

Chigasaki Breeze

Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget.

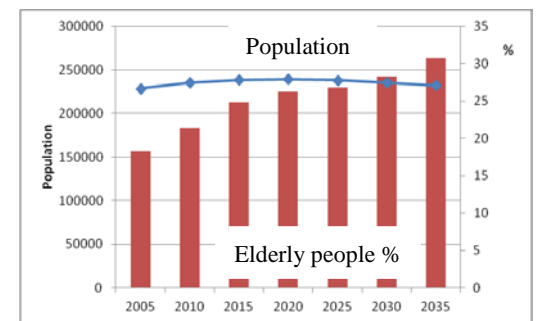
No. 58

City Envisages Bright Future かっき す まち めざ 活気ある住みよい街を目指して

At the regular meeting of the City Assembly on February 20, 2015, Mayor Nobuaki Hattori explained the City's Administrative Policy for fiscal year 2015. His speech outlined a vision of Chigasaki as a place both willing and able to embrace new challenges. His main points were:

- **The age profile of the city's population will change significantly** in the future (see chart), necessitating a new social structure and ongoing improvement in and expansion of city services.
- **The general account budget will increase by 5.6%** year-on-year, despite the expectation that tax revenues for fiscal year 2015 will flatten.
- **Our living environment will be transformed** as a result of last year's establishment of a sister-city affiliation with Honolulu and this March's completion of the Sagami Expressway.

The mayor asserted that these changes were a good opportunity for Chigasaki to develop much more, and reiterated his desire to push forward in making the city more attractive, aiming at realizing a prosperous long-lived society where everyone can enjoy a rich life with good health. In support of this vision, funding for more than 20 major projects has been approved for the coming fiscal year, including: ① Shimoterao Kanga Remains Preservation Project (Continuing, ¥129m); ② Yanagishima Sports Park Construction Project (Continuing, ¥177m); ③ Michino-Eki Construction Project (New, ¥10m); ④ My Number Promotion Project (Continuing, ¥295m). *Budgets are shown in round figures.



Herbal Bath with Acorus Calamus しょうぶゆ 菖蒲湯

In Japan, May 5 is Children's Day, when people pray for their children's health and happiness. The fifth day of the fifth month is also known as *tango no sekku* (端午の節句), one of the five *sekku*, or seasonal festivals, and, since the samurai era, has traditionally been a day to celebrate boys. Parents with sons display *yoroi* (armor) and *kabuto* (warrior's helmets) as well as May dolls, which portray heroes from Japanese history. You can also see carp streamers, which symbolize strength and success, hanging outside homes, shimmering in the warm breeze as if gliding effortlessly through water.

Another custom, quietly passed down, is *shobu-yu*, or calamus bath. Hearing the name *shobu* may remind you of *hana-shobu*, the sword-leaved iris, often placed beside May dolls. Although the leaves look similar, calamus belongs to the Acoraceae family and iris to the Iridaceae. *Acorus calamus* has long been used medicinally and aromatically in many countries, including China, where it was once believed to expel evil spirits. First introduced into Japan in the 6th century, 菖蒲 (*shobu*) became associated during the Edo Period with the homonym 尚武 (*shobu*), which can signify respect for the warrior spirit, and so came to symbolize the boys' festival.

Herbal baths with calamus warm and relax our bodies and minds. Unfortunately, wild calamus is now rare, but cultivated leaves are readily available. The sword-leaved iris, however, can be seen here and there, such as in the Himuro Tsubaki Garden in Higashikaigan, around the entrance gate of Samukawa Shrine, and below the Shin-Shonan Bypass in Akabane. Why not enjoy a seasonal Japanese tradition?



Time Day とき きねんび 時の記念日

The first clepsydra, or water clock, in Japan was commissioned in 660 (Saimei 6) by Prince Naka-no-Ōe, who later became Emperor Tenchi (668-671). On June 10, 671 (Tenchi 10), he publicly unveiled a new clepsydra which sounded out the hours with bells and drums. In commemoration of this historical event, and to encourage people to value time, in 1920, June 10 was designated as "Time Day" in Japan.



Time-Flow Water Clock
(Bernard Gitton, 1979)

Despite the appearance of early mechanical, astronomical and spring-driven clocks during the following centuries, water clocks remained the most precise and most-used time-measuring device for a thousand years until pendulum clocks were invented in 1656 by the Dutch astronomer Christiaan Huygens. The next big breakthrough in time-keeping accuracy came in the 1930s with the development of quartz technology, which enabled the design of clocks with a maximum error of plus or minus one second in ten years, and freed people from the monotonous daily task of winding up their clocks.

Quartz clocks were the standard until the Second World War. In 1967, an atomic clock was built that used the vibrations of cesium atoms as its time marker, making it 10 billion times more accurate than the pendulum clock. Nowadays, so-called optical clocks, which are based on the atomic frequency of strontium, are even more accurate, to within one second in 10,000 to 100,000 years.

One may wonder why we need to measure time so accurately, but each new jump in precision has enabled new technologies to be developed, such as car navigation systems and mobile phones. In the future, wouldn't it be incredible if precise time measurement could gauge gravity potentials to reliably forecast an imminent volcanic eruption or tsunami? One thing is for sure, if Emperor Tenchi hadn't realized the importance of time and set up that first water clock in Japan, he wouldn't have had a main-belt asteroid named after him in 1977 by its discoverers H. Kosai and K. Hurokawa of Japan's Kiso Observatory.

JR Kagawa Station Square か がわえきまえ 香川駅前にロータリー完成 かんせい

The station square of JR Kagawa has moved a little to the south and been refitted since April 1. The area around the train station had been congested with cars around the pickup areas, especially during commuting hours and on rainy days. The newly completed area has dedicated spaces where you can pick up a community bus bound for Satoyama Koen or stop your car to pick up / drop off commuters. A taxi stand has also been established. These recent modifications will make the station front safer for pedestrians.

