



# International Relations SAIJO



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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.

# Happy Halloween 2019



On Oct. 26 (Sat.), SIEA held its annual Halloween Party with the indispensable help of the Saijo Shotengai Machizukuri Association. The weather was beautiful and about 2,000 people came to the shotengai. The event was full of people in costume enjoying the games and trick-or-treating. This year, with the hope that both children and grownups could enjoy the Halloween party together, we also of-

ferred face painting for grownups. It was charming to watch the smiles stretch across the faces of children who watched as slightly embarrassed grownups had their faces painted, and made the event all the more enjoyable. Over 100 volunteers helped in our efforts to create an amazing event. We were moved by the effort of all of our dedicated volunteers to pull of the party with smiling faces.

This year's parade float was very cute! The impact of the float was extraordinary, and watching the children parade from one end of the shotengai to the other was a highlight of the party.

Last but not least, thanks to the help of many, we could hold the Halloween Party without incident. We appreciate all of your efforts. Thank you!



**Thank you for all of your illustration submissions!**

**Grand Prize Winner:**  
Tsukahara Miki  
**Honorable Mention:**  
Yano Honoka  
Itou Kaho  
Tajitsu Saki



**Congratulations!**

# Visit from Hebei University

Professors Cho Joi and So Ho and students from Hebei University in Saijo's sister city Baoding City, Hebei Province visited Saijo from July 22~30, 2019. While experiencing a home stay within Saijo, the 15 students majoring in Japanese interacted with locals during their ascent of Mt. Ishizuchi and visits to local schools.

This year celebrates the 25th anniversary of our sister city relationship. We hope that this year's sojourn in Saijo has been a source of encouragement for the Hebei University students as they play an active role in joining our cities in friendship for the future.

Hebei University Saijo City Visit Schedule	
Date	Itinerary
7/22	Kyukamura Setouchi-Toyo (Seaside Experience)
7/23	Ehime Prefectural Office Courtesy Visit → Matsuyama Castle → Ehime University → Okaido Shopping Arcade → Asahi Beer Garden (Welcome Party)
7/24	Saijo City Hall Courtesy Visit → Imabari Shipbuilding Co., Ltd. Visit → Saijo Chamber of Commerce and Industry → Asahi Beer Factory → Kao Sanitary Products Ehime Co., Ltd. → mac Drugstore
7/25・26	Kyoto・Nara・Osaka
7/27	Bimikyushin (Lunch) → Saijo Shrine Culture Experience (Flower Arrangement・Tea Ceremony・Yukata) → Saiseikai Ishizuchi Summer Matsuri (Participation in Saturday Night Market and Fireworks Display etc.)
7/28	Quality time spent with host families
7/29	Ishizuchi Ropeway → Lunch at Ishizuchi Joju Shrine → Tsubaki Onsen
7/30	Railway History Park in Saijo → Saijo Library → Uchinuki Water Tour → Suitoichi farmers market → Saijo Senior High School → Saiseikai Hospital
7/31	Return to Hebei Province



## Living in Vietnam



I learned Vietnamese in Hanoi for close to a year. I have a lot of memories from my time spent living in Vietnam. If someone was to ask me, "What was your most enjoyable experience?" I wouldn't be able to give an answer. However, I have chosen one amongst all of my memories to share with you.

Everything about my life in Hanoi was full of surprises. There were so many motorbikes that they seemed to flow past like a raging river. I wondered, "What should I do?! How can I cross the street?" At that time, I was not yet able to cross the street with skill. One day, I absolutely had to cross the street, but I couldn't find a traffic light and, even if there was a traffic light, no one would pay attention to it. I moved about every which way in an attempt to cross the street, but I just couldn't do it.

Just as I was beginning to think that it might be all right for me to clash with a motorbike, a woman looked over at me and smiled. Seeing that I was trying to cross the street, she grabbed my hand. As she held my hand, she started to walk, and when she raised her hand the motorbikes came to a stop. After we had crossed the street, she looked over at me and smile. Soon afterwards, she took off without a word wasn't able to thank her.

When I told this story to my Japanese friend, she said she experienced something similar when she was in Hanoi. "An older man helped me to cross the street. The man probably thought that I couldn't cross the street or that I didn't know my way. I actually only wanted to call a taxi on an app called Grab. After he helped me, I re-crossed the street again by myself!!!"



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**International Exchange Month** The International Exchange Promotion Association hosted the 2019 International Exchange Month with Africa as the theme.



**An African Day**

“An African Day” was held at the Saijo Community Center on August 24 (Sat.). The peanut and coconut milk curry was completely different in taste and appearance from the curry we usually eat. The spicy meat and potatoes refreshed our will to survive the summer heat.



**Discussing Mozambique Weapon Art & Weapon Art Exhibit**

On September 9 (Sun.), we invited Takeuchi Yoshiko, a representative of the board of directors at Ehime Global Network, to join in “Discussing Mozambique Weapon Art.” Ms. Takeuchi visits Mozambique each year to collect weapons used during Mozambique’s civil war and give locals abandoned bicycles from Japan. Throughout that time, she came across weapon art. During the discussion, she introduced weapon art and the wish for peace infused in each work. The works were exhibited at the library until September 23, bringing together the impressions of all those who visited.

**Niger Film Screening & Homecoming Information Session**

On September 16 (Sun.), we held a film screening of the Niger documentary *Caravan to the Future*. Saijo High School’s teacher Matsuda Tatsuya and student Hanna Westrop spoke in detail about their experiences in Mozambique during their homecoming information session, using a slideshow presentation, tools and items of clothing from Mozambique in their explanations. Lastly, Saijo Agriculture High School gave a presentation on the cultivation of green papayas.



**Saijo Industry Fair AFRICA FE**

On November 9~10 (Sat./Sun.), SIEA held the “Africafe” during the Saijo Industry Fair at Saijo Agriculture High School. This year’s theme was “Africa.” Guests had fun taking part in a VR experience of the landscape in an African country, attempting to carry water on their heads, and trying on ethnic clothing. Graduate students from Mozambique and the DR Congo joined us for conversation over tea and snacks during the fair. Clothing from Africa and a large picture of a herd of zebras decorated the venue and set the mood. There was also a corner exhibiting JICA’s initiatives and photographs of volunteers, showing the active international presence of Saijo natives.



This year, we sold Jamaican jerk chicken at our stall on the 1st floor. On the 1st day, we sold much more than expected, so we hurriedly bought more ingredients for the 2nd day. Nevertheless, we still sold out by 10:30! A big thanks to all of our volunteers! We’re looking forward to next year!!!



## Learning English

As 2020 draws near, athletes all over the world are training, aspiring to win medals for their countries during the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. Meanwhile, local governments are making efforts to provide services important to welcoming guests in connection to the games and inbound tourism. English education in Japan is also facing significant changes. The impetus behind these changes is the need for Japanese people to communicate more effectively in English as our global society becomes increasingly interdependent.

In Saijo, the passion with which so many people study English is remarkable. I love foreign languages, but my generation generally didn't start foreign language study in America until senior high school, and I had never thought to ask for private lessons. In high school, I took French, but we also learned about the culture. When I recall that, I wonder if English learners also learn about different cultures.

English is England's mother tongue, but due to imperialism and colonialism, people from many different cultural backgrounds consider English their mother tongue. Even if it isn't, English is so well integrated into the societies of other homelands that the people would be recognized as native speakers. (For the same reasons, French is not limited to France, but the scale of its dissemination is not as great as that of English.) So, do English learners solely study the language or do they learn about English culture?

At present, England has become a nation of immigrants, so I think of English culture as twofold. There is the England formed of traditions and outlooks that have been passed down from generation to generation; on the other hand, there is the England formed of immigrants who have embedded themselves into English society and of English people who have been influenced by other cultures.

Should English learners study the cultures of other nations too since English is also their mother tongue? As so many countries and cultures have ties to the English language, how should we approach the study of a different culture in English education? Alternatively, is it enough to understand the English language alone? I personally don't agree with this opinion. Regardless of how much English you can understand, I don't think you can communicate well if you don't have an awareness of your audience's perspective.

The different cultures linked to English are complicated, but I think that those cultural complications are what make English interesting. Therefore, I initiated a course that is not only about studying English but also about exploring different cultures. In this year's Eng-

lish reading club, we are reading an anthology called *The Good Immigrant: 26 Writers Reflect on America*. Although it is about American immigrants, I chose it because it has universal themes that are relevant to Japan where the non-Japanese population is growing.

I worried that my students wouldn't be interested in the stories of immigrants (themes that have personal importance to me) because most English learners focus on perfecting the language. 3 classes have passed since the course started. The content is difficult, but even those with less confidence have shared their ideas during our discussions. We talk about topics that don't usually enter everyday conversation, so I think our time together is valuable. As the instructor, I am full of gratitude for my open-minded students.

We don't often talk about different cultures that deeply. We largely regard "different culture" as the "culture of another country," but humankind's history of crossing borders is rather long. There are obviously different cultural aspects within a country's borders as well, but it is easier to think of people within larger categorizations of cultural identity and to ignore the cultural gradations that exist within any location. Moreover, in Japan, people have a tendency to consider "different culture" as "gaikoku" or "gaikokujin." The meaning of these words are so restricting. Even though people know that hundreds of countries exist, the persistent use of the word "gaikokujin," ultimately throws everyone into one category. There are similarities across cultures just as there are differences between people who come from the same country. Whatever your feelings toward English learning, I believe it's important to think more deeply about intercultural understanding, the goal that makes the study of English even more worthwhile.

## Events &amp; Announcements

## &lt;Second International Exchange Café&gt;

- ◆When: December 14 (Sat.) 10 : 00~12 : 00
- ◆Where: Omachi Community Center
- ◆Cost: 300円 (General) 200円 (Member)  
100円 (Children over 3 years old)



## Editor Notes

It feels like we just sent the September edition of the newsletter, but it's already December! Thanks to the support of everyone this year, we were able to host several events. Thank you everyone. It is still a little early, but have a wonderful New Year!(小)

## International Relations Saijo Staff

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Read in full  
color !

