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City Life

ISSUE 192

February/March 2026 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, or would like the paper version sent to you (free for foreign residents who live, work or study in Sakai), please contact Lena at the following email address: kokusai@city.sakai.lg.jp



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

☆Hinamatsuri (Girls' Day)

Hinamatsuri (Girls' Day) is a traditional Japanese event held every year on March 3rd to pray for the healthy growth and happiness of girls. At home, families display hina dolls dressed in Heian-period imperial family attire, accompanied by peach blossoms and colorful rice cakes. It's a festive and warm celebration where people enjoy traditional foods like chirashi sushi and amazake sweet drink, while anticipating the arrival of spring.

Making chirashi sushi is very simple. Just mix store-bought chirashi sushi seasoning with warm rice, then decorate with your favorite toppings such as finely shredded egg strips, boiled shrimp, and green beans. This year, why not add peach blossoms and enjoy Hinamatsuri at home?

In the historic district of Sakai, the Sakai City Traditional Townhouse Museums will display hina dolls as shown below. How about taking a stroll through the historic scenery while enjoying traditional hina doll displays?

Exhibition Period: March 4th (Wed) ~ April 3rd (Fri)

Venues: Old Yamaguchi Family Residence, Old Seigakuin Mountain Priest Dojo, Old Gunsmith Workshop and Residence

For details on admission fees and opening hours, scan the QR code.



Photo from last year's exhibition



☆Kozen Park

With a land mass of 170 thousand square-meters, this vast park is known for its plum trees. Currently there are a total of 1,100 plum trees of about 50 different varieties. The best time to see them is between mid-February to early March. Nearby there is Tajihayahime shrine, of which main hall was built in the 16th century and is designated as a National Important Cultural Property.



Detailed information on opening hours, admission costs, access etc. of Harvest Hill, Sakai City Museum, Mihara History Museum, Sophia Sakai, Alphonse Mucha Museum and Sakai Plaza of Rikyu and Akiko can be found on the Sakai City Government English website.

Museums & Facilities



Events



☆Events at Fenice Sacay

Concert of Famous Pieces from Movies, Dramas, and Musicals

A luxurious concert where you can relax and enjoy a rich orchestral performance of famous songs. Admission not permitted for preschool children.

Conductor: Shin-ichiro IKEBE

Orchestra: NHK Symphony Orchestra Alumni Ensemble

Programme list: From the film *The Godfather Part III*: Intermezzo from the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Mascagni; from the musical *Singin' in the Rain* by Brown; and more.

Date/time: March 21st (Sat) 15:00~ performance starts

Venue: Fenice Sacay, large hall

Fee: 3,800 yen

Application method:

Web: Sacay mate (scan the QR code to access)



Happy Jazz Hour!

That unforgettable tune was a jazz classic! Reunite with your favourite melodies at this happy, friendly jazz concert. Admission not permitted for preschool children.

Performers: Nobuya SUGAWA (sax), Yosuke INOUE (bass), Ai OKUMURA (violin), Mei INOUE (guitar), Ai OKUMURA Strings

Programme (planned):

'Take the A Train' – composed by Billy Strayhorn

'I Got Rhythm' – composed by George Gershwin

'When You Wish Upon a Star' – composed by Leigh Harline...and more

Date/time: February 8th (Sun), doors open 13:00, performance starts 14:00

Venue: Fenice Sacay, large hall

Fee: 3,800 yen

Application method:

Web: Sacay mate (scan the QR code to access)



THE Fenice Bunraku

Experience the world of Bunraku, the traditional Japanese puppet theater, as portrayed by Japan's Living National Treasure, Kanjuro KIRITAKE.

Date/time: March 1st (Sun), doors open 13:00, performance starts 13:30

Venue: Fenice Sakai, large hall

Fee: 5,500 yen (same price for advance and same-day)

Capacity: 500 people

Application method:

Web: Sacay mate (scan the QR code to access)



Other shared application methods for the three events:

Phone: Sakai City Cultural Foundation Ticket Center (TEL 0570-08-0089)

Counter: Fenice Sacay Ticket Counter (9:00-20:00)



☆Harvest Hill Illumination: Wonder Night Hill

Designated days until February 23rd (Mon/National holiday). Those who haven't yet, make sure to go!

Time: 17:45-21:00 (last admission at 20:30)

Event days:

February 1st, 7th ~ 8th, 11th, 14th ~ 15th, 21st ~ 23rd



For more information, scan the QR code.



☆Third walking along the green roads of Minami event ~ Lets aim for 6 million steps in total together!

Using sports, you can enjoy the abundant nature and the interactions with people. 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 Tazono Park which you can enjoy when you reach the goal. Every participant will receive an original towel. Some participants will be chosen through a raffle to win niwadani rice. In addition, if the total steps of all participants reach 6 million, the number of winners will increase. Anyone is welcome to participate for free. Cancelled in case of stormy weather.

Date/time: March 1st (Sun), 9:00-12:30 (accepting between 9:00-10:00)

Location: Izumigaoka Greenway (start: Miyayama Park, Ohasu Park, Harumi Park, Tazono Park - Goal: Tazono Park)

※ You will start at the location you selected at application

Access: Nankai Semboku line, Izumigaoka station

Application: Apply by February 13th, ① via the Sakai City e-application system, ② sending a participation application form by mail, fax or submit it by hand to Minami Ward office, Planning and General Affairs Division. For more information scan the QR code (Japanese only).



◆The 21st Sakai Student Calligraphy Exhibition



Calligraphy works by students enrolled in elementary schools, junior high schools, and special support schools in Sakai and university students from ASEAN countries will be displayed. The themes in the calligraphy include Sakai's traditional culture and significant figures, the students hope for the future and international exchange. Come see this aspect of traditional Japanese culture! Admission free.

Exhibition: February 21st (Sat) ~ February 27th (Fri), 9:00-21:00
*opening day starts at 14:00, closing day ends at 16:00

Venue: Sakai City Hall, Main Building, 1F Entrance Hall



Last year's display

◆The Harmony Mucha Dreamed of

Alphonse Mucha is widely known as an Art Nouveau artist who portrayed elegant and graceful women. However, throughout his life, he created numerous works expressing his wish for the happiness of all people. This exhibition introduces a new side of Mucha's artistry under the theme of "Harmony." Centered around the museum's iconic large oil painting "Harmony" approx. H1.5m × W4.5m, the exhibition explores recurring motifs and compositions found in selected works from the collection, uncovering the messages Mucha sought to convey to the world.

Exhibition period: Until March 29th (Sun)

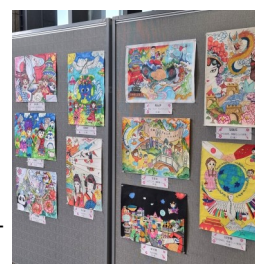
Venue: Sakai Alphonse Mucha Museum

◆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), Wellington City (New Zealand) and Da Nang City (Vietnam). Free entry.

Date/time: February 17th (Tue) ~ February 27th (Fri), 9:00-21:00
*closing day ends at 15:00

Venue: Sakai City Hall, High Rise Building, 1F North Lobby



Last year's display

※Tax Payment

February is the fourth appointed time for Fixed Property Tax and City Planning Tax. The payment deadline is **March 2nd**. Please make your payment by the deadline at your nearest financial institution, convenience store, etc. Payment can also be made using Pay-easy, mobile payment methods, and credit cards via the regional tax payment website (eLTAX). Scan the QR code for the English user's guide on the website (eLTAX). For those using automatic withdrawal, the fourth appointed time for Fixed Property Tax and City Planning Tax will be withdrawn on **March 2nd**. Please ensure you have sufficient funds in your account.



※Declaration for Municipal and Prefectural Tax

This is an important procedure which provides the basis for the calculation of taxes in FY2026 and also enables taxpayers to be issued with tax certificates such as "Proof of Income" (所得証明). Please complete the declaration during the designated period. To prevent congestion, please submit documents by post. The forms are available on the Sakai City Government website.



Who needs to make a municipal and prefectural tax declaration?

Anyone who had an address within Sakai City as of January 1st 2026 and received income in 2025, excluding:

- anyone who informs the national tax office of his/her income individually
 - anyone whose income is solely derived from wages and the place of employment automatically informs the municipal government of their earnings
 - anyone whose income during 2025 is from public pension only and 1.55 million yen and under (1.05 million yen and under for those born on January 2nd 1961 and after)
- If you had no income in 2025, but still want to receive a "Proof of Income", please make a declaration.

Declaration period:

February 16th to March 16th (excluding weekends and public holidays), 9:00-17:00

Place: City Hall Main Building 3F Meeting Room, Naka/Higashi/Minami Ward Office 2F Meeting Room, Nishi Ward Office Basement Meeting Room, Kita Ward Office 1F Meeting Room, Mihara Ward Office Main Building 3F Meeting Room

Necessary Items:

- A document that can prove your earnings, e.g. income tax withholding slip (源泉徴収票)
- A document that can prove a deduction from your income, e.g. payment receipts of national health insurance (国民健康保険)
- Identification documents of the person filing the declaration (Residence Card, My Number Card, etc)



※National Pension Contribution Special Payment System for Students

If a student's income for the previous year is below a certain amount (1.28 million yen if there are no dependents), contribution payments for that period can be deferred upon application. The approved period will count toward the eligibility requirement for receiving a pension; however, it will not increase the pension amount. If an accident or illness during this period results in a disability, the Basic Disability Pension may be paid if certain conditions are met. To apply, please bring your pension book or Notification of Pension Number, a personal identification document such as My Number Card, and either student ID or certificate of enrollment to the Health Insurance and Pension Division at your local ward office. Submission by mail or electronic application via the Mynportal is also available. If you are continuing to use the system from last year, return the application postcard once it arrives.

※Do you know about the foster care system?

There is a shortage of foster parents who can temporarily care for children unable to live with their families for various reasons. Why not take this opportunity to learn more about the foster care system? For more details scan the QR code (Japanese only).



※Fines will be introduced for bicycle traffic violations!

From April, the traffic violation notification system, commonly known as the blue ticket, will apply to more than 100 types of bicycle violations, such as ignoring traffic lights and using a smartphone while riding. Under this system, offenders who pay the fine will not face criminal penalties. The applicable age is 16 years and above, and the penalty will be the same as that imposed for violations involving motorised bicycles (mopeds). Let's follow bicycle traffic rules and be careful to avoid both causing accidents and being involved in them.

- Use of mobile phones, etc. (holding in hand) 12,000 yen
- Failure to stop at a stop sign 5,000 yen
- Riding on the right side of the road 6,000 yen



※Temporary Closure of Sakai City Museum

The Sakai City Museum is currently closed for air-conditioning system renovations. It will reopen on April 1st, so please come and visit from then. Meanwhile, the Sakai City Tea House "Shin-an" remains open as usual, except on Mondays.

◎National Health Insurance Premiums and National Pension Contributions Before and After Delivery

Reduction of National Health Insurance Premiums

From January 2024 onward, if a household enrolled in National Health Insurance has an insured person who is expected to give birth or has given birth, the per-income and per-capita portions of the premium attributable to that insured person will be fully reduced, thereby lowering the household's insurance premiums.



National Pension Contributions Exemption

Payment of contributions to the National Pension before and after giving birth will be exempted upon notification. The exemption period will be counted toward your basic pension benefits, and you can still make additional contributions if you wish.



For more information scan the QR code.

◎Japan has a universal health insurance system

In Japan, everyone is required to enroll in public health insurance to ensure access to medical care with peace of mind. Programmes such as National Health Insurance and the Medical Care System for the Elderly are part of this framework. These systems are based on mutual support, with all insured individuals contributing to help one another. Let's work together to protect healthy living for everyone.

• Eligibility for enrollment

You must enroll if you are a foreign national who is permitted to stay in Japan for over 3 months. However, there may be cases where enrollment is not possible. Scan the QR codes for details about the enrollment conditions and how to enroll.

• Insurance premiums and medical expenses
When you enroll in health insurance, premiums are charged based on your income and household composition. In addition, you can receive medical care by paying 20-30% of the medical costs yourself (10-30% for the Medical Care System for the Elderly). The exact percentage depends on factors such as income.

• Those under 74 years

National health insurance →

• Those aged 75 and older
Elderly person health insurance (Japanese only) →

The deadlines for February and March are as follows.

February: March 2nd

March: March 31st



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)



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

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.



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.

Administrative: March 27th 13:30-16:30

Labour: March 6th 13:30-16:30

Law: Not available

Immigration: March 13th 13:30-16:30

Daily Life: Not available

Free Confidential Consultation

February 18th (Wed) & March 18th (Wed), 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.



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**.



やさしい日本語 Facebook Page

POME Sakai has 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.



“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 at a convenience store.
- Get confirmations of automatic withdrawal payments.
- Apply for temporary stop and start of water services.
- Pay bills with your credit card (registration required).

For Android users



For iPhone users



Waterworks and Sewage Bureau Web-site



For more details and to download the app, scan the QR codes (Japanese only).

No smoking or littering on the street

The area in front of Sakaihigashi station and the public road on the south side, the squares in front of Sakai station (west and east), Oshoji street, and the area around the city hall are designated as non-smoking and no littering zones. Violations will result in a fine of 1,000 yen. Additionally, Sakaihigashi station's west side, Nakamozu station, Mikunigaoka station, Sakaishi station, Komyoike station, Fukai station and Izumigaoka station are designated as priority areas for improving smoking and littering manners. We appreciate your cooperation.



※Emergency Numbers

110: Police

119: Fire or medical emergency (available in English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese and Vietnamese).

When you call 119, the operator can set up a three or four-way call with an interpreter/s. It can take up to 10 seconds to connect, during which the caller should wait on the line and not hang up.

For sudden injuries or illnesses, there is a national 'Ambulance Use Guide'. It is available in multiple languages, so scan the QR code to access it.



※Storing Water and Toilets in Case of Disaster

It is said that a person needs about 3 liters of water per day. Immediately after a major disaster, water supply will be cut off. Prepare three days' worth of drinking water to be ready for a disaster.

From the fourth day after a disaster occurs, you will be able to receive water at evacuation centers. Prepare portable toilets for times when your home toilet cannot be used.



※Parking Ban-Zones for Bicycles & Minibikes

Abandoned bicycles (including minibikes) obstruct the safe passage of pedestrians and the entry of emergency vehicles. The areas around 27 stations in Sakai City (within approximately 300 meters of railway stations, excluding the Hankai line) are designated as a parking ban zone for bicycles. Bicycles and minibikes left in the zone will be removed, and a removal and storage fee will be required for their return. Please park your bicycles and minibikes in designated parking areas.



Sakai City CIR Facebook & Instagram Accounts

Get the most up-to-date information on what's happening in Sakai. Sakai is a beautiful place and we would love it if you shared with us what amazing places you know. Please follow and add #hellosakai to your posts!

Find us by searching 'Sakai City CIR' on Facebook and Instagram!!

