Club promotes culture, not just open to Japanese

By Stas Georgiadis
Lantern staff writer

The Japanese Club at Ohio State is a newly formed organization designed to promote Japanese language, culture and business. However, this club has a different twist: it is designed for students of all nationalities.

The Japanese Club became an official student organization Winter Quarter 1991. Being Oriental is not a prerequisite to join the club. In fact, only about 25 percent of the club's members are from Japan, including the five original officers.

"The club is not just for Japanese-speaking students," said M. Todd Faulkner, a senior member of the club majoring in Japanese and ceramic engineering. "It's for anyone who's interested in the Japanese culture."

The club has already set up several programs and events that will fulfill that interest, such as a Japanese Mini Tour and lunch outing.

During Asian Awareness Week, May 5 to 12, the club plans to open two booths. The booths will have many Japanese souvenirs with some of the members wearing modern and traditional Japanese clothing.

One booth, open during the Asian Cultural Fair on May 7, will have a member performing a traditional Japanese dance. While the other booth, open during the OSU World Food Fair on May 10, will have food donated by local restaurants and will perform a traditional Japanese tea ceremony.

The club has also started a project called "Big Sibs, Little Sibs." The program involves providing housing, transportation and support for Japanese exchange students coming to Ohio State.

The club has also set up conversation partners to help non-native, Japanese-speaking members improve their Japanese language skills while helping the native Japanese speakers improve their English skills.

"The key to success is to get everyone excited about the club," said club secretary Monica Burkhardt, a sophomore majoring in Productions and Operations.

"The Japanese Connection," the club newspaper, explains and announces many of the club's activities and programs. It is available in Cunz Hall or at any of the club's meetings. There will also be a Japanese translation of the newsletter available during Fall Quarter.

"We think the club will be a big asset to the students at Ohio State," Burkhardt said. If anyone is interested in joining or receiving more information about the club, contact Alyson Flagel, president, at 261-1730.
Students upset over Kobe quake; service to be held

By Li-Fen Li
Lantern staff writer

The 7.2-magnitude earthquake that devastated the city of Kobe, Japan, has also struck the Japanese community at Ohio State. Japanese people at Ohio State are still in a state of shock even though they are accustomed to the occurrences of earthquakes in their homeland.

"Because the earthquakes occur in Japan so frequently, I didn't expect the quake to damage Kobe so heavily," said a Japanese student from a small town 35 miles away from Kobe.

About 180 students from Japan are studying at Ohio State, according to the registration record from the Office of International Education.

Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone areas, with an average of 5,000 a year.

Takejiro Higashihara, president of the Japanese Student Organization, said some students are undergoing the trauma of losing their relatives from this disaster.

"All we could do is comfort our friends," Higashihara said.

A prayer service for the people in Kobe will be held today at 7:30 p.m. at 55 W. Maynard Ave. Higashihara said friends of any nationality are welcome to join the meeting.

Keichi Matsunobu, an electrical engineering student from Tokyo, said this earthquake has given him a lack of confidence in the Japanese building structures.

Several modern buildings and sections of major highways, believed to be quake proof, turned out to be vulnerable, collapsing because of the violent shaking.

In the event of an earthquake, Higashihara said the Japanese government conducts practice escape procedures in elementary schools every year.

"But in the case of Kobe, the escape practice seemed unable to avoid the disaster," Higashihara said.

Higashihara said most locals were still sleeping when the earthquake shook Kobe and it hit too suddenly for them to escape.

One Japanese study-abroad program may be affected by the disaster. The program is offered as a collaborative effort between the Department of East Asian Language and Literature and Shoin Women's University in Kobe.

Mineharu Nakayama, associate professor of East Asian Language and Literature, said he has no idea of whether the program will proceed as planned after the earthquake.

"All the connections have been blocked. I cannot contact any of my colleague friends in Kobe at this moment," Nakayama said. "What I'm concerned with most right now is if they are all safe.”

Nakayama said the information has not been confirmed and will not be available until the two-way connections are open again.

"It will take at least one week," Nakayama said.

The quake wreaked havoc on the offices and factory of Daikoku Co. Ltd. in Osaka, and caused delays in its manufacturing systems, said Osamu Soma, vice president of Daikoku USA in Reynoldsburg.

Soma said about 60 percent of their employees started to work on the second day after the quake. Daikoku USA manufactures overhead conveyor belts for large companies such as Honda.

Thirty-four percent of Daikoku U.S.A. employees are from Japan, and 50 percent of them are from the area of Kobe, Soma said.

Soma said some of the employees have flown back to Japan to help their family members.
Japanese students seek help for earthquake victims in Kobe

By Li-Fen Li
Lantern staff writer

The Japanese Student Organization at Ohio State is asking for donations from all people sympathetic to those devastated by the earthquake.

Takuijro Higashihara, president of JSO, said the organization has collected some money from the participants of the prayer service held recently.

Japan's deadliest quake in more than seven decades has claimed about 5,000 lives and injured nearly 26,000 people. The freezing temperatures, shortage of food, and lack of utilities are among the horrific conditions being dealt with by thousands of survivors.

"It is nearly one out of four people, in the numbers of Columbus population, left homeless by the quake in Kobe," Higashihara said. As reported, the homes of 300,000 people have been damaged or destroyed in the quake.

"We'll send the money to the city of Kobe rather than to the Japanese Embassy because we want the money to be used directly and quickly for the people," said Chikako Inoue Cox, faculty adviser for JSO, and a psychologist at the OSU Counseling & Consultation Service.

Cox said from the perspective of a psychologist, the quake survivors would face the problem of post-traumatic stress disorder. She explained the severe, acute anxiety often emerges among people suffering natural disasters.

"The rescue needs are identified in both physical and psychological aspects," Cox said.

A donation box is set up in the lobby of the Counseling and Consultation Service located on the 4th floor of the Ohio Union. Checks can be made out to the Japanese Student Organization, and mailed to the following address: 4th floor, Ohio Union, 1739 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1392.

"We are grateful to any amount of money. Even one or two dollars are big money for us," Higashihara said.

The donation period will be from Jan. 25 to Mar. 7. Higashihara said that at the beginning of Spring Quarter the organization will have a list to show how the money will be used.