

Finding Work in Japan

A staffing agency with a difference is helping foreign students – and their potential employers – to find stable employment in Japan.

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IN 2011 in Japan, there were about 160,000 foreign students, a figure which had increased to about 200,000 by 2016. Along with this trend, there has been an increase in the number of foreign students joining Japanese companies after graduation. According to the Japanese Ministry of Justice, the number of foreign students granted residence status for joining Japanese companies is at an all-time high, rising from around 11,600 in 2013 to 12,900 in 2014 and 15,600 in 2015.

Amid this situation, there has also been an increase in the need for services for foreign students seeking jobs in Japan. Fourth Valley Concierge Corporation, a staff-

ing agency founded in 2007, paid quick attention to these needs and provides services to support their search for employment.

“Many global companies operate in Japan. Japan also enjoys high standards for public safety and is an economic power,” says Yohei Shibasaki, CEO of Fourth Valley. “There are many foreign students who hope to work in such an environment.”

Many major Japanese companies recruit people mid-career based on their career history and skills, but their recruitment is mainly focused on new undergraduate and graduate students without job experience beyond internships and part-time jobs.

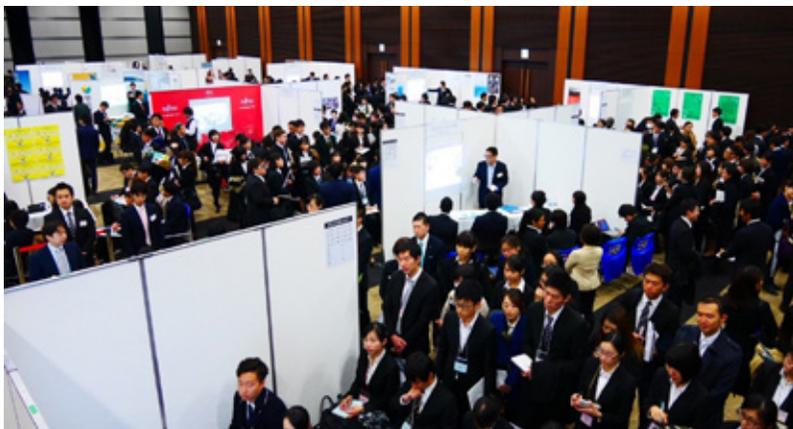


Yohei Shibasaki, CEO of Fourth Valley Concierge
Photo: Courtesy of Fourth Valley Concierge Corporation

Japanese companies employ this recruiting model because they have a system of nurturing employees through in-service training and on-the-job training programs for longtime employment.

“You could say that Japan is the only country in the world that adopts such an employment method and system,” says Shibasaki. “The Japanese corporate culture of recruiting new graduates for long-term employment is also appealing to foreigners who seek stable employment.”

Fourth Valley provides free services to students who are registered on its website, such as seminars through which job-seekers can gather detailed information about finding jobs in Japan, including the schedules for job-seeking activities and corporate interviews, and individual counseling as well as mock examina-



A joint job fair for foreign students held by Fourth Valley Concierge in Tokyo
Photo: Courtesy of Fourth Valley Concierge Corporation

tions and interviews. In addition, Fourth Valley also holds joint job fairs exclusively for foreign students in Japan. Twelve companies participated in the first joint fair held by Fourth Valley in 2009, and the number of companies has increased year by year. Last year about one hundred companies participated with about two thousand foreign students in attendance.

Meet the Students

Many foreign students have joined major Japanese companies through Fourth Valley's services. Ariunaa Munkhbat, a second-year student at the Graduate School of Hitotsubashi University from Mongolia, is one of those students.

"I hoped to get a global job where I can make use of my economic knowledge," says Ariunaa. "I thought it was a good idea to be employed in Japan to achieve this."

Ariunaa came to Japan in 2010 and organized and participated in many international exchange activities, majoring in economics at her undergraduate and graduate schools. She highlighted such experience during her recruiting activities and got a job in a major Japanese insurance company.

"I gained a lot of information about how to prepare for recruiting activities and what I should say in a job interview through the recruiting seminar held by Fourth Valley," says Ariunaa. "I also found it very helpful to listen directly to former foreign students who now work in Japanese companies at the job fair for foreign students in Japan."



Ariunaa Munkhbat (right) and Kang Wooyong

Kang Wooyong, a senior student at Keio University from South Korea, will be employed by a major Japanese automobile manufacturer.

"I wanted to join an automobile manufacturer in the future before I entered a Japanese university," says Kang. "When recruiting people, Japanese companies place an emphasis on students' passions during their school days and what they learned from such experiences. I greatly empathized with Japanese companies' screening of job applicants with a focus on the personalities of students."

Kang also felt that Japanese companies' focus on developing human resources with a long-term perspective is suitable for him. He also found it attractive that Japanese companies have substantial welfare benefit services for their employees, such as the payments of transportation expenses and

housing allowances.

"Recently I have spoken about my job searching experience in Japan with Korean juniors," says Kang. "For my corporate career, I want to work on promoting environmentally friendly vehicles."

Fourth Valley holds many events, such as employment seminars and joint job fairs, at universities and hotels in about thirty countries, including China, Singapore, Vietnam, the United Kingdom and the United States. Fourth Valley gathered about 200,000 registered students from almost seven hundred universities in Japan and abroad. These registrants represent around 100 different countries.

"In the future, I want to create a platform where young people from all over the world can learn about the stages where they can demonstrate their talents in Japan or elsewhere," says Shibasaki of Fourth Valley. 