

IIN

40 年記念行事報告

2024.11.14 ~ 19

Ibaraki Intercultural Network (IIN) celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the celebration was delayed by two years, but from November 14th to 19th, 2024, we welcomed nine members of the Minneapolis-Ibaraki Sister City Association (MISCA) as a citizen delegation from Minneapolis and held the IIN 40th anniversary event.

During the pandemic, we continued to interact online with the people of Minneapolis, which is believed to have contributed to the smooth face-to-face interactions this time. The member of IIN meticulously and sometimes intensively prepared for each event. Below, we introduce the interactions at the four main commemorative events.

●Thursday, 14th: Rose WAM regular meeting

During the group talking session, thanks to the excellent conversation skills and listening abilities of everyone, the visiting delegation members who came to Ibaraki for the first time quickly relaxed and engaged in lively conversations. After enjoying the tea ceremony, we held the Ibaraki Local Karuta Tournament. The MISCA members were very familiar with Ibaraki and impressively picked up the cards at an astonishing speed.



Before the Awaji bus tour on the 16th, we enjoyed a presentation introducing Awaji Island and a puppet play version of Joruri by IIN. Finally, under the guidance of a wagashi (Japanese confectionery) artisan, we made nerikiri sweets in the shape of roses, which are the city flower of Ibaraki.



Despite the whirlwind of events on the first day, the MISCA members showed no signs of fatigue from their long journey and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.



●Saturday, 16th: Awaji Island bus tour



We crossed the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, which we proudly mentioned in the presentation on the first day as being longer than the Golden Gate Bridge, and headed to Awaji Island, the home of incense.



Everyone chose their favorite scents and enjoyed making their own original incense.



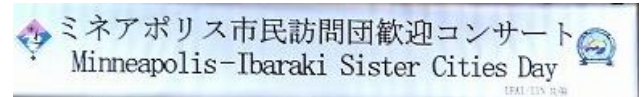
Lunch at Miketsukuni restaurant, Awaji.



Then, we watched the Awaji Ningyoza Joruri puppet theater. Although the Joruri performance was a difficult one, thanks to the IIN puppet play on the first day, we were able to understand it well. Karl, the president of MISCA, who teaches stage production at a high school, was very interested in the background introduction that utilized the perspective techniques that Awaji Ningyoza is proud of.



●Monday, 18th: Welcome Concert for the Minneapolis Citizen Delegation



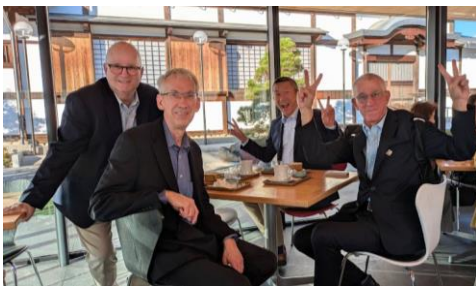
We enjoyed that beautiful ensemble of piano, flute, and bassoon at Kitashin Hall.

With invitations extended to members of the International Friendship Association of Ibaraki (IFAI) and through the city's public relations magazine, the total number of attendees reached 140. At the end,

everyone inside and outside the venue joined in a grand chorus of "Do-Re-Mi" and "edelweiss" in the sister city version.



In the afternoon, we took a stroll to Sojiji Temple. On the way back, a large rainbow appeared, symbolizing the bridge between our two cities!



●Tuesday, 19th: IIN 40th anniversary reception with our friends from Minneapolis

It was the final day of interaction with the Minneapolis citizen delegation. Members of the IFAI, Ibaraki city hall staff, and those who have long supported the IIN since its inception also participated, allowing us to spend a pleasant time together.





At the end, everyone joined in a grand chorus. Despite being hurried by the piano performance of “Auld Lang Syne”, we found it hard to part and lingered for a while.



We deeply appreciate the “people to people” bonds that are the core of IIN’s philosophy, and this event became a hopeful occasion to discuss future interactions. We sincerely hope that the wonderful exchanges between the IFAI, IIN, the City of Minneapolis, and MISCA will continue to flourish.

A total of 373 people participated in these four commemorative events. We want to remember their number not just as a record, but as a cherished memory.