



International Relations SAIJO

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CONTENTS

Introducing Saijo's Local Japanese Classes	1
Our World Through Coffee and Chocolate	2
A Vietnamese New Year SAIJO 2021	2
Saijo High School's English Speaking Society	3
A Vietnamese Folktale: Táo Quân Day	4
International Relations INFO	4



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

Introducing...

Saijo's Local Japanese Classes!



Org. Name

- ① Date and Time
- ② Location
- ③ Format
- ④ Fees
- ⑤ Contact Information
- ⑥ Comments



Saijo International Exchange Volunteer Association (SKV)

- ① Sat., Weekly 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM
- ② Saijo City Welfare Center
- ③ Individual and group lessons
- ④ 300円/year
- ⑤ 090-7571-7333(Ochi)
090-2787-6996(Suto)
- ⑥ We hold textbook studies,
conversational workshops, tutoring for
primary school students, and more!

Tanbara Japanese Language Association

- ① Sun., Weekly 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- ② Tanbara Community Hall
- ③ Group lessons (Sorted by level)
(Individual lessons are negotiable)
- ④ Must pay for textbooks
- ⑤ 090-9045-3064(Yusa)

Saijo Japanese Study Society

- ① Sun., Weekly 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- ② Kambai Community Center
- ③ Group lessons
- ④ 500円/year
- ⑤ 0897-55-6668
- ⑥ With consultations, scheduling,
individual lesson, and corporate
training requests are accepted.

Saijo Japanese Classroom (SJS)

- ① Sun., Weekly All-day; Negotiable
- ② Saijo / Taga Community Center
- ③ Individual and group lessons
- ④ Must pay for textbooks
- ⑤ 090-2895-4719(Yanagawa)
- ⑥ Let's tackle conversational
basics and the JLPT (N1-N4)!

Ishizuchi Japanese Club

- ① Negotiable
- ② Saijo City Welfare Center,
Negotiable
- ③ Individual
- ④ 500円/60 min.; 750円/90 min.
(Sat., Sun., Weekdays after 5 PM
600円/60 min.; 900円/90 min.)
- ⑤ 090-2787-3433(Tokunaga)

Do you know anyone looking for Japanese classes?

Are you a foreigner who wants to learn Japanese?

Then, this info is for you!

Join a Japanese class that fits your needs and liven up your life in Saijo!

Our World Through Coffee and Chocolate

"Our World Through Coffee and Chocolate" was held on February 6th (Sat.). This time around, it was an online event hosted on Zoom. Lecturer Mr. Ken Fujiyama entreated us to his in-depth talk on coffee and chocolate, making us question our roles as consumers.

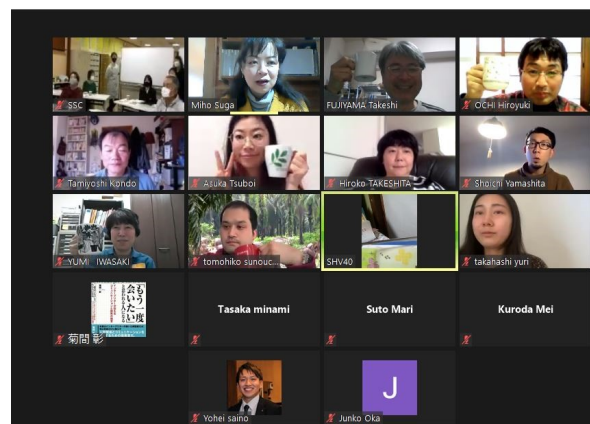


This time, participants received coffee handled by Mr. Fujiyama and chocolate from Shikokuchuo's GBC Chocolate Factory in advance. This was the first event of its kind, where participants actually learned and practiced how to brew delicious coffee and tasted chocolate made from cacao beans harvested from different locales.

Mr. Fujiyama said that it is important for each of us to stop and re-evaluate our roles as consumers. Many countries that export coffee and cacao beans also happen to be poverty-stricken. By being more conscious of the stories behind the goods we consume, we can better support developing countries, in turn leading to prosperity — around the world and at home. What do you see beyond the coffee cup in front of you? Your coffee just might taste better with that in mind.

Impressions — Hiroto Akiyama (Saijo Agricultural HS)

After attending this lecture, I asked myself, "How would I feel if the things that I grew and produced with love were treated with disdain?" From now on, before I buy something, I want to put myself in the shoes of producers, understand who they are, what they went through, and what level of quality they put it into making what they made, actually think about where the profits would go, and focus my purchases on goods that benefit both producers and consumers.



A Vietnamese New Year Saijo 2021

We held our Vietnamese New Year event on February 20th. In Vietnam, they celebrate Lunar New Year, which fell on February 12th this year. Several of Saijo's Vietnamese residents, led by CIR Anh Thy, taught us about the Vietnamese Lunar New Year, all the while comparing it with the Japanese New Year. In Japan, New Year's is associated with kotatsu and mikan, but in Vietnam, where it's hot all-year-round, people decorate watermelons and eat them together. It is said that the redder the inside of the watermelon is, the better your luck will be for that year. On the day of the event, we prepared watermelons, a variety of other fruits, Vietnamese sweets, and even Vietnamese zongzi. Normally, this would involve a tasting, but due to COVID-19, we instead imagined what they would taste like — given their appearance, ingredients, and words from Anh Thy — and hoped that next time, we would be able to taste them ourselves. It was a pity we didn't get to try the sweets, but we learned a lot about the Vietnamese Kitchen Gods, the Vietnamese Zodiac, and decorations made from flowers and fruits, and before we knew it, we were out of time. Thuy, a local Vietnamese resident, decorated the venue with many flowers, so we were able to fully enjoy the atmosphere of a genuine Vietnamese New Year. The counter of the International Exchange Promotion Office is currently decorated with yellow plum blossoms, an integral part of the Vietnamese New Year, courtesy of Anh Thy, so please check them out. As for me, the quintessential Vietnamese New Year song our Vietnamese residents sang for us is playing nonstop in my head. ♪ ♪ ♪



Saijo High School's ESS International Understanding Club

We're the ESS International Understanding Club (or "Essassa"). We carry out club activities to showcase attractions at Saijo HS and in Saijo. Through volunteer activities, we interact with locals and foreigners and experience various cultures. In a given year, we volunteer at many events, but this year, we couldn't do our normal activities due to COVID-19. We're planning on sharing videos we made with students at George Washington HS, which has an exchange program with Saijo, sharing opinions and introducing our school on Padlet. Currently, we have 29 members, who are divided into four groups and working on the following activities:

Group A

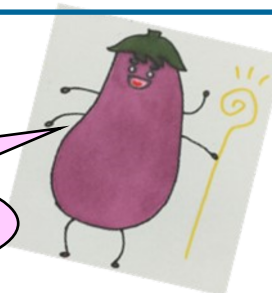
We're making a video and a presentation to tell GWHS's students about some differences between Japan and other countries. We made a video introducing the average day of Saijo HS students. We also shot a video on "cleaning time" and bentos, rare sights overseas. We want to convey what school life is really like. In our presentation, we also introduced the history of Saijo HS, its events, and its uniforms. Through this activity, we learned a lot about the history of our school. We think our presentation can help people understand the charms of our very traditional Saijo HS.



Group C

We're making a paper play, or *kamishibai*. Places and events familiar to locals like Mt. Ishizuchi and Saijo Festival appear in this story. The story is about the adventures of high school students and the fairy Tatan in Saijo. Readers can enjoy learning about all the things Saijo has to offer. The story isn't geared for just foreigners – even local people can enjoy following along. In fact, high school students at GWHS read our paper play, and they gave us some good feedback.

**My name is Tatan and I want you
to know what makes Saijo special!**



I'm based on a kinukawa eggplant, a local Saijo specialty!



Group B

We create bilingual maps and videos to introduce Saijo, just like our seniors before us. We created two types of movies: one with Japanese audio and English subtitles, and the other with English audio and Japanese subtitles. We interviewed shop staff and took videos and photos of various shops. We also added a new QR code to the map to make it easier for users to understand.



Group D

We made a video introducing famous souvenirs in Saijo, in the hopes that many people would think, "I wanna go to Saijo!" We visited confectionaries famous for selling classic Saijo souvenirs and featured some of their products. We made our video in both English and Japanese to help people understand the appeal of Saijo better.

A Vietnamese Folktale



Táo Quân Day

One week before the Vietnamese Lunar New Year, or Tet, on the 23rd day of the 12th month of the old calendar, there is a holiday known as Táo Quân Day. It is a special day in honor of the Kitchen Gods, Táo Quân. On this day, the Táo Quân deities ascend to Heaven, report to God all the good and bad things that happened in a given household, and return on New Year's Eve to continue watching over the household. The Táo Quân deities are said to consist of three lovers -- one woman and two men.

This might sound strange at first, but the Táo Quân deities are highly respected by the Vietnamese people, and Táo Quân Day is an indispensable tradition to kick off the New Year. The story of Táo Quân is as follows:

"Once upon a time, there was a man named Trong Cao and his wife Thi Nhi, who, despite having lived together for quite some time, were unable to bear children. They gradually grew lonely and their quarrels grew more frequent. One day, Trong Cao let his anger get the better of him and he hit Thi Nhi, who then ran away from home. Thi Nhi ran far, far away, where she fell in love with a man named Pham Lang, who she ended up marrying.

Some time passed and Trong Cao's anger subsided. He regretted what he had done, and so he set off to look for his wife. Eventually, he ran out of money and had to beg for money to survive. To his surprise, while begging outside a certain house, the woman who came to greet him was none other than the very person he had been

searching for, his wife Thi Nhi. After realizing this beggar was Trong Cao, she invited him into their house and told him how she became Pham Lang's wife. Thi Nhi felt sick to her stomach.

That was when Pham Lang came home. Stumped as to how to explain to her husband the whole Trong Cao situation, she had Trong Cao hide in a pile of straw in the garden. However, the unaware Pham Lang lit the pile on fire to make fertilizer. Trong Cao, wanting to spare Thi Nhi any trouble, didn't try to escape and burned to death. Thi Nhi rushed out of the house, and, upon seeing the burning straw, leapt into the flames to rescue Trong Cao, dying in the process. Shocked by his wife's unexpected actions, Pham Lang blamed himself for his wife's death and he threw himself into the flames too.

Their three souls arrived before God, who, moved by their story, made Pham Lang the Deity of the Kitchen, Trong Cao the Deity of the House, and Thi Nhi the Deity of the Market.

And that was how Táo Quân came to be.



(traditional Vietnamese Woodblock Print) The Three Táo Quân Deities

International Relations INFO



☆☆☆ Establishment of the SIEA as a NPO Organization ☆☆☆

As of March 2021, the SIEA will be re-established as a non-profit organization.

Full-scale operations are scheduled to begin in April 2021.

We would like to know what kinds of events you want to do!

If you have any suggestions, please contact our secretariat.

We are always looking for new members. Are you interested in cultural exchange? Do you want to develop a more global perspective? Are you a foreigner interested in promoting cultural exchange? Or perhaps, do you already employ foreigners? No matter the case, the SIEA is looking forward to welcoming you as a new member!



Concerning NPO SIEA Annual Dues for 3rd Year of Reiwa

Please pay annual dues for the 3rd year of Reiwa on or after April 1st.

※ WARNING! Our account information will be changed in the 3rd year of Reiwa.

Our new account information will be made available at a later date.

Editorial
Comments

Before I knew it, March arrived. This is the last newsletter for the 2nd year of Reiwa. This was also be our last newsletter as a private organization. From April onwards, SIEA will be operating as a non-profit organization. We're looking forward to your continued support! - Maiko Kosugi

International Relations SAIJO Staff:

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Nguyen Bui Anh Thy

Readable in
Full Color! 🖨️

