



International Relations SAIJO

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International Relations SAIJO

is a newsletter published by the Saijo International Exchange Association (SIEA). Feel free to contact us with your comments, questions, and submission requests.

SIEA Interviews with our language instructors!

- ① Hometown ② Their reason for studying Japanese ③ Favorite place in Saijo
④ Foods they like/hate ⑤ Words for our readers

J (English Instructor)

- ① New York, America
② I first learned about Japanese culture in high school and I've been interested in it ever since. I was very surprised by the differences between Japanese and American culture at the time, and that's why I started my Japanese studies.
③ I love the mountains and the sea, since they're both nearby and full of nature.
④ I eat just about anything, so I don't know what my #1 favorite food is, but I'm not a big fan of mentaiko and pickled plums.
⑤ The whole world right now is facing extremely troubling times. Despite all that, everyone's doing their best. Let's take care of ourselves, keep moving forward, and get through this together!



Cho (Chinese Instructor)

- ① Jilin Province, China
② I worked for a Japanese company and that was my reason for starting my Japanese studies. Later, I left the company and went to a Japanese language school for a year.
③ I like the mountains and rivers.
④ My favorite foods are tomatoes and cucumbers, and I don't hate any foods in particular.
⑤ Language opens up new, unknown worlds and possibilities. Why don't you give the world of Chinese a try?



Anh (Vietnamese Instructor)

- ① Hanoi, Vietnam
② Ever since I was a child, I've been interested in East Asian culture and I wanted to learn kanji. Even though its resources are scarce and it's often plagued by natural disasters, I looked up to Japan as an economic powerhouse, and that was why I decided to advance my Japanese studies.
③ Mt. Ishizuchi. I climbed it last year in October. Even though the trails were steep and the vertical chains were a bit scary, the view from the summit was so beautiful that words don't do it justice. I want to go again this year.
④ I like sushi and I don't like anything made with onions.
⑤ I'm Anh, a Vietnamese person who loves Japan. It's only been a year and a half since I moved to Japan, but I've grown to love Japan more and more. I want to keep studying Japanese while working and experience many things. I want to become friends with people who love Vietnam, and build a bridge between Japanese and Vietnamese culture. I look forward to meeting you!

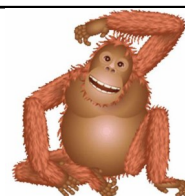


Lee (Korean Instructor)

- ① Korea
② I started studying Japanese in middle school because I wanted to watch Japanese anime like "Hajime no Ippo" and "One Piece".
③ Hachidoyama and Kamegamori. Nature is everywhere and the views are stunning!
④ Like: Pork Steak and ramen Hate: Tofu and cucumbers
⑤ If you see me outside, please say "Annyeonghaseyo" to me!



☆The Environment and the Forests of Borneo☆



“The Environment and the Forests of Borneo” was held on August 8th (Sat.) at Saijo City’s Welfare Center. Due to concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, there was apprehension about holding the event but the event was ultimately held without any trouble. In addition to the in-person attendees, nearly 40 people from around the country participated using ZOOM in a completely novel event format.

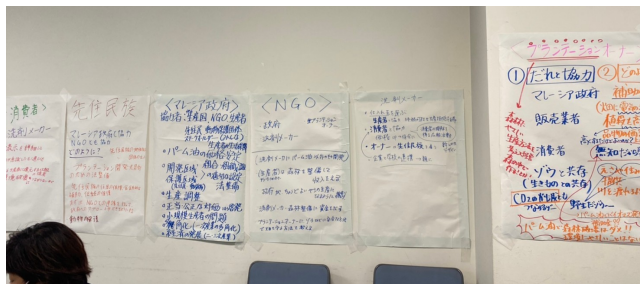
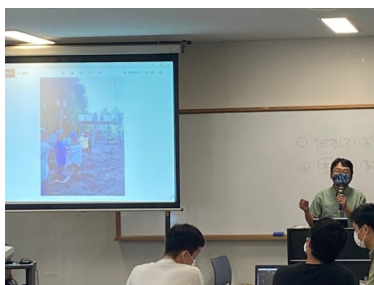


The event commenced with a lecture on “SDGs and International Understanding” by Mr. Shoichi Yamashita, the Ehime desk representative of JICA Shikoku. Starting with an explanation on “Millennium Development Goods” (MDGs), the predecessor to SDGs, Yamashita first discussed its successes and shortcomings before introducing the series of events that led to the adoption of “Sustainable Development Goods” (SDGs).

After Yamashita’s presentation, Mr. Tomoo Arakawa, director of Borneo Conservation Trust Japan (BCTJ), lectured on environmental conservation in Borneo in great detail.

Attendees were shocked to hear the extent to which palm oil produced in Borneo is used in their daily lives. They also learned about palm oil itself, and how it is primarily gathered and produced in oil palm plantations. Attendees also participated in various workshops, learning about the actual situations in these oil palm plantations, the palm oil industry’s connections to Japanese corporations, and other related topics.

Even though the forests of Borneo may seem distant and disconnected from our lives in Japan, they’re deeply interconnected. Through understanding and recognizing the problems the planet faces, we can then plan and act accordingly. The event was a good opportunity to reflect on our actions to help protect the environment.



“Our Wide World” Exhibition



From August 4th to August 31st, the International Relations Promotion Team held its “Our Wide World” exhibition at the entrance to the Saijo Branch Iyo Bank. Equipped with easy-to-understand displays, traditional tools, and clothing from a myriad of countries, the exhibition helped to convey a sense of just how large our world is. The “Our Wide World” exhibition was a lot of fun and allowed visitors to experience many countries they’ve never seen or visited before.



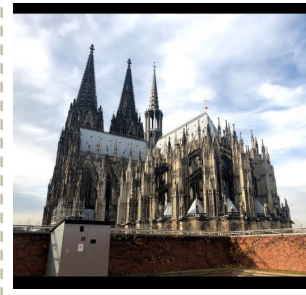
My First German Meal



My Language Course



My Host Family and Me



My Favorite Place:

My Study Abroad Experience



Living in a Different Culture

After studying abroad for 7 months, I can say that I've learned a lot and grew significantly as a person. Of all the things I've come to learn and understand, the most important thing I learned was who I really am. The fundamental difference between living in Germany and Japan lied in whether I was considered a minority or not. In Japan, since I was part of the majority, I didn't think too much on who I was and just conformed to society. On the other hand, Germany was the first place overseas where I was a minority. When I tried to build a good community there, the one thing I was most conscious of was my own identity. I was just a foreigner and my German was terrible; at that rate, no one would pay attention to just an ordinary Asian like me. I learned to highlight my individuality and autonomy, figured out exactly who I was, and conveyed my self to everyone I met. As a result, my newfound identity became the basis for many of my friendships and I learned to acknowledge and respect the individuality of others a lot more, too. Living in a different culture has definitely been a great opportunity to rediscover my roots.

Volunteering at a Refugee Camp

One of the aims of my study abroad program was to volunteer in refugee camps, which I visited 2 to 3 times a month. My volunteer work mainly consisted of holding volunteer language classes. In between volunteer activities, I talked with some refugees and learned a lot about the refugee crisis and their daily lives. What stood out to me was the fact that almost all of the facilities were managed or supported by German companies and volunteers. Germany helped the refugees regardless of their citizenship, and I feel like that symbolizes what an ideal leader of today's globalized world should be doing.

On the other hand, compared to other G7 countries, Japan's refugee recognition rate is extremely low at a meager 0.2%. In addition, the current refugee recognition system itself is littered with flaws, and for applicants, it is not remotely fair. In fact, in April last year, an Indian man who went through a cycle of detentions and had his application rejected committed suicide in one of these refugee camps. I want more people to know about the harsh predicaments refugees face when they come to Japan. The fact that the rights of socially disadvantaged people are not protected means that if we ever became disadvantaged people in the eyes of society, we'd be left by the wayside too. This is also something that I want Japanese people to understand. (Saijo High School Saori Ishioka)



Christmas in America

Everyone at the Refugee Camp

My Beloved Teacher, Their Partner, and Me

Dresden Memories

From Hue, Vietnam



The rainy season in Vietnam lasts from June to November. The rainy season brings heavy rainfall and flooding, and the central regions of Vietnam are especially vulnerable. Saijo's sister city, Hue, is located in one of these central regions. In fact, heavy rains and typhoons are so frequent that it is often said that "Hue's local specialty is rain."

Even though the construction of hydroelectric and dry dams have decreased the amount of damage incurred, every year, heavy flooding continues to occur until these facilities are built. Notably, in 1999, historic amounts of flooding occurred in Hue, and the event still remains in the hearts of its citizens today. One village watched as hundreds of houses floated away. The sight of many people on their roofs waiting for days for help and of others breathing their last breaths will forever be ingrained in their minds.

As a result of that event, the Hue government decided to allocate more resources toward disaster prevention. Hue's collaborative disaster prevention projects with Saijo are a part of this effort. For instance, Saijo's "Education on Disaster Preparedness for Middle School Children" is one such project.

In September of this year, a typhoon hit Hue, toppling over countless trees and utility poles and inflicting casualties for the first time in years. Then, heavy rain fell continuously from October 6th to October 12th due to a tropical low-pressure system, and the entirety of Hue faced severe flooding, with some areas submerged. The water levels even surpassed the records set in 1999. The total extent of the damage has yet to be

determined.

In addition to floods, in the summer, hot winds blow in from neighboring Laos, causing a "maddening" heat wave to sweep over Hue. Despite living in such a harsh environment, the people of Hue are said to be the most kind in all of Vietnam.

Even though rain can inflict significant damage, it is described with tenderness and beauty in songs. One famous song has the following verse: "If you go to the city of Hue, send her rains my way." For people from Hue who currently live far away from their hometown, the rains of Hue certainly bring about a sense of nostalgia.

To help the people of Hue in these trying times, Saijo sent comforting words and donations their way. We hope that Hue recovers as soon as possible.



-The Submerged Symbol of Hue, Đại Nội-

"World Study" Intl. Understanding Lectures Have Started!

As of 2020, SIEA's newest project, the "World Study" International Understanding lectures, is now underway.

The lecturers, including Professor Bunji Matsushita (visiting professor in the Department of International Studies at Juntendo University), the board chairman for the non-profit International Exchange Support Association, have each gone on trips around the world, visiting a myriad of countries. This wonderful lecture series offers attendees the opportunity to listen to fascinating stories about various countries, while learning authentic English. Children attending the event watched and listened with their eyes aglow, as if they had gone on a trip themselves.



International Relations INFO

Saijo City published its "Saijo Living Guide," a multilingual daily life handbook for foreigners living in Saijo.

This handbook contains essential information to help you navigate through city life, such as: information on making phone calls to fire departments and emergency centers, rules and regulations for the separation and disposal of garbage, and even disaster prevention information. It's a guide designed to let you know who to contact when you need help. You can download the handbook from the Saijo City homepage, so please give it a read!



Editorial Comments

Little by little, SIEA is resuming its lectures and events. We still can't let our guard down, so with social distancing measures in mind, we're planning many fun events for all of you in the near future! Look forward to it! - Kosugi

International Relations

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Readable in

full color !



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