



MIA news

Miyakonojo International Association

Miyakonojo International Association
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Greetings from the Chairman

Happy New Year everyone!

I would like to offer you all my sincerest thanks for your continued support throughout last year.

Last year, as with the year prior, due to efforts to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, the association's Trivia Night was cancelled, and "World Festa in Miyakonojo", scheduled for the 16th of this month, has unfortunately been cancelled as well.

Amidst these difficult conditions, our regular Japanese Practice Sessions, whilst put on hold while facilities were closed over May and June, have been regularly held every Friday and every second Sunday since being re-opened.

The needs of our international students attending these sessions are many and varied; it is thanks to the assistance of our many wonderful volunteers that we can support their Japanese Language studies. I would like to offer my profound thanks to all of our volunteer teachers.

Additionally, throughout December, our three Coordinators of International Relations (CIRs) held International Cooking Classes (AKA Cooking Adventures) in the City Centre Kitchen, located in the Mallmall City Centre Exchange Plaza. While the event was small in scale with



MIA Chairman
Mr. Hironori Kodama

up to 12 people participating in each class, we've received a great deal of positive feedback from those who participated, after having enjoyed being able to make home-made cuisine or traditional sweets with our CIRs, as well as having an opportunity to enjoy a level of international exchange with them. Thank you to all of our participants, and especially to our CIRs.

At the same time, we are looking forward to holding our Community Safety workshop around early March, to provide safety and security for our international residents. Once the content of this workshop has been decided, we will provide you all with further details.

Unfortunately, the WHO have reported another "Virus of Concern", the Omicron variant, forcing us to remain vigilant. It is under these difficult conditions that we at the Miyakonojo International Association, while diligently and steadfastly upholding our COVID management protocols for the safety of our members, remain optimistic for the future and continue to work hard.

As we look to the future, we shall continue to endeavor more than ever to bring fulfillment through our projects, and seek to provide peace of mind for our international residents through support programs and the proactive enlightenment of our local population.

I look forward to everyone's continued support for, and cooperation with, the Miyakonojo International Association.

Framing the Past, Picturing the Future - Rebecca Devoto (Miyakonojo ALT from USA!)

Hello! My name is Rebecca and I have been living in Miyakonojo for three months working for JET as an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher). Originally, I am from California. I attended college at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), which is a beautiful campus located on the coast in Northern California. Here I discovered my passion for teaching as I began mentoring and tutoring students.

My career as an educator began in 2015 at an elementary school. This school focused on social emotional learning, which is the belief that learning takes place through social interactions. My experiences at this school shaped the way I view teaching and learning. I made my way back to UCSC to earn my Master's Degree in education and have been working with students ever since. I taught at many different schools throughout Northern California, working with students of all ages and backgrounds. Now that I live in



Miyakonojo, many of the experiences I'd hoped for as a teacher in the United States have come to life. I am integrating my professional training, teaching philosophy, and equity-oriented material into my own lessons. Even more importantly, I'm learning new teaching techniques from Japanese teachers and educators.

Although most of my time is spent teaching, I have lots of other interests that I am excited to expand upon in Miyakonojo. During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, I decided to turn my passion for photography into a more serious hobby. I enrolled in some photography classes online and was quickly drawn to photojournalism. Specifically, I created a portfolio of work documenting many social movements in the United States. One of the most exciting gatherings that I documented was a march that took place on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California.

My experience walking across the Golden Gate Bridge inspired me to travel across my own country, as I've spent most of my life within the state of California. This past spring, with my camera bag at my side, I hopped into my Honda Fit and drove through 34 different states in one month. I drove over 16,000 kilometers on

this journey! One of my favorite stops was Chicago, Illinois. Chicago has arguably the prettiest skyline in America. The Chicago River runs through the city and connects to Lake Michigan. You can take a boat tour to learn about the city's history and architecture as well as get a great view of the cityscape from Lake Michigan. A less traveled part of the country that I loved was Bangor, Maine, which is located in the northeast. Maine is a beautiful mountainous state with lots of areas to hike and enjoy nature. In the winter, they get around 177 centimeters of snow! Bangor, Maine is also the hometown of horror writer Stephen King. In the southeast, I really liked Savannah, Georgia. The architecture in Savannah is quite beautiful with a lot of wrought iron fencing which gives the city a cinematic feel. The city itself is quite small, but has a rich history that dates back before America was even a country. Because of this, it is believed that there are many spirits in Savannah. Including one that has made appearances at the bar in "The Olde Pink House" restaurant. In the southwest, I enjoyed Albuquerque, New Mexico. New Mexico has a lot of creative individuals and because of this, there is a huge art scene in this state. There are also several different Native American tribes in the area, so a lot of art is created by Native Americans and inspired by their culture. New Mexico is known for their UFO museum and hot-air balloon rides.

Albuquerque even hosts the world's largest annual hot-air balloon festival. Throughout this cross-country journey, I saw numerous historical landmarks, ate a lot of tasty foods, and visited friends and family.

I am incredibly excited to improve my skills in teaching and photography, but also I hope to learn Japanese. I am currently taking Japanese lessons at the community center. Additionally, I am very interested in learning how to cook Japanese food! I love food, and one of my favorite things about living in Japan is being immersed in completely new cuisine. I am genuinely grateful for the welcome and reception I have received in my move to Miyakonoyo and can't wait to spend more time exploring the city.



Photos taken during Rebecca's trip. Left: Chicago's "Cloud Gate". Right: Stephen King's home in Bangor, Maine.

General Information

Bonchi de Travel: ~Gochūmon ha Ikagadesuka?~ (How about Australia/China/Mongolia?)

The following is a notice from the Internationalisation Promotion Department.

Miyakonoyo's three CIRs, hailing from Australia, Mongolia & China, want to hear from YOU! Submitted stories will be shared regularly with everyone, and you can vote on your favourite!

● **What kind of event is this? What's it all about?**

Our three CIRs from Australia, Mongolia & China want to hear about your experiences with their home countries. The episodes you share with us will be regularly posted for everyone to see, and we'll be collecting votes on everyone's favourite!

Episode Submission & Voting: Jan. 14th (Fri) – Feb 9th (Wed)

● **Where is Bonchi de Travel happening?**

City Hall's 1st Floor Lobby!

● **What should we write about?**

For those who have been to any of our CIRs home countries, we'd love to hear about your experiences, thoughts, or recommendations! For those who haven't had a chance to visit these countries, we'd love to hear about all the things you want to do if you have the chance to go! For example, "I'd love to go to ___ in

Australia!", "I want to try eating ___ in Mongolia", or "I want to go and see/do ___ in China", we want to hear about it all!

● **Is there anything else on offer at this event?**

For all of our participants, there will be small gifts, hand-made by our local CIRs!

In addition, for those who submit particularly popular episodes that receive a large number of votes, there might just be an extra special gift from the country you submitted the episode about...?!

● **Can we chat with the CIRs themselves?**

While the event is running, our CIRs will regularly make themselves available in the Lobby. Maybe while you have a chat to them, an idea of what you'd like to write might come to mind...? In any case, we look forward to seeing you at City Hall's First Floor Lobby for the event!



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

- Eternals (Japanese Dub)
- Rogo no Shikin ga Arimasen (Japanese)
- Mamorarenakatta Monotachi he (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)