

## FFWPU UK: Japanese Celebrate New Year with Traditional Shinnenkai in London

Michael Balcomb  
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On January 11th, 2025, 50 Japanese members and guests gathered at River South Peace Embassy for a lively Shinnenkai, celebrating traditions, food, music, and camaraderie.

On January 11th, 2025 some 50 of the Japanese members living in London, and a few from further afield gathered for traditional New Year's party - a Shinnenkai - River South Peace Embassy.



Michael and Fumico Balcomb offered brief greetings. Dr. Balcomb observed that the presence of such a healthy and loyal community was a testimony to the enduring relationships created when Father and Mother Moon came to Europe in 1981, and matched and blessed many European members with young Japanese missionaries who said goodbye to their home country and settled here.



Then everyone settle down to eat a tremendous feast of traditional Japanese delicacies, including, of course, sushi, sashimi, miso soup, chicken, salad, and many other favourites. There were musical presentations by some of today's young missionaries from Japan and Korea followed by Nigel and Chisuko B. performing Amen Corner's "If Paradise was half as nice" on the ukulele. Later Chizuko returned to give an interesting talk about what DNA tells us of the origin of the Japanese people.

Then there was some high spirited games. One of the favorites was bingo. And in this version, everybody won a prize!

At the end we finished with a traditional sanbone-jime hand clapping to indicate that the New Year had truly begun.

Thank you to Keiko S. and her team and all those who helped organise and prepare! See you next year!