

Diwali in Yokohama 2015

Enjoy lights fest together

By Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa
Ambassador of India

I am happy to learn that for the 13th consecutive year the Indian festival of lights, Diwali, will be celebrated with traditional pomp and gaiety by the Indian community in historical Yamashita Park in Yokohama.

Diwali is an occasion for families and friends to come together



Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa

to celebrate the victory of good over evil. This celebration provides an opportunity for us to mingle and introduce our Japanese friends to the festive traditions of India.

I convey my best wishes to all fellow members of the Indian community, and to their many Japanese friends, for their health, wealth and prosperity.

With thanks and appreciation to all the members of the Diwali Organising Committee of Yokohama, I am happy to inform you that the Diwali festival in Yokohama was one of the most successful events of the Festival of India in Japan, 2014-15.



Courtesy of Diwali in Yokohama Managing Committee

The 2014 Diwali festival at Yamashita Port, Yokohama

Diwali celebrations symbolic of Yokohama's close ties with India

By Fumiko Hayashi
Mayor of Yokohama

Happy Diwali, everyone, and happy Diwali in Yokohama 2015! I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Ryuko Hira, chairman of the executive committee, and all involved for their great efforts in supporting this wonderful event. This year marks the 13th Diwali in Yokohama, a deep-rooted festival in our community that we look forward to each autumn.



Fumiko Hayashi

Yokohama enjoys a close, historic relationship with India. Since the opening of its port in 1859, which

spurred the growth of Yokohama into the city it is today, countless Indian people have made the city their home, establishing trading firms and other companies. Yokohama was India's first economic outpost in Japan.

In 1965, Japan and India's first sister-city partnership was signed between Yokohama and Mumbai. For five decades, the people of these two cities have nurtured their friendship and this year they celebrate the 50th anniversary of this partnership. Diwali in Yokohama 2015 serves as part of these 50th anniversary celebrations.

We hope visitors will take an interest in the exchanges between Yokohama and Mumbai and experience the appeal of India as they participate in this festival. We look forward to welcoming you to the celebration.

Celebrating the light of Diwali: India's most important, largest festival

By Ryuko Hira
President of the Indian Commerce and Industry Association Japan (ICIJ)

The power that fosters harmony in the universe — the power that provides for all needs essential to the continued well-being of all beings — is named Goddess Mahalaxmi — goddess of wealth, popularly known in Japan as Goddess Kannon-sama, which came to Japan with Buddhism in the sev-



Ryuko Hira

enth century.

In India, as in Japan, the principle of Mahalaxmi is also known as "Ashtalaxmi" or "Hachi Kannon." It confers eight types of wealth — "Dhaanya," wealth of grains; "Dhana," wealth of money; "Dhairiya," wealth of courage; "Gaja," wealth of majesty; "Vidya," wealth of knowledge; "Veerya," wealth of vitality; "Jaya," wealth of victory; and "Saubhagia," wealth of worldly success.

A festival of lights, Diwali literally means collection, or "Samooaha," of lights. Wisdom is symbolized as light. Churches, shrines, temples and altars often light lamps and candles that are symbolic of the supreme Godhead. God is love.

Love is expressed through lamps and the lighting of candles on birthdays, weddings and ceremonies.

No other element in this world is as significant as light. Since time immemorial, India has been imparting spiritual education to all nations of the world and thus bestowing peace and happiness on all. This is the eternal glory of India. The motto of Indians has been and is "Loka Samastha Sukhind Bhavantu" (may all people of the world be happy). This culture and tradition of wishing the whole world "Happy Diwali" is synonymous with bringing to fruition world peace and prosperity.

If you look at the history of India, you will realize how peace-loving

Indian people are. Only when India was invaded did the people try to defend themselves; they have never invaded other countries.

Magnetic power — the power of attraction — exists in all objects in the world. All thoughts in a man's mind have this magnetic power. From magnetic energy is derived electrical energy. Electrical energy is the source of the power of light and atomic power. Atomic energy is present in thoughts and speech. Thus magnetic energy is the basis for all forms of energy. It is this energy that accounts for speech, singing and all other activities. The power of this energy was recognized from ancient times. India is the nation that recognized the divine source of this ener-

gy, experienced its power and propagated the truth about it to the whole world. Indian culture represents the eternal verities that are unaffected by time or the vicissitudes of history.

Diwali is the single most important and largest festival of India, making significant contributions to economic, cultural and social sectors. Indian merchants and houses of business commemorate it as the start of a new year, closing their fiscal year and begin trade afresh. Festivals contribute immensely to India's gross domestic product.

Diwali is observed as the day of discarding worn-out prejudices and adopting new habits of love and mutual respect. It is the freshening of

one's attitude toward one's kith and kin, brothers and sisters of all creeds and nations, the hanging of festoons of friendship and fraternity over the doorsill of the heart. This makes the Diwali festival truly meaningful and fruitful for all countries.

Overseas Indians have embraced citizens of all countries in the powerful festivities of Diwali. In Japan, Diwali began with Indian homes in the Meiji era and today marks the 13th anniversary of the public celebration jointly with the city government of Yokohama. Admission is free, for all to experience the fascinations of Indian culture. All readers are cordially invited to share the joys of the "Diwali in Yokohama Festival" at Yamashita Park.