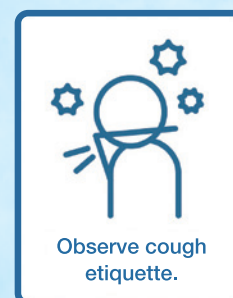
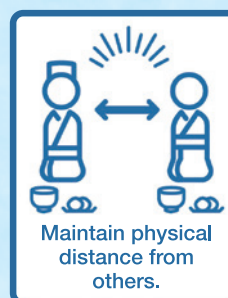
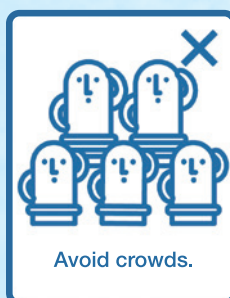
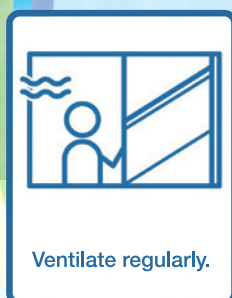


Sakai City Human Rights Education  
Promotion Council Newsletter

# Kokoro-no-Hibiki

Kindness connects us heart-to-heart.

Let's overcome the Covid-19 crisis together with  
thoughtful behavior and correct understanding.



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To help increase public awareness of human rights, the Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council issues an annual newsletter, **Kokoro-no-Hibiki**, to advocate the importance of human rights.

HREPC Official Website    
<https://www.jinkenkyo.jp>



Editor and Publisher (Published in March 2021)

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**Human Rights Promotion Division, Sakai City Government**

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Sakai City, Osaka Prefecture  
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## DVDs on Human Rights

# The Human Rights Promotion Division of the Sakai City Government lends out DVDs on human rights for free.

\* The DVDs are in Japanese only, without foreign-language subtitles or dubbing.



**Inquiries: TEL: 072-228-7420 FAX: 072-228-8070**



DVD

### Personal information

## *Kodomo Bohan Sukuru* Approx. 23 min. – Netto/SNS Toraburu Hen

(How to safeguard children from falling victim to crime – Potential problems of using the Internet and SNS)

Various apps and online sites offer social networking services (SNS) that enable users to easily communicate with family and friends. While SNS has become an inseparable part of the lives of many children, it can be a breeding ground for crime.

An expert explains how to protect children from problems caused by using the Internet and SNS in a gentle and interesting manner.



DVD

### Human rights of sexual minorities

## *Minna de Kangaeru LGBTs*

(Let us think about LGBT issues together) Approx. 25 min.

### Vols. 1 to 3

We all have a sexual identity, and we must prevent discrimination and prejudice on the basis of sexual orientation; gender identity and sexual orientation are simply personal traits.

This three-volume DVD set was produced as a teaching material to learn about sexual diversity as a personal characteristic and to help LGBT children accept themselves as they are and develop self-esteem and self-respect.

## Sustainable Development Goals



## The motto of the SDGs is “Leaving no one behind.”

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The SDGs are intended to achieve a better future for the world by finding solutions to various global challenges, such as poverty, inequality, disparity, climate change, depletion of resources and destruction of nature in a 15-year period from 2016 to 2030.

The Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council (HREPC) has been working to increase public awareness of the SDGs by producing SDGs panels and stickers. HREPC is committed to working toward the SDGs in partnership with Sakai City and other organizations by expanding human rights education and conducting awareness-raising activities.

Sakai City was designated as an SDGs Future City in June 2018 by the Japanese government and has since been working hard toward the SDGs.



Sakai City was promoting the five-year Sakai Safe City Program to create a safe and comfortable living environment for women, children, and all other people. After the program ended in FY 2019, the city started in FY 2020 a new program named Safe City Sakai, building on the experience and achievements of the Sakai Safe City Program.





# What Is the Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council (HREPC)?

The Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council is a civic organization established in July 1979, with the aim of eliminating any form of discrimination, including buraku discrimination, and protecting human rights of all people. With an extensive membership comprised of civil groups, businesses and religious corporations, HREPC carries out various activities to educate the public on human rights and contribute to a peaceful and prosperous society where the human rights of all people are respected.



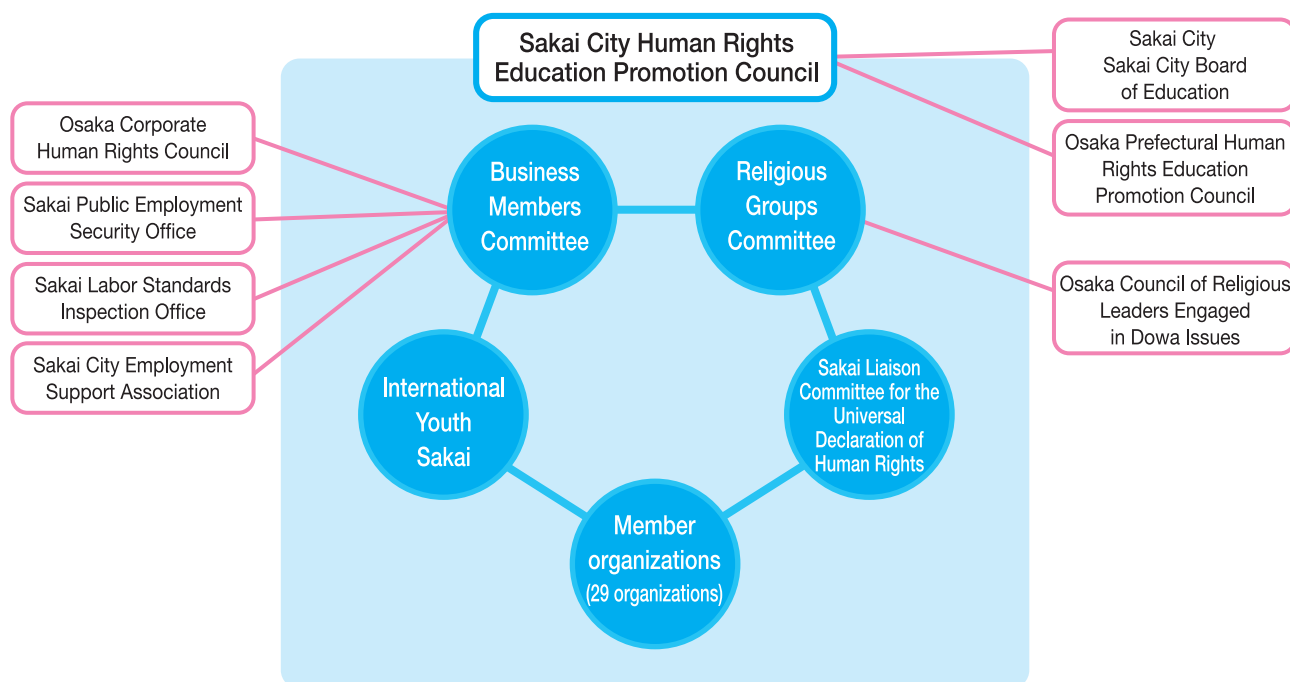
**KANAMARU Naohiro**  
Chair



The HREPC's symbol represents people holding hands, praying for promotion of human rights and world peace.

## Organization Chart / Directors of the Council

Chair	KANAMARU Naohiro (Business Members Committee of the Council)	
Vice Chair	KUBO Teruo (Federation of Sakai City Residents' Associations)	YAMAGUCHI Noriko (Sakai City Women's Association)
	NOMURA Tomoaki (Sakai City PTA Federation)	SHIRAMOTO Tadashi (Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations)
	KIDO Kazutomo (Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools)	TAKEDA Shin'ichi (Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League)
	YOSHIMURA Seiji (Religious Groups Committee of the Council)	
Treasurer	KOYAMA Toshimi (Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation)	MORIUCHI Keiko (District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association)



- Sakai City Education Association
- Sakai City Support Group for Foreign Residents' Education
- Sakai City Women's Association
- Sakai City Liaison Council of Instructors for Youth
- Sakai City PTA Federation
- NPO Sakai Federation of Private Educational and Childcare Institutions
- Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools
- Sakai District Committee of Administrative Counselors
- Osaka Prefectural Association of Vocational Schools
- Semboku Sumai Center, West Japan Branch, UR Community Inc.

- Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation
- Federation of Sakai City Residents' Associations
- Sakai City Federation of Private Kindergartens
- Sakai City Human Rights Education and Research Society
- Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations
- Sakai City Federation of Child Welfare Commissioners
- Sakai City Federation of Senior Residents' Clubs
- Sakai City Liaison Council of Probation Officers
- Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Headquarters of Liberal Dowa Association
- Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League

- Sakai City Association for Sound Growth of Children
- Sakai City Social Education Committee
- NPO Sakai Federation of Disabled People's Organizations
- Sakai City Agricultural Cooperative
- Sakai City Welfare Association for Single-Mother Families and Widows
- Sakai Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association
- Sakai City Council of Social Welfare
- Principals' Association of Osaka Prefectural Schools in the 8th District

# Introduction of Member Organizations

## Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations

The Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations (SCACO) is a private body established in June 1930 jointly by the municipal government, supporters, educators and kindergarten teachers and staff, with a view to contributing to the development of early childhood education in Sakai City.

Although SCACO was temporarily dissolved during World War II, it was reestablished in 1947 following the post-war reopening of kindergartens. As the number of new kindergartens increased from year to year in response to the growing demand of citizens for early childhood education, the number of SCACO members also increased. SCACO has continued growing and developing, and in FY 2020, celebrated the 90th anniversary of its foundation.

Some of the activities undertaken by SCACO are as shown below.

- Organize inspection tours to kindergartens in other prefectures and pre- and post-tour training sessions for capacity-building of kindergarten teachers and staff.
- Offer training sessions and other networking opportunities for parents of kindergarten children.
- Implement Kosodate-hiroba program as part of parenting support.
- Organize Yochien-ten, an exhibition to showcase creative works of kindergarten children and increase public awareness of kindergarten education.

- Organize Yochien-no-tsudoi, an event in which parents and children watch plays and sing songs together.
- Issue a regular bulletin to publicize the distinctive programs of Sakai municipal kindergartens, report SCACO's activities and provide useful information, to enhance early childhood education.

In this way, SCACO has continued to provide opportunities to bring together children, parents and kindergarten teachers and staff, and connect communities with kindergartens throughout its 90-year history.

Many parents of former kindergarten children, as well as former kindergarten principals, remain SCACO members and continue to support Sakai municipal kindergartens.

The Covid-19 pandemic caught everyone by surprise and has caused many problems in the field of education as well. The pandemic has drastically changed the social and living environments in which children live, put people under stress due to social isolation and restrained lifestyles, and caused discrimination against people with Covid-19 and healthcare workers. Also, there has been a notable increase in child abuse and domestic violence incidents at home, and child poverty has also become a serious problem.

Now is the time to take action towards the SDGs. As a supporter of education, SCACO, together with teachers, will explore actions while respecting the spirit of the founders of SCACO.

## Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools

The Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools (SCAPMS) consists of the Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Kindergartens, the Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Elementary Schools, and the Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Junior High Schools. The operating policies of each of these associations are outlined below.

### [Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Kindergartens]

Consisting of principals of Sakai municipal kindergartens, this association was established to give its members opportunities to learn from each other to enhance their professional capacity and promote education at Sakai municipal kindergartens. Early childhood education is a starting point of school education leading to high school. The association aims to provide comprehensive guidance to children to help them develop an interest in learning through the process of playing and living in a setting suited to their ages.

### [Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Elementary Schools]

Consisting of principals of Sakai municipal elementary schools and special needs education schools, this association was established to give its members opportunities to learn from each other to enhance their professional capacity and promote education at Sakai municipal elementary schools. The association also aims to foster cooperation among its members, while working in partnership with other organizations to contribute to education in Sakai City. Since its establishment, the association has launched various initiatives to address the educational needs of the times, conducted research, and improved the educational environment for the betterment of elementary school education in Sakai City, while recognizing the importance of the tradition and culture of Sakai, known historically as an autonomous city.

### [Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Junior High Schools]

Consisting of principals of Sakai municipal junior high schools, this association was established to conduct research on issues and policies relating to junior high school education and explore school management policies, while deepening solidarity and cooperative ties among its members. To further promote junior high school education in Sakai City, the association carries out studies and surveys on topics concerning junior high school education and promotes various educational activities.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has spread around the world since the end of last fiscal year, kindergartens and schools throughout Japan were temporarily closed in March 2020. Since the resumption of kindergartens and schools, SCAPMS has conducted various educational activities in response to the pandemic in line with the "new normal," offering support for the health and living of kindergarten children, elementary school pupils and junior high students as well as teachers and staff.

SCAPMS will promote effective educational activities in close cooperation with the municipal government, municipal board of education, relevant bodies, families and communities, based on a deep understanding of the current social and educational situations, and respect for human rights.



# Do Not Let Covid-19 Affect Your Mental Health.



Anxiety about Covid-19, which involves many uncertainties, may make us overreact to situations and hurt others without knowing it.

## What is actually happening?

- Names and addresses of infected persons are identified and they are criticized on SNS or anonymous bulletin boards.
- Infected persons and children of healthcare workers are bullied.
- Foreigners are harassed.

To overcome the anxiety that now prevails, let us support each other by encouraging thoughtful behavior and developing correct understanding, and make our society a better place to live.

## When you feel anxious, try to:

- Stay away from information that makes you feel bad.
- Take a deep breath and calm yourself.
- Speak with those you can trust and listen to diverse opinions.
- Imagine the situations of others.

I'm very worried.  
How about you?



I'm worried, too. I think everyone feels the same way, but I don't want to hurt anyone.



## Express your gratitude and send messages of support.

Always be thankful and respectful to all the people who support our society. By facilitating mutual assistance with compassion for others, we can overcome the Covid-19 crisis together.



Thank you.

## Warm feelings connect us heart-to-heart.

### Media Literacy and Human Rights

Society today is flooded with information, delivered through diverse media such as newspapers, TV, radio, books, advertisements, and the Internet.



### What is media literacy?

Media literacy is a combination of the following three abilities:

**Ability to interpret media messages on one's own**  
(assess the credibility of information)

**Ability to access and use media**

**Ability to communicate with others through media**



In short, media literacy is the ability to assess a diverse range of information from various perspectives and identify what is correct on one's own, instead of blindly accepting biased media messages.

### Improve your media literacy skills!

The recent growth of the Internet has enabled us to easily access and send information via SNS and other sites. However, not all such information is true, and some may even violate human rights and privacy. By sharing information that can fuel discrimination and prejudice or clicking the Like button on hateful posts, we may hurt someone's feelings.

When using media, therefore, each of us must assess the credibility of diverse sources of information and act responsibly, while remembering that our casual actions could cause pain to others.

# Fear of the Pandemic Gives Rise to Prejudice and Discrimination and Makes It More Difficult to Control the Virus.

## MORIMITSU Reo

Clinical psychologist, Japanese Red Cross Society Suwa Hospital

Roster member, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support

A fear of dangerous things is a natural instinct for all living creatures. In essence, it is a positive reaction that increases the probability of survival. Amid the Covid-19 outbreak, however, people seem unable to “fear correctly.” Why?

It is difficult for the human brain to fear a threat that is invisible. To clearly recognize a threat, we need to be able to see something that we fear. By dispelling a visible threat, we can have a temporary sense of security. Therefore, people unconsciously tend to seek something visible to hate. In the case of Covid-19, the hatred may be directed towards a certain race, region, profession or group of people associated with the pandemic. This is how prejudice and discrimination begin.

Prejudice and discrimination stemming from fear of the pandemic can give rise to two problems. First, as the prejudice and discrimination become widespread, people grow increasingly hesitant to seek consultations or medical tests, for fear of becoming the target of prejudice and discrimination themselves, and this can cause the infection to spread. Second, healthcare workers are coming under increasing stress. Throughout Japan, healthcare workers are working day and night for the testing and treatment of Covid-19 patients on the frontline of the battle against the pandemic. However, most healthcare and medical institutions are placed under extraordinary stress, due to the risk of becoming the target of harmful rumors and harassment. We must fight a long battle against the unknown; we will lose any chance of winning if healthcare workers on the battlefield fall. This is a lesson that humanity has learned from the experience of fighting SARS and Ebola. If we are to overcome the ongoing crisis quickly, we should call for support and praise healthcare workers throughout society, instead of stigmatizing and attacking them.

While it is difficult to “fear correctly,” excessive fear may make us want to put the blame on someone, or take part in harassing someone. You should take a deep breath and take all possible measures to protect yourself and your family members from infection. Given the magnitude of the current crisis, what we need now most is to facilitate mutual support with people close to us.

1

First of all, relax.  
Find time to feel at ease.

## Five Tips to Protect Your Mind from Anxiety

To calm yourself,  
try the following tips.

2

Do something that keeps you  
occupied or warms your heart.  
Doing physical exercise  
is recommended!

3

Look at the ongoing Covid-19  
situation objectively and talk  
with someone who has a  
different view.

4

Ask yourself if the information  
is factual. Assess the  
credibility of information  
calmly.

5

Eat properly and  
sleep well to stay healthy.

**We are easily infected by anxiety. Take good care of yourself if you find yourself feeling anxious.**





## My Everyday Life (Sixth-year elementary school student)

(This essay was written when the author was a fifth-year elementary school student.)

I became unable to walk at the age of five and began using a wheelchair when I was in kindergarten. At first, I was scared of using a wheelchair, but I became gradually used to it after entering elementary school. Still, when the wheelchair moves too fast, I sometimes fail to turn the corner and fall over. There are also some other inconveniences about being in a wheelchair. Do you know what bothers us, wheelchair users? Have you imagined how we feel when in trouble?

I often go to a nearby park with friends where we play on the slide and ride on the swings. We also play tag. When playing tag, the narrow paths and poles block my wheelchair and I have to look for an alternative path. When playing with the slide or swings, the wheels often get caught in a hollow in the ground or in the sand box, and I have to manipulate the wheelchair myself to get free.

Whenever I am in trouble, I try to think how to overcome it on my own, but there are times when it's impossible and I just have to give up. But I sometimes ask my friends, family members, or adults around me for help instead of giving up. Whenever I do, I feel their kindness, which warms my heart. Every time I receive help, I naturally thank them.

I hope that barrier-free and universal design will become common and that no one will suffer such inconvenience by the time I grow up and join society. I will do my best to take care of myself as much as possible, while remaining grateful to all the people close to me.

## Gender, Prejudice and Human Rights (Second-year junior high school student)

Last spring, I got to know a girl on the Internet. As we are about the same age and share the same interests, we soon became close friends and exchanged messages every day. One day, she sent me a message that said, “I am bisexual.” So she was LGBT. Though I was confused by this unexpected coming-out, I had learned a little about LGBT people in the ethics class at school and from books, so I replied, “I have no prejudice.” I wrongfully thought this was the right thing to say. Therefore, when she replied, “I don’t like the term ‘no prejudice,’” I could not understand what she meant. She continued, “When I come out to my friends, they always say they have no prejudice against LGBT people. But that hurts, because it reminds me that being LGBT is abnormal and something to be prejudiced against.” Reading this message, I knew how badly I had hurt her feelings. I was struck by her words, “Everyone treats me as LGBT, not as an equal person.” I regretted what I had said and apologized. She accepted my apology and sent me a sticker of a laughing face with tears, which made me terribly sorry.

She taught me something important. I had always assumed that the right response to an LGBT person is to say, “I have no prejudice.” This was as natural to me as the idea that a chair is something to sit on and shoes are something to wear on our feet. That day, I had inexcusably treated her as something special, something different from us, not as an equal human being.

The words “I have no prejudice” can convey a positive message that we want to have an equal relationship with somebody and that we respect their human rights. But from a different angle, these words can mean “you deserve prejudice” or “I am normal but you are not.”

In fact, we humans can understand only what we have felt and seen ourselves, and so we tend to judge things based on our personal experience. Perhaps it is inevitable to think we are normal and perceive persons different from us as special.

But that’s why we must try to look at things from the other person’s perspective to develop mutual understanding, think about human rights and the equality of all human beings, and not blindly accept what is written in books or learned in ethics class.

By doing so, we can eliminate the prejudice implicit in the words “I have no prejudice.”

I want to remain good friends with her, and continue to think about issues relating to gender, prejudice, and human rights.



Twenty award-winning essays selected from 2,435 entries are posted on the following site. (in Japanese)

Collection of award-winning “My Human Rights Message” essays:  
<https://www.jinkenkyo.jp/past-message/>



# The Courage to Live and the Words Given to Me by My Father

(Third-year student in the upper secondary department of a special needs education school)

There was a time when I felt deeply distressed for being hearing-impaired during my first year in the lower secondary department of a special needs education school: when I learned that my younger brother had become angry and fought with his friend who had mocked me after having found out about my impairment from my brother.

Before that, I had thought I was less impaired than my classmates, but after I found out the cause of the fight, I became obsessed with questions like, "Why should I be the target of mocking?" and "Why can't I hear normally?"

From that day on, the obsession grew bigger and bigger until I felt almost suicidal. When my suicidal feelings became too strong to bear on my own, I asked my father about it. He replied:

"You were born prematurely. The probability of your being born alive was very low, but the doctors and staff did their best. They successfully performed surgery and saved your life, but your visual and hearing abilities were damaged. But I was happy to welcome you, with or without any disability. Thank you so much for coming into our lives. I, too, have had many hard times but your presence is always an encouragement to us. You give us the power to live. You are our beloved child, regardless of whether hearing-impaired or not. The only difference between you and others is that you have some difficulty in hearing. You may think you're handicapped, but don't worry. My responsibility as a father is to raise you to become a respectable person. A lot of happiness awaits you in the years to come. Do you know what is the worst tragedy that can happen to parents? It is to lose a child. Never think of committing suicide."

This strong, clear message is still with me. It made me determined to accept what I am and live my own life, without being obsessed by my disability. In the future, my hearing impairment may cause me to develop suicidal feelings again, but whenever that happens, I will remember my determination to live a positive life. Suicide causes such pain to family and friends and must be avoided at all costs. I will live my life to the fullest and return the favor to my father someday.

## Light at the End of the Tunnel: My Japanese Language Study (Adult)

I first met my husband when he visited Taiwan for business. Time has passed and it is now more than thirty years since I moved to Japan. Though both the Taiwanese and Japanese languages use Chinese characters, there are differences in pronunciation and meaning. Also, Taiwanese does not have hiragana.

For example, "大丈夫" means "I'm OK" in Japanese, but means "a manly man" in Taiwanese. "大丸" is the name of a department store that is pronounced "Daimaru" but I pronounced it "omaru" and was laughed at, as "omaru" means a potty-chair in Japanese.

Since moving to Japan, I have done a variety of jobs: I've worked as a janitor, as an okonomiyaki restaurant worker, as a dishwasher at a Japanese-style restaurant, and as a carer for the mother of a company president.

When working at the okonomiyaki restaurant, I struggled to turn over okonomiyaki using a spatula and could not properly mix flour with other ingredients, as okonomiyaki doesn't exist in Taiwan. My clumsiness irritated the manager, who came to me and stamped on my foot. I felt really miserable.

After finishing my daytime job, I worked at night as a dishwasher at a Japanese-style restaurant. For years, I lived in Osaka City on weekdays, and stayed at my husband's home in Sakai City on Saturday and Sunday, until moving to his home some years ago. After settling in Sakai City, I joined the "Tsudoi" Japanese language class offered at the Sakai City Human Rights and Friendship Center, as I wanted to be able to speak Japanese like a native speaker, and to study Japanese from the basics. The Chinese characters used in Japanese were very difficult, but I enjoyed studying. I also practiced reading and writing hiragana again and again.

When writing a New Year's greeting card to the company president, I learned that punctuation marks are not used in such cards. I am still unable to read written Japanese as fluently as Japanese people, especially because I have difficulty pronouncing long sounds and double consonants.

In March last year, I began attending a course to acquire a license as a caregiver. When I studied late at night, after finishing my regular work, checking a notebook, my husband used to praise me, saying "you are really diligent" and sharpened pencils for me. When I got the caregiver level 2 license, my husband was so pleased and happy for me.

Last autumn, I returned to Taiwan for the first time in a long while. My Taiwanese relatives and friends enthusiastically welcomed me and prepared lavish meals to entertain me. I had such a good time. Taiwanese people are open and friendly, and casually invite guests into their homes. After returning to Japan, therefore, the attitude of Japanese people seemed somewhat cold and distant. Of course, they are kind, but I cannot distinguish between what they publicly say and what they really think. There seemed to be a low invisible barrier between me and Japanese people, even if we get on well.

Most young foreigners who study at the Tsudoi day-time Japanese language class quit as soon as they become reasonably proficient in Japanese, so even if I make friends with them, I have to say good-bye shortly after.

When I returned to Japan from visiting Taiwan, my Tsudoi classmates were preparing for a stage performance in an autumn festival, and had already made considerable progress during my absence. I felt left behind and a little lonely. In those days, I lived a hectic life, partly because a new commuting route required me to change trains more often, and partly because my siblings visited Japan. This made me think negative thoughts, such as "I won't need Japanese if I return to Taiwan," "I have no problem in everyday life with my current level of Japanese," and "Maybe it's time to quit studying Japanese at my age."

I was torn between spending the rest of my life doing only what I like, or continuing to study and work hard for greater fulfillment and happiness. Then I remembered that the staff of the Tsudoi class are happy to answer any questions, however silly they may seem. Stuck in a dark tunnel, I kept asking myself what I should do.

One day, the mother of the company president I had cared for returned home from the hospital and said, "Chen-san, thank you very much for caring for me for such a long time." Her warm, sincere words touched my heart deeply.

I like Japan! I want to keep improving my Japanese and my understanding of Japanese culture. Perhaps, Japanese people are discreet about building personal relationships, which makes them look cold and distant. I will enhance my ability to speak with Japanese people on an equal footing, and help my relatives in Taiwan feel closer to Japanese people.

In the new year, I finally escaped from the tunnel. I hope to live a fulfilling life after overcoming the Covid-19 crisis, while appreciating the wonderful aspects of Japan.