



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 Halloween2018



On Oct. 27 (Sat.), SIEA held its annual Halloween Party with the indispensable help of the Saijo Shotengai Matchizukuri Association. Since we held advance sales of the participation cards, we could begin the party smoothly and many could enjoy the event and beautiful weather. In total, we sold 1,000 participation cards, and about 2,000 people came to the party in costume!

The children received snacks while trick-or-treating in the shopping arcade. The party was not only an event for international exchange, but also for exchange amongst local residents and regions and for regional revitalization. Over 100 volunteers helped in our efforts to create an amazing event.

This year's long-awaited parade float was the Queen of Hearts! During the parade, she traveled from one end of the shopping arcade to the other with all the children. Due to the help of many, we could hold the Halloween Party without incident. Thank you all for your efforts!



«Mayor Klinar of Seeboden City, Republic of Austria»



We enjoyed a special appearance at the Halloween Costume Award Ceremony. Happy Halloween!

Thank you for all of your illustration submissions!

Grand Prize Winner:
Mitsuki Ishihara

Honorable Mention:
Nariharu Watanabe
Noa Usami
Ryoma Hada

CONGRATS!!!



《October International Exchange Events》

Thinking about Cuisine, Japan and the World with 1 Cup of Coffee

On Sept. 29 (Sat.), we invited Office Naturel's Kenji Fujiyama to speak about cuisine, the history of cafés and *kissatens*, and world affairs.

By the way, does everyone know the difference between a café and a *kissaten*? Although they seem similar, they are rather different. A *kissaten* is actually a "teahouse." Having originated in London, England, teahouses have a 300-year history and, like pubs, offer a space to exchange information. However, unlike pubs, they don't provide alcohol. On the other hand, cafés originated in Paris, France in 1686. Called cabarets, cafés were venues where people could appreciate entertainment while eating and sharing information. Nowadays, they are called cafés or bars, and alcohol is also available. At present, cabarets only remain in Paris and New York. Cafés that feature talk shows and live performances perhaps reflect some of their former history as cabarets.

In the afternoon, we tasted coffee from the beans of three different countries. Although we ground the beans and prepared the coffee in the same way, each had a distinct aroma, acidity, and flavor. We also learned a new way to brew coffee. Many participants even explained, "Really? I had no idea! I have been brewing it incorrectly!" So it left quite an impression! Ultimately, we not only learned about coffee but also about the dietary culture and local economy associated with it. Learning from several perspectives was an enjoyable experience.



~International Understanding Lecture: Learning to Speak German – From Saijo to Europe~

On Oct. 3, we hosted a lecture for international understanding in the large conference room of Saijo City Hall. We invited Ms. Moeko Minami to teach us about the lifestyle, schools, and tourism of Germany and Austria, so we truly learned a lot in the mere hour and a half.

What is the merit of learning German? There are 4 countries that have German as a mother tongue: Germany, Lichtenstein, Switzerland, and Austria. If you speak German, you can communicate with 4 different countries. Moreover, as England exits the European Union, speakers of German will form the majority of the EU, and the economically stable Germany will become an even more attractive country. Furthermore, the education system is of a very high quality. Unlike Japan, university tuition is around a mere 30,000 yen, and Germany is said to have a very good learning environment for students. German resembles English in some ways, so it is also useful in the study of English.

Many students participated in this lecture. Afterwards, we held a Q & A session from which we can see that Saijo residents have a keen interest in Germany and Austria (Europe).



We are the World Exchange Festival



Saijo City held an international exchange concert on Aug. 19, 2018, inviting the Tarumi Violinists from New York and Ms. Yuko Itou, a soprano singer and Saijo native residing in Italy, to perform with the Saijo elementary and junior high school choruses and the Saijo City Boy Scouts.

The Tarumi Violinists are based in New York and led by Ms. Yukako Tarumi. Using the universal language of music, these messengers of love and peace have performed in concerts worldwide, including one for the Pope and the King of Sweden. The media even refers to them as musical ambassadors of love and peace. For many years, they have performed in the Peace Bell Ceremony held at the UN Headquarters every year. Recognized for their activities for international friendship and goodwill, they received the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Commendation in 2016. Ms. Yuko Itou was born in Omachi, Saijo. She graduated from Saijo Senior High School and the Tokyo University of the Arts. After finishing her doctorate in vocal music, she began her career as a soprano soloist in the Italian Opera based in Milan. This year, she made her 2nd performance in Saijo since 2014 with her husband, the pianist Andrea Schiavo.



The Tarumi Violinists arrived in Saijo on Aug. 16. They performed at a senior citizens home and communicated with Saijo's youth using English and gestures at parties throughout their stay. As the students of Saijo encountered topics related to New York and Italy, it seemed as if Saijo grew closer to the rest of the world. This year's concert was the 3rd since 2014 and 2016. Each concert adds value to the opportunity for international exchange, so we hope to lengthen the legacy of the We are the World concerts.

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60th Annual

Saijo Industry Fair

Vietnam World

On Nov. 10 and 11, SIEA hosted the “Vietnam World” exhibit during the Saijo Industry Fair at Saijo Agriculture High School. This year’s theme was “2 days of *easygoing*

Vietnam.” Visitors could enjoy the *áo dài* exhibit (traditional Vietnamese dress) and try them on. They could also make conversation with 7 of the current Saijo residents from Vietnam while drinking Vietnamese coffee and tea and eating snacks together. The Vietnamese coffee roasted at the venue and served with condensed milk was the most popular treat. Young children also attempted to say greetings in Vietnamese. Many of the visitors enthusiastically asked questions about Vietnam and the neighboring countries Thailand and Laos. JICA volunteers also exhibited photographs showing how internationally active the locals of Saijo are.



Exhibit Booth Members!



Ms. Thuy introducing Vietnam to guests

Saijo High School students
wearing *áo dài*

This year, we sold a Vietnamese dessert soup called *chè bà ba*. During the first 2 hours of both days of the event, we sold 100 bowls! We enjoyed an *easygoing* 2 days. We are so grateful to all of our volunteers! We are looking forward to next year!!!



Chè bà ba

“Vietnam Folk Tales I Want to Share with the People of Saijo ~ No. 3 「Milk Fruit」

Vietnam is also called the Kingdom of Fruit! At the Industry Fair, “Vietnam World” featured a photo exhibit of fruit in Vietnam. There are many fruits that people have never seen in Japan. Amongst them is the “milk fruit.” In Vietnamese, it is called Vú Sữa; “Vú” means breast, and “Sữa” means milk. If you translate it directly into Japanese, it means “breast fruit”! The name is said to have originated from its milk-white fruit juice and shape, but every Vietnamese person knows this folk tale.

Once upon a time, there was a mother and a son in a village. Having lost her husband, the mother cherished her son and did everything for him. However, the more he was spoiled, the more mischievous he became and trouble he caused. When his mother scolded him for his mischievousness, he grew angry and ran away from home. His mother was very sad and ardently prayed for her son’s return. She waited for him in front of their house every day. No one knew how far her son strayed from home.

The son went very far away, receiving food from strangers and playing every day. However, after some time, he began to long for his mother. One day, it was cold, and he had an empty stomach. Some children started to bully him, so he decided to go home. Although nothing had changed about their house, he could not find his mother. No matter where he searched, in the house or in the garden, his mother was nowhere to be found. The son started to cry, screaming “Mommy!” but there was no answer. He continued to cry as he hugged a tree in the garden. Suddenly, the tree started to shake. He was so surprised that he looked up. As he did, a round fruit fell before him. Completely exhausted, he bit into the fruit, but it was very hard. Then, another one fell from the tree. This time, he peeled the fruit before tasting it, but it was bitter. Suddenly, another one fell. This time, he tried massaging the fruit. As he did, a white liquid started to flow from the fruit. The flesh of the fruit also became juicy. It was really delicious. It seemed like a gift from his mother, so the son started wailing. As he did, the tree’s branches extended as if his mother was embracing him.

Later, the son learned of his mother’s death from the people in the village, and he became contemplative. He offered the delicious fruit of the tree in the garden to the people in the village. As the fruit was full of his mother’s love, they called it “Vú Sữa (breast milk).”





Horagai

Sometimes, fog envelops Mt. Ishizuchi, wrapping the peak with a white veil. Within the mysterious atmosphere, you may hear an unusual sound; it's as if whales are crying overhead, swimming amongst the clouds. Somewhere in the heart of the mountains, a *yamabushi* (a practitioner of Shugendō) is playing the *horagai* (conch shell trumpet).

The *horagai* has a long history in Japan. Played as a trumpet, it also had over 1000 years of use as one of the tools for religious practices and military affairs. Henceforth, it has been passed on from one generation to the next. Special schools teach traditional *horagai* music, and each school has a unique melody. The *horagai* is particularly associated with *yamabushi* because they are known to use *horagai* to communicate with each other, as they can describe their location and actions depending on how they play it.

Mt. Ishizuchi is a place of worship of Shugendō, so it also has a rich history of *horagai*. Even now, you can get a taste of that history. Numerous Shugendō practitioners dedicate the *horagai* to Mt. Ishizuchi throughout the year. Furthermore, every November, the Ishizuchi Ryura no Kai Association gathers at Ishizuchi Joju Shrine for a *horagai* certification exam, ceremony and contest. This year, the exam took place on Nov. 2, and the contest took place on the following day.

Before any training can begin, the association members dedicate their *horagai* to Ishizuchi Joju Shrine.

Then, divided into appropriate ranks, they receive instruction on their playing techniques before taking the first exam. The participants receive more guidance in the afternoon before taking the second exam and written test. They complete the first day with evening prayers in the shrine. The second day features a ceremony with all of the participants and teachers playing in unison before the contest. Seeing the white clad figures playing together is a remarkable sight.

Everyone gave me a warm welcome, allowing me to enjoy a truly meaningful 2 days. I had only ever seen older men playing the *horagai*, so I was surprised to encounter several women and children gathered for the examination. I was further surprised to meet participants from more distant prefectures like Niigata, Mie, Hyogo, Hiroshima and Fukuoka. Amongst the participants, there was even an 87-year-old man facing his 24th examination, and a 7-year-old boy completing his first. I learned that people enjoy *horagai* regardless of age. Although everyone had a different reason for picking up the *horagai*, most became interested in *horagai* due to a family member's influence. Many hoped to carry on the memory of someone dear.

Having attended the events, I didn't only learn about the proper way to play the *horagai*, but I also learned about the rich religious heritage involved with the study of *horagai*, as people bring their *horagai* to Mt. Ishizuchi as an offering to the god of the mountain. When people play the *horagai*, I can sense the respect for the god of Ishizuchi, but I can also feel the love of family and community.

Events & Announcements

<Vietnamese Ikebana Course Information>

- ◆When: Dec. 9 (Sun.) 10:00~12:00
- ◆Where: Public Welfare (Fukushi) Center ◆Cost: Free

<3rd International Exchange Café>

- ◆When: Dec. 15 (Sat.) 10:00~12:00
- ◆Where: Omachi Community Center
- ◆Cost: 300円 (general) 200円 (members) 100円 (Age 3+)

<International Understanding Lecture: Fair Trade>

- ◆When: Dec. 15 (Sat.) 14:00~15:30
- ◆Where: Omachi Community Center ◆Cost: Free

<Conversations with the People of Vietnam>

- ◆When: Jan. 19 (Sat.) 10:00~12:00
- ◆Where: Public Welfare (Fukushi) Center ◆Cost: Free

<4th International Exchange Café>

- ◆When: Feb. 13 (Wed.) 18:00~20:00
- ◆Where: SICS
- ◆Cost: 300円 (general) 200円 (members)

Tanbara-cho International Exchange Association

19th International Exchange Speech Contest

- ◆When: Dec. 16, 2017 (Sun.) 13:00~16:30
- ◆Where: Saijo City Tanbara Community Center
- ◆Contents: Foreign residents·elementary·middle·high school students' speech contest ◇Free to Watch!◇
- ◆Inquiries: TEL:090-2781-6502 (Mr. Ando)

NPO Regional Revitalization·Individualized Medical Care 3rd English Speech Contest

- ◆When: Jan. 14, 2019 (Sun.) 13:00~16:30
- ◆Where: Saijo City Library 2F Large Conference Room
- ◆Contents:

First half – 2018 Seattle, America International Training Report

Second half – Elementary·middle·high school student English speeches

- ◆Exchange Party: 17:00~19:00 SICS
- ◆Inquiries: Tel : 080-6808-5059 (Mr. Ishikawa)

E-mail: toshihisa.ishikawa.r@gmail.com

Editor
Notes

Typical of the end of the year, this December feels as if we are running to the end with vigor. Thank you for all your support as we carried out many events and classes throughout 2018. It's still a bit early, but we hope you have a happy New Year! (石)

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Read in full
color !

