

## English Translation (英語翻訳)

Our company's staff, Dita and Eka, were featured in the Kobe Shinbun newspaper on Saturday, January 10, 2026.

Company Bulletin

Living Together

There are over 90,000 foreigners working in the elderly care sector in Japan. With an estimated shortage of 550,000 elderly care workers by 2040, when the elderly population peaks, their presence is sure to increase. While emphasizing the need to secure talent from abroad, Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae has touted a "society of orderly coexistence" and has proposed stricter regulations on residence status, including permanent residency. Is accepting foreign workers simply a way to fill the workforce?

### Multinational Service Site

Mutual Support Improves the Quality of Care.

When we visited a site in Hyogo Prefecture where foreign staff work, we saw them supporting each other regardless of their country of origin or whether they are caregivers or recipients. Dita (30), a certified care worker from Indonesia, has worked for eight years at Ishibashi Internal Medicine, a medical company that operates clinics and care facilities in Himeji City. She is responsible for both daily and short-term care, and she always has a smile on her face. She has a passion for Japan, such as hanami (cherry blossom viewing) and matcha (matcha).

After attending university in Bali, she began studying at a Japanese language school in Himeji in 2010. She planned to return to her home country and become a Japanese language teacher. However, her part-time job as a nurse at Ishibashi Internal Medicine proved to be a turning point. "The staff and coworkers were all very kind to me. I decided I wanted to work in Japan permanently." After graduating from the Japanese language school, she changed her residence status from "Student" to "Specified Skilled Worker." To continue working in Japan, she needed to obtain a care worker qualification within five years. The national Japanese language exam was a high hurdle, but she decided to give it her all.

### Turning Obstacles into Advantages

Dita is the first foreign staff member at Ishibashi Internal Medicine Hospital. To facilitate communication, the facility requires patients to speak standard Japanese, not the Banshu dialect. She treats everyone with courtesy and adapts quickly to the workplace. Ishibashi Administrative Director Masako believes her language limitations are actually an advantage. "She listens carefully to what our patients have to say, trying to understand them. There's a lot we can learn from her," she said. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she hasn't been able to see her mother for several years, and her fiancé, Eka (31), also started working at Ishibashi Internal Medicine Hospital from her home country.

The couple married in their hometown in 2023. Dita discovered she was pregnant after returning to work but was determined to give birth in Japan. Her husband was unable to obtain a specialized skills visa in time and was unable to arrive in Japan in time for the baby's due date. The users were worried about her because she was giving birth alone in a foreign country, giving birth to her first child, and encouraged her by saying, "Don't worry, there are many grandmothers here. We will all take care of your baby." They also helped her carry heavy bags and reach objects in high places. Hisako Yokoyama (34), a child care user, recalled, "I was so happy when I heard that she had given birth to a baby girl safely." When Dita passed the nursing care welfare exam on her second try, the entire facility celebrated. "We think of our users as our parents," she said, dedicating herself to their care.

### Embracing Differences

Professor Hiroshi Takebata (Sociology of Welfare) from the School of Human and Environmental Studies at the University of Hyogo emphasized the importance of a mutually supportive relationship between caregivers and users. "Caregiving is not one-way; two-way interactions, like Dita's, improve quality." Creating a conducive work environment for people from diverse backgrounds will also contribute to a more comfortable working environment for Japanese society and revitalize the workplace. "Relationships that recognize and respect the existence of others, including foreign talent, are important in any workplace," Professor Yukibata emphasized. However, he believes that recently, more and more people are applying the rule of "not causing trouble for others" to themselves and those around them, as if it were a constitutional rule that must be strictly adhered to. "I feel that by trying to conform to the rules, we lose our self-respect and are no longer able to respect others. I feel this is directed at foreigners." Respecting people from diverse backgrounds as fellow human beings is tantamount to accepting oneself. Building relationships where we can live together and support each other is the key to unlocking the future.