

SHINJUKU NEWS

No. 7

Publishing Date: January 1, 2007
Published by: Cultural and International Division, Regional and Cultural Affairs Department, Shinjuku City
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Foreign Language Website <http://www.city.shinjuku.tokyo.jp/foreign/english/>
Please make your inquiries in Japanese when calling the coordinating division.

Tips for Everyday Living in Japan



Many people from around the world are living, working or studying in Shinjuku. We asked them about things that surprised them when they came to Japan, things that gave them trouble and any advice they would like to share.

We talked with many foreign residents.



From China

- ★ Compared to Chinese, the Japanese language is more difficult in that there are subtle ways of expressing different things. Also, because Japan culture places an emphasis on courtesy, using “keigo,” the honorific language, gives the listener a good impression. Like they say, “Courtesy is an international passport.” But unless you understand why you must respect that person and the true meaning of the language, it is hard to express respect for the other person naturally.
- ★ The ¥100-shops are like a museum! It’s fun to look at the different novelties available and think, “Wow! I didn’t know this kind of product existed!”
- ★ It’s hard to find rental housing in Japan because you have to have a security deposit, key money and a guarantor. It’s a good idea to make use of personal contacts, such as friends and elders, and have someone introduce you to a real estate agent who deals with foreign residents.



From Korea

- ★ I was surprised that the traffic signal system is different. In Japan, even when the pedestrian traffic light is green, cars are permitted to make left turns. I guess it’s important to always be careful and look both ways before crossing the street.
- ★ If you want to improve your language skills and make friends with Japanese people, I recommend working part-time. I think it’s good to work in a shop where there are a lot of Japanese people, and to do all kinds of part-time work. That way, you’re in an environment where you have to speak Japanese no matter what, and you pick up all kinds of vocabulary through work that you don’t learn at a Japanese-language school. Although interviews for part-time jobs are nerve-wracking, I think it’s good for preparing you for entrance examinations and job-hunting.
- ★ When I invited a Japanese person to go out to eat, he said, “Maybe next time.” I wasn’t sure if he just didn’t want to go out or if he was just really busy. Since Koreans are very straightforward, the vagueness of Japanese people is still hard for me to understand.



From Thailand

- ★ At first, I was surprised that the bathtub water is used by the entire family, but now I’m used to it. I think it’s a good way of conserving water.
- ★ I think that as long as you’re living in Japan, you might as well enjoy it. First of all, I did my best to like the food. Once I understood the food culture, I was able to gradually accept other things as well.
- ★ I think it’s important to be patient with yourself and that others should not force you to do anything. You can’t change the customs of Japan, so the only thing you can do is gradually change yourself.



From the Philippines

- ★ When I came to Japan, I developed hay fever. Also, in the winter, the air is so dry, my skin gets chapped. Since the climate is different, I think it’s important to take extra good care of your health.



From Indonesia

- ★ Since I am a Muslim, I cannot eat pork. I always check the ingredients on labels, such as for “ramen” soup. At supermarkets in the U.S., where globalization is more advanced, food is available to suit the diets of followers of different religions. I hope that it will someday be like that in Japan, too.
- ★ The high monthly rent is hard for single people in Japan. I live in a dorm, and although it’s communal living, I think it is a good idea because it’s economical and you can make friends with people from around the world.

A Message from the Foreign Residents’ Advisory Corner

To enjoy your life in Japan to the fullest, you might as well learn and use the Japanese language, and experience the good aspects of Japan, as well as the not-so-good.

If you have any problems or concerns, please feel free to ask for advice.

Shinjuku City Office: 03-5272-5060, 5070 and 5080
(English, Chinese and Korean)

Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza: 03-5291-5171

(English, Chinese, Korean, Thai and Myanmar)

International Exchange Residents' Gathering

Come One, Come All!

"Hina Matsuri" Doll Festival



Try your hand at calligraphy!

Make your own India ink painting and take it home as a souvenir.



The traditional "hinamatsuri" doll festival is an event held to celebrate the healthy growth of girls by setting up a "hina" doll display. It is celebrated on March 3.

Experience traditional Japanese culture

Every year, almost 200 foreign residents come and enjoy trying on a kimono, and experiencing India ink painting, flower arrangement and tea ceremony at this annual "hinamatsuri" doll festival. It is worth the trip to see the seven-tier "hina" doll display! Simply come directly to the venue on the day of the event.



Date and Time: February 24 (Sat.), 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Location: Shinjuku Bunka Center (6-14-1 Shinjuku)
Participation Fee: ¥500 (Free for elementary school children and those younger)
Inquiries: Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, Tel: 03-5291-5171



Recruiting Municipal/Private Nursery School Students for the School Year Starting from April

Nursery schools provide a child care service for children of parents who are unable to take care of them at home during the day due to employment or illness.

Nursery Schools: 25 municipal and 11 private nursery schools
Eligibility: In general, must be at least 43-days-old and younger than elementary school age. (Varies at each nursery school)

Required Documents:
 (1) Documentation verifying that the parent is not able to take care of the child during the day. (2) Documentation verifying the parent's income tax amount for 2006. (3) Documentation verifying the Resident Tax amount for FY2006.

Nursery Fees: Nursery fees are determined based on the tax amount of the household and the age of the child.

Application Forms: Application forms are available up to January 16, (Tue.) at the Nursery School Division of the City Office, at municipal and private nursery schools and at Branch Offices.

How to Apply: Applications are accepted on a reservation basis. Please call the Enrollment Section of the Nursery School Division (Tel: 03-5273-4527; Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. 2F) to make an appointment to submit your application (before January 16 (Tue.)). If you do not speak Japanese, please come with someone who does.

Recruiting Foreign Residents!!

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government conducts training programs for disaster prevention (language) volunteers who help foreign residents if a disaster strikes. For this reason, foreign residents are being recruited to play the role of disaster victims. Please participate in this program.

Date and Time: January 16, 2007 (Tue.), 9 a.m. to 12 noon
Location: Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza (Hygeia 11F, 2-44-1 Kabukicho, Shinjuku-ku)

Application/Inquiries:
 Citizens Exchange and International Affairs Section, Metropolitan Residents Living Division, Tokyo Metropolitan Government
 Tel: 03-5388-3156
 E-mail: S0000667@section.metro.tokyo.jp

Recruiting After-School Club Members for the School Year Starting in April

"Gakudo Club" (After-School Club) offers a childcare service with supervised play and instruction for school children, who would otherwise be at home alone during the day after school because their parents work or for other such reasons. Please call for more information.

After-School Clubs: 24 municipal and 3 private after-school clubs
Eligibility: Children who live in the city from 1st through 3rd grade of elementary school, who are unable to receive proper continuous care at home, and are assessed as being able to cooperate in group activities.

Fees: For municipal clubs: ¥6,000/month; For private clubs: ¥6,300/month

How to Apply: Submit a completed application form available at after-school clubs, with the club of your choice by January 22 (Mon.). A brief interview with the parent is conducted at the time of application. If you do not speak Japanese, please come with someone who does.

Inquiries: Children and Families Support Section, Children and Family Division (Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. 2F), Tel: 03-5273-4544

Seeking Regular Users of Bicycle Parking Lots and Bicycle Control Areas

Shinjuku City has established bicycle parking lots and bicycle control areas near train stations. If you would like to use a bicycle parking lot from April, please apply for registration. Do not leave your bicycle parked on the street. Use a bicycle parking lot.



Period of Use: April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008
Eligible Vehicles: Bicycles and motorcycles (engine size of 50 cc or less)

How to Apply: Submit a completed application form between February 1 (Thu.) and February 28 (Wed.) 2007. Forms are available at your local bicycle parking lot, or Branch Office. Applications may also be submitted via e-mail. If the number of applicants exceeds the capacity, a lottery will be held.

Inquiries: Bicycle Countermeasures Section, Roads and Greenery Affairs Division (Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. 7F), Tel: 03-5273-3896

To All 20-Year-Olds Participate in the Coming-of-Age Day "Gathering of 20-Year-Olds"

In Japan, young people join the ranks of adulthood, becoming of legal age for voting and drinking alcohol at 20 years of age. The objective of this ceremony is to encourage energetic young adults to open their way to the future and take responsibility for themselves. Shinjuku City also holds an event to celebrate the adulthood of new 20-year-olds.



Let's celebrate with all registered 20-year-olds in Shinjuku!

Date and Time: January 8 (Mon., national holiday), 1 to 3 p.m. (Reception will be open from 12 noon)
Location: Keio Plaza Hotel (2-2-1 Nishi-Shinjuku)
Eligibility: Those born between April 2, 1986 and April 1, 1987, who are registered as foreign residents of Shinjuku
Program: Ceremony and buffet party
Inquiries: Gender Equality and Peace Promotion Division (Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. 3F), Tel: 03-5273-4088

The Oya-Oya Club Child-Raising Classes to Support Foreign Residents with Child-Raising We are Creating an Information Publication on Child-Raising

Interpreters and Nursery Service Available

We are currently working on editing a child-raising information publication in foreign languages for foreign residents who live in Shinjuku. Japanese and non-Japanese residents meet to edit useful information and the opinions of foreign residents who live in the city, while talking and having fun. We look forward to welcoming newcomers who are willing to help!



Date and Time: January 13, February 3 and 17, March 3 and 17 (Sat.), 10 a.m. to 12 noon (tentative)
Location: Cosmic Center (3-1-2 Okubo)
 Please call if you need an interpreter for a language other than Chinese, Korean and English.
Application/Inquiries: "Shinjuku City Lifelong Learning Foundation
 Tel: 03-3232-7701 Fax: 03-3209-1833
 E-mail: jigyou@regasu-shinjuku.or.jp

A Leisurely Stroll in Shinjuku City

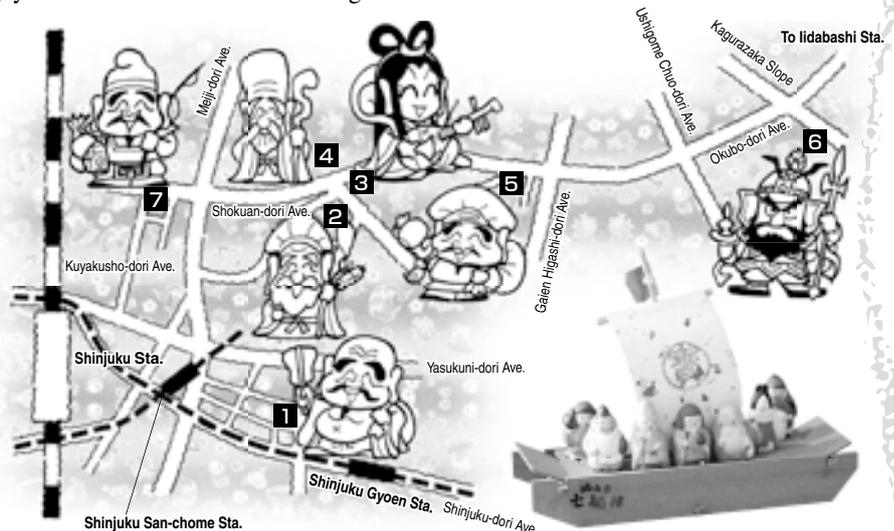
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In Japan, it is believed that seven gods called, "Shichi Fukujin (Seven Lucky Gods)," bring good luck. It is said that if you make a pilgrimage to the temples and shrines where these gods are enshrined, or if you place under your pillow a picture of a "takara-bune" boat with the seven lucky gods on board on New Year's Day, your "hatsu-yume" (first dream) of the year will be good and you will have a happy year.

The temples and shrines in Shinjuku City where these lucky gods are enshrined, are called "Shinjuku Yamanote Shichi Fukujin (the Seven Lucky Gods of Shinjuku Yamanote)." Why not step out to these locations between January 1 and 7 when it is said to be the best time to make such a pilgrimage? These temples and shrines offer participants painted images of the seven lucky gods and box-shaped "takara-bune" boats (for a fee). Visiting these seven locations and collecting memorabilia of the seven lucky gods is something you can look forward to doing during the New Year.

Starting with Taiso-ji Temple which is near Shinjuku 3-chome on the Toei Shinjuku Subway Line, proceed to Hozen-ji Temple, Itsukushima Jinja Shrine and Ei-

fuku-ji Temple. Then take the Oedo Line and visit Kyo'oh-ji Temple, Zenkoku-ji Temple and Kio Jinja Shrine. The entire eight-kilometer course takes about three or four hours. Since there are also interesting sites other than those for the seven lucky gods, such as Shinjuku Gyoen Park and Kagura-zaka, it may be a good idea to spread the pilgrimage over two or more outings.



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|-----------------------------------|---|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Taiso-ji Temple | (Hotei-son = God of Family, Peace and Protection from Illness and Disaster) | 2-9-2 Shinjuku | Tel: 03-3356-7731 |
| 2 Hozen-ji Temple | (Jurojin = God of Long Life and Protection from Illness) | 6-20-16 Shinjuku | Tel: 03-3351-4080 |
| 3 Itsukushima Jinja Shrine | (Benzaiten = God of Music, Arts and Speech) | 8-5 Yochomachi | Tel: 03-3351-5875 |
| 4 Eifuku-ji Temple | (Fukurokuju = God of Health, Happiness and Long Life) | 7-11-2 Shinjuku | Tel: 03-3203-8910 |
| 5 Kyo'oh-ji Temple | (Daikokuten = God of Grain Harvest and Wealth) | 1-14 Haramachi | Tel: 03-3341-1314 |
| 6 Zenkoku-ji Temple | (Bishamonten = God of Protection from Disaster and Evil) | 5-36 Kagurazaka | Tel: 03-3269-0641 |
| 7 Inari Kio Jinja Shrine | (Ebisu-jin = God of Prosperous Business) | 2-17-5 Kabukicho | Tel: 03-3200-2904 |

Living Together

Forefront of Multicultural Living

In Japan, there are local community organizations called “cho-kai” or “chonai-kai” (town associations), and “jichi-kai” (residents’ associations). Today, 199 town associations and residents’ associations in Shinjuku City conduct various programs, from disaster/crime prevention to community exchanges, on such topics as environmental planning, information provision and festivals.

We spoke with Mr. Kiyoshi Kawai, Chairperson of the Shinjuku-Toni Town Association who commented, “I hope that foreign residents will also participate so we can create a town that is comfortable for everyone to live in together.”

— Let’s Work on Local Community Exchanges — Why Not Join the Town Association?

– Please tell us how Shinjuku Toni Town Association works.

Shinjuku Toni Town Association is located in the eastern part of the Okubo district, with about 1,300 residents. Currently, the association is divided into eight areas (divisions), and each division is further divided into about 10 groups called “kumi.” Each “kumi” consists of about 20 residents who live near each other.

In every “kumi” there is a council member (“kumi-cho” group leader), who performs various organizational duties, such as passing around the “kairanban” bulletin (with local information such as announcements from the city office, police department, fire department and sanitation office, which passed along from house to house so that local information is shared) and collecting association fees (¥200 per month).

In addition, the town association has nine groups, such as the disaster prevention committee, traffic committee and environment sanitation committee, with programs conducted according to each committee.

– What kind of things do town associations do?

We do various things to help everyone in the town association (association members) lead cheerful and enjoyable lives in the neighborhood. The biggest events are the local Grand Nishimukiten Jinja Shrine Festival and the Bus Tour. Planning exchange programs that strengthen close ties among residents to help them understand one another, is a major role of the town association.

Besides these programs, the town association conducts traffic safety and crime prevention patrols to promote disaster prevention and crime prevention in the local community. In addition, if an earthquake strikes, the town association will lead evacuation groups and conduct independent activities at evacuation sites. I hope foreign residents will also participate in neighborhood disaster prevention drills because we never know when an earthquake will occur.

– Town associations play a major role when a disaster strikes



If the town association is familiar with who lives where, they are capable of lending a helping hand. I hope that people join the association to help ensure their safety.

◀ Fire drill



Mr. Kiyoshi Kawai has been Chairperson of the Shinjuku-Toni Town Association for nine years. His second son's wife is a career woman who graduated from the University of Indonesia in her home country. He is also a man of international caliber at home.

– Can foreign residents join town associations?

Of course, they are more than welcome! There are already many foreign residents in our town association. Last year, we asked a foreign resident to serve as “kumi-cho” group leader, and he willingly accepted the assignment. He is now working very hard on various programs. It is great to see how he is blending into our community.

– Do you believe that town associations are important for international exchanges?

Yes, I feel very close to foreign residents. When foreign residents join the town association, we can become familiar with each other and have opportunities to talk with one another. Once people get to know each other, international borders and prejudices seem to disappear.

This is my personal opinion, but I think that if people relate to each other from the heart with warm, friendly feelings, then they are sure to be able to communicate with one another. In Japan today, there are many people from various countries around the world in our community; the world has become much closer. I believe that having more foreign residents is good for making our town livelier. I think it's important to adjust one's way of thinking so that everyone grows and profits.



▲ Let's carry the portable shrine together! Wasshoi! Wasshoi!

– Can we ask you to give a concluding message to our foreign resident readers?

Yes, by all means, join a town association and help develop friendly exchanges in the local community. Even if you can't speak Japanese, we can still communicate as long as our heart is in the right place.

It would be great if, together, we could rouse up enthusiasm for events like festivals. Anyone can shoulder the “omikoshi” shrine. Since there's also a children's “mikoshi,” it would be great if a lot of foreign children joined in as well.