

SHINJUKU NEWS



Foreign Language Website <http://www.city.shinjuku.tokyo.jp/foreign/english/>
Please make your inquiries in Japanese when calling the coordinating division.

No. 19

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Japanese

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日本語

Make Life 100 Times More Fun by Learning Japanese

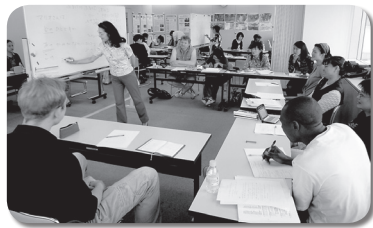
Can you read the Japanese written above the title? The words are written in hiragana, katakana, and kanji and all say the same thing: *nihongo* (Japanese language).

If you were not able to read them, do not worry! In this issue, we describe Japanese-language classes that are available for children, adults, and families. Studying Japanese will increase your opportunities to enjoy different aspects of Japanese culture and make new Japanese friends. It will also help you avoid misunderstandings and problems with Japanese people. Why not study Japanese in a relaxed atmosphere in a class that suits you so that you can enjoy life in Japan even more.



Shinjuku City Japanese-Language Class (April through July)

Why not learn Japanese from a volunteer teacher in a class in your community? If there is an opening in the class, you can join even in the middle of the term.



Eligibility: Beginning level—This class is open to those who need to learn Japanese expressions that are necessary in everyday life. Those who live, work, or go to school in Shinjuku will receive priority. Junior high school students and younger children are not permitted to join the class.

Date and Time: Monday through Friday—There are classes that meet once a week and those that meet twice a week. The day of the week on which classes are held differ according to the location. Classes are held 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Evening classes are on Thursdays only.)

Location: Various locations in the city, including Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza (Note: Please call for more information.)

Fee: ¥2,000 per term for classes that meet once a week; ¥4,000 per term for classes that meet twice a week (Note: Once fees are paid, there are no reimbursements.)

To Apply: Send a postcard, fax, or e-mail by March 5 (Fri.) to Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza. Please be sure to give your (1) address, (2) name (with *furigana*), (3) telephone number, (4) nationality, and (5) desired day of the week and time. All applicants will be notified of the results by mail by March 26 (Fri.).

Shinjuku Children's Japanese-Language Class

Let's have fun learning Japanese! Instructors teach Japanese in the children's native language.

Term: Classes are held from March 24 through 31 on weekdays, 2 to 4 p.m., for a total of six classes.

Location: Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza

Fee: Free of charge

Eligibility: Classes are open to children to whom either of the following applies: (1) he/she is a student from the fourth grade of elementary school through junior high school and is transferring to a Shinjuku municipal elementary or junior high school on or after April 6 (Tue.), 2010; (2) he/she is a student from the sixth grade of elementary school through junior high school at a Shinjuku municipal elementary or junior high school and cannot speak Japanese very well.

To Apply: Send a fax or e-mail to Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, giving (1) the child's name (with *furigana*), age, and native language; (2) the parent's name (with *furigana*); (3) address; (4) telephone/fax number; and (5) name of the class. Details will be mailed to applicants.

Note: To prevent accidents and injuries, parents should accompany their children to and from the Japanese-language classes.

Let's Have Fun Learning: Oyako (Family) Japanese-Language Class

Why not have fun learning Japanese together as a family? There are babysitting services, so families with infants and toddlers can study with peace of mind. You can join in the middle of the term as well.

Date and Time: Saturdays, from January 16 through March 20, 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Location: Shinjuku Municipal Okubo Elementary School (1-1-21 Okubo)

Fee: Free of charge (However, there is a ¥500 fee for insurance.)

To Apply: Send a fax or e-mail to Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, giving (1) the child's name (with *furigana*), age, and native language; (2) the parent's name (with *furigana*) and native language; (3) address; (4) telephone/fax number; and (5) name of the class.

Application/Inquiries: Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza
Hygeia 11F, 2-44-1 Kabuki-cho, Shinjuku-ku 160-0021
Tel: 03-5291-5171 Fax: 03-5291-5172

E-mail: kokusai@shinjukubunka.or.jp

How to Get There: A 10-minute walk from JR Shinjuku Station East Exit or a five-minute walk from Seibu-Shinjuku Station

Hours: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Closed: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month and during the year-end/New Year holidays (December 29 through January 3)



Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza (Hygeia 11F)

The next issue of *Shinjuku News* will be published in March 2010. *Shinjuku News* is available at various public facilities such as Shinjuku City Office, Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, Branch Offices and public libraries.

To All 20-Year-Olds Be a Part of the Gathering of 20-Year-Olds on Coming-of-Age Day



In Japan, young people join the ranks of adulthood—with all the rights and responsibilities that come with it—at 20 years of age. The objective of the Coming-of-Age ceremony is to encourage young adults to become aware of their new status and take responsibility for themselves. Shinjuku City holds an event of its own to celebrate the adulthood of new 20-year-olds. You do not have to dress up, so please feel free to come to join the event.

Date and Time: January 11 (Mon., a 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, 1989, and April 1, 1990, and who are registered as foreign residents of Shinjuku
Program: Ceremony and buffet party
Inquiry: General Affairs Section, General Affairs Department (Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. 3F), Tel: 03-5273-3505

Let's Enjoy Japanese Culture ♪ International Exchange Residents' Gathering



Hina Matsuri (Doll Festival)

Every year, many foreign residents come and enjoy various aspects of Japanese culture, such as trying on kimonos and experiencing *suiboku-ga* (painting in India ink), flower arrangement, and tea ceremony, at the annual *hina matsuri* (doll festival). Also, there will be a rare seven-tier display of *hina* (dolls).

Date and Time: February 27 (Sat.), 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Location: Shinjuku Bunka Center 4F and B1 Exhibit Hall
Fee: ¥500 (free for children of elementary school age and younger)
To Apply: No application is necessary. (Simply come directly to the site on the day of the event.)
Inquiries: Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, Tel: 03-5291-5171



← Commemorative photo of participants wearing kimonos in front of a beautiful display



A participant extremely satisfied → with the *suiboku-ga* she painted

Let's Enjoy Flower Viewing

In Japan, when people talk about *hanami* (flower viewing), they are generally referring to appreciating the beauty of cherry blossoms in bloom. This shows how much the Japanese have always loved cherry blossoms. In spring, when cherry blossoms are in full bloom, people go outside with friends and colleagues to eat and drink near cherry trees while enjoying their beauty.

Shinjuku has many cherry blossom viewing spots. Because they are most spectacular from around late March through early April, why not step out with your family to see the flowers in bloom?



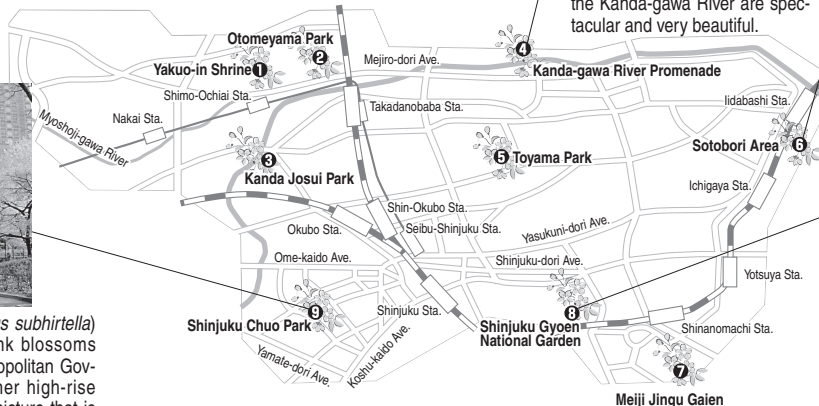
The cherry blossoms that almost completely cover the banks of the Kanda-gawa River are spectacular and very beautiful.



You can see cherry trees between JR Ichigaya and Iidabashi Stations from inside the JR train.



The *kohigan-zakura* (*prunus subhirtella*) trees, with their deep pink blossoms set against the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building and other high-rise buildings, create a scenic picture that is uniquely Shinjuku.



This spacious park has approximately 65 varieties of cherry trees, all 1,300 of which bloom one after another over an extended period of time. Admission is ¥200 for adults and ¥50 for elementary and junior high school students.

Let's Prevent House Fires

Eighty percent of deaths from fires occur in houses. In Japan, winter is a time of year when the air is very dry and the risk of fires is high. Let's protect ourselves and our families from fires by being conscientious about fire prevention.

Seven Points to Protect Lives from House Fires: Three Habits + Four Preventative Measures

Three Habits

- Never smoke in bed.
- Use a space heater only where there are no flammable objects nearby.
- If you must leave the kitchen while food is cooking on the stove, be sure to turn off the stove before you go.



Four Preventative Measures

- Install fire alarms so that you will be warned of a fire in time to escape.
- Use bedding, clothes, and curtains made of nonflammable material to prevent them from catching fire.
- Install fire extinguishers so that fires can be put out while still small.
- Organize a community support system in your neighborhood to protect the elderly and the disabled.



Installation of Fire Alarms Will Be Obligatory for All Households as of April 1, 2010

- These alarms detect fires at an early stage and effectively alert you to the presence of smoke or heat.
- The installation of fire alarms will be required for all living rooms, kitchens, and stairways. (This does not include rooms with baths, toilets, or just sinks.) Note: Installation is not required for rooms that already have automatic fire alarm apparatuses or sprinklers.

File Your Income Tax Report (Kakutei Shinkoku) during the Filing Period

The deadline for reporting and paying income and donation taxes for 2009 is March 15 (Mon.). The deadline for reporting and paying consumption and local consumption taxes (for sole proprietors) is March 31 (Wed.).

☞ Salaried income earners must file a report in the following cases:

- (1) Those whose income exceeds ¥20,000,000
- (2) Those who have an income other than salaried income and retirement benefits that exceeds a total of ¥200,000 (after deducting necessary expenses from revenues)
- (3) Those who have a salaried income from two or more sources and have not received a year-end adjustment for them.

(4) Those who have not paid withholding tax in Japan when receiving their salary because of such reasons as being paid overseas

★ To pay your income tax, consumption tax, and/or local consumption tax, please take advantage of the convenient account transfer payment.

★ For more information, please visit the National Tax Agency Web site (in Japanese and English) at www.nta.go.jp.

Inquiries: Yotsuya Tax Office (24 San-ei-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tel: 03-3359-4451)

Shinjuku Tax Office (1-19-3 Kita-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tel: 03-3362-7151)

Information on the New Influenza A (H1N1) Virus

Most people are not immune to the new influenza A (H1N1) virus, so it is easy for infection to spread. Many of those who did become infected, however, recovered quickly after exhibiting only mild symptoms. Treatment with antiviral drugs, such as Tamiflu and Relenza, has been found to be very effective. However, expectant mothers and those with underlying diseases need to be extra careful because if they become infected, their conditions may potentially become very serious.

Please bear in the mind the importance of avoiding infection and preventing the spread of the new flu virus and calmly take appropriate action based on information included in such announcements as the Shinjuku City foreign language Web site.

www.city.shinjuku.tokyo.jp/foreign/english/



Totsuka Branch Office Will Move into a New Building

Totsuka Chiiki Center Will Open on February 27

On February 22, Totsuka Branch Office will move into a new building (2-18-1 Takadanobaba).

Also, on February 27, the Totsuka Chiiki Center (community center) will open in the same building. The Totsuka Chiiki Center is a place where residents can strengthen friendly ties through community activities. Please feel free to take advantage of what these facilities have to offer.

Totsuka Chiiki Center Opening Event ♪

Date and Time: February 27 (Sat.), 1 to 4 p.m. (subject to change)
February 28 (Sun.), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (subject to change)

Program: Presentations by elementary and junior high schools in the district (brass band performances, art exhibitions, etc.), presentations by community groups (folk songs, hula performances, etc.), refreshment booths, and more

Inquiries: Totsuka Branch Office, Tel: 03-3209-8551

Living Together

“Multicultural living” refers to people of different nationalities and ethnic races living together, and accepting and understanding the differences between their cultures.

In this issue, we will report from the front lines of multicultural living.

When you think of traditional Japanese culture, what comes to mind? There are many aspects of traditional Japanese culture and arts, such as kimono, tea ceremony, flower arranging, and classical Japanese dancing. Among these, there may be things that will amaze or surprise people from foreign countries.

For this issue, we asked two foreign students who are studying in Shinjuku to try on *yukata*, which is generally worn even today at summer festivals and fireworks displays, and take part in a tea ceremony, which is an art that blends various aspects of Japanese culture.

Touching the Japanese Heart with *Yukata* and Tea

Park: Because *yukata* is like a one-piece robe that opens in the front, I was kind of worried about whether it would stay in place with just an obi (sash) and *himo* (string), but it looks as if we are wearing it properly enough.

Karmacharya: I was not able to tie my own obi and needed help to get dressed.

Park: Don't you feel as if you are ready for something once you put on *yukata*? I feel like taking a walk wearing this.

Karmacharya: This is the first time I have ever worn *yukata*. It felt a little tight at first, but I think I got used to it right away. The next time I wear one, I want to be able to tie my own obi.

Park: I am impressed that in Japan, people casually wear traditional clothes like this even today.

Karmacharya: Yeah, I agree. Like the Japanese kimono, we have traditional clothes in Nepal, such as *dauwa suruwal*, sari, and *cholo*, but they are worn on special occasions only, like when relatives get together, or for celebrations.

Park: Some people wear *hanbok*, which is the traditional costume of Korea, for traditional events, such as New Year and *obon*-like festivities, but you rarely see people wearing it in normal everyday life. I bet there are some young people who have never worn this traditional clothing. Although recently, there are casual ones; you usually see them only at weddings.

Karmacharya: In Japan, you can see people on the street wearing traditional clothing that matches a particular event. I think it is great that young people in particular are carrying on the tradition by wearing kimono and *yukata* and enjoying it.

We also took part in a tea ceremony today. When it comes to tea, sweet milk tea is very common in Nepal, so when I first drank green tea

in Japan, I remember it tasted bitter. But now, I love green tea, and I drink it every day!

Park: I did not like green tea very much at first, either. But today, I bravely took a

cup, and to my surprise, it did not taste that bitter. Unlike the tea sold in PET bottles, this tea had a deep aroma. It matched the Japanese sweets, and I really enjoyed it.



Park Sang-Hyun

Place of Birth: South Korea
Game Planning Course, Engineering Program,
Japan Electronics College



Karmacharya Pramesh

Place of Birth: Nepal
E-business Course, Tokyo Multimedia College



cup, and to my surprise, it did not taste that bitter. Unlike the tea sold in PET bottles, this tea had a deep aroma. It matched the Japanese sweets, and I really enjoyed it.

Karmacharya: When I prepared the tea, I had to sit Japanese-style—with my legs tucked under me—while whipping the tea with *chasen* (a whisk-like utensil made of bamboo and used to mix tea), so my feet fell asleep. I could hardly bear it and asked the teacher, “How many more minutes will this take?”

Park: Yeah, it was hard for us foreigners to prepare tea while sitting Japanese-style. It felt strange preparing tea with *chasen*. I bet Koreans would use a spoon.

Karmacharya: In addition to using *chasen*, there were all kinds of rules, such as the proper way of drinking tea, right? Because there are no rules for preparing tea in Nepal, I thought the tea ceremony was very interesting.

Park: Yeah, me too! Once I know the rules of the tea ceremony, I begin wanting to learn the reasons behind the rules, such as the reason for whipping the tea into a froth.

Karmacharya: Because each country's culture is different, I want to look for more opportunities to learn more. As a foreign student, I hope to share this experience with friends who come to Japan.

Park: This experience made me want to explore more areas of traditional Japanese culture. Attention, all foreign students and foreign residents in Japan! Why not try experiencing traditional Japanese culture?

