

EST. 1994

# City Life

ISSUE 180

February/March 2024 Edition

City Life is a free English newsletter published every even month by the International Division at the Sakai City Government to provide information to the residents of Sakai City. It is available at libraries, ward offices and other city facilities, or you can view it online at the Sakai City Government English website. Don't forget to also sign up for emails to know when each new edition is published! Scan the QR code for more information. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact Lena at the following email address: [kokusai@city.sakai.lg.jp](mailto:kokusai@city.sakai.lg.jp)



**Legend:** ☆Events ◆Exhibitions ※Important Notices ▲Campaigns ●Child & Healthcare ❁Environment 📞Help Lines

## ☆Setsubun - “Bean Throwing Ceremony”



In Japan, setsubun (February 3<sup>rd</sup>) known as “the day to scatter beans and ward off demons” and especially in Osaka, is “the day to eat *ehomaki* (sushi rolls)”. The history of warding off demons during setsubun is long, said to have origins as an imperial court custom during the Heian Period (8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century). The act of scattering beans is said to have arrived from China in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.



Setsubun (literally meaning “seasonal division”) originally marked the transition between the seasons and occurred 4 times a year. Perhaps the reason why only “spring setsubun” remains is because spring is considered the beginning of the harvest year and therefore the most important season. Or perhaps it is because they felt that more protection from misfortune was needed in the season where chilly days linger and they were more susceptible to illnesses.



*Ehomaki*'s origin is said to have started during the Edo Period (17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century) in the merchant town of Osaka. On the night of setsubun, there is a folklore that your wishes will come true if you eat an uncut sushi roll (*makizushi*) in the lucky direction of the year (“*eho*”), as that's where the goddess of the year resides. That is east-northeast this year.



## Flower Viewing in Sakai

### ☆Daisen Park Japanese Garden

#### Camellia (until late March)

For more information



The camellia is a much loved flower in Japan from ancient times. It is often used in art and music. It especially fills an important role in tea ceremony. Also, the oil extracted from camellia seeds is used in cooking, hair products and cosmetics.



#### Peach blossoms (peak viewing in March)



The peach tree is thought to have become the symbol of vitality and have abilities to ward off evil because it produces lots of fruit. Peach blossoms are also used to decorate for *hinamatsuri* or girls' festival.

The Togendai area in the Daisen Park Japanese Garden blooms with peach blossoms, plum blossoms and peonies to enjoy in spring. The meaning of togen is utopia. Come and relax while viewing the peach blossoms!

### ☆Kozen Park

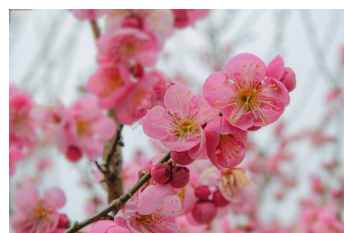


Currently there are about 50 species and a total of 1,400 plum trees. The best time to see the blossoms is between mid-February to early March.

**Place:** 2-3 Miyayama-dai, Minami-ku

**Access:** Izumigaoka Station (Semboku Rapid Line) → Miyayamadai niicho Bus Stop (Nankai Bus #102 or #212)

**Cost:** Free



Events at city-affiliated facilities are updated on the Sakai City Government English website when City Life is released. Detailed information on opening hours, admission costs, access etc. is available there.

Museums &  
City Facilities



### ☆◆Mihara History Museum

#### Clarinet concert

**Date/time:** February 24<sup>th</sup> (Sat) 13:30~15:30

**Participation fee:** Free

**Application:** At the counter, by phone call or fax, or email, stating participants name and phone number

**Application period:** February 2<sup>nd</sup> (Fri)~23<sup>rd</sup> (Fri • Public holiday)



#### Ceramics Exhibition

Ceramics from a local ceramics club will be on display. The art pieces displayed are filled with humor depicting shapes such as the kofun.

**Date/time:** March 9<sup>th</sup> (Sat) ~ April 6<sup>th</sup> (Sat) 9:30-17:00



#### Bell-ringing experience

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month  
Come and ring the temple bells of Kawachi foundry that was active during mid-12<sup>th</sup> century in the Mihara area.

**Date/time:** February 4<sup>th</sup> (Sun), March 3<sup>rd</sup> (Sun) 10:00~15:00 ※ Cancelled in case of rain

**Participation fee:** Free

### ☆Opening of the Old Gunsmith Workshop and Residence

From the Middle Ages to Edo period, Sakai used to be one of the biggest gun production centers in Japan. The only remaining gunsmith workshop and residence from the Edo period containing important historical materials will open on **March the 3<sup>rd</sup> at 13:00** in the Old Moat area as a tourist site.



You can learn about the history of gun production and the method of manufacturing through videos and exhibitions. For more details, please look forward to the next issue!

**Opening hours:** 10:00~17:00

**Closed:** Every Tuesday and New Year holidays (December 29<sup>th</sup>~January 3<sup>rd</sup>)

**Entrance fee:** 500 yen

**Address:** 1-3-22 Kitahatago-cho Nishi, Sakai-ku

**Nearest train station:** A 5-minute walk from Takasujinsha station, (Hankai Line), or Shichido station (Nankai Line)

### ◆Townhouse History Museums Yamaguchi Residence, Seigakuin, and Old Gunsmith Workshop and Residence

#### Hina Dolls Display for Girl's Festival

**Date:** March 3<sup>rd</sup> (open from 13:00), to April 3<sup>rd</sup>

There is a 3 x entrance ticket you can buy for 700 yen. You can also buy a 2 x entrance ticket.

### ☆◆Sakai City Museum

#### Portable gramophone concert

You can appreciate experiencing listening to the gramophone and record artifacts from the museum collection.

**Date/time:** February 11<sup>th</sup> (Sun) 14:00~14:30

※No reservation required, come straight to the venue.

#### Experience playing with old tools and games

Let's make old toys such as button whirligigs and play with it and experience old tools such as a stone mortar to grind rice into flour.

**Date/time:** February 24<sup>th</sup> (Sat) 13:00~16:00

**Location:** Sakai City Museum hall and study room (basement).

※No reservation required, come straight to the venue.

### ☆Sakai Plaza of Rikyu and Akiko

#### Enjoy Sakai's Marche! Sakai's Kofun

**Dates:** March 23<sup>rd</sup>~24<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 10:00~16:00

**Venue:** Sakai Plaza of Rikyu and Akiko



This year's festival will be held in anticipation of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group's registration as a World Heritage site. Including the Nintoku-tenno-ryo Kofun VR experience, you can also make magatama accessory, experience wearing ancient style clothing, miscellaneous goods and food related to ancient tombs will also be on sale.

### ☆ Walk along the green roads of Minami

**Date/time:** March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:00~12:00 (accepting between 8:30~10:00)

**Location:** Toga Greenway (can start at Momoyama Park, Nishihara Park, Niwashiro Park, Miike Park, goal: Nishihara Park)

**Application:** Apply by February 16<sup>th</sup> through the cities electrical application system, sending an application form by mail to Minami Ward Administration and Planning

Office, fax or bring it, or by submitting to each school district sports promotion committee member. (For advertisement and application, see QR code).

**Participation fee:** free

The length of distance is based on your own body and fitness and you can choose how far you go. There are also booths at Nishihara Park which you can enjoy when you reach the goal.

#### Benefits of participation:

Every participant will receive an original towel. 20 people will be chosen through a raffle to receive 2kgs of 'niwadani' rice. In addition, if the total steps of all participants reach 3 million the number of winners will increase.



### ☆Harvest Hill

#### Rapeseed Flowers



**Peak viewing:** Mid-February  
Surround yourself with a field of yellow flowers and get the early feeling of Spring!  
**Place:** Mura Area

#### Capvbara Hot Spring



**Date:** Until February 25<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** Please check their website

\*may be cancelled depending on the temperature, and times may change

**Cost:** Free (feed ranges from 200-500 yen)

**Place:** Capybara house

#### Make strawberry cupcakes!



Pick a pack of strawberries from the strawberry house and use them to make the cupcakes to consume on site. You can take any leftovers home.

**Date:** Weekends & public holidays in February

**Time:** 13:30

**Duration:** 90 minutes

**Cost:** 2100 yen

**Capacity:** 48 people (reservation needed)

### The Sakai Student Calligraphy Exhibition

**Date/time:** March 1<sup>st</sup>~8<sup>th</sup>, 9:00-21:00

\*opening day starts at 14:00, closing day ends at 16:00

**Place:** 1F Entrance Hall of the Main Building (*honkan*), Sakai City Hall  
Calligraphy works by local students and university students from ASEAN countries will be displayed. The themes include future dreams, aspirations, international exchange, and world peace. Come see this aspect of traditional Japanese culture!

### ☆India Day in Sakai

A 2-day Indian festival you can experience in Sakai! There will be food stalls, market booths and tons of events like dance, music, and more.

**Date/time:** March 23<sup>rd</sup> (Sat) 12:00~18:00, 24<sup>th</sup> (Sun) 11:00~18:00 (stage performance till 17:00)

**Place:** Mina Sakai (in front of the city hall)

**Admission:** Free

### ◆Kindergarten Children's Art Exhibition

We will be holding an exchange exhibition of art made by kindergarten children from Sakai City and from Sakai's sister and friendship cities: Berkeley City (USA), Lianyungang City (China), Wellington City (New Zealand) and Da Nang City (Vietnam).

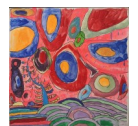
**Date:** February 16<sup>th</sup>~28<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 9:00-21:00

\*closes at 15:00 on the final day

**Place:** 1F Entrance Hall, the High-rise Building (*kosokan*), Sakai City Hall

**Cost:** Free





### ※City and Prefectural Tax Notice

February marks the fourth appointed time for payment of fixed assets tax and city planning tax. The deadline is **Thursday February 29th**.



To pay, please go to the nearest banking facility, post office, convenience store, Tax Payment Division (City Hall Mikunigaoka Branch) or by internet or mobile banking. Please make sure to pay before the deadline.

For those that use the automatic transfer, payment will automatically be deducted on the dates above so please check that you have sufficient funds.

### ※Declaration of Municipal and Prefectural Tax

This is an important procedure which provides the basis for the calculation of taxes in FY2024 and also enables taxpayers to be issued with tax certificates such as "Proof of Income" (所得証明書 shotokushomeisho). To prevent congestion, please submit documents by post. The forms are available on the Sakai City Government website.



For more details please refer to the QR code.

### ◎Collection of products containing mercury



Products such as fluorescent tubes, thermometers and batteries will not be incinerated by the city at a Clean Center, it will be treated and recycled by specialist private companies. Due to this, you cannot throw it away in the daily waste rubbish, or bring it to a Clean Center.

From now on, please place the rubbish coming from your household in a collection box placed at every ward office. Collection boxes are also placed at regional supermarkets and shopping malls. Please refer to the QR code (in Japanese).



### ◎ Health Insurance Deadline for February and March

If you do not make payments from pension, the deadline for national health insurance payments (June through to March 2024) is the **last day of every month**, aside from December which is the 25<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for elderly person health insurance payments is the last day every month between July and March 2024. Please make sure to pay by February 29<sup>th</sup> (Thurs) and April 1<sup>st</sup> (Mon).

### ※Postponement of National Pension Payment for Students

Students who earned an income of 1.28 million yen or less (threshold different for those with dependents or permanent employment) last year are eligible for a postponement of payment of contributions for National Pension. The period under this system counts towards the normal obligation time but is not reflected in your pension amount. Furthermore, if you happen to get a disability due to an injury or sickness in this period, you may be eligible for disability pension if you meet certain requirements.



To apply, please bring your pension book or Notification of Pension Number, My Number card/My Number Notification card with other personal identification, and student ID to the Health Insurance and Pension Division at your local ward office. If you are continuing use of this system, please simply return the postcard when sent to you.

### ◎ Don't throw out rubbish in cardboard boxes

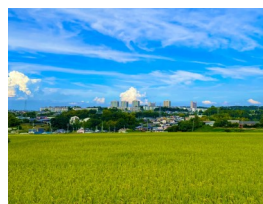
When throwing out daily waste or recyclable rubbish, please use clear plastic bags or white translucent plastic bags that are 45 liters or less. When waste or rubbish is put into cardboard boxes, it cannot be determined whether they are being thrown out as rubbish. Furthermore, it is possible for home delivery products to be mistaken as rubbish and be collected.

When throwing out cardboard as daily waste, please flatten and fasten string around 4-5 pieces and throw out up to 3 bundles in one go.



### ◎ Recruiting logo design for Minami Ward's brand 'M&GREENS'

In the Minami Ward of Sakai City, as part of the Minami Ward brand strategy, they are aiming to establish the brand of M&GREENS as abundant living filled with greenery. As such, they are looking for a logo design of M&GREENS. The winner will be awarded with 50000 yen and 5kgs of Minami wards local specialty 'niwadani' rice.



**Where to apply:** Minami Ward Administration Planning Office

**How to apply:** Through the city's electronic application system or by email (minamikiso@city.sakai.lg.jp)

**Deadline:** March 3<sup>rd</sup>

### ◎Reduction and Exemption of Social Security Services before and after Delivery

#### National Health Insurance

In the case that a household covered by the National Health Insurance has an insured person who expects/delivered a baby/babies, per capita and per income portions imposed on the insured person from January 2024 and onwards will be exempted, and so the insurance premiums for the household will be reduced.

**Reduction period:** 4 months from the month before the expected/actual date of birth (for multiple births, it will be 6 months from 3 months before the month of expected/actual date of birth)

**Eligibility:** Insured person whose delivery date is from November 2023 or after  
**Necessary documents:** National health insurance card, identity verification papers and documents that can confirm delivery date (mother-child health book etc.)

#### National Pension

Payment of contributions to the National Pension before and after giving birth will be exempted upon notification. The exemption period will be considered the same as payment, however you can still make additional payments if you wish.

**Exemption period:** 4 months from the month before the expected/actual date of birth (for multiple births, it will be 6 months from 3 months before the month of expected/actual date of birth).

**Eligibility:** Primary insured person (daiichigo hihokensha)

**Necessary documents:** Pension booklet, My Number card/My Number Notification card with applicant's personal identification and mother-child health book with which the expected/actual date of birth can be confirmed.

#### To Apply

Please bring in necessary items to the Health Insurance and Pension Division at your local ward office from 6 months before the expected date of birth

\*A power of attorney is needed if a person outside of the household comes to the ward office.

\*Any pregnancy 85 days and over (around 4 months) is counted, including premature birth, stillbirth and miscarriage.



The Plaza of Multicultural Exchange Sakai (POME Sakai) can help you with language assistance for any of the processes in the city notices listed here. Check the back page for all their contact information!

**Plaza of Multicultural Exchange Sakai**

TEL: 072-228-7499

Email: kokusai@city.sakai.lg.jp

Address: 2-1 Minamikawara-machi, Sakai-ku (5F Sakai City General Welfare Hall)



**Administrative:** February 11<sup>th</sup>, 13:30-16:30  
**Labour:** February 19<sup>th</sup> & March 18<sup>th</sup>, 13:30-16:30  
**Law:** February 25<sup>th</sup> & March 24<sup>th</sup>, 13:30-16:30  
**Immigration:** February 28<sup>th</sup> & March 27<sup>th</sup>, 13:30-16:30  
**Daily Life:** February 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> & March 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 13:30-16:30

**Opening Hours:** Sunday to Friday 9:00-17:30 (closed on public holidays and **New Year's break December 29<sup>th</sup> to January 3<sup>rd</sup>**)

**Free Confidential Consultation**

**February 21<sup>st</sup> & March 13<sup>th</sup>, 14:00-17:00**

Consultations on naturalizations and immigrations with an administrative procedure specialists are available for discussing the status of or changes to applications. **Three slots available** (Reservations required). Those that require an interpreter must apply at least 10 days before the date of the consultation.



**General Consultations for Foreign Residents**

Please drop by in person or call during these hours if you have any queries regarding daily life.

**Mon to Fri 10:00-12:00 & 13:00-16:00**

Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Thai.

**\*Tagalog, Indonesian and Nepali is only available for in person consultations.**

\*Languages other than Japanese/English will be conducted through a 3-way call or through the use of translation devices and interpreting services.



**Volunteer Interpreter Service**

Those who need interpretation can apply for a volunteer interpreter using the form available for download from the QR code. Please make sure to hand it in via post, fax or email **at least 10 days in advance.**



**Free Online Consultations for Foreign Residents**

The Plaza of Multicultural Exchange Sakai are offering free online consultations using Zoom for foreign residents living, working, or studying at school in Sakai City, in 13 languages. Get advice from immigration and law experts. Please make an appointment by phone or e-mail one week in advance of your consultation day.

**やさしい日本語 Facebook Page**

POME Sakai has started a Facebook page which posts about emergencies, disaster warnings, upcoming events, etc., in Easy Japanese. This is a great resource for those who want to attain information in Japanese.

**Smoking and Littering Ban**

In Sakai City, there is a ban on smoking and littering stretching from around Sakai Higashi station, the City Hall and Oshoji road to Sakai station (East to West). There is a **1000 yen penalty fee** if caught.

The areas of western Sakaihigashi station, Nakamozu station, Mikunigaoka station, JR Sakaishi station and the shopping arcade in front of it and Komyoike Station have been marked as priority areas for improvement. We appreciate your cooperation.



**Parking Ban-Zones for Bicycles & Mini Bikes**

Each railway station Sakai City (except for the Hankai Line) is designated as a parking ban zone. Bicycles and mini bikes left in the zone will be removed. In addition, we will collect the removal & storage fee for the return of a removed bike or mini bike. Please use the parking lot to park a bicycle or mini-bike.



**“Suirin すいりん” App for Waterworks**

Download the official Sakai City Waterworks and Sewage Bureau app for these convenient features!

- Get notices about checkups and view up to 2 years of past water usage and bills
- Get digital bills delivered through the app and pay using PayPay or by showing the barcode at your local 7-Eleven or Ministop.
- Get confirmations of bank transfer payments
- Apply for temporary stop and start of water pipes
- Pay bills with your credit card (registration required)



**Sakai City CIR Facebook & Instagram Accounts**

Get the most up-to-date information on what's happening in Sakai, from upcoming events to emergencies & disaster warnings. Sakai is a beautiful place and this year, we're going to show just how amazing it is to the world! Please search Sakai City CIR on Facebook and Instagram.



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