

The Hyogo International Association's Cultural Exchange Publication

# ComeHIA

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Sharing information in multiple languages

Including やさしい日本語

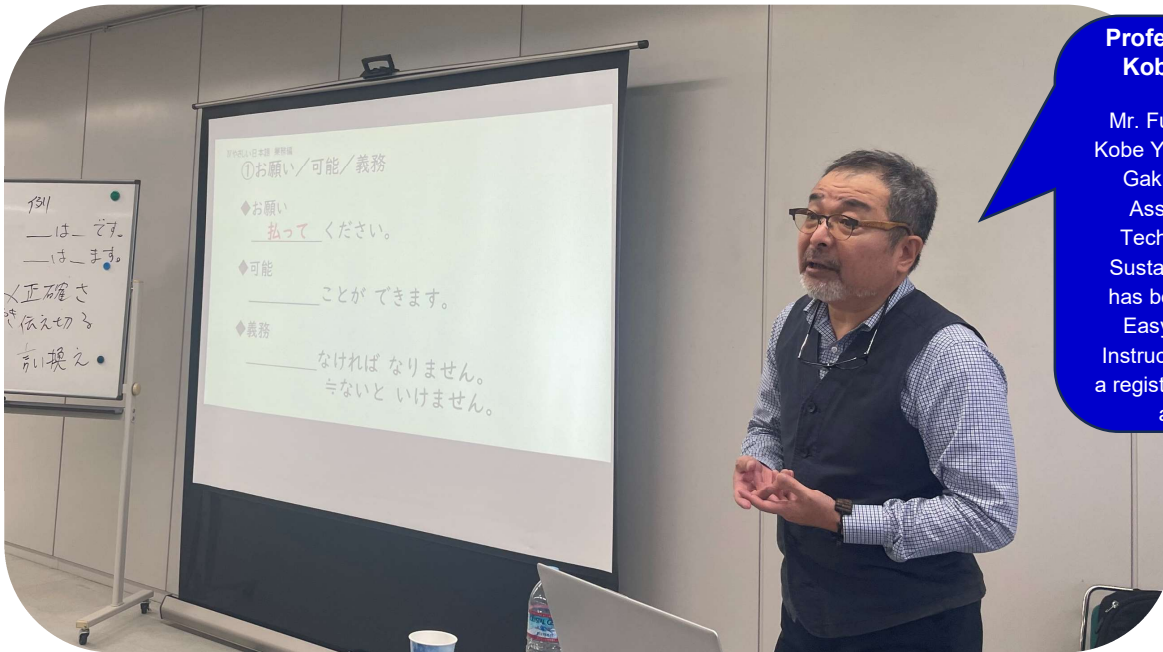
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# HIA is focused on providing information in multiple languages!

The number of foreign residents in Hyogo Prefecture has reached a record high of 127,090 people (as at 30 June 2023), and it is becoming more important to broadcast information in multiple languages. One of the languages we can use when providing information is 「やさしい日本語」 "easy Japanese". This time, we would like to have Professor. Takeshi Fukui from Kobe YWCA Academy to explain 「やさしい日本語」 that is easy to understand for foreigners.



## Professor. Takeshi Fukui Kobe YWCA Academy

Mr. Fukui taught Japanese at Kobe YWCA Academy, Kwansai Gakuin University, and the Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships. He has been an instructor for the Easy Japanese Promotion Instructor Dispatch Project and a registered Japanese instructor at HIA Since 2016.

## 【Languages in which foreigners prefer to receive information】

Easy Japanese  
76%

English  
76%

Japanese  
22%

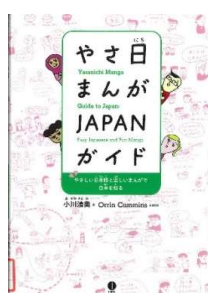
Source: Agency for Cultural Affairs "Easy Japanese Guidelines for Residence Support"

Do you know the background of how the concept of やさしい日本語 started? In January 1995, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake struck. At that time, it is said that the necessary information did not get delivered to the foreigners living in the affected areas. For example, even if we say, 「余震に注意」"Be careful with aftershocks" or 「避難場所に速やかに移動してください」"Please move to an evacuation site immediately" you can imagine that many foreigners will not be able to understand it correctly and quickly. From this experience, the idea of やさしい日本語 was created. Since then, as the number of foreigners living in Japan has increased, やさしい日本語 has become more widespread, not only in the event of a disaster, but also in everyday life, such as the rules for garbage disposal, and used by the service counter staff at government offices and hospitals when dealing with foreigners.

Until recently, there may have been a preconception that we Japanese people had to use English when communicating with foreigners. However, the number of foreigners living in Japan who are not good at English is increasing, and many of them can speak Japanese to some extent. At the same time, it is still difficult to understand the Japanese we normally use even if they speak Japanese. Therefore, it is necessary for us Japanese speakers to be mindful of using やさしい日本語 and being creative when talking to foreigners. From the figures on the left, you can see there is a high demand for easy Japanese from the foreigners when receiving information.

## We've curated an array of 「やさしい」 "easy" books!

From the collection at the Hyogo International Plaza, we present titles focused on the theme of 「やさしい」 "easy".



「やさ日まんがJAPANガイド : やさしい日本語と楽しいまんがで日本を知る」"Yasanichi Manga JAPAN Guide to Japan : Yasashii Nihongo to Tanoshii Manga de Nihon wo Shiru" (Written by Kiyomi Ogawa / Published by IBC Publishing)

This book allows foreigners to explore various aspects of Japanese life through manga, offering clarity on topics they may find challenging. Available in both Japanese and English.



「パラipanmanma」"Paripanmanma" (Written and illustrated by Gee-eun Lee/ Translated by Myonhou Shin and Yukiko Hiromatsu / Published by Poplar Publishing)

Dive into the world of small marshmallows as they encounter a creature uttering mysterious words in their village. What will their reaction be?

## What should we do for easier translation?

We introduce some tips for using 「やさしい日本語」 "Easy Japanese" in the quiz below

### Point 1

#### Using Non-verbal communication

**Q** 「歯ブラシって何ですか」  
"What is a toothbrush?"

If foreign people asked you this, how would you explain it? It has a lot of brushes on the top of the stick, and you can brush your teeth with it. It might be difficult for them to understand clearly what it is. So, you can otherwise use more non-verbal communication rather than just explaining the word itself.

For example, you can use gestures, facial expressions and pictures.



**A** You can use a gesture when you explain it.

### Point 2

#### Avoid using honorifics, use simple grammar patterns 「～は～です」 "A is B" form

**Q** 「リーさんはどちらに住んでいらっしゃるんですか」  
"Would you mind if I ask you where Mr. Lee lives in?"

Overly polite form and honorifics is hard to understand for foreigners. You could ask simply 「リーさんはどこに住んでいますか」 "Where does Mr. Lee live?", using a basic grammar structure, 「～は～ですか」, "A is B?"

E.g. 「私は田中です」 "This is Tanaka"  
「家は神戸です」 "My house is in Kobe"  
「仕事は日本語の先生です」 "My job is a Japanese teacher"

They all use 「～は～です」 form

Almost all of the basic Japanese textbooks for foreign learners start with this chapter, 「～は～です」 "A is B". So, this is the simplest Japanese sentence expression.

**A** 「リーさんの家はどこですか」 "Where is Mr. Lee's house?"

### Point 3

#### One piece of information per sentence

**Q** 「エレベーターに乗って、8階に行ったら、事務所があるので、そこで聞いてください。」 "If you take the elevator to the eighth floor, there is an office, so you can ask there."

You can divide this sentence into 4 shorter sentences using a simple grammar structure. It is likely to reduce misunderstanding. This method is similar to Point 2 that you just learned above "A is B". This is better because it has only one piece of information per sentence.

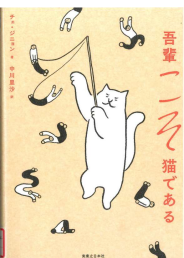
**A** 「エレベーターに乗ります。8階に行きます。事務所があります。事務所で聞いてください」 "Take the elevator. Go to the eighth floor. There is an office. You can ask questions there."

There are many ways to use easy Japanese. Try to be flexible and think creatively!



「吾輩こそ猫である」  
"Wagahai Koso Neko de Aru" (Written by Jinyong Che/ Translated by Risa Nakagawa / Published by Jitsugyo no Nihon Sha)

Delve into this mostly illustrated work pondering the challenges of being human. Enjoy the visuals and remember to be kind to yourself.



「サボる」防災で、生きる：キャンプで楽しく学ぶ、災害に備える力  
"Saboru" Bousai De, Ikiru : Camp De Tanoshiku Manabu, Saigai Ni Sonaeru Chikara (Written by Hajime Sangawa and Setsuko Sangawa / Published by Shufu to Seikatsu Sha)

Explore strategies for preparing for emergencies in everyday life and during camping adventures. Equip yourself with the necessary skills and resources for when disaster strikes.



**Hyogo International Plaza**  
Join us at the Hyogo International Plaza for our special monthly themed corner. Stay tuned for more exciting themes!

For opening times and other details



## A Window into Multiculturalism



We are introducing the "Regional Japanese Language Coordinator Development Workshop" intended for teachers at International Associations who are responsible for teaching useful Japanese necessary for daily life to foreign citizens living in Hyogo.

### We've launched Japanese language courses tailored for everyday life!

At HIA, we hold the "Practical Japanese Language Course" annually, designed specifically for those seeking to learn Japanese for their daily needs. Participants include foreign residents eager to enhance their Japanese skills, local community supporters lending a hand as classroom assistants, and experienced Japanese instructors. This year, the course ran for a total of 18 days in September 2023, attracting 11 foreign residents.

During the course, we utilized the textbook "Dekiru? Dekita!! Kurashi No Nihongo" (Can You Do It? I've Done It! Everyday Japanese) delving into 10 real-life scenarios. For instance, on "Taking the Train" themed lesson, we covered phrases like "Does this train stop at XX station?" Similarly, on "Shopping" days, we practiced useful expressions such as "Where can I find the milk?" Interacting with classmates and supporters, we unearthed numerous practical insights, like "Are local and rapid trains priced the same?" or "Does the seal on meat packaging signify a 10% discount?"

Despite diverse backgrounds and ages among participants, everyone embraced the 18-day intensive course with enthusiasm and collaboration, fostering a dynamic environment for mutual learning and growth.

#### ① Let's try sorting the garbage according to the rules



#### ② Let's try reading the information on the flyer



#### ③ Let's try buying a train ticket



## See! Read! Coordinator for International Relations

### Let's make Hakka cuisine with the Coordinator for International Relations (CIR)!

On December 2, 2023, we held an event titled "Cooking with CIRs, Hakka Cuisine." Hakka cuisine originates from the native dishes of the Hakka people living in Guangdong, Jiangxi, and Fujian provinces of China, as well as in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia.

At this event, we made a popular Hakka dish, "Egg Dumpling Soup" with the CIR Ms. Li Xia, who hails from the Hakka community. Participants, many of whom were interested in Chinese cuisine or studying Chinese, worked together in groups, thoroughly enjoying the cooking process.

In recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, various events have been canceled, and it had been four years since HIA had organized an event where people could interact directly. Perhaps due to this suspension, we received numerous requests from participants to organize similar events in the future. We aim to continue hosting international exchange events that everyone can enjoy even more in the future.



Cooking Together



Egg Dumpling Soup

### Welcome our new CIR! A New CIR has arrived

Hello!

My name is Ethan Shuley and I'm a Coordinator for International Relations. I'm originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, but I've been living in Utah for the past five years.

There are six of us in my family, and I am the eldest son. I have many hobbies, but I'm especially into running, taking photos, reading, and learning languages. Since moving to Hyogo Prefecture in August 2023, Japan has been treating me to something new every day. This is my first time living in Japan.

As a Coordinator for International Relations, I hope to interact with many people during my stay. I also hope to discover similarities between Japan and America, as well as between Japanese people and myself.

I look forward to meeting you!



### SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank the following HIA volunteer translators for their assistance with this volume's publication; we would not have been able to produce it without their help.

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