



# MIA news

Miyakonojo International Association

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## A Trip to China & Harbin - Sakurada Izumi (MIA Member)

Do you know of the three major winter festivals of the world? They are Canada's "Quebec Winter Festival" (AKA Carnaval de Québec), Japan's "Sapporo Snow Festival", and China's "Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival". This time around, I would like to introduce you all to the "Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival" in my home country of China. Two years ago, my daughter asked me "what would a world of ice be like?"



Ms. Sakurada (left) and her daughter.

"Shall we go to the frozen lands of China's north and find out?"  
"Yes, let's go, I wanna go!"

And so, we bought some tickets to China's Harbin City. This would be our first time back in two years.

Firstly, allow me to give a simple explanation as to what kind of area Harbin City is.

Located in the central southern area of China's Heilongjiang province, a province which borders Russia, Harbin has since ancient times been adorned with titles such as "the Paris of the Far East" or "the Moscow of the East". It is the coldest metropolis amongst all the major cities of the world. The city itself consists of a fusion of Chinese and Western Gothic architecture, making it appear as if it were a different country entirely.

Along a street reminiscent of the main promenades of Europe, you can partake of authentic Russian cuisine. By the way, my favourite amongst the local fare would have to be 红肠 (Hóng cháng, lit. Red sausage or intestines), which is made from pork intestines stuffed in the style of Foie Gras.

The day to leave finally arrived. From Miyakonojo to Fukuoka, Fukuoka to Shanghai and onwards to Harbin. Looking down upon the expanse of land that is Harbin, my daughter exclaimed "it looks just like a world of snow, let's hurry up and land!" When we finally did set foot upon the land covered in snow and ice, it was as if Mr. Wind, Ms. Snow and Mr. Ice came to greet us with a hearty "Welcome!"

We got into a taxi and made our way towards the streets of Harbin. First and foremost, our eyes were drawn to the red flowers we found blooming on either side of the street. What kind of flower, I wondered, was blooming so beautifully amidst the cold of -25 degrees?

After around 40 minutes, we arrived at the hotel that was our accommodation in the heart of the city. The interior design of the hotel and rooms was very much of the European style.

We left our baggage behind and quickly departed once more.

The first thing I had upon arriving in Harbin was 铁锅炖大鹅 (Tiě guō dùn dà é), which consists of an entire goose stewed in a large iron pot with corn flour bread stuck around the inside of the pot. Served steaming hot, it warms the body right up, and is absolutely delicious. This is a local specialty that absolutely cannot be passed up during the winter, and made for a fulfilling first day for my daughter and myself.

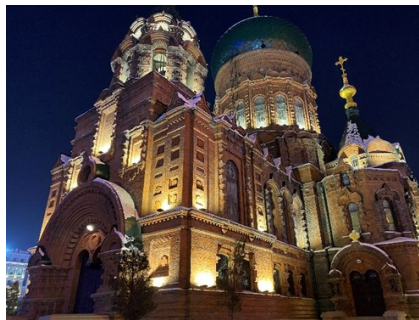
The following day, we picked up our car and headed to China's largest Siberian Tiger Park.

There are around 100 of the world's largest tigers (all Siberian tigers) living in this park. Here, you can

find your bravery once more. There are also some rare white lions, as well as some black jaguars. You can even feed them!

When the weather is good, you can witness the spectacular sight known as the "Frost Tiger" (Often seen early in the morning, tigers so perfectly covered in frost that they shimmer white). My first thoughts when I saw it was "if we sit here and watch, my daughter can get her school research project done!"

The end of the day comes quickly in Harbin during the winter. At around 3PM, the streets go dark.



Before heading to the festival grounds, we went and stopped in at St. Sophia's Cathedral. The cathedral is symbolic of Harbin in its Russian architecture. You can also head inside to observe the interior.

Finally, we headed to the long-awaited festival grounds. The first thing that surprised us upon arrival was that, even though we had arrived particularly early, there were already a lot of people beginning to gather. The festival is held outdoors, and the temperature at the time was around -30 degrees. Our breath, eyelashes and eyebrows were all tinged with frost. Of course, we made sure to be dressed in warm layered clothing before heading out.

Once within their expansive grounds, beyond the many ice sculptures present, there was a giant ice-carving stage more than 100m long (by far the most popular area), horse-drawn carriages, and a maze of ice to challenge, all of which were very enjoyable. When we saw



the giant ice sculptures, it was as if we had been transported to the world of “Frozen”. The snow sculptures were lit up by LEDs, changing the world us to one of a colorful fantasy land. Captivated by the beautiful scenery around us, we forgot entirely about the cold. In order to create this city of ice, 200,000 cubic meters of ice is necessary. This ice is taken from the Songhua River near Harbin city. In recent years, as a side effect of global warming, it seems that the amount of ice available is decreasing. Additionally, there is also the mid-winter swimming tournament held in the Songhua River each year.

Well then, what did you all think? If you have the chance, try and visit this wonderful world of snow and ice, I insist! Try everything that’s on offer! And of course, if you decide to go, just make sure you come prepared for the cold!



**Aussie Bites!**

This month’s Aussie Bite comes from Mr. Takamichi Miura! Thank you very much!

Around 25 years ago, when I headed to Melbourne in order to run the “Melbourne Marathon”, I went sight-seeing both before and after the race; I was excited to see all of the unique animals such as kangaroos, koalas and wombats at the zoo, but the most exciting and memorable experience was joining a tour to see the “Penguin Parade”. That being said, this was not a group of captive penguins that were trained to perform a parade, but rather a group of wild penguins that would come ashore of the evening and return to their nests. Around 30cm in size and 20 – 30 in number, avoiding their natural predators, these penguins would wait until darkness approached to waddle up all at once to their nests in the grass from the foreshore, before once more waddling back to the water together once more; they were just so cute! So soothing to look upon! The fact that you could go and see penguins in the wild just a short distance away from a major city like Melbourne was incredible! Also, on the way home, we stopped by a souvenir store where I bought some aboriginal art. When making my selection, I saw a piece depicting a large fish being captured, and as I have a penchant for buying fish-related things, I bought it and took it home with me. The description of the piece read “BARRAMUNDI”, and when I looked up the word, I found it was about a fish, and



meant “Red Eyes”. This fish is of the same species as those found in Japanese fresh and salt water rivers, but can grow to over 1m in length and is on the endangered species list. This fish is only found in places where nature abounds, and has recently only been spotted in Miyazaki Prefecture and Kochi Prefecture rivers. As Australia’s aboriginal inhabitants continue to harvest from these natural habitats, I was once more convinced of just how abundant Australia’s nature really is!



**General Information**

**◇ MIA News Trivia, Round 2!**

In similar fashion to last year, due to the unfortunate cancellation of this year’s World Beer & Trivia Night, we’re here to present you with a few quick questions to keep that grey matter healthy! We’ve added some tougher questions into the mix this time, so best of luck! You can find the answers upside-down on the last page!

- 1) How many sports were participated in during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics? (Not the number of events, but it’d be impressive if you knew that too!)
- 2) How many countries does China share a border with?
- 3) What is the second-most populous nationality in Miyakonojo?
- 4) How many active volcanos are there around Japan?
- 5) What is the greatest time difference between 2 locations in the world?
- 6) “The Knights of the Round Table” is one story regarding King Arthur, the knights and their quest for the Holy Grail, as well as the establishment of ancient England as found in the Tales of King Arthur. Where was this round table located?
- 7) The human brain is an extremely complex organ, consisting of countless neurons, and even more synapses that connect these neurons together. Roughly how many times more synapses are there compared to neurons?
- 8) Do you know which areas have time differences of 45 minutes? There are 3 of them!
- 9) Which country has the second most Nobel Prize winners?
- 10) Which ancient Greek goddess has the “Owl of Knowledge” as a symbol?
- 11) If you fill a pool with a substance like custard, you can run over its surface! It’s still dangerous to stop in the middle though! What is the formal name for these types of substances?
- 12) At present, what is the fastest recorded internet speed?
- 13) Did you know that the sun is also rotating? How long does it take for one full rotation at the equator?
- 14) The earth’s prime meridian passes directly through the city of Greenwich, located at 0 degrees east/west (or longitude 0). This line also happens to pass through

**General Information**

three oceans! Can you list all three?  
 15) There are a number of “ends” to each match of curling. What is the last stone thrown in an end called?  
 16) The Olympic 10km swimming race is certainly quite the distance, but what is the longest distance event swum at the FINA world tournament?  
 17) How many kanji are in the Jōyō kanji (everyday use) list?

everyone who comes and participates!  
**Location:** Miyakonojo City Hall 1st Floor Foyer  
**When:** Jan. 14th (Fri) ~ Feb. 28th (Mon) 2022  
**Inquiries:** Miyakonojo City Hall  
 Community & Culture Division  
 Internationalisation Promotion Office  
**TEL:** 0986-23-2295  
 More details as we get closer to the event!

So, how did you do? Hopefully this will keep you going until we can hold our Trivia night next year! Fingers crossed that we can!

◇ **It's Time For A Cooking Adventure!**

MIA will be holding cooking classes held by each of the three city CIRs. We hope that you can join us for some delicious food and fun time together! Please note that each of these sessions will be held in Japanese only.

- ① **Mongolia**      **Date:** December 11th (Sat)  
 “Tsuivan” (Similar to Japanese Yakisoba!)
- ② **China**      **Date:** December 12th (Sun)  
 “Sweet & Sour Boiled Pork Bone-on Spare Ribs + Japanese Yam & Cloud Ear Mushroom Stir-fry”
- ③ **Australia**      **Date:** December 18th (Sat)  
 “Lamingtons + ANZAC Biscuits”

Doors open at 9:20AM for a 9:30~11:30 class. This will be followed by an exchange session before cleanup.

**Location:** Machinaka Kitchen near Marumaru Library, along the No. 10 road.  
**Cost:** 600 Yen for members  
 900 Yen for non-members

For inquiries or to sign up, please call MIA directly. Limited spaces available. Please bring a *pen* and *apron*. We look forward to seeing you there!



◇ **Bonchi de Travel!**

Miyakonojo City's three CIRs want to hear about your episodes in Australia, China & Mongolia! We'd love to hear about your experiences in each of these countries, and we also want to hear about all of the places you want to travel to in the future!

For those that manage to write a particularly popular piece, there might even be a special prize...? You'll have to wait and see! There will definitely be gifts for



We look forward to having you with us for our next Trivia Night!

- 1) 33 Sports, 339 Events
- 2) 14, sharing #1 with Russia!
- 3) Vietnamese (with Japan being the most populous, of course!)
- 4) 108
- 5) 26 hours (Kiribati and Baker/Howland Islands)
- 6) (The castle of) Camelot
- 7) Roughly 200-2000 times (a single Perkinje cell can have up to 200,000 connections!)
- 8) Australia's Eucla, New Zealand's Chatham Island, and Nepal. In fact, Tokyo and Eucla's time difference is just 15 minutes!
- 9) England, 2nd to Japan!
- 10) Athena
- 11) Non-Newtonian fluids
- 12) Approximately 319Tb/s (40TB/s)
- 13) 25 days (at the poles, it's around 30 days!)
- 14) Antarctic, Arctic, Southern Pacific
- 15) The Hammer
- 16) 25km
- 17) 2136

Quiz Answers:

**Movies info** C-Plaza Cine-port (Tel: 0986-24-2571)  
 17-9 Nakamachi, Miyakonojo, Miyazaki Map-Code (GPS): 117 488 540\*55

- Eternals (Japanese Dub)
- Ron's Gone Wrong (Japanese Dub)
- Rogo no Shikin ga Arimasen (Japanese)
- Dune 2021 (Japanese Sub)
- Daughter of Lupin (Japanese)
- 007: No Time To Die (Japanese Sub)
- Masquerade Night (Japanese)  
 \*The 1st of every month is ¥1,100 for everyone.  
 \*Every Wednesday is 'Ladies' Day', all ladies ¥1,100.  
 \*The cinema is closed every Tuesday.  
 \*For session times visit: <http://movie.walkerplus.com/th286/schedule.html> (Japanese)