

# International Relations





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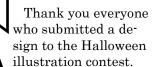
International Relations Saijo is a quarterly newsletter published in Japanese, English, and Vietnamese by the Saijo International Exchange Association (SIEA). We welcome your comments, questions and submissions.

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!





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!





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# 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

XAll illustrations by Rohan Mitchell



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# "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.

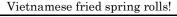
# 60th Saijo Industry Fair World Café

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 ~ "Woo!" It was a day of fun! We look forward to next year!





Arabian Corner



Research students from Africa

Everyone gathered to square dance!

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**\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*** \* \* Dates with Diana \*\*\*\*

During the 3 years since SIEA's establishment, SIEA has joined forces with the International Exchange Promotion Association (Susumeru Kai) to increase opportunities for cultural exchange. To deepen intercultural understanding, we introduced American square dancing during Saijo's Industry Fair last November. Having done so, I later received a call inviting me to join a square dance lesson from Ms. Mitsuko Okino, a veteran of the Ehime Overseas Cooperation Agency (EOCA) with 20 years of experience in square dancing. From that moment, a new partnership was born.

Ms. Okino's friend had invited her to join a square dance lesson about 20 years ago. After that, she was hooked. Ms. Okino formed a square dance circle in Matsuyama and even dances with other devotees abroad. She says she loves square dance because anyone can join in the fun regardless of age, nationality, gender, or occupation and square dance helps people get along even if they are meeting for the first time.

I was also captivated by square dance. I first encountered it when I was a first-year middle school student. As ours was the only class to make a square dance presentation at our school, it was a pure coincidence. The more dances I learned, the more I came to like it. However, I had not square danced again until last year's Industry Fair. While it is common for people to square dance in rural America and the Appalachian cultural region, there is no such custom in larger cities like my hometown Los Angeles, so I had few opportunities to continue square dancing.

Last year, I recalled the appeal of square dancing after I participated in my first Saijo Matsuri. The sight of everyone uniting as one moved me deeply. It is rare for the people in Los Angeles to unite in such a way. However, when I performed the square dances in middle school, teamwork was of the utmost importance, so I think that experience echoed the sense of unity in the community that I felt during the Saijo Matsuri.

I believe that dance is a tool for communication. Many people do not have the confidence to speak in English, but I think that intercultural communication is not limited to English. Through square dance, I

wanted to illustrate the many forms of communication. This year, I had the opportunity to introduce square dance to Saijo once again with the help and passion of Ms. Okino. Together, we hope to increase cultural exchange through square dance!



Nowadays, square dance is not only enjoyed in America, but also throughout many countries in the world. Through dance, a new international community has come into being!

# **Events & Announcements**

# [Tanbara-cho International Exchange Association]

18th International Exchange Speech Contest

- ♦Free to Watch!♦
- ◆Date: December 24, 2017 (Sun.) 13:00~16:30
- ◆Place : Saijo City Tanbara Community Center 1F Hall
- ◆Contents:Speech Contest
- ①Foreign residents' Japanese language speeches
- ②Elementary students' speeches
- ③English language speeches

(middle high school students)

- 4 Japanese residents' foreign language speeches
- ◆Inquiries: Tanbara-cho International Exchange Association Office

TEL:090-2781-6502(Mr.Ando)

### <3rd International Exchange Café >

- ♦ Date : December 17 (Sun.) 13 :  $00 \sim 15 : 00$
- ◆Place: Tanbara Community Center
- <4th International Exchange Café >
- ♦ Date: February 7 (Wed.) 18:  $00 \sim 20: 00$
- ◆Place : Saijo Industry Information

Support Center (SICS)

Participation Fee: 300円 (general)

200円 (members)

## [English Speech Contest]

- ◆Date: Jan. 7, 2018 (Sun.) 13:00~17:00
- ◆Place: Saijo City Library 2F Large Conference Room ①Assistant Language Teacher's (ALT) Japanese speeches
- ②Elementary middle high school students' English speeches
- ◆Recruitment Period for Entries: Dec. 1~31, 2017 Applications by E-mail: toshihisa.ishikawa.r@gmail.com
- ◆Inquiries: NPO Regional Revitalization Individualized Medical Care Toshihisa Ishikawa

Tel: 080-6808-5059



2017 has ended suddenly, hasn't it! This year was full of activity, and half of our staff changed. In 2018, we also hope to give the community opportunities to learn about new cultures, meet new people, and learn foreign languages for cultural exchange. Have a happy new year! (石)

# International Relations Saijo Staff

Yuki Teraoka (寺) Miho Ishimura (石) Diana Marie Linton (ダ) (English Translation) Nguyen Bui Anh Thy (ア)

Read in full color!



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