

# KCC Newsletter

## December, 2024

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Vol. 104

### Announcement

#### Online International Exchange Salon

#### Fun Recreation Ideas

~Games for Building Good Relationships that Can Be Played Anywhere - Even on the Zoo

- D** December 19 (Thu) 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. How to participate: Online (Zoom)  
**L** Mr. Takanobu Kosai, Board Member of Kita-Kashiwa Town Council **F** Free  
**A** Sign up by December 18 at the KCC Office or by email at < boshu-1@kira-kira.jp>. Applicants will be sent a URL to join on the day of the event.



#### Taiwanese Cooking

- D** December 22 (Sun) 9:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. **P** Chuo Kouminkan cooking room  
**C** Taiwanese stir-fried rice noodles, oolong tea and chicken wing soup with medicinal herbs, white kikurage mushroom dessert **L** Ms. Huang Mei Jung **F** 1,500 yen **N** 25  
**A** Sign up at the KCC Office or by email at <boshu-1@kira-kira.jp> by December 19 (Thu). Cancellations made on the day of the event will be charged the fee.



White mushroom dessert

#### Free Legal Advice and Administrative Procedure Support for Foreign Residents

To foreign residents. Are you in need of help? Lawyers and administrative procedure specialists are available for consultation. You can ask for specialists' advice on issues such as family or partner violence, divorce, visa procedures, and problems at work. Reservation necessary.

- D** December 25 (Wed), 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. **P** Palette Kashiwa MTR A **R** the KCC Office

#### <Announcements from Other Organizations> Foreign Language Salon

We will continue to hold a salon mainly for beginners to enjoy conversation once a month at Palette Kashiwa next year.

**Indonesian Language** January 18 (Sat), noon - 13:00 p.m. MTR-E

February 8 (Sat) and March 8 (Sat), 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. MTR-D

**French Language** January 21 (Tue), February 18 (Tue) and March 18 (Tue), 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. MTR-D  
 Eligibility: People who live, work or go to school in Kashiwa **F** Free

**A** Please write "Application for Foreign Language Salon" in the subject line, include your name and telephone number in the body of the message, and email it to <gaikokugo@kira-kira.jp>.



#### Join Us for "Happy Halloween!" (10/27)

Sixty-six Japanese and foreign parents and children enjoyed a Halloween party. This year, Palette Kashiwa and KCC co-hosted the event, with Palette Kashiwa holding a family concert in the morning and KCC hosting the Halloween party in the afternoon.

Children who attended the party went around the KCC Office, the Civic Activity Center reception desk, and the Palette Kashiwa reception desk, saying "Trick or Treat" and looked happy when they received the treats.

The children watched a PowerPoint presentation of a Halloween picture book with English and Japanese explanations, danced, and played a balloon-carrying game. They got excited when they broke the piñata and received treats. There was a big cheer when the participating fathers helped to break the piñata. The costume contest was held at the end, and all participants received pretty medals. It was a fun and festive party.



Everyone in Halloween costumes

Eleven members of the delegation, led by Ms. Akemi Kosuge, visited Chengde City.

We received an enthusiastic welcome from Deputy Mayor Cui Wanfeng and the people of Chengde city government, and felt the 40-year ties of exchange between the two cities. In particular, it was impressive to hear that they would like to strengthen mutual exchange between the youth of the two cities. On the second day,



Courtesy call to the government  
of Chengde City



At the Emperor's Chengde  
Summer Resort

we visited the World Cultural Heritage Site of the Emperor's Chengde Summer Resort, and had exchanges with people from Chengde Chess Academy, the Calligraphy Association and the Museum of Classical Architecture. We also visited Hebei Minzu Normal University and conversed in Japanese with students of the Japanese language department. At the farewell banquet, Kashiwa members performed Tai-chi and recited shigin (Chinese poems) and received a big applause. Host families and former exchange students joined the party and everyone was able to renew old friendships. After a fond farewell to the people of Chengde, the Kashiwa group visited the Tomb of Empress Dowager Cixi, Jiumenkou Great Wall, which is the only Great Wall that straddles a river, and Laolongtou, located on the easternmost Great Wall facing the Bohai Sea. We also visited the Summer Palace in Beijing, the Museum of Imperial Examination Center, and the Lugou Bridge before returning to Japan.

## Online International Exchange Salon

### Things I Find Troubling When Living in Japan - How Japanese People and Foreigners in Japan Become Friends (10/17)

Ms. Adash Bala Sharma from India, who has been living in Japan for over 40 years and resides in Nara, spoke about the difficulties she faced while living in Japan and how she overcame them to develop friendships with many Japanese people.

In 1996, she founded a volunteer organization called "Nara Family and Friend(s?),” and since then has worked with Japanese volunteers to support many foreigners living in Japan by helping them learn Japanese and helping them solve their problems.

When foreigners try to integrate into Japanese society, they face “language barriers,” “social system barriers,” and “mental barriers,” and it is especially difficult to break down the mental barriers. Ms. Sharma's comment that Japanese people often treat foreigners as guests and provide hospitality, but do not see them as friends was an eye-opening comment.

Ms. Sharma explained that the 3Fs, “Food, Fashion, and Festival” have been the means of international exchange up until now, but from now on, we need to go beyond those and focus on “To Know, To Recognize, and To Collaborate.” She concluded her lecture with the hope that “learning together, working together, and living together in Japan” will become the basis of future? international exchange.

### Kashiwa and Kashiwanoha Japanese language classes' extra-classroom activity (10/27)

We visited the Former Yoshida Family Residence for the first time in five years as an extra-classroom activity. In all, 25 people participated, including 18 students, family members and friends, and 7 Japanese language staff members.

**Ms. Samindi (Sri Lanka), a participant, commented:** “The guide's explanation was very detailed and interesting. I learned many facts about old Japan. I always dreamt of seeing a traditional Japanese house, and it was a wonderful experience. The house and garden were very meticulously designed. It was a farmhouse, so the roof was thatched, and there were separate entrance and rooms for the use of the samurai. Shoes had to be removed when entering the tatami-matted area. In the living room, guests were assigned a place to sit so that they could enjoy a beautiful view of the garden. I sat there and experienced being a guest of the Yoshida family. Also, in case of fire, the house had to be destroyed to prevent the fire from spreading. So, the walls were designed that way. I wanted to see old photos of the residents, but I could not. I could only imagine how they lived in their house.”



At the Former Yoshida Family Residence

<Request> When applying via email, please be sure to include the event name, your name, and phone number.

**D**ate & Time **P**lace **F**ee **N**umber of applicants **L**ecturer **C**ontents **A**pplication **R**eservation.





## School Education in the United States

Hajime Fujita

I grew up in Kashiwa, Japan, and moved to the United States 12 years ago. Now, I live near Detroit, Michigan, with my Japanese wife, whom I met here, and our two children - an 8-year-old daughter and a 5-year-old son. In this article, I would like to introduce the early childhood and elementary school education we have encountered in the U.S. Please note that the education system in America varies by state and school district, so this account is primarily based on our experiences in Austin, Texas, and the Detroit metropolitan area.

Our daughter, now 8, attended a Japanese daycare until she was 3 years old, an art-focused English preschool for one year, and then an English Montessori preschool for another year before enrolling in kindergarten at a local public elementary school. She is now in the second grade. Our son, now 5, attended a Japanese Montessori school until age 4, followed by an English Montessori program for a year, and is currently in kindergarten.

In the U.S., compulsory education begins with kindergarten, so until then, parents can choose daycares or preschools as needed. Our children's educational background shows that urban and suburban areas offer various options. However, daycare and preschool costs are not cheap; in our area, it costs about \$1,000-\$1,300 per month for a 3- or 4-year-old to attend five days a week, equivalent to approximately 150,000-200,000 yen. The cost can double in major metropolitan areas like New York or San Francisco. On the plus side, apart from a few popular facilities, it is generally possible to find available spots.

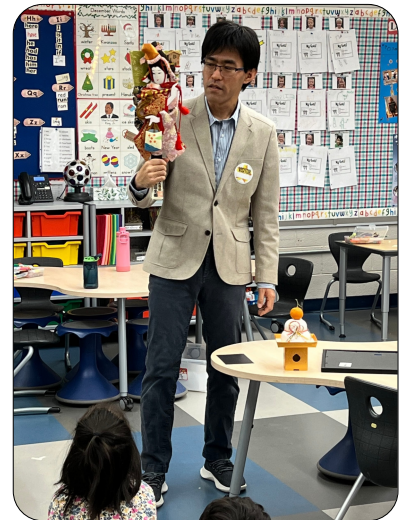
Kindergarten is part of the elementary school, where children from kindergarten through 5th grade attend classes in the same building. Each state generally determines the curriculum, but there are no prescribed textbooks. Teachers use various materials, including worksheets, slides, and tablets. Homework policies also vary widely, depending on the teacher.

School life is filled with a variety of events, both big and small. For example, at the beginning and end of the school term. There are days when students dress according to a daily theme, such as Pajama Day, Sports Team Day, or Hero Day. Additionally, parties (game days) that parents can participate in are held in the classroom on Halloween, the end of the year, and Valentine's Day. These events are mostly organized by parent volunteers, with calls for participation and donations issued beforehand. This is true volunteering, with no shift of mandatory assignments. As a result, there are occasionally announcements that an event has been canceled due to a lack of volunteers. Compared to the PTA and extracurricular activities in Japanese schools, which often burden teachers and parents, this approach is noteworthy.

While school buses are a well-known symbol of American schools, elementary students commute in various ways, including buses, walking, or being dropped off by parents. Our children primarily use the bus, but on days with extracurricular activities, we pick them up by car. When the weather is nice, they sometimes bike to school. Many schools have dedicated drive-thru lanes where parents can drop off or pick up children without leaving their cars, which is very American.

Finally, regarding school meals: our children's school provides breakfast and lunch, which have been entirely free since last year, thanks to a policy by Michigan's governor. Lunches can be pre-ordered based on a menu, and we let our children choose school lunches on days they want them and pack homemade lunches on other days.

This has been a quick overview of our children's school life. With potential changes in federal involvement in education due to political shifts, I can only hope for the continued well-being of our children.



The author giving a lecture about Japan to his daughter's class.



A morning school commute scene.

### Upcoming Events (January 2024-)

New Year's Party (1/26)

International exchange through tea ceremony experience (2/1)

# December Events

## Japanese Shonan Classes(Winter Vacation December 16-January 4)

### Online Classes

Sun	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary II
Sun	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary I and Intermediate

### In-person Classes (Shonan Community Center)

Thu	10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary I(2 classes)
Sun	10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary I(3 classes)

## Japanese Kashiwa/Kashiwanoha Classes(Winter Vacation December 22-January 6)

### Online Classes

Tue	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary I (Unit 25 - )
Wed	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Conversation Elementary (Level 2)
Wed	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary II (Unit 45 - )
Thu	1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Conversation Elementary (Level 2)
Fri	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> ,Primary II (Unit 48 - )
Sat	9:30 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.	Conversation Intermediate

### In-person Classes (Palette Kashiwa)

Tue	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary I (Unit 2 - 5 )
Tue	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Beginners, <i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary 1 (Unit 12~)
Tue	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary I (Unit 17 - )
Sat	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary I (Unit 9 - )
Sat	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i> , Primary II (Unit 46 - )

### In-person Classes (Kashiwanoha Service Corner)

Thu	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Conversation Elementary Former • Latter
Thu	1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Hiragana, Katakana
Sat	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Intermediate

## Members Wanted! Kashiwa International Relations Association (KIRA)

Why don't you become a member and join us in international exchange activities? Let's interact with foreigners by planning and organizing various events. You don't have to speak English. You can also make friends. For more information, please visit our website. (Inquiries: the KCC office)

## Information for Foreign Residents from Kashiwa City

### Consultation for Foreign Residents

Available in English ( Thu) , Chinese (Wed and Fri), Spanish (Mon), and Korean (2nd and 4th Tue) from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Consultation Counter for Foreign Residents (City Hall Main Office Building, 3rd floor).  
Tel: 04 - 7168 - 1033  
No reservation required.

### Email distribution service from Kashiwa City

Sign up to receive email announcement from the city, such as information on natural disasters, crimes, and fires of your area in the language of your choice. Scan the QR code and register!



### Multilingual "Koho Kashiwa," monthly official city bulletin

Scan the QR code and select your language under "Foreign Language" to read the official city bulletin, "Koho Kashiwa," selected and translated for foreign residents.

## Links for Multilingual News & BOSAI INFO (Disaster prevention and Coronavirus)

NHK WORLD-JAPAN



Questions?  
Please contact the office of  
Kashiwa Cross-cultural Center (KCC)

Tel: 04-7157-0281 Fax: 04-7165-7321  
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:15 p.m.  
Closed on Sundays and national holidays