

ICO NEWS

07/10 No. 211

October 2007

RIKEN

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Autumn in Japan

Autumn is a season when people in Japan enjoy a lot of activities, because the weather becomes cooler and more comfortable after the humid summer. There is an idea that people are inclined to lead more productive lives in this season, and this may be true.

October 8 is a national holiday, *Taiiku-no-hi* (sports day). This was established by the Japanese government to commemorate the opening day of the Tokyo Olympics on October 10, 1964. October 10 was a national holiday for more than 30 years until 2000, when the government decided to change the date to the second Monday in October so that people could have a long weekend.

Many schools, kindergartens, companies, and local communities hold athletic festivals around *Taiiku-no-hi*, with programs including running races and other individual compe-

titions as well as group competitions like relays, and performances of creative dancing and folk dances. Schools and kindergartens also have competitions for parents. Parents are very busy on the day, preparing *bento* (lunch boxes), cheering their children joining in the parents' competitions, and taking pictures and videos to record the day's events.

In addition, Japanese people also enjoy an "imported" event this month: Halloween. The truth is that many of them do not know the original meaning of the event, but in recent years this seasonal festivity has really taken root in Japan. The photo on the right is a seasonal display at *Vuona Vita*, a variety store in front of Wako-shi station (September 2007).



Ask ICO Room

ICO Room staff are happy to help if you have any questions or problems. Please visit or send e-mail to icoroom@riken.jp. Tel. ext. 2788/2789 or (048) 467-9481. Open 10am to 5pm (without a lunch break) Monday to Friday. Room 133/5, Main Research Building. Ask for Takada-san or Otsuka-san.

This month I'll tell you about Japanese convenience stores. This might be especially useful for newcomers to Japan. You may have already noticed that Japanese convenience stores are very convenient. Many of them are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Even after other shops are closed, you can get toiletries, over-the-counter medicines, snacks, drinks, or hot meals. I know one workaholic bachelor who eats convenience store food for every meal. My niece goes to a cram school every evening, so she always gets dinner from a convenience store. I'm sure they can't live without them.

Did you know that convenience stores provide many other services besides selling the goods that are on display? You can transfer, deposit, or withdraw money at their ATMs. They have printers and photocopiers that you can use for making copies, sending faxes, or even printing photos from CD-ROMs or memory sticks. Some stores provide postal services. You can send parcels and buy stamps or postcards, or pick up packages delivered by courier companies. You can even buy tickets for events like sumo or concerts.

One of the most popular services is bill payment. You can pay utility bills at convenience stores without any handling fee. Bills for internet shopping or catalog shopping can be usually paid in convenience stores too. Of course, paying by credit card is even more convenient. But getting a Japanese credit card is not as easy as you might think if you do not have any credit history in Japan.

The other day, one researcher came into ICO Room and asked me about discount international phonecards. He said, "I want to order a card over the internet and be able to make international calls straight away. My colleague told me I would need a Japanese credit card, but I don't have one. Is that really the only way to get a phonecard?" No. You don't need a credit card. You can order a phonecard over the internet and make international calls straight away immediately if you choose to pay at convenience stores. Most international phonecards can be charged at convenience stores using a system called "Smart Pit."

Services vary between shops, so please ask the staff, or in ICO Room, if you want to find whether a particular service is available at a particular shop. Anyway, I hope you will make good use of convenience stores in your life in Japan!
(Yoko Otsuka)

Notices from the internal website

Spam mail quarantine

The Advanced Center for Computing and Communication has started a spam mail quarantine service on an experimental basis, on the mail server Postman (for @riken.jp e-mail addresses only; not for addresses that do not end in @riken.jp). Postman quarantines spam mail before it gets delivered to users. Once this feature is enabled, you do not have to filter spam mail, because it will be blocked before it arrives at your PC. To use this service, open your browser, log in to the system, and click the Properties tab then the Spam filter link, and check the Filtering box. Press the OK button to finalize the setup.

Consultation for inventors at Yokohama Institute

The Intellectual Property Development and Management Team in CIPS holds regular consultations for inventors every other Thursdays. It offers advice not only on inventions, but also on the procedures for applying for patents within RIKEN and general queries about patents. In order to preserve confidentiality, consultations are for individuals only. In October, consultations will be held on Thursday, October 4 and 18 at 10am-5pm in room C212, Central Research Building, RIKEN Yokohama Institute. For advance reservations phone ext. (91-)3923 (Wako, Mr. Fujita) or e-mail chizai@riken.jp; for same-day reservations phone ext. (94-)2224 (Yokohama Planning Section). For schedules of consultations on other campuses see the internal websites.

Changes in regulations for visiting personnel

On August 23 the Personnel Administration Section announced changes in regulations for visiting personnel with regard to honorariums, travel expenses, living allowances and accommodation. This will be important for team leaders or senior researchers who invite foreign researchers to their laboratory or team. However, if you are a visiting researcher yourself, it could also be important to know about these changes to RIKEN regulations.

Others

There are also notices on the internal website regarding how to apply for external funds and application deadlines, seminars, lectures and special meetings, and consultation schedules, and recent issues of internal newsletters and reports. See <http://common.riken.jp/>.

**Next Recycling Fair: October 26
at lunchtime in ICO Room**

Bring items you no longer need, and pick up things that are useful for you.

Events in October

Wako and Saitama prefecture

Carrying an *omikoshi* portable shrine

The annual festival of Kumano Jinja shrine in Wako will be held on **Sunday Oct 7**. The festival committee is now recruiting people who would like to participate by carrying the portable shrine. Participants will leave the shrine around 3pm and carry the *omikoshi* on their shoulders for about two hours. If there is anyone who wants to participate, please contact ICO Room (icoroom@riken.jp).

Oct 8 (Mon, national holiday) Wako Citizens' Sports Festival at Wako city sports ground (facing the south side of the RIKEN campus). Starts at 8:45am. The program of events and other information will be published on Oct 1 in the monthly city newsletter and on the Wako city website. Contact ICO Room for more details.

Oct 13 (Sat) Saita-matsuri 2007 at Saitama Super Arena. This is a "matsuri summit" of festivals from all over Japan. There will be a big parade, stage performances, photo and painting competitions, food stalls, flea markets, and much more. In front of Saitama Shintoshin Station. <http://saitamatsuri.jp/> (J)

Oct 14 (Sun) Inauguration of the Railway Museum in Saitama-shi. Walk from Omiya Station. <http://www.railway-museum.jp/> (Eng/Chi/Kor)

Oct 20 (Sat)–21 (Sun) Kawagoe Matsuri. One of the most impressive festivals in Saitama. Enjoy beautiful *dashi* floats and lively festival sounds. The *dashi* are especially spectacular at night when they are lit up with traditional lanterns. Tobu Tojo Line Kawagoe station or Seibu Hon-kawagoe station. <http://www.city.kawagoe.saitama.jp/> (Eng)

Tokyo

Oct 20 (Sat)–28 (Sun) 20th Tokyo International Film Festival at Shibuya Bunkamura, Roppongi Hills, and other locations. <http://www.tiff-jp.net/en/>

Oct 29 (Sat)–30 (Sun) Edo Tenka matsuri at Hibiya koen park. 10am to 7pm. *Dashi* floats parade, Japanese drum performance, flea market, and other events. <http://www.mm-chiyoda.or.jp/>

Yokohama

Oct 1 (Mon) 国慶節 Kokkei-setsu (China National Day) China's foundation as a nation is celebrated with Chinese lion and dragon dance parades in Yokohama Chinatown from 4pm to 8pm. Five-minute walk from Isesaki-cho station on the JR Negishi line. <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e3201.html>

Oct 6 (Sat)–7 (Sun) World Festa Yokohama 2007 at Yamashita koen park, organized by the Yokohama Chamber of Commerce and Industry. 10am to 5pm. A big festival of world foods and amusements. food stalls, traditional music, and dance performances from all over the world. JR Negishi line Kannai station or Ishikawa-cho station. <http://www.yokohama-cci.or.jp/> (J)

Oct 7 (Sun) Tsurumi 80th Anniversary festival at Kagetsuen koen park, Tsurumi-ku. 10am to 4pm. Stage performances, a big parade, world food market, and more.

All about RIKEN's administrative departments

13. The Contract Management Division

The Contract Management Division consists of Contract Section I and Contract Section II. Each of these sections has three subsections. To put it simply, Contract Section I is in charge of contracts for purchasing things, and Contract Section II manages contracts for services and construction work. Their offices are on the third floor of the Main Research Building in Wako.

Contract Section I

This section is in charge of contracts for buying goods, manufacture, repairs, maintenance, and leasing of supplies and equipment. It oversees the purchase of research equipment, reagents, and office supplies, and keeps track of lease and maintenance contracts for photocopiers and other machines.

Contract Section II

This section supervises contracts for building design, construction and maintenance, and the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of facilities. It oversees contracts for security and cleaning. Specifically, Contract Section II is in charge of contracts for measurements and studies, the care and feeding of experimental animals, security, cleaning, land and building lease, facilities maintenance, and the cafeterias.

What happens when you want to buy something

The above paragraphs may not mean very much to you, since in labs most of this kind of work is done by assistants. So here is a brief explanation of the procedures. Suppose you need a new piece of lab equipment. You cannot just order it from any vendor or shop you like, nor can you just pay for it yourself. This is because most of RIKEN's money comes from taxes, so we are strictly accountable for all our expenditure. We always have to be able to explain why we chose a particular vendor.

So what do you do? First you have to explain what you need, where you will use it, and when you need it. What forms have to be filled out depends on the estimated cost of the item. If it costs more than a million yen, you use an order form, and if it costs more than three million yen you have to fill out a contract and an estimate form. In both cases, if you need certain specifications or a certain product brand, you have to submit documents to explain the reasons.

If the estimated cost is less than five million yen, you have to get quotations from several vendors so that we can compare the prices. If the estimated cost is five million yen or more, the order has to be opened up to bidding.

If the item is estimated to cost 16 million yen or more, you need to get a government procurement contract, which can take three or four months. If the estimated cost is 130 million yen or more, you have to apply for special procurement funding from the government. This can take five or six months to be approved.

Why do we need all these procedures?

There have recently been many reports in the news about fraud related to research funding at Japanese institutes and universities. Scientists have set up fake deals to get refunds for purchases that they never made, padded their expenses, and committed other types of fraud. The government has demanded rigorous controls, and RIKEN has set up measures to prevent these kinds of illegal activities. The purposes of RIKEN's contract procedures are to prevent fraud, ensure transparency, and encourage competition.

Starting this fiscal year, the Contract Management Division has been making inspections to confirm that items purchased with external funding are actually being delivered to labs. It is no longer sufficient for us to verify orders and deliveries just by examining purchase vouchers, since there have been cases of fake vouchers and cases where the items delivered were different from what was written on the voucher. The new inspection system may seem a nuisance and make you feel as if you are being suspected of wrongdoing. But we have to ensure transparency in all transactions at RIKEN. If fraudulent activity is discovered, the government would require a full audit that might go back five or even ten years. They might even decide to stop all funding for the institute. These possibilities are clearly worse than any minor inconvenience, so we hope you will understand and cooperate.

Too close a relationship with a vendor can also lead to trouble if special favors are offered and accepted. It is best to maintain a businesslike and transparent relationship with all vendors. Consult the Auditing and Compliance Office if you need advice.

Advice and further information

If you regularly purchase the same item several times during the fiscal year, you may be able to make a unit price contract. This will save you from having to fill out a voucher each time, and you can get discounts for large orders. Another option recommended by the Contract Management Division is to buy eco-friendly items that come under the Law on Promoting Green Purchasing. You are also encouraged to support local small businesses by giving them a chance to get your orders.

Additional information is available on the Contract Management Division's website (currently only in Japanese), and there is a very useful *Finance and Contract Management Guidebook* at <http://common.riken.jp/office/accounting-sect/kaikei/document/060901Guidebook.pdf>

A message from the Contract Management Division

Our policy is to work with you to find the best way to meet your needs. The rules have become stricter over the years, and we have less flexibility than before. But we are always looking for ways to support your research within the limitations of RIKEN's rules and budgets. We sometimes have to visit labs to check on the delivery of your orders, so your understanding and cooperation are much appreciated.

A word from the ICO News Editor

This was my first time to talk with anyone in the Contract Management Division. My only contact with them had been sending purchase vouchers. I don't know much about contracts, so I was a bit uneasy about this interview. However, the manager of Contract Section I was very friendly and helpful and gave me a clear explanation of the division's work. He used to work in the Harima Research Promotion Division, and was in charge of taking care of Harima's foreign researchers and their families, helping with nursery school and kindergarten applications, housing, shopping, and so on. He had been providing the same kinds of services as ICO Room in Wako.

Foreign researchers at RIKEN do not often have to deal directly with administrative departments. But I hope this series of articles is helping to make them less mysterious and more familiar. Next month: all about the Policy Planning Division.

Newcomers

Arriving between August 26 to September 25, and staying more than three months

Nitcha	Chamreo	Thailand	Microbe Division	BRC
Lundby	Alicia	Denmark	Neuronal Circuit Dynamics	BSI
Voultsidou	Marotesa	Greece	Human Brain Dynamics	BSI
Niu	Rong	牛 榮 China	Chemical Genetics	DRI
Hu	Muhong	胡 木宏 China	Atomic Physics	DRI
Liu	Ching-Yuan	劉 青原 Taiwan	Advanced Elements Chemistry	DRI
Chang	Wei-Chiao	張 偉嶠 Taiwan	Genetics of Allergic Diseases	SRC

Just arrived

Nitcha Chamreonsaksri, Thailand
Microbe Division, Biological Systems, BRC
Period of stay: 6 months

What are you going to be researching at RIKEN?

Identification and characterization of moderately halophilic bacteria.

How does Japan compare to your home country?

In Japan you have more green area in the cities than in Thailand.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Taking a walk or watching TV.



Liu Suet Yi, Macau
Chemical Dynamics Laboratory, DRI
Period of stay: 1 year

What is your impression of RIKEN?

Grand, beautiful and well-organized.

How does Japan compare to your home country?

Japan is bigger than my country, and most Japanese treat travelers politely and kindly.

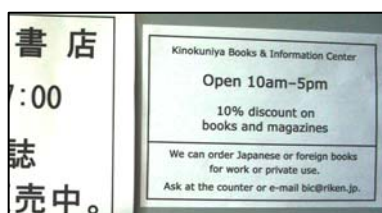
What places in Japan do you want to visit?

Disneyland, to fulfill my childhood dream.

Do you have any other particular plans for while you are in Japan?

Learning Japanese, doing good research and accommodating to the Japanese lifestyle.

This month's photos



Some useful new signs in English

The Welfare Section has recently put up several new English signs and notices in the cafeteria building and in other locations on the Wako campus. Next to the ATM there are now notices that tell you what services are available, what the charges are, and what cards can be used. There are several new English signs in the main cafeteria. The first-aid kits in Wako now have text in English and Chinese as well as Japanese. (Incidentally, anyone can use these first-aid kits for free!)

Of course, there are still many more signs and notices that need to be translated into English. Please send your suggestions and requests to ICO Room (icoroom@riken.jp) or ICO News (iconews@riken.jp). We will pass your suggestions on to the appropriate departments.

October 22 is RIKEN foundation day

RIKEN was established in 1917 as a private foundation supported by the Imperial Household. On October 21, 1958 it was re-organized as a semi-public, non-profit-making organization supported by the Japanese Government under the special 'RIKEN Law'. Although RIKEN was re-organized again as an independent administrative institution under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2003, every year this anniversary is still celebrated as a RIKEN holiday. From 2001, RIKEN has decided to celebrate this day on the fourth Monday of October, and so this year it will be on Monday 22.

Sendai

Oct 6 (Sat)–7 (Sun) Michinoku Yosakoi Matsuri This is a kind of dance carnival. Enjoy watching the lively dances with *yosakoi* music and *naruko* (hand-held clappers). The dancers' costumes vary from traditional *happi* and kimono to modern western-style wear. <http://www.michinoku-yosakoi.net/>

Oct 6 (Sat)–8 (Mon, national holiday) Sendai Classic Music Festival 2007 101 concerts in 3 days from morning till evening. Each show lasts 45 minutes. Advanced tickets ¥1000 (some shows are free). <http://sencla.com/en/>

Nagoya

Oct 13 (Sat)–14 (Sun) Nagoya Matsuri Big parade featuring historical samurai costumes, stage events and more. Nagoya castle, zoo, and other facilities will be open to the public admission free. <http://www.nagoya-festival.jp/top.htm>

Kobe and Kansai region

Oct 5 (Fri)–7 (Sun) Kobe Jazz Street. Kobe is considered the home of Japanese jazz. This big jazz festival dates back to 1982, and this year features more than 400 performers. Walk from Sannomiya Station. **Oct 5 festival eve** from 7pm to 10pm at Shin-kobe Oriental Hotel. **Main festival Oct 6 (Sat) and 7 (Sun).** Parade starts at 11am from the north door of Hankyu Sannomiya department store. One day pass ¥4600 (in advance, ¥4000). Two-day pass ¥8500 (¥7400). For more details see <http://www.kobejazzstreet.gr.jp/> (J).

Oct 13 (Sat) Midosuji Parade, a major parade in Osaka. See <http://www.osaka21.or.jp/> (J).

Oct 14 (Sun)–15 (Mon) Himeji Nada Matsuri Traditional floats feature in this festival at Matsubara Hachiman in Himeji.

Oct 22 (Mon) Jidai-matsuri, Kyoto One of the most famous festivals in Kyoto. A big parade of people wearing traditional and historical Kyoto costumes and makeup to represent nobles, princesses, and commoners. On the same day in Kyoto, **Kurama-no-himatsuri (Fire Festival)** on Mt. Kurama. Details of both festivals can be found on the Kyoto City Tourist Association website at <http://www.kyokanko.or.jp/> (J).

Upcoming events

Nov 10 (Sat)–11 (Sun), Nov 23 (Fri, national holiday) and Dec 12 (Sun) Sai-no-kuni Saitama Chinese Cinema Festival 2007 Nov 10 and 11 at Saitama Kaikan (Urawa), Nov 23 at Kumagaya Bunka Sozo-kan, Dec 2 at Soka Bunka Kaikan. Tickets: ¥800 (day tickets ¥900), ¥1800 for three tickets. Advance tickets are now on sale at Ticket-Pia counters, Family Marts, Circle-K and Sunkus convenience stores. (P-code for buying tickets is P478-025). <http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/A02/BP00/chinesemovie2007/>

LUNCH at

a Fancy Restaurant

a Reasonable Price

Nirvana New York in Tokyo Midtown (Roppongi)

Tokyo Midtown is one of the most popular districts in Tokyo at the moment. It opened in March 2007 and features a variety of facilities like shops, restaurants, museums, hotels, offices, and even residences. Once you get there, you can spend all day enjoying yourself, participating in a Tokyo Midtown Tour*, looking around shops, sitting back and having a nice cup of coffee at a cozy café, and having a lovely meal at a fancy restaurant.

There are more than 60 cafés and restaurants in Tokyo Midtown, and they are really full of variety, such as Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Mexican, Pakistani, Indian, Italian, French, and Spanish. Hard to choose one, isn't it? If you are in Midtown and having

a trouble making up your mind, why don't you try Nirvana New York?

Nirvana New York is an Indian restaurant with a lovely exotic atmosphere which offers varied authentic Indian cuisine. The set menus are rather expensive (especially at night time), but the lunch buffet is quite reasonable (¥2,000- / 11am-3pm), and you can enjoy various Indian foods as much as you like! There is a salad bar, *raita* or soup of the day, three types of curry of the day, vegetable plate (hot or cold), steamed rice, naan, and desserts for you to help yourself, and my *osusume* (recommendation) is freshly cooked naan. Its savoriness and delicious chewy texture give you an appetite, and sets off the aromatic spicy flavor of the curry even more.

You can find more information, including menus and the location, on their website:

<http://www.nirvana-newyork.jp/>.

* **Tokyo Midtown Tour:** ¥1,500- (¥700- for primary school children). If you would like an English guide, a reservation has to be made one week in advance (03-3475-3290).

Haruka Okada



The noh drama

Japan has three main types of traditional theatre: kabuki, noh (also written no or nō), and bungaku, which uses puppets. Kabuki is spectacular and melodramatic, and popular in every sense—there is a lot of shouting, and the audience are allowed to talk and eat. Noh is more sophisticated and refined, and in my experience audiences are mostly old people with exquisite manners.

The first time I came to Japan, it was arranged for me and two other people to go to the kabuki and the noh. We first went to the kabuki, and found it long and painful. Afterwards my friend said, "It's pretty clear we're not going to enjoy the noh unless we learn something about it." So we read a book about the noh, and then we enjoyed it.

The book was *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives*, by Kunio Komparu. The author was an architect and a noh actor, and the book is idiosyncratic but fascinating. It introduces aesthetic concepts such as the three stages of *jo-ha-kyu* and the obscure and mystical *yugen*, which is a kind of suggestive, subtle beauty. It explains elements of the drama in detail—for example the stage, costumes, masks, props, and music. Finally it presents the noh as a rich

and unified whole, even a supreme and transcendent art form.

Noh makes very little attempt at realism. It is more like a representation. A fan can be used as a bottle or a cup, and a single step (or even just a pause), can represent a journey of hundreds of miles. Sets are minimal if they are used at all. Characters sometimes speak for other characters, or change between being real and being ghosts. So it is often impossible to understand what is going on unless you know the story in advance.

Noh music consists of a flute, several drums, and the voices of the actors. There is no harmony, and barely any melody. One of the strangest things is that the drummers make inarticulate shouts between beats. The "chanting" of the actors is partway between speaking and singing.

People with refined sensibilities might be able to enjoy the noh without knowing anything about it in advance. But even for them I would recommend reading, in fact memorizing, the story of each play. For myself, I know that if I had not read the book by Kunio Komparu, I would never have liked the noh. I think it is a masterly book. It

brought me from knowing nothing, and being pessimistic about Japanese drama, to enjoying and even being spellbound by the noh.

Edmund Jones



There are about seventy noh theatres in Japan. For example, the Hosho noh theatre (above), near Suidobashi station in Tokyo, provides English synopses for all plays. A full programme of noh lasts all day, but the Hosho theatre sometimes has shorter evening performances, which cost ¥4000 (¥2000 for students).

Bulletin Board

Wako City Tour—an international exchange program

The Wako City Office will be offering an English-guided tour of the city on Saturday November 17. This is a bus tour of temples, shrines, and other cultural locations in the city. The tour is primarily meant for foreign people living or working in Wako, but Japanese residents are welcome to join.

Date and time: Saturday November 17, 9am-4pm

Who can come: Anyone who lives or works in Wako. Children under 13 must be accompanied by adults

Available seats: 26 (18 for foreigners, and 8 for Japanese)

Cost: About ¥500 (please bring your own lunch)

To apply: Give your name, address, age, phone number, and name of employer (i.e.

RIKEN) to the Wako City Jinken-bunka-ka department, by phone, fax, e-mail, or in person. Tel. 048-464-1111 (ext. 2352), fax 048-464-1234, or e-mail: jinken-bunka@city.wako.saitama.jp.

Application period: Oct. 3 to 19, from 8:30am to 5pm

For more information contact the Jinken-bunka-ka or ICO Room.

Nguyen Dinh Dang exhibition

Dr. Nguyen Dinh Dang (Heavy Ion Nuclear Physics Lab, Nishina Center) invites *ICO News* readers to his solo exhibition of paintings entitled "East and West in Me" at H.A.C. Gallery (Minami-Aoyama), from Friday October 26 to Sunday November 4. More information is available at <http://ribf.riken.go.jp/~dang/H.A.C./HACshow.html>.



Nguyen Dinh Dang's painting *The Exit*, for which he was awarded the 2007 Excellent Artist Prize by the Sompo Japan Fine Art Foundation. This prize has been awarded every year since 1977, to the best 36 artists representing 36 leading fine-art associations throughout Japan.

2007, oil on canvas, 162 × 194 cm.

