

# SHINJUKU NEWS



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

**No. 22**

**Publishing Date:** September 25, 2010  
**Published by:** Culture, Tourism and International Affairs Division, Regional and Cultural Affairs Department, Shinjuku City  
**Tel:** 03-5273-3504  
**Fax:** 03-3209-1500  
1-4-1 Kabuki-cho, Shinjuku City, Tokyo 160-8484

## Let's Talk with People from all over the World!

## International Exchange Salon

Have you ever wished you had Japanese friends or could talk with people from different parts of the world?

Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza's International Exchange Salon is an event where anyone and everyone can feel free to come and make new friends. Each session is bustling with many participants from various countries who enjoy chatting with people. You can hear conversations that are an interesting blend of Japanese and foreign languages.

Why not come join the fun? Let's widen our circle of international exchanges!



**Date and Time:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month, 6:45 to 8:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza (Hygeia 11F)  
**Capacity:** Approximately 50 people  
**Fee:** ¥200 per person  
**To Apply:** No advance reservations are required. Simply come to the site on the day of the event.  
**Inquiries:** Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza  
9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (Monday through Friday, closed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays and during the year-end/New Year holidays)  
Tel: 03-5291-5171, Fax: 03-5291-5172  
E-mail: [bunka@regasu-shinjuku.or.jp](mailto:bunka@regasu-shinjuku.or.jp)

### Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza

**Address:** Hygeia 11F, 2-44-1 Kabuki-cho, Shinjuku City 160-0021

**Inquiries:** Tel: 03-5291-5171, Fax: 03-5291-5172

**How to Get There:** A 10-minute walk from JR Shinjuku Station's east exit or a five-minute walk from Seibu-Shinjuku Station

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

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

**Web site:** [www.regasu-shinjuku.or.jp/?p=352](http://www.regasu-shinjuku.or.jp/?p=352)



Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza (Hygeia 11F)

### We Have All Kinds of Information for All Foreign Residents!

Shinjuku City offers locations where foreign residents can obtain all the information they need, such as announcements about services available at Shinjuku City Office, Japanese-language classes in Shinjuku City, and international exchange events. Please come to Shinjuku City Office Main Building 1F (at the foreign resident registration waiting area) or Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza.

The next issue of *Shinjuku News* will be published in January 2011. *Shinjuku News* is available at various public facilities, such as Shinjuku City Office, Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, Branch Offices, and public libraries.

# Welcome! Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza

Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza (hereinafter referred to as “the Plaza”), which serves as the venue for the International Exchange Salon (see pages 1 and 8), is the center for multicultural living and international exchange activities in Shinjuku City.

September 2010 will mark the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Plaza, which has welcomed more than 110,000 visitors hailing from 127 countries around the world. This issue will have a special feature on the Plaza that will describe the kind of place the Plaza is, the kind of activities that take place at the Plaza, and other useful points of interest.

By all means, take advantage of the services the Plaza has to offer!



## Japanese-Language Study Corner

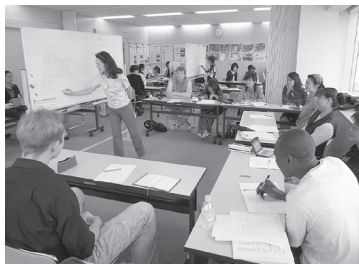
This area has a lot of materials for those who would like to learn or teach the Japanese language. You can refer to these materials freely within the area and study by yourself. In addition, there are Japanese-language study sessions held by volunteers on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons that are free of charge and require no reservations (capacity of 40 people per session on a first come, first served basis).



Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
Kanji 2 to 3:30 p.m.	Minna de Nihongo (Japanese with Everyone) 2 to 3:30 p.m.		Hajimeyo Nihongo (Let's Start Japanese) 2 to 3 p.m.		Nihongo Doyo Salon (Japanese Saturday Salon) 2 to 4 p.m.
Eligibility: Those who can speak a little Japanese			Eligibility: Those who are studying Japanese for the first time		Eligibility: Everyone is welcome to join.

## Shinjuku City Japanese-Language Class, 2nd Term

Let's learn basic Japanese for everyday living! If there is an opening, you can start in the middle of the year.



**Eligibility:** Beginning level—Those who need to learn basic Japanese necessary for everyday living (However, those who are of junior high school age and younger are not permitted to join the class.)

**Date and Time:** Weekdays, September through December, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Evening classes are on Thursdays only.) There are classes that meet once a week and those that meet twice a week. Schedules vary depending on the class location.

**Location:** 10 locations in the city, including Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza

**Fee:** Classes that meet once a week—¥2,000  
Classes that meet twice a week—¥4,000  
Note: There will be no refunds of fees.

**Inquiries:** Cultural Exchange Division, the Shinjuku Foundation for Creation of Future; inside Shinjuku Bunka Center, 6-14-1 Shinjuku, Shinjuku City 160-0022, Tel: 03-3350-1141, Fax: 03-3350-4839, E-mail: bunka@regasu-shinjuku.or.jp

## Family Japanese-Language Classes for Foreign Residents

Japanese-language skills are carefully taught to families who do not speak Japanese. Because there are babysitting services, families with small children can attend with peace of mind.

**Term:** Every Saturday from January 15 through March 19, 10 a.m. to 12 noon; total of 10 sessions

**Location:** Okubo Elementary School

**Eligibility:** Children and parents who live in Shinjuku City (20 families on a first come, first served basis) and are able to understand Japanese at the introductory/beginner level

**Fee:** ¥500 per person (for insurance)

**To Apply:** Send a fax or e-mail to the address below. Please be sure to write down (1) the name of the parent (with *furigana*) and language that he/she understands well, (2) the child's name (with *furigana*), age, and language that the child understands well, (3) address, (4) telephone and/or fax number(s), and (5) “Family Japanese-Language Class.”

Detailed information will be sent to all applicants.  
**Inquiries:** Cultural Exchange Division, the Shinjuku Foundation for Creation of Future; inside Shinjuku Bunka Center, 6-14-1 Shinjuku, Shinjuku City 160-0022, Tel: 03-3350-1141, Fax: 03-3350-4839, E-mail: bunka@regasu-shinjuku.or.jp



## 2 Foreign Resident Consultation Corner

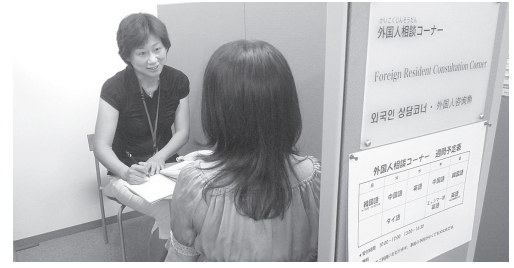
Please feel free to stop by if you have any problems or questions concerning everyday living. You will receive free advice on how to solve the issues you face. Consultations are offered in various languages, and consultants will listen to you carefully and empathetically. Why not come and talk instead of worrying all by yourself?

**Hours:** Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 to 5 p.m.

Note: Closed during the year-end/New Year holidays, on national holidays, and on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays

**Consultation Methods:** In person at the counter or over the telephone (03-5291-5171)

**Consultation Fee:** Free of charge



**Languages:** English: Thursdays; 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays; and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays

Chinese: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Korean: Monday afternoons and Fridays

Thai: Tuesdays

Myanmarese: Thursdays

### A Message from the Consultants to Everyone: "We Are Here to Serve You!"

#### Korean



It does not matter how insignificant your question may seem, we are here to answer any questions you may have on learning Japanese, raising children, hunting for jobs, or anything you do not understand about everyday life in Japan. If

there is something you want to ask, please feel free to drop by the Plaza. We are here to help make your life in Japan even more fulfilling.

#### Chinese



A consultant who is currently majoring in law at graduate school offers advice on labor, marital problems, and procedures at the city office. In addition, making use of his own experiences, he offers advice on living as a foreign student, advancing to higher education, and other related matters. Also, there is a consultant who is familiar with medical information, such as medical institutions that offer services in foreign languages. In addition, there is a Japanese consultant who is married to a foreigner and offers moral support for those who are struggling with family/marital relationships and provides helpful hints on living in Japan.

#### English



Hello, everyone! If you ever receive something in the mail from the city office and do not understand what it says because everything is

written in Japanese, please come and ask for help as soon as possible. Promptly asking for help with matters concerning tax notifications, health checkup announcements, and other useful/necessary information can lead to an even more comfortable life. Ask us anything. We hope our consultation services will alleviate any worries and make you smile. We look forward to serving you!

#### Myanmarese



These days, there are people from not only Myanmar but also the Philippines and other Asian countries coming in for consultation. It does not matter

how insignificant your question may seem, whether it concerns problems in everyday life or not knowing whom to turn to for advice, you can always ask us. Simply come to the Plaza and ask a consultant. There is most likely an answer to your problem or question. Do not struggle with it by yourself.

#### Thai



The Plaza is the only place in metropolitan Tokyo that offers consultation in Thai every week. We have handled various cases in the past. It does not matter what question or problem you may have, such as problems in everyday life or questions about visas and children, just ask for help. We hope to work with you so that we can find a solution together. When you come in for consultation, please give us accurate information. All matters will be kept strictly confidential.

# At the Plaza, You Can Also Consult a Specialist concerning Visas



## Consultation Support Center for Foreign Residents (Located inside Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza)

**Hours:** Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 to 4 p.m.

Note: Closed during the year-end/New Year holidays, on national holidays, and on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays

**Consultation Methods:** In person at the counter or over the telephone (03-3202-5535 or 03-5155-4039)

**Consultation Fee:** Free of charge

**Languages:** English, Chinese, and Portuguese are always available.

**Web site:** [www2.ocn.ne.jp/~ccf/](http://www2.ocn.ne.jp/~ccf/)



For other languages, please refer to the chart below.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 <sup>st</sup> week	Spanish	Vietnamese	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
2 <sup>nd</sup> week	Spanish	Indonesian	Closed	Spanish	Bengalese
3 <sup>rd</sup> week	Spanish	Vietnamese	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
4 <sup>th</sup> week	Spanish	Indonesian	Closed	Spanish	Bengalese



## Reference and Information Corner

You are free to read and/or take the various materials provided here, such as those containing useful information for foreign residents (information on everyday living, events, etc.), announcements from Shinjuku City Office, and advertisements recruiting volunteers. Please use this area for learning and collecting information.



## Multipurpose Space

Besides Japanese-language classes (see page 2), various seminars and events are held here. Among them, the International Exchange Salon (see pages 1 and 8), where Japanese and non-Japanese residents are free to chat, is very well attended each time it is held. Why not use these facilities as a venue for telling everyone about the language and culture of your country?



**Please see page 1 for the location of Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza!**



Population Census



## A Population Census Will Be Taken

October 1 is Population Census Day. The census is taken according to national law by the Japanese government once every five years, and the responses received serve as important data for national policy and city planning. The census applies to everyone who lives in Japan, regardless of nationality, and everyone must participate. Please note that the results of the survey are for statistical purposes only and will not be used for anything else, such as reference for immigration, taxes, or police records.

Census takers will deliver a form to every home between late September and early October. You must complete the form and either return it to a census taker or mail it to the city office. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

**Inquiries:** Shinjuku Population Census Implementation Headquarters (Statistics Section, Regional Coordination Division, Regional and Cultural Affairs Department), Tel: 03-5273-4096

## Free Health Checkups

Shinjuku City offers free health checkups for those between 40 and 74 years of age who are enrolled in Shinjuku City National Health Insurance. Let's undergo a health checkup by December 31 (Fri.).

### Information Center

If you do not know how to make a reservation or if you do not have a health checkup slip, please call the following: Health Checkup Information Center, Shinjuku City Office, Tel: 03-5273-3584 (Weekdays, September 15 [Wed.] through November 30 [Tue.], 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.)

### Notification Postcard

Those between 40 and 74 years of age who have not undergone health checkups between May 2009 and June 30, 2010, will be mailed notification postcards concerning health checkups.

**Inquiries:** Health Checkup Section, Health Promotion Division (Shinjuku City Office New Wing of Annex 2, 1F), Tel: 03-5273-4207

## To All Special Permanent Residents:

### An Announcement concerning a Special Benefit

Shinjuku City is offering a new benefit program for special permanent residents who are not able to draw Basic Pension for the Elderly due to the National Pension system. Eligible individuals are those who are special permanent residents (including naturalized citizens), have lived in Shinjuku City for two continuous years or longer from the date of resident or foreign resident registration in Shinjuku City, and meet the following conditions:

#### (1) Special Welfare Benefit (monthly benefit: ¥20,000)

Those who were born on or before April 1, 1926, and are not drawing public pensions, etc.

#### (2) Special Benefit for the Severely Disabled (monthly benefit: ¥30,000)

Those with a *Handbook for the Physically Disabled*, Level 1 or 2; a *Handbook for the Mentally Disabled (Ai-no-Techo)*, Level 1 or 2; or a *Health and Welfare Handbook for the Mentally Disabled*, Level 1 or 2, who have reached 20 years of age by January 1, 1982; who have completed foreign resident registration in Japan as of January 1, 1982; and who are not drawing public pensions, etc. Note: Both (1) and (2) have more detailed eligibility requirements.

**Inquiries:** (1) Service Section, Senior Citizens' Service Division, Tel: 03-5273-4591  
(2) Accounting Section, Welfare Division for Disabled Persons, Tel: 03-5273-4520

## HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Are Immediate Problems

Shinjuku Public Health Center offers HIV and STI testing and consultation for free on an anonymous basis. Anyone can have an STI and be infected with AIDS. Because early detection and early treatment are extremely important in curing these illnesses, it is a good idea to seek consultation and undergo testing if you suspect the slightest possibility of having these diseases.

### 1. HIV Consultation and Testing in Foreign Languages

**Languages:** English, Portuguese, Spanish, and Thai

(1) HIV/AIDS Telephone Consultation, Tel: 03-3369-7110

**Consultation Days:** Thursdays, 1 to 5 p.m. (This service is offered in Thai twice a month, on days that HIV testing is conducted.)

(2) HIV and STI Testing

**Testing Details:** HIV and STI (syphilis and chlamydia) testing are given. Please come directly to the site during reception hours to get tested. No reservations are necessary.

**Testing Days:** As a rule, two Thursdays a month

Note: Please come again to the site a week after getting tested. The results will be given there.

**Reception Hours:** 1 to 2:30 p.m.

**Location:** Nishi-Shinjuku Public Health Center (7-5-8 Nishi-

Shinjuku, Shinjuku City)

For a detailed schedule, please visit the city's foreign-language Web site.

[www.city.shinjuku.lg.jp/foreign/english/oshirase/teiki/aids.html](http://www.city.shinjuku.lg.jp/foreign/english/oshirase/teiki/aids.html)

### 2. HIV Consultation and Testing in Japanese

(1) HIV/AIDS Telephone Consultation

Tel: 03-5273-3862 (Health Consultation Section, Public Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Division)

**Consultation Days:** Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

(2) HIV and STI Testing

**Reservations** (A reservation is required for the testing in Japanese.): Tel: 03-5273-3859 (Disease Prevention Section, Public Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Division)

Note: Testing details and days are the same as those for the testing in foreign languages described above.

## Recruiting Children for Municipal and Authorized Private Nursery Schools

Nursery schools are facilities that take care of children on behalf of parents/guardians who are unable to care for their children at home due to work, illness, or other reasons.

Although the eligible age varies with each nursery school, it ranges from as early as 43 days after birth up to the age at which children enter elementary school.

Applications are scheduled to be accepted from mid-December through mid-January for enrollment starting in April of next year. Each month, the deadline for admission to nursery schools is around the 15th of the preceding month. Be sure to call and make an appointment to submit an application.

**Inquiries:** Enrollment Section, Nursery School Division (Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. 2F), Tel: 03-5273-4527

## Recruiting Preschoolers for Kindergarten

Kindergartens are educational facilities for preschoolers ages 3 to 5. There are municipal and private kindergartens in the city.

The recruitment of children to enroll in kindergarten in the upcoming fiscal year is conducted around October of every year.

For more information on admission to kindergarten, please contact the particular kindergarten directly.

**Inquiries:** Either the particular kindergarten in which you are interested or the Kindergarten Section of the School Management Division (Shinjuku City Office Annex 1, 4F), Tel: 03-5273-3103

## Recruiting Children for Kodomo-en

*Kodomo-en* is a childcare and educational facility that functions as both a kindergarten and nursery school and focuses on the growth and development of children, from newborns up to those entering elementary school. Please call for more information on enrollment.

**Inquiries:** Either the particular *kodomo-en* in which you are interested or the Kindergarten Section of the School Management Division (Shinjuku City Office Annex 1, 4F), Tel: 03-5273-4047



# Shinjuku Art Heaven 2010

Shinjuku Art Heaven starts with a parade of marching bands from local elementary schools and universities; the parade goes through Shinjuku City from east to west. At each site, there will be a variety of entertainment, such as performances of brass bands and Awa-Odori Dancing as well as many kinds of street performances. Please come and enjoy the event where the town of Shinjuku is transformed into a theater.



**Date: October 10 (Sun.)**

☆ **Parade: Starts at 11:10 a.m.**

**Parade Course:** Intersection of Shinjuku-dori Avenue and Meiji-dori Avenue – Shinjuku-dori Avenue – in front of Alta Building – O-Guard – Shinjuku Station west exit – Kogakuin University

☆ **Festa: 1 to 5 p.m.**

**Location:** Various sites in all directions, radiating from Shinjuku Station (Shinjuku Station Square, Shinjuku Southern Terrace, and other locations)

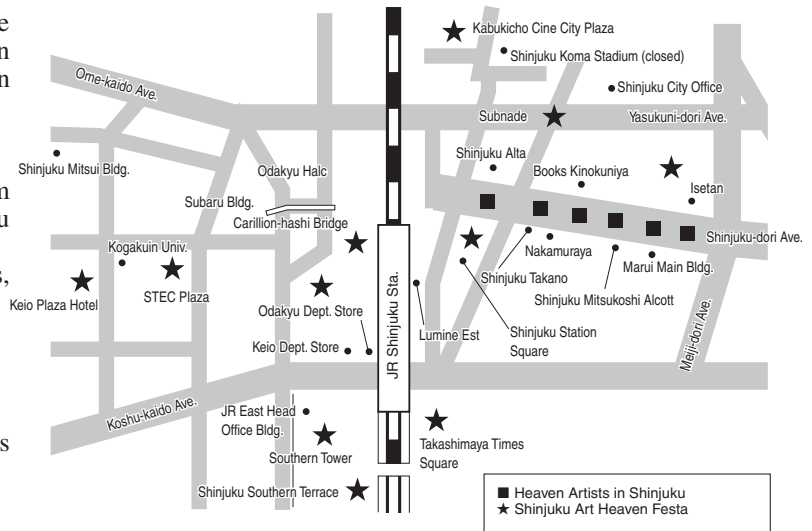
**Program:** Marching bands, cheerleading performances, street performances, and more

☆ **Heaven Artists in Shinjuku: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

**Location:** Six locations on Shinjuku-dori Avenue

**Program:** Street performances

**Inquiries:** Culture, Tourism and International Affairs Division, Tel: 03-5273-4069



## Shinjuku Sports Recreation 2010



Your body cannot help but move instinctively! There will be all kinds of fun events on Sports Day in Shinjuku City! There will be an enjoyable convention of booths where you can experience traditional

Japanese martial arts; various forms of dancing from around the world; as well as sports, such as volleyball, futsal, and swimming! Popular beauty and health programs, such as aerobics, Pilates, and yoga, will be free of charge, and you will be able to try everything without advanced reservations! Simply come to the site on the day of the event dressed in comfortable sportswear.

**Date and Time:** October 11 (Mon., a national holiday), 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Location:** Shinjuku Cosmic Sports Center (3-1-2 Okubo), Shinjuku Sports Center (3-5-1 Okubo), and other locations

**Inquiries:** The Shinjuku Foundation for Creation of Future, Tel: 03-3232-7701

## Takadanobaba Yabusame Demonstration



It is said that the Takadanobaba style of *yabusame* (horseback archery) began in 1728, in the Edo period, when the eighth shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune, ordered it as a prayer offered at Anahachimangu Shrine for the healing of his son's illness.

A *yabusame* procession will depart from Anahachimangu Shrine and make its way to Toyama Park, after which archers will shoot at three targets while riding galloping horses.

Note: The event may be canceled in the event of rain.

**Fee:** Free of charge (Standing room only)

**Date and Time:** October 11 (Mon., a national holiday), 2 to 3:30 p.m.

**Location:** Toyama Park (Hakoneyama Area, Toyama 3-chome, Shinjuku City)

**Sponsor:** Committee for Preservation of Takadanobaba Yabusame

**Inquiries:** Shinjuku Historical Museum, Tel: 03-3359-2131

**How to Get There:** An eight-minute walk from Waseda Station on the Tozai Subway Line; a 10-minute walk from Nishi-Waseda Station on the Fukutoshin Subway Line; or a five-minute walk from the Baba-Shitamachi bus stop, taking the Gaku (学) 02 Toei Bus heading toward Waseda-Seimon bus stop

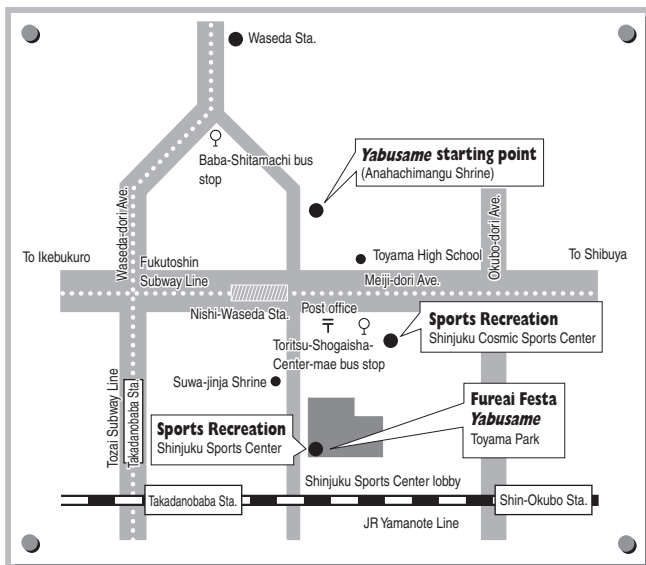
## Fureai Festa 2010



This annual local festival will be held in Toyama Park. There will be various performances, such as *taiko* (Japanese drums), jazz music, and Japanese and foreign dance shows, at three stage areas. There will be plenty of events, vendors selling local specialties, and various stalls in eight plazas. There will be something fun for everyone, from children to adults. Why not step out with your family to enjoy the city's biggest festival?



**Date and Time:** October 17 (Sun.), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
**Location:** Toyama Park Okubo Area (Okubo 3-chome)  
**How to Get There:** A three-minute walk from Nishi-Waseda Station on the Fukutoshin Subway Line, a 10-minute walk from Takadanobaba Station on the JR Yamanote Line or Seibu-Shinjuku Line, or a 15-minute walk from JR Shin-Okubo Station  
**Note:** Because there is no parking available, please refrain from coming by car.  
**Inquiries:** Culture, Tourism and International Affairs Division, Tel: 03-5273-4069



## A Gathering of Refugees Settled in Japan



There will be an awards ceremony for refugee supporters followed by performances of Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian songs and dances by refugees from these countries who are now living in Japan. We are looking forward to welcoming as many people as possible!

**Date and Time:** October 24 (Sun.), 1 to 4:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Large Hall, Shinjuku Bunka Center  
**Inquiries:** Refugee Assistance Headquarters (RHQ), Foundation for the Welfare and Education of Asian People, Tel: 03-3449-0222  
 Web Site: [www.rhq.gr.jp/](http://www.rhq.gr.jp/)

## Kita-Shinjuku Library



### Information on Multicultural Services

Kita-Shinjuku Library offers the following services to help foreign residents and promote multicultural understanding.

#### ☆ Foreign-Language Book Section

There is a selection of foreign-language books, mainly in English, Chinese, and Korean, that can be borrowed. Also, there are picture books and publications in English, Chinese, and Korean geared to children.

#### ☆ Foreign-Language Storytelling Events

The library has English and Korean storytelling events that double as gatherings to promote intercultural exchange through fun songs and games.

Future events are as follows:

- Storytelling in English  
October 23 (Sat.), from 2 p.m.
- Storytelling in Korean  
January 15 (Sat.)



**Inquiries:** Kita-Shinjuku Library (3-20-2 Kita-Shinjuku, Shinjuku City), Tel: 03-3365-4755

## Community Activity Compensation Program

In April, Shinjuku City started a program in which the city will bear the cost of insurance premiums and offer compensation for damages and injuries resulting from accidents that occur during community activities. The purpose of this program is to ensure that all city residents can participate in town council undertakings, residents' association events, and volunteer activities with peace of mind. (No advance registration is required.)

Activities that fulfill all of the following conditions are eligible for the compensation program:

- Must be organized by a community group composed of Shinjuku City residents (including those of foreign nationality) or a community group based in Shinjuku City
- Must be independent and aimed at benefitting the public
- Must be conducted in a planned and consistent manner throughout the year
- Must be voluntary and without remuneration (Payment for actual expenses, such as transportation, is not considered remuneration.)
- Must be conducted within Shinjuku City or conducted for Shinjuku City residents outside of the city (restricted to activities conducted within Japan)

If an accident resulting in damage, injury, or compensation for such occurs during a community activity, please call the number below within 14 days of the accident. **Note:** This program does not offer compensation for all community activities and does not apply to sports, recreational, or other similar activities conducted as a hobby nor does this apply to preschool children. Please call for more information.

**Inquiries:** Lifelong Learning Community Section, Lifelong Learning Community Division (Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. 1F), Tel: 03-5273-4127

## 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 article, we will report from the front lines of multicultural living.*

Why not exchange opinions with people from countries around the world and think about multicultural living? The International Exchange Salon described on page 1 of this issue is not just an event where you can enjoy talking with people, it is also a great opportunity for understanding differences in each other's cultures and values. In this article, we will introduce two foreign students who participated in the International Exchange Salon last July.

# Widening the Circle of International Exchanges in Shinjuku—Experiencing the International Exchange Salon

**Kim:** Living in Shinjuku, I am finding that it is a really nice place to live. Transportation is quite convenient, and there are many nice places for shopping and dining. Also, here you can feel not only the Japanese culture but also the cultures of various countries around the world. Shinjuku is very international, and one of the great aspects of this city is that, with restaurants of every cuisine you can think of, you can buy ingredients for any cuisine from around the world.

**He:** I agree. Shinjuku is definitely a comfortable place



Kim Kwangsoo  
(from South Korea)  
Third year student  
in the Department of  
Engineering and Design,  
Faculty of Engineering  
and Design, Hosei  
University



He Yuxuan  
(from China)  
Third year student in the  
Department of Japanese  
Language Studies,  
Faculty of Foreign  
Language Studies,  
Mejiro University

to live. Because there are many people from foreign countries who live in Shinjuku and organize activities here, there are multilingual signs in all areas of the city as well as hospitals with foreign-language-speaking staff, so all this really helps.

**Kim:** I have lived in Shinjuku ever since I came to Japan, and I think it is interesting that each community has its own distinct atmosphere, such as the business area of Nishi-Shinjuku, the streets of Kabuki-cho, Kagurazaka, Waseda, and Shin-Okubo. Do you have a particular area of Shinjuku that you especially like, Ms. He?

**He:** Yes, I love Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden. In spring, the cherry blossoms are in full bloom, and I went there again this year to view them. I was able to experience Japanese culture there. How about you, Mr. Kim? Do you have a favorite place to recommend?

**Kim:** Yes, I recommend the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Buildings. You can enjoy a really beautiful night view there.

**He:** Oh, and I think Chuo Library is great, too! They have books and magazines in foreign languages, and you can really concentrate in the study rooms.

The two continued to talk about various topics, such as how they spend their time in Shinjuku City, life in Japan as a foreign student, and relationship with Japanese people starting with the greeting. Time flew, and the fun time of chatting was over. We asked them to talk about their first experience at the International Exchange Salon.

**Kim:** I think it was a truly worthwhile experience because you can have a lot of international exchanges with people from various countries around the world who live in Shinjuku. Personally, I was not able to express my own views because my Japanese-language skills are still not very good, but it was really nice that everyone was not shy and did their best to participate actively.

With different countries, different languages, and different cultures, there are naturally some things that seem obvious to you but are a surprise to other people or things about one's home country that will make others laugh. I think we were able to exchange all kinds of information. Even people from the same country can have different habits and values. However, I was really impressed with the way that participants tried to overcome barriers and understand each other.

**He:** At the International Exchange Salon this time, there were more than 70 people from various countries around the world. Listening to the warm laughter in the friendly atmosphere made me think that there really are no borders between nations. This was the first time I heard of such a wonderful place! Shinjuku City is really a great place for foreign residents to live. It is convenient, there are all kinds of different cuisines from around the world, and you can make friends at such events as the International Exchange Salon. Unfortunately, I hear that there are various kinds of problems in local communities that are caused by cultural differences. As a foreign resident, I realize the importance of keeping in mind "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" in everyday life. I hope to be able to understand the Japanese culture and rules for everyday living while living in Japan and to grow as a person.