

# The Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents Newsletter No. 49



KAWASAKI CITY  
川崎市

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(Simple Japanese) <http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/250/page/0000042748.html>

## International Festival in Kawasaki and Multicultural Festa Saiwai

International Festival in Kawasaki was held at the International Center on Sunday, July 7. There was a lot to do at this event, from sampling various foods from all over the world, to being entertained by song and dance different nations. There were a surprisingly large number of participants, and one could feel excitement in the air. This was the first time for the Representative Assembly to attend this event.

On Sunday, September 29, Multicultural Festa Saiwai was held at Saiwai Civic Hall. The Saiwai Ward Office hosted this event, and it was visited by many locals. Each event was enjoyable in its own way, and a nice change of pace from the ordinary meetings.

A panel was prepared to promote awareness of the Representative Assembly at these events. It was a great success, as there were many first-time international visitors. There were also some Japanese residents who inquired about the Representative Assembly.

Our "World Quiz" was very popular among adults as well as children, providing an enjoyable opportunity for multicultural exchange. Participating in these events made us feel that we wanted to return in later years.



◆International Festival in Kawasaki◆



◆Multicultural Festa Saiwai◆

## <The Representative Assembly FY2013 Meeting Schedule>

Time: 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Location: Kawasaki International Center  
(approximately 10-minute walk from  
Motosumiyoshi Station, Tokyo Toyoko Line)

Access Map : <http://www.kian.or.jp/accessmap.shtml>

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Fourth Meeting, Day 1: Sunday, January 19

Fourth Meeting, Day 2: Sunday, February 16

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Anyone is welcome to come and observe the meetings.

Please feel free to come to observe our meetings!



# <Open Forum>

The Open Forum for FY2013 was held on Sunday, November 17 at Nakahara Civic Hall. The aim of this Forum is to hear the opinions of those who are not on the Representative Assembly and to have their ideas reflected in our deliberations. It also provides an opportunity to share information about the current topics of discussion in the Representative Assembly.

There were approximately 120 attendees at this year's Open Forum, and discussions lasted for about three hours from 14:00 through 17:00. During the first half of the Open Forum, a keynote presentation was delivered by Mioko TSUBOYA, Associate Professor at Yokohama City University, on the topic of "Relationships between Foreign Residents' Communities and Local Society." In this presentation, the role of foreign residents' communities was explained from the perspective of an expert on the subject. The current situation and issues were introduced through concrete examples such as activities undertaken by young people with international backgrounds, or initiatives of neighborhood associations from residential complexes with high populations of foreign residents. Some of the thoughts and comments shared by the participants include: "It was a new experience, like a university lecture," and "I came to think that we could overcome cultural barriers if we were to view ourselves as a group of residents that share common issues, whether you are a Japanese resident or a foreign resident."



During the latter half of the Open Forum, Izumi Beatriz SONODA, Welfare and Education Section Leader, and David CHART, Life and Society Section Leader, shared highlights from the topics that are currently being discussed in the Representative Assembly. In particular, we received numerous comments from the participants on the issues of transmission of information and multilingual services offered at city offices, which have also been marked as important topics in the deliberations of the Representative Assembly. Additionally, we received valuable comments and advice from Chikako KASHIWAZAKI, Professor at Keio University, and Yuji NAKANO, Professor at Komazawa University.



Another aim of the Open Forum is to provide a place for exchange among the participants. Many Japanese as well as foreign residents attended the exchange party that was held after the closing ceremony, and the meeting was concluded in great success.

## Comments from the Moderators:



This was my second time to act as a moderator. The keynote speech on the topic of "Foreign Residents' Communities" was very informative. Overall, we were able to hear opinions and thoughts from many attendees. I was very pleased with today's Open Forum, as we were able to share the aims and topics of discussions in the Representative Assembly. (Brandon SIEFKEN)

It was a great experience to be able to serve as one of the moderators at the Open Forum. I believe that the foreign residents of Kawasaki benefited greatly from the keynote speech, although certain parts required a technical background to fully understand. We were able to hear the opinions of many of the participants, and I believe that things went very smoothly overall. (Latsamychanh KEOPASEUTH)

## ◇ Meeting Reports

### ■ Welfare and Education Section

Discussions of all topics have been completed within the Welfare and Education Section, and now we are entering the phase of summarizing and building proposals with our members based on material and references we have gathered over the last two years.

Thus far, one of the proposals has been decided, on the topic of “home education.” We would like to present this proposal so that parents and guardians will be able to receive proper training and support.

In the few remaining meetings, we are planning to summarize the importance of transmission of information, which is interconnected with all other topics and has been designated as another candidate for a proposal. Through our discussions, we hope to help develop the city of Kawasaki into a better place to live for the foreign residents.

(Izumi Beatriz SONODA, Welfare and Education Section Leader)

### ■ Life and Society Section

We are now entering the final adjustment phase of proposals for this term within the Life and Society Section. So far, we have narrowed down the list of discussion topics to three.

The first topic is on the issue of transmission of information. This is a topic that was brought up at the general meeting as well. In particular, multilingual services provided at city offices emerged as a concrete topic of discussion, and it has designated as a candidate for proposal.

The second topic is on the issue of immigration, with a focus on allowing the parents of foreign residents to join them in Japan. However, since this issue is outside the jurisdiction of the city, the proposal would be to request to the city to raise this issue with the Japanese government.

Lastly, the third topic on support for employment was brought forward as an issue which has been faced by many the foreign residents. It appears that in some cases foreign residents were not offered jobs based on the fact that they were not Japanese, and we hope that we can help resolve such issues. But we also feel that creating a practical and concrete proposal is a challenging task. We hope to continue to work together to advance meaningful discussions within the time remaining time.

(David CHART, Life and Society Section Leader)



## 〈Participation in Emergency Drills〉

On Saturday, August 31, I participated in the Kawasaki City Comprehensive Emergency Drills. September 1 is designated as “disaster prevention day” in Japan, and emergency drills are held countrywide around this time of the year. The city of Kawasaki conducts emergency drills every year. Many local residents as well as various groups participated in this year’s emergency drill, which was held at Todoroki Ryokuchi.

During the drill we learned how to rescue people when buildings collapse in earthquakes and practiced bucket brigade firefighting - all participants took it very seriously. As the saying goes “be prepared,” so it is important to have proper training to respond to a disaster. It was my first time to participate, but it was a very valuable experience. Please try to attend the emergency drills if you have the opportunity.

(Minsuk GONG)



Information regarding emergencies and disasters are also available on the Kawasaki City Homepage.

- Disaster Preparedness in Kawasaki - Information on disaster countermeasures.

<http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/160/page/0000015861.html>

- Emergency Evacuation Map - A map with a list of emergency evacuation centers.

<http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/kurashi/category/15-3-13-7-0-0-0-0-0-0.html>

\*Multilingual versions are available of both



## New Year's Celebrations From Around the World



There are many different ethnic groups and religions around the world. New Year's is celebrated in ways unique to countries or regions of the globe.

Here, we would like to share some of the ways New Year's is celebrated in various parts of the world.



The Chinese New Year is often referred to as the Lunar New Year or the Spring Festival (2014 Spring Festival falls on January 31.) Since the Chinese calendar is lunisolar, Chinese New Year typically falls between late January and mid February. Families gather for a reunion dinner on New Year's Eve, known as Chuxi, and it is customary to eat dumplings around midnight. The sounds of fireworks and firecrackers echo through the air all night long. Chinese New Year is celebrated in Taiwan and Hong Kong as well.

In countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, New Year is celebrated four times a year because there are so many different ethnic groups. However, in Singapore, Chinese New Year is celebrated with most vigor as approximately 70% of the residents are of Chinese origin.

Korea follows both the Gregorian and lunar calendars. Due to influences from Confucianism, the main purpose of the holiday is respecting ancestors and elders rather than getting together to spend time with your family.



In Spain, twelve grapes are eaten in time with the chimes of the church bells, while wishing for twelve months of happiness in the new year. Early the next morning, people go out to have hot chocolate and churros.

In Brazil, it is customary to dress in new white clothes on the night of New Year's Eve. White clothes represent peace.

The Russian New Year is a family holiday. Christmas Day falls on January 7 instead of December 25, since the Orthodox calendar (Julian calendar) is followed in Russia. The Russian version of Santa Claus is called Ded Moroz, and he delivers gifts on January 1 along with his granddaughter Snegurochka. The Russian Christmas tree is called Yolka, and is usually decorated and displayed until around January 14.



Although New Year's is celebrated in different ways, what is common in all countries and regions is that we all await the New Year in anticipation and hope that it will be filled with happiness.

(Yi YANG / Orietta OIDE / Anna YANAGISAWA)

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Your opinions regarding this newsletter and/or the Assembly are always welcome.