



This newsletter is published by Naka Ward in English and Chinese to provide foreign nationals with useful information on topics such as municipal administration, social programs and rules for everyday living in the community.

Try Taking a Step Forward, Even When You Don't Know Japanese

You don't know Japanese or you only have family members to talk with, so you feel lonely. More than a few foreign residents face this issue. It can be difficult to gather the courage to take positive action in a new living environment, but many foreign residents in Naka Ward have overcome such worries. In this issue, we will introduce you to some places to take a courageous first step toward making ties in Japan.

Japanese Language Classes as a First Step

Japanese classes are a good place to start when you're still new to Japan. Naka Ward has many Japanese language classes. Dates, time and fees vary, but participants all say that they found people to talk to and a place where they could feel comfortable. Classes are a place where you can meet people of similar circumstances.

A Visit to Naka International Lounge Japanese Class!

The Japanese classes run by Naka International Lounge in the Annex of Naka Ward Office put out a call for students twice a year. Classes are held twice per week. On the day we visited, classes were split into groups and had with a friendly atmosphere.



Fang Yan-san
(4 years in Japan)

We Asked the Students / What does taking Japanese class mean to you?

These two students are in international marriages.
They were busy raising children so they couldn't join a class for a while.



Dong Qin-san
(1 year in Japan)

Q What was your motivation to take Japanese classes?

A I heard about the classes from other school mum friends in my circle. I managed until now without knowing Japanese, but thinking about my growing child and the future, I decided to join one. The class here was just in the right time for picking up my child. (Fang-san)



Q What do you think about your Japanese classes?

A I've made connections with people here and can learn things about Japan through my Japanese instructor. I felt lonely until I started coming here, but I don't feel alone anymore. Because I feel supported here, I try communicating in Japanese, even if I'm making mistakes, so I have gained confidence. Classes are also an important place to get information. There are also Chinese staff here, so I can relax here. (Dong-san)



Q What changed after taking Japanese classes?

A I started taking my child to the park with the other mothers I met in class, or we would go for lunch after class. I'm introverted so I didn't go out much, but now there are new people in my life who say, "Let's go together." The instructor also cares for me like family, so I feel like I'm at home. (Fang-san)

Q What do you want to do next?

A I want to say what is on my mind, to be able to communicate normally. I'd also like to be able to talk to my child's elementary school teacher. (Dong-san)

I'd say, "Take a step forward without hesitation"

Jeena-san told us about her experiences taking the next step beyond Japanese classes. She came to Japan from India about a year ago. She participated in the annual Naka Ward Multicultural Festival and volunteered at the India booth.

Your Japanese is very good! Where did you learn?

When I first came to Japan, I was so bored because I was always at home. One day, I heard about Japanese classes and immediately applied for it. All my instructors became my friends now. I sometimes even go to a park and approach strangers to have a chat in Japanese. About work, family, travel, etc. I also teach Indian cooking to my Japanese friends and learn Japanese cooking from them.



Tell me about volunteering for the Naka Ward Multicultural Festival

Someone at Naka International Lounge invited me, and I thought it was a great idea. I didn't hesitate at all when I was asked. I really like Japanese people, and I also want to tell people about India. At first, I had a hard time understanding. I repeatedly practiced my Japanese at home and I can now write about 200 kanji. On the day of the festival, there was a Japanese person who greeted me in Hindi. I was really surprised and impressed. It was great to learn that Japanese people want to know about India.



What do you want to do next?

My dream is to start my new career in Japan, for that I want to improve my Japanese. I am also touched by my teachers' devotion to us. I'd love to volunteer to teach English.

Are you glad you studied Japanese?

Definitely. As my Japanese began to improve gradually, my day-to-day life became more interesting and joyful. So for people who want to learn Japanese and those who hesitate, I'd like to say please don't hesitate and enroll yourself classes. Japanese classes not only teach you the language but also give you exposure to Japanese culture.

Naka International Lounge Japanese Language Class Coordinator Ko-san



Building a relationship of trust with students is just as important as the content of the lessons. Since one cannot concentrate on study while having concerns, I want to face each problem and address it together with the students. So I work with students to build and maintain a friend-like relationship where they feel like they can chat with me. I'm happy if they feel they have a place to discuss things. Recently, I've been get asked a lot about kids' matters.

Naka International Lounge Japanese Language Classes

- From May 12–Oct 13
- Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (there will be a summer break)
- Course fee: 6,000 yen (30 classes)

These classes are an enjoyable way for learning practical daily Japanese. Classes are held in small groups according to level. Please make an appointment to determine your level by phoning or coming to the lounge. Interviews are held between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (8:00 p.m. on Tuesday or Saturday). Please note the lounge is closed the 3rd Sunday of every month.

* These classes are beginner-level Japanese for persons living or working in Naka Ward who are at least 16 years old.

Naka International Lounge, Tel: 045-210-0667

Summer Festivals

— Don't worry about the language and enjoy the atmosphere

One event that is particularly easy for foreign residents to attend is summer festivals. You can try your hand at the traditional bon dance. Go in your regular clothes or try wearing a yukata—both are OK! Summer festivals are especially recommended for people who want to experience Japanese culture.



Another Step Forward — Community events

Your local *jichikai/chōnaikai* (neighborhood association) holds various events. Many foreign residents think they need to speak Japanese to participate, but this is not true. Here are a few of the events held in many communities. If you are interested, please try participating.

Park Cleanups — A regular chance to get to know members of your community

Local roads and parks are kept clean by a community effort. Members of community sweep fallen leaves and pick up litter. Most of the time, the cleanup dates and times are announced in the *kairanban* (a circulated newsboard) or posted on community bulletin boards. These cleanups are a good way to periodically meet other people in your community, and even if you don't understand a lot of Japanese, people will gradually get to know who you are.

Radio Calisthenics Workout (Radio Taiso)

This workout is a Japanese classic. Just follow the recorded instructions and perform the movements in time with the music. On summer mornings, you will see children in parks and other local spots gathering to do the radio calisthenics workout. Going together with your family is also a lot of fun.



Responses to inquiries will be in Japanese unless it is clearly indicated that the response should be in English or Chinese.

To All Dog Owners

Dog owners are required by law to register their dog once in its lifetime, to vaccinate the dog annually for rabies and to notify the municipality of that vaccination.

Registration

Once you get a dog, register your dog within 30 days (for puppies, within 30 days from its 91st day of life). The registration fee is 3,000 yen per dog. A 鑑札 (registration tag) will be issued when the dog is registered. If you move to a new municipality, you will need the tag for the necessary procedures there, so please do not lose it.



Rabies vaccination

Vaccinations are available at veterinary clinics. The veterinarian will issue a 狂犬病予防注射済証明書 (rabies vaccination certificate) upon vaccination. Bring the certificate to the ward office to be issued a rabies tag, which costs 550 yen per dog. (Some clinics can issue both the registration tag and the rabies tag together.)



<Seikatsu Eisei (Environmental Sanitation) Division, Naka Ward Office, Tel: 045-224-8339 >

Seeking Renters for Municipal or Prefectural Public Housing

The City of Yokohama and Kanagawa Prefecture offer public housing with relatively low-cost rents. The information desk on the 1st floor of the Naka Ward Office distributes a guide/application package (in Japanese) during application periods. This guide outlines information about the housing, application requirements, etc.

Municipal housing

Apply April 13 (Mon)–April 24 (Fri)
Tel: 045-451-7777

Prefectural housing

Apply in May (scheduled)
Tel: 045-201-3673

* If you cannot read the application guide or write in Japanese, please bring the application

package to NPO Kanagawa Housing Support Center for Foreign Residents (2F, Yokohama YMCA, Tel: 045-228-1752), Mon–Fri 10 a.m.–5 p.m. (English Tue–Fri, Chinese Tue–Wed/Thu afternoons. For other languages, please inquire.)

For National Health Insurance Members

Coupons for tokutei kenshin (special health checkups) are now being mailed out sequentially.

These free health checkup coupons are sent to NHI members between the ages of 40 and 74 to encourage early detection of lifestyle diseases. A list (in Japanese) of medical institutions where you can take the checkup will also be enclosed. Please make an appointment on your own. To find out if any of the listed institutions can provide service in your language, please consult with Naka International Lounge (045-210-0667).

FY 2020 notification of NHI premiums to be sent out mid-June

Members will be sent notification for one year's worth of National Health Insurance Premiums (April–March). The premiums are paid in 10 installments. Payment slips are mailed out in June, July, October and January. Please pay by the due date on each slip. Automatic payment by direct debit from your bank account is also a convenient option.

<Hoken Nenkin (Insurance and Pension) Division, Naka Ward Office, Tel: 045-224-8315 >

Submit Your Child Allowance Genkyo-todoke (Status Report) by June 30

Each year, recipients of the child allowance must submit this report to confirm their present situation as of June 1. If the report is not submitted, payment of the allowance may not be possible, so please do not forget. The needed documents (in Japanese) will be sent out by post in early June.

<Kodomo Katei Shien (Children and Families Support) Division, Tel: 045-224-8198 >

Sort Your Waste before Putting It Out!

Not sure what category a waste item is?



Search by name here →

All about Neighborhood Associations

Here are some of the things they do

Most local communities have a neighborhood association in Japan

Your jichikai/chōnaikai (neighborhood association) is a local residents' committee made up of your neighbors. Everyone works as a volunteer, getting to know each other to encourage mutual assistance during emergencies and to create a community where people can live with peace of mind. Participation is through membership fees. Foreign residents are also part of the community, so we encourage you to join. The more people you know in your community, the more enjoyable your life in Japan will be. Start by asking a neighbor how to join. If you need help communicating in Japanese, please call or visit Naka International Lounge (045-210-0667).



<Chiiki Shinko (Regional Promotion) Division, Naka Ward Office, Tel: 045-224-8131 >

Naka Ward Multilingual Website

Information in English, Chinese, Korean and Easy Japanese for administrative services and events. Updated monthly.



Second Shi-kenminzei (Municipal/Prefectural Resident Tax) Payment Due Monday, August 31

Persons who received a 納税通知書 (nōzei tsūchisho, Notification of Taxes) should pay at a bank (or a convenience store if the slip has a barcode). Arranging for automatic debit from your bank account is also a convenient option (note that the initial procedures will take a bit of time).

International Service Staff

Naka Ward Office, Counter 23 (2nd floor)
English 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Chinese 8:45 a.m.–3:45 p.m.

International Service Staff provide assistance with matters such as guidance on Naka Ward Office activities, interpretation at various ward office counters and support for filling out certificate applications. Stop by if you would like assistance.

Help Me Know Q&A



What is a “Local Disaster Preparedness Center”?

⇒ When a very strong earthquake (5 -upper or more on the Japanese seismic intensity scale) occurs, a shelter called a *chiiki bosai kyoten* (local disaster preparedness center) will be opened at a local school, etc. People who have lost a place to live due to collapsed home or fire from the disaster can live at the preparedness center temporarily in cooperation with community members.



What are the important points when living at a local disaster preparedness center (evacuation center)?

The logistics of day-to-day living at the center are managed by a steering committee made up of mostly local residents. However, the cooperation of evacuees is also vital to ensure that the center operations go smoothly.

Water and food

Centers are stocked with just enough food for those who were unable to bring disaster emergency supplies with them because of fire or other serious reasons. Individual households therefore need to prepare their own emergency food and water, and bring it with them when evacuating.

Practice drill for living at a Local Disaster Preparedness Center

Held once a year, this drill allows members of the community to learn about the rules, etc. for communal living at the center.

● Know and be known ●

It is important that you know and be known by your neighbors through everyday greetings, etc. for mutual cooperation when a disaster strikes.

To learn more about disaster prevention in Japan (multilingual):





Go for a Visit

Give Running a Try!

Feel the port breeze while running!

The 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held this summer. In Naka Ward, Yokohama Stadium will be the venue for baseball and softball matches. Why not take this opportunity to participate in sporting activities? Here are some running courses for enjoying the port atmosphere.



Yamashita Park

Colorful flowers such as roses bloom from spring through summer



Sakura-dori

Take a refreshing run under cherry blossoms!



Run at night to enjoy downtown Yokohama's gorgeous night views



Zou-no-hana Park

Enjoy a break at the park café!

Thoughts of a Foreign Resident Life and Culture in Japan



Getting Used to Life in Japan



When coming to Japan for the first time, many foreigners worry about how to quickly adapt to life here. I did, too.

My daughter came to Japan when she was two. I will never forget the day when I went out with my daughter for the first time. I went to a play center near my home. The center has books, toys and staff who will play with the children. My daughter is energetic, so I believed she would like this place, but she froze like a statue when we entered and looked uneasy. It was her first time in an all-Japanese environment and did not feel comfortable. It made me feel bad to see her like that.

Because I wanted my daughter to get used to living in Japan quickly, I took her outside as much as possible—to parks, to

nearby play facilities, to kindergartens open days. She gradually got used to enjoying her life in Japan. My son, on the other hand, moved to Japan in elementary school. Although there was a period where he was not comfortable living here and didn't have any friends, he made an active effort to go to play in the local park and made friends. Although it can be uneasy at first, you will quickly adapt to life in Japan if you make an active effort to get out into the community. Naka International Lounge will help you if you have any questions in your life in Japan.

(Naka International Lounge, Chinese language staff)

Good to Know! About Japanese Culture



Life and Culture in Japan

Tango no Sekku (Boy's Day)

Celebrated each year on May 5, Tango no Sekku (Boy's Day) was originally an event held for avoiding illness and disaster. This event used *shobu* (iris), which has the same pronunciation as a word that refers to samurai spirit and a kind of samurai sword. Over time, the event gradually transformed into a celebration of the birth and healthy growth of male children. Today this is a national holiday known as *kodomo no hi* (Children's Day) and is celebrated by displaying a kabuto (samurai helmet) and putting up *koinobori* (carp streamers).



We are always looking for locations to distribute *Naka Ward Town News*. If you have many foreign visitors to your shop, clinic, organization, etc. and would like to make this newsletter available to them, please contact us at 045-224-8123 to arrange delivery. The next issue will be published on July 1.