



MINATO TOKYO

Bulletin

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MINATO UNESCO ASSOCIATION NEWS & CALENDAR

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Minato UNESCO, a Place for New Encounters

Akemi Suzuki, Director, Minato UNESCO Association

The inauguration ceremony of the Minato UNESCO Association was held on October 17, 1981 at the Geihinkan (presently the Tokyo Garden Museum) in Shirokane, Minato City. I attended the event at the invitation of a friend. During the following 34 years, I wonder how many encounters with new friends I have had through MUA activities, and how much positive influences I have received from them.



At the time of MUA's inception, there was no platform for our activities. Therefore, we started by engaging in different works and interacting with various people to build one. For example, we secured a corner space inside the Minato City office, with their approval, and worked together to publish and mail out the initial issues of MUA bulletins. During the first three years, we organized a committee to introduce to resident foreigners the culture of Japan's New Year practices. We asked the Minato kindergarten management to let us use their facility where we used to demonstrate "Mochi-tsuki" and other New Year special activities to foreigner guests. We also served them "Ozohni" and perhaps it was the start of MUA's World Cooking Workshop.

The New Year event developed into a well-established New Year Party. It was held annually at either Aoi Kaikan or Yayoi Kaika in Shibaura. Many ordinary citizens started to join the event, including high school student volunteers. We wanted to make the gathering even more enjoyable in a cross-cultural environment. I trust that the pleasure of sharing food is one of the best ways to promote friendship and mutual understanding.

I am currently a member of MUA's World Cooking Workshop Committee. Most of our instructors are natives of selected foreign countries. I take a great pleasure in making close friends with these instructors. Sometimes their mother countries are those which we come to know for the first time when TV broadcasts the marching scenes of athlete delegations from faraway countries in the opening ceremony of Olympic Games.

We are always very excited during the preparations for a few months before the workshop date finally comes. We learn not only the recipe and cooking of foreign home dishes but also unexpected interesting knowledge
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