



EKIMAE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE CENTER

Smashing Communication Barriers

With Hong Kong's place in the global spotlight, RAY LAM wants to make sure that its future generations are endowed with the capacity to engage in international dialogue.

One of the more common difficulties Hong Kong faces as an international hub of commerce and culture is the wide communication gap among the locals and several other nationalities present in the city. For expatriates, fully immersing in everyday life and work in the mostly Cantonese speaking locale is a challenge. For those native to Hong Kong seeking business and learning opportunities abroad, the ability to communicate in other tongues is a minimum requirement.

Ekimae Language Center seeks to enable and empower Hong Kong's citizenry and foreign individuals with the necessary verbal communication skills. It offers courses in Japanese, French, Cantonese, Mandarin, and English, for children, as well as adults.

A short walk to success

"In the beginning, we just wanted to provide adult language classes to Japanese and foreigners living in Hong Kong," says founder Ray Lam. Located only a few steps from the Wan Chai MTR terminal, it was established to allow professionals to attend courses right after work or in between office hours easily. Ekimae (駅前) is a Japanese phrase that actually means "in front of a station".

A tremendous subsequent demand from locals for both adult and children's courses brought about a quick expansion of class offerings, beginning with Japanese classes for children in 2004. As a pioneer in Japanese language instruction, Ekimae employs unique but proven teaching methods and develops its own texts and curriculums.

"We strive to create a natural environ-



ment for the children to learn Japanese – a carefree and enjoyable setting without any pressure or hard memorization," says Lam.

"Additionally, we offer exchange programmes and study tours (游学) through which our students can learn along with native-speaking children in Japan. It gives them some real practical learning, and not to mention, it is also precious experience!"

International Standards

"To maintain our high teaching standards, we make sure that our teachers are fond of children, dedicated to teaching, and can fully embrace our original and unique methods of instruction. It goes without saying that they must also pos-

sess highly impressive qualifications," says Lam.

Adding to its current location in Wan Chai are up and coming branches in eastern Kowloon and the New Territories. Initial plans for the new locations have already been drawn up. Given the praise and support that it enjoys from its students, both adults and children along with their parents, Ekimae Language Center will continue to bridge the communication gap in Hong Kong, forging global competitiveness and making the region truly worthy of its title of Asia's World City. ■

For additional information please visit <http://ekimae-center.com>