



International Relations SAIJO



Vol. 17

December 2017

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

Halloween Party 2017

"Trick or Treat! Happy Halloween!" echoed throughout the shopping arcade. Photographs of the event reveal a colorful collection like a page in a picture book. Despite the rain, children gathered in costume, creating a lively afternoon! This year, the parade float featured "Yubaba" from Spirited Away. Each year, our esteemed volunteer, Ms. Kawabata, creates a masterpiece like that of a professional. Everyone at SIEA is grateful for your work!

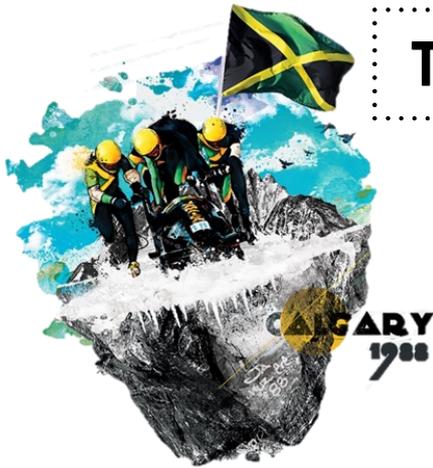


Thank you everyone who submitted a design to the Halloween illustration contest. The award of excellence was given to Mitsuki Ishihara! Ouka Okamoto, Yuna Shitsukawa, and Kii Fujimoto received honorable mentions. Congratulations!

Saijo's CIR Diana dressed as Uwajima's "Ushi-oni" (cow demon) in memory of her matsuri merriment, and CIR Anh Thy wore a cute Minnie Mouse costume. →→→→→

Well now, which "Kao Nashi" (No Face) is our ALT, Megan?↓↓
The correct answers is...
Left: Balloon
Right: Megan!





The Art of Transition

In April 2011, I got an email that forever changed my life. I found out the delightful yet daunting news

that I'd be going to Japan as an ALT on the JET Programme—wow! Although I was very excited about the opportunity, I also felt gripped by anxiety—would I be an effective ALT, how would I handle culture shock, would I be affected by the aftermath of the March earthquake? Moreover, I'd be far away from all my family and friends. I was able to get over my initial concerns eventually with a fresh coat of positive energy, and boarded a plane with 14 other enthusiastic Jamaicans. I was on a new life-enhancing journey that

would never make me look at the world in the same way.

Fast-forward to January 2015 and here I am with almost four years of wonderful ALT experiences but standing at a crossroad of decisions. Staring at my contract with pen in hand I deliberated—should I throw away a comfortable job with a steady income or dive into my artistic passion full-time? I chose to dive and I've been living as a freelance illustrator/graphic designer since. This is something I really wanted to do and the transition was smooth, especially since my wife supported the decision.



I majored in Visual Communications at an art college in Jamaica and was working in an advertising agency for two years before coming to Japan. Even as an ALT, I continued to create designs and illustrations for practice, competitions or volunteer work. I love the rush of creatively producing something from scratch, regardless of how challenging a project may seem. I'm happy with my current path so far although it has been difficult at times to navigate the journey. Being in

charge of your own time and having the freedom to create comes with a great deal of responsibility. It requires planning your own daily schedule and having a routine that keeps you motivated to work. Admittedly, that has been an 'up and down hill' struggle and working from the solace of my apartment doesn't necessarily help. There's no way to sugar-coat it, the life of a freelance artist truly requires tenacious discipline—I'm still working on that.

I usually work with publishers, writers, people in the music industry, start-ups and non-profit organizations to help conceptualize and visualize their visions, passions and dreams through artistic creations. I'm currently working on a few personal projects to manifest ideas that have been floating around my mind for some time. It would be nice to share my experiences with people artistically through their own eyes and interpretations. Ultimately, I want to be a part of something phenomenal and make art that will inspire others to greatness.

Rohan Mitchell

※All illustrations by Rohan Mitchell



“Vietnam Folk Tales I want to share with the people of Saijo!”

“Son Tinh, Thuy Tinh”

The Japanese phrase “earthquakes, thunder, fire, and fathers” is popular as a symbol of terrifying things. In Japan, “earthquakes” come up first when people discuss fears of natural disasters. In Vietnam, people most fear disasters involving water. Let’s read “Song Tinh, Thuy Tinh” to learn about these disasters in Vietnam!

Once upon a time, the 18th Emperor of ancient Vietnam had a beautiful daughter, My Nuong. Her beauty was so renowned that many men asked for her hand in marriage. The Emperor wanted to find the best husband for his daughter, so he held a contest. Finally, there appeared two very talented men. One was Son Tinh, the Mountain Spirit. The other was Thuy Tinh, the Sea Spirit. Where Son Tinh pointed, mountains rose from the ground. Where Thuy Tinh waved his hand, strong winds began to blow storms and water flowed abundantly. It was difficult to choose between them, so the Emperor decided, “Tomorrow, I will grant permission to marry the princess to whomever arrives with specially selected wedding gifts.” The next day, Son Tinh arrived first. The Emperor was delighted with all the gifts and agreed to let Son Tinh marry his daughter. Thuy Tinh arrived afterwards. Furious at his loss, Thuy Tinh chased after the couple. He unleashed heavy rains, which transformed into a storm, and flooded the area with water to defeat Son Tinh. However, the more Thuy Tinh submerged the kingdom in water, the higher Son Tinh raised the mountains. After many days, Thuy Tinh was exhausted. He lost the battle but did not give up on his quest to marry the Princess. So, every year, Thuy Tinh unleashes storms and floods. This legend teaches us that the god of nature causes the typhoons and floods in Vietnam.

Vietnam is a long, narrow country on the eastern edge of the Indochina Peninsula with almost half of its mainland bordering the sea. For this reason, Vietnam is an easy target for typhoons from the coast of the Philippines. Historically, the damage of typhoons and floods repeats itself. In 2017, 14 typhoons reached Vietnam, taking the lives of about 170 people, at least.

However, no matter how much Vietnamese people are saddened by disasters, we ardently tackle reconstruction. Perhaps, this attitude is similar to that of the Japanese people, who also frequently suffer from natural disasters. In Vietnam, people have felt awe for nature since the beginning of time. We revere nature for its beauty and many graces.

60th Saijo Industry Fair World Café

On November 11 and 12 (Sat./ Sun.), SIEA hosted Saijo Industry Fair’s World Café at Saijo Agriculture High School.

This year’s theme was “Meet the Arabian World.” Visitors could get a glimpse of a dwelling and try traditional ethnic clothing. Six research students from different countries throughout Africa participated in our workshops, and both days were crowded with visitors.

CIR Anh Thy also sold 400 fried spring rolls, and everyone joined CIR Diana in an American square dance. At the end of the day, everyone joined in dance outside ~ “Wool!” It was a day of fun! We look forward to next year!



Research students from Africa



Vietnamese fried spring rolls!



Arabian Corner



Everyone gathered to square dance!

