub-chapter to the International Conference in Vancouver, Canada. Hopefully all these exchanges will not only help to re-energize our local chapter, but also build a better foundation to take the organization as a whole to the next level.

In September, we held our annual welcome back barbeque for new returnees in a new location. For the first time, we moved to Hyde Park, combining a very successful afternoon of brats and burgers with a chance to volunteer at Jackson Park's Osaka Garden Festival. Some people helped make origami with children, while others worked behind the scenes either setting up the performance stage or selling food and drinks to the large crowds that came down for the two-day festival of Japanese culture and games.

Due to the success of our White Day *Yakiniku/Karaoke* Party up in Koreatown, we added a second date this year in October giving those diehard singers another chance to impress us with their talents. The group has actually gotten so large that we can no longer fit in the *karaoke* box's largest room and have to spread out.

Another on-going success is with our monthly Japanese Speaking Club. It's an informal gathering of former JETs, current exchange students from local universities, and all those interested in practicing their Japanese in a different restaurant each month. This January we managed to fill an entire *shabu-shabu* restaurant with eager *nihongo* speakers.

This fall we were pleased to welcome junior and senior high school teachers on the *Mombukagakusho* (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) exchange program to our city once again. Before heading off on their homestays downstate, the teachers shared a picnic with us at the zoo, and got better acquainted with life in the US — while not having to worry about a new language. Later on in the year, the teachers joined us for several more activities, including a session of our Japanese Speaking Club.

Additionally, Chicago continues to support the activities and goals of the Japan Information Center (JIC) in organizing JET Programme information sessions, acting as program judges, and hosting pre-departure orientations for the new crop of JETs. We are most grateful to the staff at the JIC for allowing us to be active participants in promoting the JET Programme.

As we look forward to the coming year, we are eager to continue fostering mutual understanding and international relations between Japan, the US, and the many JET alumni chapters throughout the world.



JETAA Chicago and friends gather for the very popular Japanese Speaking Club nights at *Shabuya Restaurant*.



JETAA Chicago Logo

Matsuyama City



Matsuyama
City Emblem

Matsuyama City, with an area of 289.35 km² (111.7 mi²) and a population of more than 460,000, is located on the Matsuyama Plain in the middle of Ehime Prefecture on Shikoku Island. Matsuyama has the largest population of any city in Shikoku. The trip from Tokyo to Matsuyama takes about 80 minutes by airplane.

To the east of Matsuyama lies the Shikoku Mountains including Mt. Ishizuchi, the highest mountain in western Japan. Mt. Ishizuchi faces the calm Seto Inland Sea and its many beautiful islands. The Shigenobu and Ishite Rivers flow from east to west through the Matsuyama Plain.

Matsuyama has a mild climate, which is characteristic of the Seto Inland Sea region. It has an average temperature of 15.8 °C (60.5°F) and the average annual precipitation is 1,286 mm (50.6 in), with a lot of rain in June and only a little in January. The city receives little snow and few typhoons.

Matsuyama City is known for its historic castle, literary heritage, and hot springs. Matsuyama Castle is the city's most recognized landmarks. The main castle building of Matsuyama Castle has been designated as an important national cultural property. It sits 132m (433 ft) high, on the flat-top of Katsuyama Hill, in the center of the city. It was constructed from 1602 to 1627 and is known as being one of only three multi-wing castles. The castle attracts many visitors and is especially popular when the cherry blossoms are in bloom.

Matsuyama also has the Dogo Hot Springs area, which is one of the oldest hot

springs in the country and is even mentioned in Japan's oldest book, "Nihon Shoki." The symbolic heart of the spring is "Dogo Onsen Honkan", which was built in the Meiji era (1894) and is recognized as an important national cultural asset. The top of the main building is decorated with the legendary white heron and a large drum is beaten at 6 every morning to announce the opening of the bath. More than 1,300,000 people enjoy a bath here every year.

Matsuyama is also famous for being the birthplace of Shiki Masaoka, the father of a modern Japanese *haiku* (17-syllable poetry). Modern *haiku* was developed in Matsuyama largely because of Shiki's efforts. *Haiku* was a fixed-verse form and a familiar genre to most people. Plunging himself into an environment where none of the elite scholars of his day paid any attention to *haiku*, Shiki attempted to gain the blessing of the literary community by synthesizing the past achievements of *haiku* with a modern scientific approach. In addition to Shiki, Matsuyama also takes pride in having produced other leading *haiku* poets.

Novelist Souseki Natsume was one of Shiki's friends and today Soseki's portrait is printed on the one thousand yen bill. Souseki wrote the novel "Botchan", which was set in Matsuyama. This novel was written based on his experience as an English teacher in Matsuyama, and the novel is viewed as one



Dogo Onsen Honkan, built in the Meiji era, is an important cultural asset in Matsuyama's Dogo Hot Springs.

of his most important works. "Botchan" is still well-known today.

For more information and background, see the Matsuyama City website: <http://www.city.matsuyama.ehime.jp/eng/frame.html>.



**Featured
in this
issue:**