



# International Relations SAIJO

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### International Relations

*Saijo* is a quarterly newsletter published in Japanese and English by the Saijo International Exchange Association (SIEA). We welcome your comments, questions and submissions.

## Saijo at the 2015 Hue Traditional Craft Festival



Saijo, invited by the Chairman of the Hue City People's, participated in the 2015 Hue Traditional Craft Festival (April 28-May 2). Saijo displayed traditional crafts and culture, and deepened its ties with the ancient Vietnamese city.

The festival coincided with a 6-day holiday, and Hue was visited by approximately 100,000 Vietnamese and international tourists. Saijo's booth was in a high-traffic area and received 3000 guests over the course of the event.

Many local crafts from Hue and across Vietnam were on display, and the festival included demonstrations, a market and more. Japan, South Korea, France and other countries also had booths. In addition to Saijo's booth, Shuei, which operates an embroidery factory in Hue, had a kimono display.

Saijo's booth featured panels outlining the relationship between Hue and Saijo, including the disaster readiness education program. The booth also exhibited traditional craftwork from Saijo

including lanterns and *danjiri* carvings, paper cutout art, *washi* (traditional Japanese paper), and bamboo bags.

Moreover, the lively booth offered the many visitors a fun opportunity to experience local culture through tasting Saijo's sweets and black tea, as well as through hands-on activities such as dyeing *washi* and dressing up in *happi* from Saijo festival and in *yukata*.

Saijo's success at the festival was due in large part to the efforts of Hue University students. Students learning Japanese worked tirelessly to promote our city, speaking Japanese with Saijo's organizers and helping explain displays and how to dress in *yukata*. Many students in Vietnam (average age: 29) are interested in the world. Japan is also a popular study abroad destination.

We anticipate that Saijo and Hue will build upon our cultural exchanges to create opportunities for a deeper friendship between and further cooperation in culture, agriculture, industry and other fields. (ゝ)

## Report: SIEA general meeting and commemorative lecture

The Saijo International Exchange Association (SIEA) held our first general meeting and commemorative lecture on Saturday, May 30 at the Saijo City Cultural Center. Approximately 90 members attended the general meeting, and all of the items on the agenda were approved by the assembly. Several guests including Saijo Mayor Masaru Aono offered congratulatory addresses and the association officially commenced activities.

After the general meeting, Professor Nishantha of Hagaromo International University gave a commemorative lecture about the lessons of his many years of experience in international exchange. His humorous speech encouraged Saijo's residents to strive for exchange founded in friendship and mutual laughter.

An exhibit of ongoing international exchange activities by many organizations in Saijo was also held at the cultural center. We will cooperate closely with these groups and individuals in future activities.

While it might be a difficult road at the beginning, we believe that, with the support and drive of Saijo's citizens, we can help create a more vibrant, friendly place to live. We ask for the support of our readers by becoming members and participating in our events.



(left) Professor Nishantha of Hagaromo International University, a native of Sri Lanka, received big laughs during his lecture.

(below) "International Relations in Saijo" exhibition



## Photo Gallery Hue Craft Festival!



(left) Vietnamese children trying on yukata. (top) the Saijo booth (right) Dyeing traditional paper (*washi*)



## Deconstructed

Wesley Oliver reflects on five years as Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in Komatsu.

While hiking to a mountain temple I lose myself to the surroundings. I love the refreshing feeling making my way through such a path in the spring on a Sunday. Here in Komatsu Town I have been able to let go of many preferences, biases, and a good deal of narrow-mindedness.

Now I have been here for nearly five years. Many of the people in the town are familiar with me. We greet each other, share small talk, and make attempts at humor often. I am sustained by smiling students, market vegetables, and boxed lunches from the convenience store. But if I think about it, the situation is an inverse of my first year here. When I first arrived, I was completely unfamiliar with everything. Many jokes simply confused me. I didn't know what to eat. Many thoughts of university life with distant friends and acquaintances were on my mind. Now I have vanished to most of those people in my hometown.

How was I able to let go of what I had before and live here for so long? There were many situations where it was easy. All of the times that I tried out zazen meditation. The beach at Kochi. The deck on the Orange Ferry and the moonlit scenery of islands in the Seto Inland Sea. Trying to write a haiku in a tea room on the way down from Iyadani-ji. Watching the students do their best during sports day. Being invigorated by a brisk autumn wind in the dark, surrounded by the lanterns of Danjiri.



ALT Wesley Oliver (USA)

But then there were more difficult times for me. "How do I cook a bitter melon (goya)?" Hearing depressed friends on an international phone call. "Why is there so much plastic?" Searching for Mexican food in a noisy mall while being stared at. Flying off my *mamachari* into the pavement. Catching the flu... again.



Then there were those times when my ideas become complicated nonsense, deconstructed by the voice of a child.

Today I taught a new group of preschoolers for the first time. Trying to teach English to them can be a challenge because they don't even grasp the concept of a foreign language. Countries and nationalities don't exist to them. I am a funny ceiling-touching bald teacher who dances around and blurts out the weird words of *eigo* from *kaigai*. When I show them a picture of my young nephew, they comment on how he looks like a classmate, who blushes but agrees. They don't think of him as American at all. They just want to get me involved in what they are doing. They will listen to my point of view. But they really want to explain theirs. They want to be accepted and praised. They want to make new friends.

A young girl made an origami hat for me today. It was a big gift. It made my day, even if it doesn't fit on my head at all. I wasn't sure how to thank her. She asked me to cut an ice cream cone picture out of an empty box, as using the toy saw is difficult for her. So I did that in return. I will only teach these students twice and then we will never meet again. I was happy that I got to see their world and hear about what they like. It makes me question just how much I need to be content in life.

## いいね！(Like) Saijo International Exchange Association's new Facebook

The Saijo International Exchange Association (SIEA) has started a new Facebook (FB) page. "Like" the page and event information, language course updates and other news will be automatically delivered to your News Feed.

Posts to the page will always be in Japanese and English, and occasionally also in Chinese and Vietnamese. SIEA hopes to use the page to tell the world about Saijo and its residents. (Also, publishing in multiple languages might give our readers some foreign language practice.)

You can find the SIEA page by searching "西条市国際交流協会 SIEA" or by using the following link:

[www.facebook.com/saijointernational](http://www.facebook.com/saijointernational)

We hope to let the world know about our international city and its activities. (J)

### Planned Content for the SIEA Facebook Page

-  Event information and reports
-  Language course application information
-  「We ♥ Saijo!」 What is your favorite place in Saijo? Submissions accepted via message or email.
-  Photo contests and more!

英語  
でGO!

## Beginnings and Endings —A Guide to Writing Letters and Email—

Do you ever have difficulty writing opening and closing greetings for letters or emails in English? Even native English speakers sometimes find it hard to choose the correct phrases, so I would like to offer some writing hints in this issue's column.

The rules for letters and email are a little different. Opening and closing greetings in letters are more formal, and it is best to use standard phrases regardless of the person to whom you are writing. The rules for email and other digital communication are more lax and differ depending on the recipient of your message.

First I will talk about opening greetings, or "salutations." Whether writing to your boss or a friend, **Dear** is the appropriate salutation. More casual salutations are okay for postcards and other short notes (see below for examples), but **Dear** is the safest choice in general. Remember: the comma goes after the name of the recipient, as in **Dear John,**

By the way, **Dear John Letter** is an idiom that means a letter sent by a woman who wants to break

up with her boyfriend or husband. (ex. She sent me a Dear John Letter.)

In business or when you don't know the name of the recipient, **To Whom It May Concern** is the correct salutation.

Starting an email to a friend with **Dear** is too formal. **Hey + name (Hey John,); Hi + name (Hi John,);** or simply just the name (**John,)** are common greetings. Don't forget to use formal language such as **Dear** when writing an email to a boss or someone else you respect.

There are many different ways to end letters and emails, but the most common and formal is **Sincerely,** or **Sincerely yours.** However, using this ending in a letter to a friend or family member may seem too formal or cold. More casual endings are **Yours,** or **Best,** (from **With my best regards**). Also, it has recently become common in email to leave endings out altogether, closing the message with just one's name. How you end an email can be a reflection of your personality. If you are ever stuck, a good solution is to copy the style of letters and emails from native speakers.

If there are any topics you would like to see in "Eigo de Go," contact me at [cir-1@saijo-city.jp](mailto:cir-1@saijo-city.jp) (J)



## International Exchange Events

### Lecture "The Aloha State: An Introduction to Hawaii"

Two interns from the University of Hawaii will introduce their home. Lecture includes hula and ukulele.

※The lecture will be conducted in Japanese.

Date: July 18 (Sat) 1:30-3:00

Place: Saijo Public Welfare Center, Kenshū Room 2 (3rd floor)

Max Participants: 60 (first come, first served)

Application period: July 1 (Wed) - 17 (Fri)

Organizer: Saijo International Exchange Association

Applications: Saijo City International Affairs Section  
0897-52-1206



### Become a Saijo International Exchange Association member!

Join our organization and be a part of international exchange in Saijo! Applications accepted year-round.

#### 【Annual membership fee】

Individual 1,000円 Student 500円 Organization 10,000円

#### 【How to apply】

Complete an application form and submit it to the SIEA office (Saijo City, International Affairs Section). Applications are available at city facilities (community centers, etc.) and at the following website:

<[www.city.saijo.ehime.jp/khome/somu/kokusaikoryu/boshu.html](http://www.city.saijo.ehime.jp/khome/somu/kokusaikoryu/boshu.html)>

### Upcoming ELIS Events

#### ◆Imotaki Party for New ALTs

We will welcome new Saijo ALTs with an imotaki party.

Time: August 22 (Sat) 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Place: Torimu Park Imotaki Place (Kamogawa River)

Price: 1300円

Max. participants: 30 (first come, first served)

#### ◆Kamegamori Hike and Asahi Beer Factory Tour

We will introduce foreign residents to Saijo's famous places.

Place: August 29 (Sat) from 7:00 a.m. at Saijo Station

Price: 300円(lunch, water, rain gear not provided)

Max participants: 20 ※Only available to SIEA members

【How to apply】 ※Accepting applications from Aug. 4 (Tue)

Contact: Saijo International Exchange Association

Tel: 0897-52-1206

A year and a half has passed since we began publishing this newsletter, and thanks to you all we still have lots of international news to report. We are heading into summer, so please take care of your health. (㇀)

編集  
後記

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(English translation)