

**Kawasaki City**KAWASAKI CITY  
川崎市

# Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents Newsletter

Date of publication:  
December 14, 2008  
Issue No. 35

Edited and published by:  
The Human Rights and Gender Equality Office,  
Citizens' and Children's Affairs Bureau, Kawasaki City Office  
<http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/25/25zinken/home/gaikoku/index.htm>

## Overcoming Our Differences: The Seventh Representative Assembly Convenes

Yong-Jae CHO, Chairperson of the Seventh Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents



Since its inception, the Representative Assembly has comprised foreign residents whose native language is Japanese, foreign residents whose native language is not Japanese, and even some foreign residents who speak Japanese as their primary language and are unable to speak their own native language.

Looking back at what I have just written, *foreign residents who speak Japanese as their primary language and are unable to speak their own native language* sounds like a Japanese tongue twister. Second-generation foreign residents like myself have, for better or worse, a very strong fixation on issues of identity and traditional culture regardless of nationality. This is because we have first-hand experience with the language barrier and challenges faced by our parents' generation, who immigrated to Japan, and because we have become fully aware of the negative aspects of Japanese schools, which the majority of us attended.

On the other hand, when discussing issues with my fellow Representatives, I sometimes think about the fortitude of that first generation of immigrants. At such times, I look at them from a completely Japanese point of view even though I am not Japanese.

This assembly provides opportunities for Representatives to share their opinions as foreign residents. If we cannot learn to understand and appreciate our diverse values and varied living arrangements, and if we cannot learn to cooperate with one another, we will never be able to achieve a multicultural society in Japan.

Because we represent the diverse array of foreign residents living in Kawasaki, let us use the limited time we have to diligently and earnestly strive to create a better living environment for our entire community.

## The Committee on Education and Culture and the Committee on Society/Community Life

Report from the Representative Assembly May to September 2008

The 26 Representatives of the Seventh Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents were divided into two committees to discuss issues that affect the foreign resident community.

The Committee on Education and Culture has been discussing issues concerning education, such as problems related to the provision of Japanese-language education and other forms of support for foreign children attending Japanese schools as well as problems pertaining to education aimed at achieving multicultural understanding in schools. The committee is looking for new ideas to address these problems. The Committee on Society/Community Life has been discussing issues of health care and multicultural community life. In the area of health care, the committee has been examining the roles that volunteer interpreters and health care play during times of emergency. In the area of multicultural community life, it has been debating issues related to human rights, discrimination, civic culture, and civic participation.

At the Open Forum, the Representative Assembly will listen to opinions expressed by Japanese residents and foreign residents not involved in the Representative Assembly. We hope to use this feedback to develop even more effective proposals.



● **Useful Information:** The Multilingual Consultation Office has provided counseling in more than 1,500 cases. Feel free to contact this office if you need help addressing everyday living problems or concerns. Consultation Corner for Foreign Residents, Tel: 044-435-7000, Web site: [www.kian.or.jp/soudan.html](http://www.kian.or.jp/soudan.html); for details, see issue no. 34 of this newsletter.

# Summary of Assembly Meetings

## Second Meeting, Day 1 (June 15)

- Formation of committees
- Election of chairpersons and vice-chairpersons
  - Committee on Education and Culture  
Chairperson: Xue Feng ZHANG; Vice-Chairperson: Yongdok KIM
  - Committee on Society/Community Life  
Chairperson: Hae-Sook PARK; Vice-Chairperson: Sudeep ADHIKARI

## Second Meeting, Day 2 (July 6)

- Committee on Education and Culture
  - City support for Japanese-language education  
The Committee discussed the Japanese-language tutor dispatch system, which provides support for foreign children and students in their native language, and Japanese-language classes offered by civic halls and Fureai Hall.
- Committee on Society/Community Life
  - Medical information and interpreting medical terminology  
The Committee discussed the ease of using multilingual information, such as a list of hospitals that offer medical examinations in a foreign language, and the difficulties posed by the use of specialized terminology. They also discussed the current need for interpreters that are able to interpret medical terminology.



## Third Meeting, Day 1 (September 28)

- Committee on Education and Culture
  - City-provided education aimed at achieving multicultural understanding  
Committee members enhanced their understanding of the Ethnic Culture Instructors Exchange Project conducted by foreign residents in classrooms as well as citizen-initiated lessons and planning projects led by foreign residents to introduce their cultures to the community and provide native-language education.
- Committee on Society/Community Life
  - Medical information and interpreting medical terminology  
The Committee discussed what is needed to increase the usage of the city's *Medical Guide for Foreign Residents*. Also, the Committee examined Kanagawa Prefecture's medical-related interpreter service system.  
**Note:** This information is posted on the Representative Assembly's Web site.



## ☆ Introducing a New Representative

The following individual was elected to replace a Representative who had to resign.



**Name:** Shang Shang YIN  
**Nationality:** China  
**Feelings about becoming a Representative:** Let's make Kawasaki a truly multicultural city.  
**Favorite word(s) or saying:** Where there is a will there is a way.

## ★ FY2008 Meeting Schedule ★

☆ **Open Forum:** Dec. 14 (Sun.) **Location:** Takatsu Civic Hall **Time:** 2:00–5:00 p.m.

**Note:** Anyone may participate. This is an open opportunity for members of the general public to share their ideas with their Representatives.

☆ **Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents**

**Location:** Kawasaki International Center **Time:** 2:00–5:00 p.m.

**Third Meeting:** Day 2–Nov. 16 (Sun.)

**Fourth Meeting:** Day 1–Jan. 25 (Sun.), Day 2–Feb. 22 (Sun.)

**Note:** Assembly meetings are open to the public. Please feel free to attend.



● **Useful Information:** A list of Kawasaki City Multilingual Public Relations Materials is now available. Kawasaki City has created multilingual versions (translations or Japanese versions with *furigana*) of as many as 100 government documents on topics ranging from child rearing and education to disaster prevention. Please be sure to take advantage of these resources. You can find them at ward offices, civic halls, and libraries. This information can also be found on the Representative Assembly's Web site.

# Participating in the Multicultural Festa Mizonokuchi

## ★ Booth Managed by the Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents ★



On October 18, Representatives participated in the Multicultural Festa Mizonokuchi 2008 to interact with local residents, enhance mutual understanding, and publicize information about the Representative Assembly.

Although it was a little windy this year, the weather was good overall, and many members of the community attended the event.

Those who visited the Representative's booth were offered shrimp chips, boiled dumplings, and Romanian vegetable soup. Representatives worked together to prepare enough food to feed the booth's many visitors.

The dumplings came in various shapes, depending on which of the many volunteers made them, but they all tasted fantastic. The Romanian soup was filled with all kinds of vegetables and meat and

was very tasty.

Dumplings can come in different shapes, and the soup was so good because it was pleasingly balanced with lots of nice vegetables. Isn't this just like the world we live in? Each and every individual is unique, but we are able to enjoy the life of our choosing by appreciating and working together with one another. Everyone had a great time at this year's festival.

(Sung Mi KIM)

---

## ★ Multicultural Exchange at the Multicultural Festa ★

As always, many different groups participated in this year's Multicultural Festa, which featured stage performances and food booths representing many different cultures.

While preparing our dishes, we Representatives had the opportunity to meet members of other groups that were also preparing dishes and show them how to make some of the food we were going to offer while chatting with them. We invited members of another group to try frying shrimp chips with us.

I think it was wonderful that many of the participants enjoyed multicultural song and dance performances from various countries and that they had a chance to interact with people from other cultures in their own community.

Many people visited the booth featuring traditional games. Children were able to try their hand at origami and making *kamitombo* (a toy with a propeller made of paper and bamboo) with the help of the senior volunteers at the booth. It was a fun day for kids and adults alike. Won't it be great when Kawasaki is a comfortable community for all its residents!



(Hong JIANG)



# Representatives and Their Multicultural Experiences

Volume 1

## The Meaning of Color for the Nepalese



In Nepal, colors have great significance in everyday life. For the Nepalese, particularly married women, the color of their clothing is most significant. Red is said to symbolize an auspicious beginning. Red represents life, happiness, and good fortune. Therefore, red clothing is generally worn at festivals, religious ceremonies, and weddings.

Black, on the other hand, is the color of bad luck. For this reason, black clothing is not worn on happy occasions. Women who are widowed do not wear red. For one year after the death of her husband, a widow will generally wear white. After one year, she may wear other colors, but she will not wear red.

If you ever visit Nepal and attend a festival or wedding, be sure to wear red. However, be careful not to give a widow any red clothing as a gift.

(Sudeep ADHIKARI)

*The use of white, red, and black is similar in some cultures but completely different in others. It can be quite confusing! (Editing Committee)*



## Ukrainian and Japanese Customs



Looks and languages are not the only things that make foreign residents unique. Each comes from a country that has its own culture, customs, and educational practices as well as its own way of expressing thoughts and feelings.

People who come to a foreign country must study that country's culture and language. At the same time, they must try to adapt to that country's customs. As they begin to adapt, they may start to realize that certain customs are actually similar in some ways to customs in their own countries.

I was born and raised in Ukraine. It has been 10 years since I came to Japan. Some customs in Japan are the same as those in Ukraine. One of these is the custom of giving gifts as a way of expressing one's gratitude. Once, when I tried to follow this custom in Japan, I ended up quite confused. The gifts I am talking about can be something along the lines of a cake or some fruit. But one day, when I tried to give such a gift to a friend, my friend did not look pleased. In fact, my friend actually looked kind of angry when accepting my gift. Of course, my friend thanked me verbally, but I had an uneasy feeling when we parted. Although this was a custom that I thought would please the person I was thanking, I began to realize that even though we share the same custom, our cultures differ in the ways we give gifts, accept gifts, and even the ways we express gratitude.

(Olena KUSHTA)

*Cultures are very different in their gift-giving practices. When accepting a gift, the facial expression of many Japanese people tends to reflect a sense of humility rather than delight. (Editing Committee)*

<Inquiries> Human Rights and Gender Equality Office, Citizens' and Children's Affairs Bureau, Kawasaki City  
(川崎市市民・こども局人権・男女共同参画室)

1 Miyamoto-cho, Kawasaki-ku, Kawasaki City 210-8577 (〒 210-8577 川崎市川崎区宮本町1)

Tel: 044-200-2359

Fax: 044-200-3914

E-mail: 25gaikok@city.kawasaki.jp

Ideas and input regarding the newsletter and/or the assembly are always welcome.