

*Basic Policy of
International Exchange and Multicultural Coexistence
in Nerima City*

March 2012

Nerima City

What is an international exchange..

Regional international exchange activates the area: the encounter with people with different languages, way of living and habits, makes inhabitants recognize the merit, appeal etc., of their region, let them know the good point of its sister city and enriches their culture and society. Also the direct international exchange activities by inhabitants are expected to change their awareness about the world contribution. Various exchanges and cooperative activities by regional public bodies, private bodies and individuals are expected to deepen mutual understanding at a grass-roots level and the relation between nation and nation, and eventually lead to the contribution to the world peace.

(Summary of “the meaning and aim of regional international exchange” out of “The policy concerning the assessment of the outline of regional international exchange promotion” by Ministry of Home Affairs in February 1989.)

What is multicultural coexistence...

People with different nationalities and races live together as a member of the community, respecting each other’s cultural difference and trying to build a fair relationship.

(excerpts from “Report on Multicultural Coexistence Promotion by a study group” by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, March, 2006.)

Table of Contents

I	Upon Compilation of Basic Policy	1
1	Background Information	1
2	Positioning of Basic Policy	4
II	Basic Principle of International Exchange and Multicultural Coexistence	4
1	Basic Principle of International Exchange	4
2	Basic Principle of Multicultural Coexistence	4
III	Consensus on International Exchange and Multicultural Coexistence	5
1	Promoting activities by residents	5
2	Role of municipality	5
IV	Basic measures on International Exchange and Multicultural Coexistence	6
1	Promotion of International Exchange	6
2	Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence	7
3	Improvement Promotion Teams	8
	Reference material / Commentary on terms	9

I Upon Compilation of Basic Policy

1 Background Information

(1) National Policy of Internationalization

Along with fast development of information and communication technology as well as globalization of economic activities, people move across national borders more actively than before. Against this background, Japanese government has announced “Guidelines on international exchanges by municipalities”(March 1987) [note 1](#) to demonstrate its policy to support the internationalization of municipalities.

Along with the various governmental approaches which resulted in an increase of number of foreign residents and visitors, the revision of “Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act” in 1990 [note 2](#) diversified the nationalities of foreign residents and increased the number of foreigners who apply for permanent residence and/or naturalization.

On the basis of these facts, Japanese government recognized the necessity of promoting multicultural coexistence communities where people of different nationalities and races live together as a member of a community by respecting each other’s cultural difference and trying to build a fair relationship.

“Regional Multicultural Coexisting Plan”(March 2006) [note 3](#) was developed for local public organizations and “Basic Resident Registration Act” was revised (July 2009) [note 4](#) so that Basic Resident Registration System will be applied to foreign residents as well.

(2) Current Status of Nerima City and its Internationalization Policy

The number of foreigners living in Nerima city is on the increase, and as of January 1, 2012, the number of

foreigners who registered in Nerima city was 13,017. The number of registered foreigners increased to 1.12 times during the last 10 years, which account for 1.84% of the entire population of Nerima city (as of January 1 2012, 707,903), and the variety of nationalities counts over 100.

In order to promote international understanding among citizens, Nerima city has carried out international exchange programs to introduce foreign cultures and help residents interact with each other. We have also provided Japanese language classes, information in foreign languages and consultation services for foreign citizens.

In 2006, we established “Nerima city international exchange projects promotion association”, consisting of members of international exchange projects, volunteers and foreign residents, to facilitate effective promotion of international exchange projects as well as collaboration among people concerned. And in 2009, we carried out the opinion poll: “Researching the thoughts and ambitions of Nerima’s foreign residents”.note 5

Regarding the exchange with overseas cities, in 1992 we signed “Agreement on friendship cooperation and exchange” with Haidian ward, Beijing city, China, and in 1994 “Agreement on friendship and bilateral cooperation” with Ipswich city, Queensland, Australia. Based upon these agreements, exchanges among municipalities are expanded and at the same time, exchanges among residents are deepened through culture, art, sports and overseas youth exchange programs.

Furthermore, in April, 2009, we concluded “Animation industry exchange agreement” with Annecy city, France and Annecy Metropolitan community.

(3)Development of Nerima City Basic Concept and Nerima City Long Term Plan

“The Nerima City Basic Concept” which provides a basic policy for the management and administration of the city puts the slogan “Our city, Nerima, which is built together and extended to the future, is a place where people and greenery glow” forward as a desired status of the city 10 years from now.

The Long Term Plan which was developed based on the basic concept (March, 2010) has positioned the policy concerning international exchange and multicultural coexistence under “Policy#335: promoting understanding of the variety of cultures and societies” of “Category-by-category objective 3: creating a city with liveliness and serenity”. Because of the increasing necessity for mutual understanding and cooperation beyond the difference of languages and customs, the plan also encourages the implementation of exchange programs with sister cities abroad and measures to promote interaction, mutual understanding and cooperation between Japanese and non-Japanese residents in the city.

(4)Increased Necessities of International Exchange and Multicultural Coexistence

The Great East Japan Earthquake which occurred on March 11, 2012 devastated the Tohoku region. Japan has received assistance force, aid supplies and monetary contributions from many countries which have friendship relations or cooperation partnerships with Japan. On the other hand, some foreign residents in Japan went back to their home countries feeling anxiety. The great disaster outlined the importance of

accurate information, network and exchange among local residents. Further promotion of international exchange and multicultural coexistence is requested in order to activate local community functions by facilitating accurate information providing system in emergency.

2 Positioning of Basic Policy

Based upon various projects ever before as well as opinions collected by conducting the survey, “Researching the thoughts and ambitions of Nerima’s foreign residents,” we will carry out measures of the long term plan. This Basic Policy is set as a guideline for developing international exchange and multicultural coexistence measures and promoting them comprehensively and systematically.

II Basic Principle of International Exchange and Multicultural Coexistence

1 Basic Principle of International Exchange

We try to reinforce mutual understanding and friendship between municipalities through exchange programs for internationalization of residents. More exchange activities joined by residents to move more people and materials gives good effects a wide variety of fields such as economy, culture, art, and sports, which leads to a richer local society. Trust-based relationship among municipalities and residents over difference of nationality and culture contributes to world peace.

2 Basic Principle of Multicultural Coexistence

If both foreign and Japanese residents respect each other’s cultural differences, try to build a fair relationship and live together as members of the community, we can facilitate creation of new cultures and local activities to make our community a society

where everybody wants to live in.

III Consensus on International Exchange and Multicultural Coexistence

1. Promoting activities by residents

It is important that international exchange and multicultural coexistence are participated by each of residents independently in variety.

A mind to respect each other is cultivated not only through international exchange between municipalities; It is also developed by deepening understanding about different cultures through continuous resident-based relationship with people who have different habits and languages.

Through exchanges with various cities, additional cultures and an appeal will be created to make Nerima city more attractive for both residents and visitors.

If foreign residents and Japanese residents accept each other's difference, respect each other and work together on regional challenges, new regional cultures will be created and regional activities will be promoted.

It is our basic policy that we respect independence and creativity of activities by residents and various groups so that they can take active acts on promoting an international exchange and multicultural coexistence.

2. Role of municipality

(1) Promoting international exchange

We cooperate with residents and support them so that they can exchange independently; we cooperate with other municipalities for friendship, establish a relationship of mutual trust and cooperation, provide residents places to promote their international exchange activities, collect and offer information and etc.

(2) Promoting multicultural coexistence

We support the activities of the residents and its groups by making an effort to maintain and improve the infrastructure, at the same time we respect the human rights of everybody including foreign residents for the establishment of multicultural coexistence community.

IV Basic Measures on International Exchange and Multicultural coexistence

1 Promotion of International Exchange

(1) Exchange with Friendly cities

- a. On an equal friendship relation, we deepen the trust between municipalities by understanding the situation and the needs of the partners.
- b. We promote the participation of residents who are involved with activities of culture, art, and sports, etc. to the exchange activities.

(2) An Exchange mainly composed of residents

We establish the structure so that exchanges mainly composed of residents can continuously be done in various fields.

(3) Making of Attractive City

- a. We promote to make city from universal design note 6 point of view so that foreigners are able to understand signs in the city easily.
- b. We collaborate with residents as well as various organizations to carry out exchange programs, develop local businesses, economy and tourism by promoting residents' exchange activities so that Nerima can be more attractive to visitors.

2 Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence

We help foreigners to be a member of community and Japanese to deepen understanding of different culture. Moreover, we establish a facility to serve as a liaison office to promote multicultural coexistence measures and try to invigorate collaboration with related organizations.

(1) Communication Support

- a. We provide foreign residents with information on daily lives in foreign languages and try to provide more opportunities and places to remove language barriers.
- b. City office staff make most of “basic Japanese” note 7 when they speak with foreign residents and try to communicate with each other more smoothly in Japanese. At the same time, we make usage of basic Japanese more popular among residents through town activities and community activities.

(2) Livelihood Support

- a. We provide foreign residents with information on welfare, medical services, education and disaster prevention that are closely related to daily lives so that foreign residents can easily get the information when they need to. We promote collaboration with related sections and expand consultation service windows in foreign languages.
- b. We provide places for activities of multicultural coexistence where residents can propose and conduct exchange programs and exchange information with each other.

(3) Making of Multicultural City where residents with different cultural background can coexist

- a. We introduce Japanese culture and customs to

foreign residents and promote international understanding so that residents can recognize different culture and customs with each other and build equal relationship in the region.

- b. We promote exchange programs with regional activity organizations to activate exchange among residents, help foreign residents join regional activities to build stable relationship among neighbors.
 - c. We train residents with excellent skills in multicultural communication who can be of help to multicultural society.
- (4) Collaboration with Regional Activity Organizations and Volunteer Groups
- a. We cooperate with neighborhood associations, residents' associations, private enterprises, NPO, volunteer organizations, and educational institutions positively to promote solid coordination system.
 - b. We aim to activate volunteers who registered on the list of cooperators for multicultural society in Nerima City and strengthen the association.

3 Improvement in Promotion Framework

To support residents-based activities and to promote international exchange projects and multicultural coexistence generally and effectively, we set up in city office a trans-office communication adjustment system and aim to strengthen our cooperation system. We also set up a liaison conference composed of residents and/or groups in the city to promote international exchange projects and multicultural coexistence which adopt various opinions of them.

Reference material / Commentary on terms

note 1 Guideline on the ideal method of international exchange of local public entities. (Ministry of Home Affairs, Feb.1988)

The guideline was set by the government so that local public entities can assess and develop their society on international exchange for the time being, with the recognition, that the international exchange by local public entities should be improved both in quality and quantity.

note 2. Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. (Immigration Control Act) (government ordinance No.319 in 1951)

The law which stipulates the Immigration Control system and Refugee Recognition system on the basis of Convention relating to the status of Refugees and Refugees protocol. By the revision in June 1990, the status of residence of “long-term resident” was newly created and people of Japanese ancestry up to 3rd generation (sansei) was given the status which enables them to work. Therefore for people of Japanese ancestry(Nikkei) from South and Central America, such as Brazil, Peru etc., an entry for Japan became easier.

note 3 Regional multicultural coexisting plan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications March 2006)

The plan is made to help local public entities to make their guideline/plan regarding an improvement of multicultural coexisting plan. We recognize that the policy on foreign residents is a national-wide challenge since the foreign residents in Japan is expected to increase and that therefore it is necessary to promote the regional internationalization further through “International Exchange”, “International Cooperation” and “Regional multicultural coexistence” as three main means in local public entities.

note 4 The Basic Resident Registration Act (Act No.81 of 1967)

The Act stipulates the Basic Resident Registration System which controls the records concerning residents properly on the basis of office work management. In July 2009, the Basic Resident Registration Act is partially revised and it became applicable to foreign residents equally as Japanese residents.

note 5 Research on thoughts and wishes of Nerima's Foreign Residents (Oct 2009)

We surveyed the opinions of 6,300 residents selected at random out of all foreign Nerima residents who are more than 20 years old, 17 international exchange related groups and 18 volunteer Japanese class on easiness of living in Nerima, request to city administration regarding regional exchange and making of co-existing community. It aims to obtain a basic reference material so that we could make communities in which residents of different nationalities and habits could respect each other and coexist.

The result shows that almost 70% of the respondents feel Nerima city comfortable to live in. A little less than 30% respondents mentioned "language" as one of the obstacles in the daily life in Japan. Specifically, most answered that it is difficult for them "to read Japanese newspapers and notices" as well as "to understand explanations given at the city office and hospitals." As requests for the municipal administration to develop co-existing community, "the efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination" and "events or opportunities to exchange with Japanese residents" were given.

note 6 Universal Design

It means to design things for any people, regardless of age or disability. To design things available for as many people as possible.

note 7 Easy Japanese

Simple and easily understandable Japanese terms were researched and selected for people of “Basic Japanese Proficiency” after Hanshin Awaji Great Earthquake so that disaster information is surely conveyed to foreign victims.

e.g. *Kesa*(this morning)→*Kyou* (today) *Asa*(morning)

Kakuninsuru (confirm)→*Yokumiru*(watch closely)

Yoshin(afterquake)→*Atode*(later) *Kuru*(occur) *Jishin*
(quake)

Kiken(danger)→*Abunai*(watch out)

*Basic Policy of International Exchange and
Multicultural Coexistence in Nerima City*

March 2012

*Issued by Culture and International Relations Section
General Affairs Division
Nerima City*

6-12-1, Toyotama-kita, Nerima-ku, Tokyo 176-8501

TEL: +81-3-5984-4333

Nerima City Web page: <http://www.city.nerima.tokyo.jp/>