



May 2015

# Berlitz Branch Newsletter

“Improving workers' lives at Berlitz since 1993”

- Abeno Tennoji - Ashiya - Hiroshima - Kariya - Kyoto Shijo - Kyoto Ekimae - Honmachi - Nagoya Ekimae -  
- Nagoya Kanayama - Nagoya Sakae - Namba - Nishinomiya - Sannomiya - Senri Chuo - Okayama - Toyota - Umeda -

## It's the Wild, Wild West in Tokai

Work rules are specific rules for the workplace that outline conditions such as work hours, salary, and rules employees need to abide by. In Japan, companies with 10 or more regular employees must draw up work rules and submit them to the Labor Standards Inspection Office.

At Berlitz Japan we have work rules and also a Policies and Procedures Manual that is used in conjunction with the Berlitz Work Rules. The Policies and Procedures Manual considers how the Berlitz Work Rules apply on a day to day basis and where there is any conflict, the Berlitz Work Rules take precedence as long as they are in accordance with Labor Laws.

### Tokai Region

Berlitz Japan operates in three regions in Japan; Kanto, Tokai, and Kansai with a few Language Centers beyond Kansai. The union has traditionally been very active in Kanto (BEGUNTO) and Kansai (General Union Berlitz Branch) with periodic activity in Tokai also supported by the General Union Berlitz Branch. Since management submitted individual letters to

instructors in October 2014, outlining contract changes, Union membership in Tokai has grown substantially and the time came to address outstanding issues that were simmering in the background. Here are two of those many issues.

### CTL Unfairness

Tokai region sets the CTL cut-off time for customers at 5:00pm. Instructors' work schedules are frequently sent out after 7:30pm and on occasion past 8:30pm. For one member, the CTL policy took on one of the meanest work practices we've ever seen Berlitz implement. Our member teaches German and on two occasions it very much appears that the request student cancelled after the CTL cut off point but before the schedules were sent out. The CTLs were moved from our members' schedule to the Manager of Instruction's schedule. The MI does not speak German and there is no clear policy

to work during that period. This amounts to both the student and the instructor losing out unfairly to an incredibly mean work practice that demonstrates yet another cost cutting measure that is appearing throughout Berlitz Japan.

### 'Official' Floating Contracts

Look for a 20/25 PTG or 40/50 Instructor Contract in the Policies and Procedures Manual. You will not find them because they do not officially exist. The GU Berlitz Branch raised a grievance for a member who had signed a regular Instructor Contract (40/40) but was being forced to float to a split shift 40/50 under the premise that this was official policy in Tokai Region. This grievance is still pending and our advice to Berlitz Japan is to follow your own set of Policies and Procedures and reconsider this brazen attempt to lower working conditions for the sole purpose of cost cutting. You can't have it all!

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is set for Sunday, 24 May from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at L-Osaka; 5 minute walk from Temmabashi Station

Map at [www.generalunion.org/losaka](http://www.generalunion.org/losaka)

Please confirm your attendance as soon as you possibly can.

<http://www.generalunion.org>



# Points to REMEMBER

## We're still here

Maybe you haven't heard from us for some time, but remember, we're still here. Union members are still negotiating with the company over how you will be reimbursed for the five minutes before, between, and after lessons.

## We beat the company's unilateral plan to give with one hand and take with the other.

It was union members and teachers who joined after the company's October announcement who forced the company to withdraw its proposals and enter into negotiations. If it wasn't for union members at Berlitz you would have "*bought a pig in a poke*".

Now, teach that expression to your students.

## The union is here for all Berlitz employees but can negotiate only for members!

The union has brought a lot of benefits to Berlitz teachers in the past:

- Proper paid holidays for contract and PL teachers
- Pay for rest day work
- Unemployment, health, and pension insurance, etc...

This time we're not only negotiating "legal issues". This means that while we believe the company must pay for the five minutes before, between, and after classes, how they do it, will be negotiated between the union and the company, union members' priorities and ideas prevail. Want to be included in this? We welcome ANY Berlitz employee to join.

## Joining the union is easy and it gives you a voice at the bargaining table

Dues for new members are ¥1,000 for the remainder of the first, and next month (for those who pay through automatic payment on PayPal, bank, post office) and are then based on your earnings (between ¥500 and ¥3000 per month). An easy online application and payment form can be found at the address below.

Feel to contact either branch chair Joe Mc Vay or Secretary-Treasurer Jools Collis.

[mcvay@generalunion.org](mailto:mcvay@generalunion.org) OR [collis@generalunion.org](mailto:collis@generalunion.org)

[www.berlitzunion.generalunion.org](http://www.berlitzunion.generalunion.org)

### Meaning

An offering or deal that is foolishly accepted without being examined first.

### Origin

"Don't buy a pig in a poke" might seem odd and archaic language. It's true that the phrase is very old, but actually it can be taken quite literally and remains good advice.

