



Kaleidoscope MEGURO



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Vol.
13

Come Join the International Mikoshi Festival !

Jiyugaoka provides international residents with unique experiences of Japanese summer tradition.



A Mikoshi is a portable Shinto shrine. Around 50 people take turns to hoist the Mikoshi on their shoulders and walk around the neighborhood, typically chanting "wa-shoi". You can experience Mikoshi in Jiyugaoka on Saturday, August 31st. This summer marks the 17th year of the festival. Every year it attracts many foreigner participants and receives lots of praise. "We look forward to the participation of many foreigners this year too." - Mr. Okamura, Executive Committee

Chairperson of the International Mikoshi Festival. Participants will be provided with "Hanten" jackets which must be returned at the end of the event. Head towels are also provided for you to use and to take home as souvenirs. After the event, you can join a free barbecue.

Application is required in advance.

If you are interested in the International Mikoshi Festival, please read details in the sidebar.

【Festival Details】

Date: Aug. 31 (Sat)

Time: 15:00-20:30
15:00- Reception opens
16:00- Opening Ceremony
16:30- Departure
19:30- BBQ party

Fee: Free

Location: Mizuho Bank Jiyugaoka branch parking lot

Requirements: Any non-japanese 14 years of age or older who can speak Japanese, French, English or Chinese. Once you file an application, you will receive a participation card. Please come wearing comfortable and easily removable clothing.

Limited Enrollments: 50 participants

How to apply: Send a fax with the information below to 03-3717-4549 (fax service available at convenience stores). - Your name, nationality, language(s) spoken, home address, phone number, fax, and email.

For more information please contact the Jiyugaoka Information Center via phone (03-5731-7274, Japanese only).

Nakameguro Summer Festival

The Nakameguro Summer Festival is an annual event held near Nakameguro Station. This year the festival will be held on Saturday, August 3rd, and Sunday, August 4th.

At the festival you can watch live performances of traditional dances called Awa-Odori and Yosakoi.

This summer marks the 54th year of the festival.

Both participants and visitors can enjoy the excitement of Nakameguro. We hope to see you there!



What is yukata?

Yukata is an unlined, casual summer kimono made of cotton. It is quite different from silk kimono which is for formal wear. The origin of yukata is said to be the Heian period (784-1185) when a pure linen kimono known as *yukatabira* was worn by noble people while taking a bath. By the Edo period (1600-1868), *yukatabira* had transformed into yukata which was worn after bathing, and it became everyday clothing and was also worn for outings among ordinary people in the summer. People came to enjoy wearing yukata when going out for summer events such as Bon dancing and firework display. Nowadays yukata, with modern designs and colorful patterns, is widely loved as casual wear to enjoy the summer mood.



Innovative ways of Japanese Language Learning

Japanese is a beautiful language yet it is relatively difficult to learn. It often takes time for non-Japanese speakers to recognize and differentiate between the kanjis. Keep yourself motivated by following a couple of innovative methods as suggested by our respondents and come up with some of your own unique methods for learning Japanese.



1 How do we keep our selves motivated to learn Japanese in the midst of our daily lives

Japanese is a beautiful language yet it is relatively difficult to learn. The most difficult part that foreigners face during their initial phase of language learning is the writing system. Though hiragana, katakana and the Japanese grammar are fairly easy to learn, it often takes time for non-Japanese speakers to recognize and differentiate among kanjis. The biggest factor in trying to learn any language is motivation. How do we keep our selves motivated to learn Japanese in the midst of our daily lives and what difficulties do non-native speakers face while learning Japanese?

To understand these questions, we conducted a survey among our international residents on their reasons and methods for learning Japanese. We received over 20

responses from international residents, where most of them are international students. The results are shown below. If you are also an international resident trying to improve your Japanese, then read along.

2 When Japanese children learn kanjis for the first time, they learn them by the most commonly used

We noticed that most of the non-native Japanese learners have difficulty in reading and writing Japanese, and learning kanjis. There are thousands of kanjis and around 2,136 常用漢字 (*jouyou kanji*) which are learned by Japanese students through their junior high education. kanji is usually more complicated than hiragana and katakana, and often have multiple readings and meanings. When Japanese children learn kanjis for the first time, they learn them by the most commonly used first, thus they learn kanjis given in the Row 1 below in 2nd grade elementary school (小学校 *shogakko*) while they learn kanjis in Row 2 much later in 7th – 9th grade of junior high school (中学校 *chugakko*)

Row 1: 曜・線・鳴・算

Row 2: 乙・了・丈・勺

Surprising isn't it! English speakers can relate it to the fact that we learn the word "drink" before we learn the word "gulp" though the former contains more characters than the latter.

Thus, as an international resident, do not be discouraged when you see new kanjis. Keep

yourself motivated by following a couple of innovative methods as suggested by our respondents and come up with some of your own unique methods for learning Japanese.

3 Innovative ways to improve your Japanese

Based on the survey, we summarized the methods our respondents use consciously and subconsciously to learn Japanese in their everyday lives.

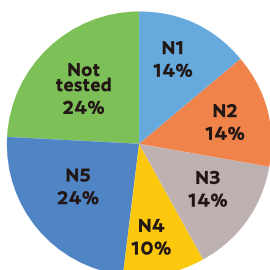
Speaking and understanding Japanese

- (1) Think in Japanese
- (2) Try watching Anime without subtitles
2. Speak with native speakers more often
3. Learn while having fun! Go for karaoke choose a Japanese song and learn new kanji with each new song
4. Correlate the words you hear with other languages that you know

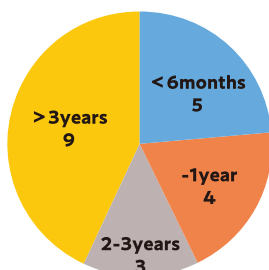
Reading and writing

1. Try recognising the kanji on things you see everyday. Such as the station name, street signs and have more conversations with a native speaker.
2. Learn by using interactive language learning apps.
3. For new kanjis, look for the etymology and story behind it. For example, the name of Osaka "大阪" was originally "大坂", it was changed to avoid the second kanji being misinterpreted as "土反" meaning "samurai rebellion".

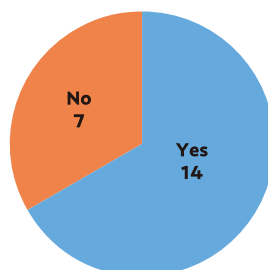
APPROXIMATE LEVEL OF JAPANESE AT PRESENT



WHEN DID YOU START LEARNING JAPANESE?



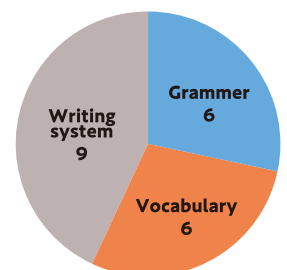
DID YOU LEARN JAPANESE BEFORE COMING TO JAPAN?



AMONG SPEAKING, READING, WRITING AND LISTENING, WHICH IS THE MOST DIFFICULT FOR YOU?



WHAT IS / WAS THE HARDEST PART ABOUT LEARNING JAPANESE?



Is it possible to climb Mt. Fuji in 5 minutes?

Special exhibition: Fuji-zuka and Fuji-ko in Meguro

Source: Hiroshige Utagawa "Meisho Edo Hyakkei"
Meguro Moto-Fuji(L) , Meguro Shin-Fuji(R)

Mt. Fuji has been a place for ascetics to practice mountain worship since ancient times. In the Edo period, ordinary people with the same religious beliefs formed a group called *ko* and climbed Mt. Fuji for the purpose of praying and contribution. Many such groups, known as *Fuji-ko*, formed in and around the Edo city. In those days, however, climbing Mt. Fuji was more or less a ten-day trip because people needed to lodge on the way to and from there. It was a heavy burden, both physically and financially. Eventually, *Fuji-zuka* mounds imitating Mt. Fuji were created in multiple places for those who could not easily go to Mt. Fuji. It was believed that climbing such a miniature "Mt. Fuji" would bring them the same miraculous virtue as climbing the real Mt. Fuji did. Most of those miniatures were just about ten meters high. This is the "Mt. Fuji" that you can climb in five minutes.

Meguro City was home to two *Fuji-zuka* mounds, Moto-Fuji and Shin-Fuji. Hiroshige Utagawa, a Japanese Edo-period painter, beautifully pictured both scenes in his *Nishikie* series (colored woodblock prints) titled "Meisho Edo Hyakkei" (One Hundred Famous Views of Edo). Moto-Fuji and Shin-Fuji were both located on hills, known for



their picturesque scenery. However, they have been demolished, leaving only an explanatory board on each site.

There used to be a worship leader called *sendachi* in each *ko* group. The descendent of a *ko* leader in Meguro has donated some valuable materials to Meguro City. To make use of them and commemorate

the 200th year of the creation of Shin-Fuji, Meguro History Museum is holding a special exhibition. Various materials, such as white clothes worn during the climb, prayer scrolls and prayer beads, are on display.

At the foot of Mt. Fuji, there is a cave called *tainai* (interior of the womb). It was said that people could purify themselves by going through the cave. Therefore, womb caves imitating the one in Mt. Fuji were made in some *Fuji-zuka* mounds as well. In 1991, a womb cave was discovered in Meguro near the place where Shin-Fuji was located. You can also see a partial replica of the cave at Meguro History Museum.



Fuji-zuka of Hatomori Hachiman Shrine in Shibuya City

Special exhibition: Fuji-zuka and Fuji-koin Meguro

Period: Jun. 1 – Sep. 1, 2019

Place: Meguro History Museum, 3-6-10 Nakameguro, Meguro-ku

Opening hours: 9:30 – 17:00;

closed on Mondays (open when Monday falls on a national holiday and closed on the next day) and Jun. 23 (Sun)

Admission fee: Free

Note 1: English explanation is not available for the special exhibition, but it is available for the permanent exhibition, accessible through QR codes at the exhibition.

Note 2: The museum opened in September 2008 on the first floor of the former Daini Junior High School building after renovation.

You can experience Fuji-zuka near Meguro City, even today:

- Hatomori Hachiman Shrine in Shibuya City
<http://www.hatonomori-shrine.or.jp/> (English version available)
- Shinagawa Shrine in Shinagawa City
<https://shinagawajinja.tokyo/> (English version not available)

The wish of Float, the Polar Bear

A picture book "The wish of Float, the Polar Bear" is published to enlighten countermeasures against global warming for children from kindergarten to lower grades of elementary school.

The picture book is about a polar bear called Float which Kanta and Kyoko saved in their dream. Together, they study how to reduce CO₂ (carbon dioxide) which is supposed to be the cause of global warming. Names of Kanta and Kyoko are derived from the Japanese word "Kankyo" (environment).

"The wish of Float, the Polar Bear" is available

at libraries in Meguro City and can also be watched at the YouTube in internet video hosting service.

It's available in Japanese, English, Chinese, Hangul, Tagalog, Indonesian, Thai, Portuguese and Spanish.

YouTube URL (English version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My-2LjY6gmM&feature=youtu.be>



Are you well prepared for heavy rain and typhoon?

In Japan, there is a rainy season called "Tsuyu" somewhere between May and July. To prepare for heavy rain and typhoon, Meguro City is taking the following measures:

In case of a flood warning

Flood warnings are announced jointly by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Japan Meteorological Agency, when rivers are likely to flood in the wake of heavy rain. Meguro River's water level rises rapidly and can start flooding in a short time once such a warning is issued. Residents of the Meguro

River basin are advised to take immediate action, like evacuating to upper floors or moving out of the basement.

Obtain sandbags in advance

Sandbags to prevent rain water leak into the house are available at 46 locations within the city.

For details, please visit the Meguro City website as below;

Help each other in the neighborhood

When you receive disaster-related warnings and / or alerts such as a flood warning of the Meguro River or mudslide alerts, please help

each other in the neighborhood. For example, you can share the information with your neighbors, pile up sandbags together and help evacuate people to a higher place.

Meguro City Disaster Prevention Weather Report

Meguro City provides residents with local weather forecast, precipitation data, river water level data, live camera feed (Japanese version only) and so on.

For details, please see the Meguro City Disaster Prevention Activity Manual as below:



Meguro City Disaster Prevention Weather Report



Meguro City Disaster Prevention Activity Manual

Life in Tokyo
Website for Foreign Residents in Tokyo

www.lifein.tokyo.jp/en/

JAPANESE ENGLISH

Meguro City Newsletter

Easy to read even on the smartphone!

Access from QR code, and you can easily read Meguro City Newsletter anytime you want.

5 languages are now supported on an e-book version! Read in your own language! Supports Text-to-Speech!

Foreign Residents Information Desk

03-5722-9187
English

www.city.meguro.tokyo.jp/multi/index.html

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Meguro City Office Complex,
2-19-15 Kamimeguro
Meguro-ku, Tokyo

MIFA
Meguro International Friendship Association

<http://mifa.jp/en/>

Kaleidoscope MEGURO aims to embrace diversity and promote intercultural harmony.

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