



J A S G

THE JAPAN-AMERICA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA

SUMMER 2019

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Emperor Abdicates Crown Prince Naruhito Ushers in Reiwa Era

On April 30, Japan's Emperor Akihito, 85, abdicated after 30 years on the throne. On May 1, his son Naruhito ascended to the throne. During his reign, Akihito traveled overseas representing Japan's diplomatic missions and dedicated himself to the vulnerable in society, including those who had suffered from earthquakes and tsunami. Emperor Naruhito, who studied at Oxford, is expected to dedicate himself to environmental issues. Naruhito, 59, is the 126th Emperor of Japan, the latest in an unbroken line stretching back 14 centuries. The Japanese royal family is the longest dynasty in the world. To celebrate, Consul-General Shinozuka hosted a dinner at his residence on May 22. Special guests included Georgia House representatives Calvin Smyre, David Knight, and Tom Taylor, and newly appointed State Treasurer Lynn Riley.

JASG Annual Dinner June 19 at Cherokee Town Club

As a part of its summer tradition, the JASG will celebrate its 39th anniversary at the Annual Dinner Gala & Silent Auction on Wednesday, June 19. The Annual Dinner provides an enjoyable opportunity for cross-cultural understanding and business networking among Japanese and Americans in Georgia as over 250 guests attend the event, including esteemed Japanese business leaders doing business in Georgia as well as prestigious Georgia companies and business owners investing in Japan.

This year, the Society returns to the Cherokee Town Club for the extravaganza that includes a cocktail reception, silent auction including Delta tickets to Japan, dinner, and a special performance by Japanese jazz musician Senri Oe, a JASG favorite, from New York City.

If you are interested in attending and/or donating to the silent auction, please contact admin@jasgeorgia.org. The deadline for purchasing tickets is June 12.



JASG Relocates Office

On June 1, JASG moved from its current location in Buckhead to Suite 112, 1900 Century Pl NE, Atlanta, GA 30345. The old office, JASG's home since 2003, is in an area being redeveloped. The new office is near Buford Highway and I-85N off of Clairmont Road. With a better layout for classes and events, we are looking forward to hosting even more events and providing more services. We look forward to all our friends dropping by to see our new digs.





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Message from the Chairman



I hope that you and your families are enjoying the start of summer and will be able to spend time outdoors and appreciate how beautiful Georgia can be this time of year.

We have had a very busy past few months with a variety of events including a tour of Hoshizaki, International Women’s Series, Foreign Exchange Seminar, and a Spring Social Networking Night. In addition to these programs, the Society were part of projects in which we hosted visitors from Japan and also sent people from Georgia to Japan. In March the Society welcomed the Spring semester group of students as part of the Obirin University Business Management Global Outreach as well as K-12 students from Fukuoka as part of the Asian Pacific Children’s Convention (APCC) Bridge Challenge Trip. From Georgia, the JASG sent a group of students and chaperones from Cambridge, Decatur, and McIntosh High Schools and also a group of government and business officials to Japan in March-April and May respectively.

We also learned of a very exciting announcement in April as members of the Georgia General Assembly recently launched of the Georgia-Japan Legislative Caucus. The Caucus is a coordinated effort to sustain and enhance economic and cultural relationships between Japan and the state of Georgia. The JASG will certainly be looking into ways it can help support various initiatives to further strengthen the friendship and close ties between Japan and our great State, and hope that you will join our efforts in this new endeavor.

In upcoming news, our 39th Annual Dinner Gala is will be held on June 19, 2019 at the Cherokee Town Club. I encourage you to join us to celebrate the JASG’s anniversary as we will welcome special guest jazz musician, Senri Oe, who will be our dinner entertainment. The event will also feature the always-popular silent auction fundraiser and a special way to promote friendship between Americans and Japanese here in Georgia as well so please plan on attending, sponsoring, and/or donating an auction item for the event. The Society will also continue to offer a variety of activities and will be part of exciting programming including host/friendship family opportunities for students from Japan, JapanFest 2019, and SEUS-Japan in Savannah and hope to see you at many of these upcoming event.

It has been an honor and privilege to have served as Chairman of the Society for the past two years. We are proud of what the JASG has been able to accomplish over the year and look forward to helping make it a better place for you. Please don’t hesitate to contact the JASG office if you are interested in being involved in promoting membership, planning events, assisting with educational programs, or have ideas on how we can better serve you.

JASG Chair
 President, Operations & E-Commerce
 TOTO Corporation



Upcoming Events and Programs

- Jun 11 (Tue) **Kayobi-Kai Dinner at Comm BBQ:** JASG members and friends gather for friendship and networking among Japanese and Americans while enjoying Southern barbecue.
- Jun 19 (Wed) **Annual Dinner Gala at Cherokee Town Club:** As part of our summer tradition, the JASG celebrates its 39th Annual Dinner. The Annual Dinner is a unique occasion when a diverse representation of many top Japanese and American business and community leaders gather for celebration and enjoyment. Guest performer: Jazz Performer Senri Oe.
- Jun 29 (Sat) **Nihongo-Eigo Kai Meeting:** Come join language learners as we enjoy conversations on different topics every month, half in Japanese and half in English.
- Jun 29 (Sat) **YP Undo-Kai BBQ Picnic:** JASG members and friends gather at Brandon Hall School in Dunwoody for a family-style barbecue. The event also features Japanese Undo-Kai (field day) activities for all ages.
- Jul 9 (Tue) **Kayobi-Kai Dinner at Sushi Yoko:** JASG members and friends gather for friendship and networking among Japanese and Americans while enjoying Japanese cuisine.
- Jul 13 (Sat) -
Jul 25 (Thurs) **APCC Bridge Summer Camp:** Three rising 6th graders and a chaperone travel to Japan for the annual Asia Pacific Children's Convention. The Georgians attend a summer camp with students from the Pacific Rim and then spend time with a Japanese host family and attend a Japanese school.
- Jul 27 (Sat) **Nihongo-Eigo Kai Meeting:** Come join language learners as we enjoy conversations on different topics every month, half in Japanese and half in English.
- Jul 27 (Sat) –
Jul 28 (Sum) **Family Outing at Zoo Atlanta's Wild World Weekend:** Come to Zoo Atlanta's Wild World Weekend highlighting activities from around the world. It features a self-guided tour of various areas of the Zoo, exclusive animal feedings, various educational opportunities for kids including the JASG's Japan booth.
- Aug 13 (Tues) **Kayobi-Kai Dinner at Gyukaku:** JASG members and friends gather for friendship and networking among Japanese and Americans while enjoying Japanese cuisine.
- Aug 13 (Wed)
- Dec 16 (Mon) **Obirin Business Management Global Outreach Program:** The JASG welcomes Obirin University students from Japan for a 16-week study abroad program where students study English while visiting and learning how various Japanese and U.S. companies operate in today's global economy.
- Aug 22 (Thu) **Annual Membership Meeting:** JASG members gather for a recap of JASG activities over the past year and a look ahead to the year to come. New Officers and Directors are voted in for 2-year terms.
- Aug 24 (Sat): **Nihongo/Eigo-Kai:** Come join language learners as we enjoy conversations on different topics every month, half in Japanese and half in English.
- Aug 31 (Sat): **JASG Braves Night Out:** Join the Japan-America Society of Georgia's Atlanta Braves Night Out at SunTrust Park as the Braves play host! Join us in The Batter's Eye Deck located in centerfield just below the Braves Vision scoreboard to take in all the pregame activities while enjoying ballpark fair foods.
- Sept 7 (Sat) **Japanese-Korean Friendship Golf Tournament:** Golf aficionados get together to enjoy a round of golf at Robert Trent Jones Grand National Country Club in Opelika, Alabama.
- Sept 10 (Tue) **Kayobi-Kai Dinner at Tokyo Shokudo:** JASG members and friends gather together at Tokyo Shokudo for the monthly dinner to promote friendship and social networking among Japanese and Americans.
- Sept 21 (Sat) –
Sept 22 (Sun)** **JapanFest 2019:** Held at the Infinite Energy Center in Duluth, JapanFest is the largest Japanese festival in the Southeast with over 20,000 attendees each year. JapanFest features the best in dance and music performances, the intricate maneuvers of Japanese martial arts, various Japanese cuisines, many different cultural exhibitions, expositions of Japanese companies in Georgia, and much more.



JAPAN FEST SEPTEMBER 21-22

2019 marks the 33rd year for JapanFest, the largest Japanese festival in the Southeast. As in previous years, it will be held at the Infinite Energy Center in Gwinnett County, Georgia!

In the spirit of “Arigato, Georgia and the Southeast!” let’s come together to entertain, educate, and warmly connect with the many Japanese and Americans, adults, youth and families, who flock to JapanFest each year to enjoy Japanese food, anime, traditional Japanese arts, great music, and increased awareness of the important contributions made by Japanese corporations in our region.

In 2018, we had a top attendance of over 22,000, reserving our ranking as the largest Japan-related event in the entire Southeast.

Our theme for 2019 is “Get Ready to Travel Japan – Olympics 2020!” with an emphasis on the virtual sensation of being in Japan, and to build on the excitement of Olympics past and soon-to-be. We are encouraging exhibitors to join in with the Olympics theme and highlight the beauty and endless exploration that Japan provides as a world-class destination.

This year, at our venue The Infinity Energy Center in Gwinnett County, we will utilize our space more fully across the facility to improve people-traffic flow and increase space for food vendors. In addition to our beautiful 700-seat theater, we will place a large Coca-Cola stage with two large video screens in the food court to offer greater visibility for programming.

We will include a new Japanese-American minyo music group from California, and invite our beloved Taiko drummers from Maturiza, Motoko the Story Teller, and Sword Soul to return, among others. Many other Japan-related local groups who have exhibited and performed in the past will bring their new acts. We will offer a new, easily accessible location for “Children’s Playland,” and offer a

screening of the award-winning anime film **Mirai** for family entertainment enjoyment. We will rotate film clips about the Olympics and tourism in Japan on the large video screens. And we are now in negotiations for some additional fun entertainment surprises we can tell you more about over the coming months which will add even more originality to this year’s programming.

With your participation, we can collectively be a strong force for peace and mutual understanding between Japan and the United States in the Southeastern region, one person at a time. We are calling on our corporate sponsors, private sponsors and volunteers from previous years, and those who have not participated before, to come together with renewed enthusiasm and involvement to make this one of our very best festivals yet, because it is your support that makes our work possible.

Visit www.japanfest.org to sign up as a sponsor, volunteer, exhibitor, or vendor and to learn more as new features are added!

JapanFest, Inc. is a 501(3)(c) educational nonprofit organization, and we warmly welcome your tax-deductible donations throughout the year.





State Legislative Caucus Launched to Enhance Relations Between Japan and Georgia

Influential members of the Georgia General Assembly announced the launch of the Georgia-Japan Legislative Caucus on Friday, April 5. The Caucus is a coordinated effort to sustain and enhance economic and cultural relationships between Japan and the state of Georgia.

The Caucus will be led by Representative David Knight (R-Griffin) and Representative Calvin Smyre (D-Columbus) in the State House and Senator Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) and Senator Jennifer Jordan (D-Atlanta) in the Senate. Caucus members will be able to actively engage with businesses and cultural communities and collaborate with Japanese and Japanese-American groups and organizations. The Caucus is open to all local legislators, particularly those with Japanese-owned companies in their districts, represent Georgia-Japan sister cities or support foreign direct investment in the state.

“I enthusiastically welcome the Georgia General Assembly’s new initiative,” Consul General of Japan in Atlanta, Mr. Takashi Shinozuka said. “My office looks forward to working with the members of the Georgia-Japan Legislative Caucus to further strengthen the deep bonds shared between Japan and the great State of Georgia.” More than half of the 1,200 Japanese affiliated companies in the Consulate’s jurisdiction are in Georgia; those companies employ more than 30,000 Georgians.

Governor Kemp Lauds Georgia Trade

Georgia has reached new trade records according to the Governor’s report on Georgia’s 2018 international trade numbers:

- Exports surpassed \$40.5 billion – a 9% increase over 2017;
- Nearly 90% of exporters are small businesses, mirroring the strength and diversity of Georgia’s economy;
- Georgia reclaimed rank as the 11th largest exporting state;
- In past decade Georgia exports have grown by 71%;
- Georgia companies exported to 212 countries and territories;
- Imports grew to \$98.7 billion;
- Georgia ranks 7th among U.S. states for imports and total trade;
- Major exports in aerospace, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural products;
- Georgia with representation in 12 strategic markets including Japan.



Georgia Hosting SEUS-Japan in Savannah October 20-23

In its 42nd year, the annual joint meeting of the Southeast U.S./Japan Association and the Japan-U.S. Southeast Association will take place in Savannah, Georgia October 20 thru 23. This prestigious

gathering of global business leaders celebrates longstanding economic and cultural ties and offers delegates from Japan and seven southeastern U.S. member states unparalleled opportunities to meet key contacts and leverage international opportunities.

Hosted at the Westin Savannah Harbor, the conference will focus on useful takeaways for participants from both the public and private sectors. Our Chairman is Virgil Miller, Executive Vice President and COO of Aflac U.S. Given Aflac’s deep roots in Japan and its history in Columbus, GA, we feel the company is a natural fit. Virgil brings a wealth of experience, his charisma, and the warm, inviting nature that befits a host in the South.

The agenda will highlight the collaboration in the US-Japan relationship, including workforce development, logistics and supply chains, trade relations, and grassroots economic and cultural exchanges. And as with all SEUS conferences, there will be plenty of opportunities for networking with old friends and new. Join us and also enjoy the beauty of Savannah history and culture.

For information on the conference, including registration, agenda, and sponsorship opportunities, please see the event website <http://seusjapan2019.com/>, or email the Georgia Department of Economic Development at seusjapan2019@georgia.org. We would love to hear from anyone with quality content or ideas!





Students in Kamakura in front of the 'Big Buddha'



Students in Hiroshima in front of Atomic Bomb Dome



From 21st century Japan to . . .

High Schoolers Study Tour to Japan – The Experience of a Lifetime

From March 28 to April 6, twenty-five Georgians visited Japan on an all expenses paid study tour sponsored by the Japan Foundation. Participants in this GEN-J inaugural study tour included 18 high schoolers from Cambridge High School in Alpharetta, Decatur High School in Decatur and McIntosh High School in Peachtree City.

While many of their classmates were vacationing on sunny Florida beaches during spring break, a group of 18 students and chaperones from Cambridge High, Decatur High and McIntosh High spent their time learning more about Japan, its history, its culture and people, and its economy during a ten-day trip in early April. With generous funding from the Japan Foundation and expert planning from members of the Japan-America Society of Georgia, the Atlanta-area students were treated to a once-in-a-lifetime experience that took them to many different parts of Japan. The students experienced bustling streets and neighborhoods in Tokyo, the historic city of Hiroshima, the small island of Miyajima, and the beautiful city of Kyoto.

Along the way, students visited many of Japan’s most well-known cultural landmarks and attractions and they had countless opportunities to interact with Japanese people of all ages. They also had the chance to learn some Japanese, eat bento box lunches, navigate Shibuya crossing, participate in a traditional tea ceremony, and learn more about the Imperial transition.

“Having so many chances to meet with Japanese citizens, and see them going about their everyday lives, was such a great opportunity for all of us,” said McIntosh High student Jennifer F. “I learned so much about what life is like in places like

Tokyo, Hiroshima and Kyoto from speaking with all of the guides we met along the way. Because of this trip, I have a much better understanding of the Japanese people and the way they interact with their surrounding environment.”

Decatur High student Ella D. had similar sentiments, “Traveling to Japan allowed me to see how other cultures interact in day-to-day life, which was really interesting,” she said. “I got to see first-hand how polite and group-oriented the Japanese people are, which stands in contrast to our more individualistic culture here in the United States. This trip helped me understand how to be a better, more helpful person to others and to respect all of the differences between myself and citizens of other countries.”

The efficiency and cleanliness of Japan’s high-speed bullet train system are what really surprised Cambridge High’s Jack T. “We took the bullet train from Tokyo to Hiroshima and it felt like we were riding on a cloud the entire way,” he said. “The

(continued on page 7)



Georgia Business and Leadership Delegation Trip to Japan

The Japan Foundation recently hosted several community-based Georgia leaders during a week-long visit from May 19 to 25 to Tokyo as well as to either Kitakyushu or Osaka.



Briefings by the Japan Foundation, the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Keidanren, JETRO and private sector executives were substantive while celebrating the decades long relationship Georgia and Japan have enjoyed. Trading partners were discussed, along with direct investments that have mutually benefitted both sides of the Pacific. The Japan Foundation creates global opportunities to foster

friendship, trust and mutual understanding through culture, language and dialogue. This special trip is a Gen-J program.

Current trade issues and workforce concerns were mutually affirmed. The timing of the visit coincided with President Trump’s visit with the new Emperor – the first world leader to visit him; meetings and other time with Prime Minister Abe were priorities with the US’ fourth largest partner (the three largest are Mexico, Canada and China - year to date).

Georgia leaders shared pride in Georgia-based companies who benefit from investing and employing in Japan – among the largest are JASG members AFLAC, Coca-Cola, Delta Air Lines –and numerous other goods and services producers. Numerous Japanese corporations invest in Georgia: all terrain vehicles, automotive parts, tires, financial services and more. (continued on page 8)



...to traditional Japan – the experience of a lifetime

(continued from page 6 High School Trip to Japan) trains moved so quickly in and out of each station so you really had to be on your toes when it came time to exit the train. I was also amazed at how clean the trains and train stations were in every city we visited. The Japanese people do an incredible job of keeping everything spotless.”

McIntosh High student Elizabeth R. summed up her experience like this: “Having the opportunity to ring the peace bell in Hiroshima is an experience that I will never forget. That day really made me think about the history of the Japan-U.S. relationship and it gave me hope for a future where countries can learn to work together to shape a better world. This trip showed me exactly how special the Japan-U.S. relationship is and I’m so thankful that I was selected to participate.”

Cambridge High Principal and trip chaperone Kimberly Premoli was also moved by the group’s visit to Hiroshima. “The history and impact observed in Hiroshima quite possibly had the greatest benefit to the students. An understanding of the destruction and devastation of the city could not be fully grasped without the visit to the Atomic Bomb Dome building and memorial. As an educator, it was so special to witness the broadening of students’ viewpoints and the beginnings of students’ affinity for travel and experiences beyond those of their home.”

Each student who participated in this unique opportunity came away from the experience with a greater understanding of Japanese culture, history, and its people. All of them will treasure their time in Japan for a lifetime.



(Business Trip from page 7) Sustainability 5.0 is a new initiative of Keidanren, the very influential association of corporations and executives. Environmental sustainability and reduction of poverty and peace are all priorities of this most influential corporate leadership organization.

The “Section 232” report of the US Department of Commerce has prompted much concern among each of the groups with whom we met. The automotive sector in Georgia is very important and supply chain interruption was already a business issue even before the publication of the 232 report. This is “one to watch” as the complex trade negotiations continue.

JETRO recently conducted a survey and results included more than half of Japanese corporations are planning expansions in the US. JETRO is another resource used by many US businesses and available for more opportunities.

Kitakyushu is home to TOTO corporate headquarters, home to the manufacturing plant and North American headquarters in Georgia – led by JASG Chair of the Board Bill Strang. A Nippon Steel tour and briefing were conducted where they also noted the joint venture with Arcelor Mittal in Alabama.

Along the way, leaders Blaine Williams (Athens); Trevor Williams (Atlanta); Mayor Phil Best (Dublin), Al Hodge (Rome),



and Mayor Pro Tem Carol Bell and Chair of City Council Julian Miller (Savannah) were treated to cultural experiences, shrines, historic tours, and lots of tasty and nutritious food – and yes, while trade, investment and sustainability were discussed, the squid was the talk of the evening with our Kitakyushu Chamber of Commerce friends.

The Japan Foundation is a very significant partner with the JASG. We are grateful for their continuous support. It is through programs, public policy awareness and advocacy and the forever important relationships that prosperity between nations, states and communities are achieved.

SPRING JASG HIGHLIGHTS



Atlanta Gladiators Japanese American Appreciation Day: The Gladiators clashed with the Greenville Swamp Rabbits in a South Division Rivalry Game! Events included live performance by Japanese drummers during the intermissions at Infinite Energy Arena in Duluth.



Facility Tour of Hoshizaki America on April 9



US-Japan-Korea Networking Reception on May 9



Mariko's Adventures

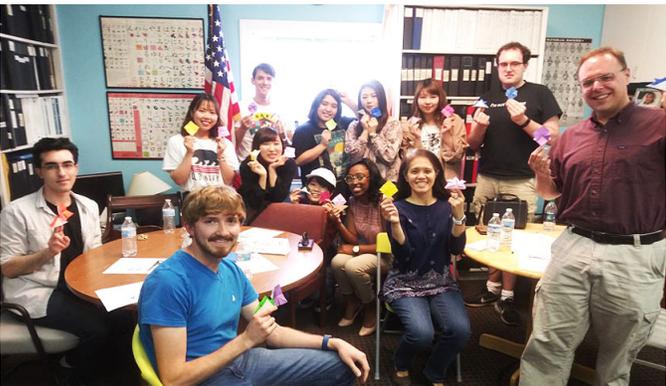
Explore Japan, Kayobi Kai, Nihongo-Eigo Kai



Macedonia Elementary School in Canton, Georgia on March 29



Gwinnett College language table and cooking event on April 29



Nihongo-Eigo Kai when Americans and Obirin college students from Japan shared their language and culture on April 27

Kayobi Kai enjoyed dinner together on May 14

Dear Friends,
 As the school year comes to a close, I'd like to thank all the schools that have invited me to explain about Japan in their classrooms and to participate in their International Days. I was surprised about how bright and cheerful US classrooms are with posters and decorations as classrooms are much more Spartan in Japan. Also Japanese high school students wear uniforms, but elementary school students almost never wear uniforms. Here it is the opposite. Lunches are also different. In Japan elementary school students carry cafeteria food from the kitchen to their classrooms where they all eat the same thing at the same time. Here students go to the cafeteria and eat lunch they either buy in the cafeteria or bring from home. Japanese high school students almost all carry their lunch from home, but Americans tend to eat cafeteria food together. I was really surprised when I saw students eating snacks or drinking in the classroom. In US middle schools and high schools, teachers have their own classrooms and students move from classroom to classroom, while in Japan the teachers go from classroom to classroom. Finally, it was interesting that US schools have visitors come to explain their culture, but in Japan the teachers stick closely to the curriculum, without outside visitors. I think it is so much more meaningful to meet people from different countries who can actually describe the country, culture, history, music, and arts. I hope everyone enjoys summer vacation. Next fall, I look forward to going to even more schools and meeting more teachers and students.

But those of you who come to Kayobi-Kai and Nihongo-Eigo Kai, there is no summer vacation. I hope even more of you come and bring your friends as we enjoy sharing our culture and language with each other. Here are some of my many memories.

Mariko Shimoda





JASG Hosts Women’s Series Seminar on Leading with Cultural Intelligence

On April 24, the JASG hosted a seminar at Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP on Leading with Cultural Intelligence: How to Succeed in a Multicultural World. The “fireside chat” style seminar, which attracted more than 70 attendees, featured Dr. Maryam Alavi, Dean and Professor at Georgia Institute of Technology Scheller College of Business and Ms. Nozomi Morgan, CEO and Intercultural Leadership Expert, Michiki Morgan Worldwide. The session was moderated by Jessica Cork, Vice President of Public Relations and Communications, YKK Corporation of America. The seminar was part of the Women Series, a collaboration between the German, French, Netherlands and Belgian American Chambers of Commerce as well as the British-American Business Council and the Japan-America Society of Georgia.

The seminar, which was preceded by a networking hour featuring sushi and sake courtesy of Wagaya Japanese Restaurant, kicked off with a Japanese tea ceremony demonstration by Kazuko Lillie. This was followed by a lively discussion of the speakers’ first-hand experiences about such topics as the biggest struggles working or studying in a country other than one’s own; self-imposed or culturally imposed glass ceilings; advice for men in how best to champion women’s advancement; your message to your younger self, based on what you know now.



Some takeaways from the session included, “Forget about being perfect. Good enough is good enough.” “Raise your hand when you have a chance even if you feel you are not quite ready.” “Take risks and challenge yourself. There is not much to lose.” “Your priorities change in different life stages. Be flexible. Be positive.”

The Society is grateful to Kazuko Lillie; the partners who assisted with this event, including Georgia Tech Center for International Business Education and Research; Smith, Gambrell and Russell, LLP; Wagaya Japanese Restaurant; and the Women’s Series leaders.

Tomodachi Club Year Culminates with Koto Performance

On Wednesday, May 1st, the Tomodachi Club wrapped up its 2018-19 season with its General Meeting at Nakato Restaurant. Our program featured Madoka Ito who played the koto. The 35 guests and members enjoyed a delicious Japanese lunch.



Planning and organizing the five General Meetings each year requires a lot of suggestions and input from members. On May 15th, the Club held its annual planning meeting at the home of Silvana Eakin. At the meeting, members made suggestions as to programs and venues that our members would enjoy for the upcoming 2019-2020 Tomodachi year.

Over the summer, the four Tomodachi co-chairs will be busy organizing the five meetings scheduled for the second Wednesdays of September 2019 and January 2020, and the first Wednesdays of November 2019, March 2020 and May 2020. Further information about programs and venues for each meeting will be available in late August. In addition, the Tomodachi Club has two small group meetings, in October and February organized by small group co-chairs.

We welcome all JASG women to join our Tomodachi Club and participate in our programs.

The Tomodachi Club was established in October 1981 under the sponsorship of JASG to promote friendship, cultural exchange, and understanding among Japanese and American women. Membership approximates 60 women. To become a member of our Tomodachi Club or for additional information, please contact Maki Murahashi at the JASG office, Tel. 404-842-1400 or Admin@JASGeorgia.org.



Language Corner

Visiting the Doctor

When I lived in Japan in the 1990s, I worked at an English conversation school. One class was a small group of friendly housewives at a high beginning English level. One day, one regular came in about 15 minutes late. She apologized for being late, explaining in a cheerful voice that she had taken her young son to the hospital.

I was immediately concerned. “Is he okay? What is wrong? Why did he have to go to the hospital?” “Oh,” she said with a smile, “he had ...” and then not knowing the English word, she used the Japanese word, “*kensa*.” Since she was speaking English, I assumed she was saying an English word, and what I heard was the English word “cancer.” I was horrified. As often happened during my stay in Japan, I was very confused, but it was all a misunderstanding.

The first big misunderstanding is that, in Japan, most doctors see most patients in actual hospitals, while in the US, we don’t usually go to the “hospital” (as in the big building) unless we are very sick or have had a serious accident or other emergency. For a routine visit to the doctor, we don’t usually go to the hospital, but rather to doctors’ offices in smaller buildings. And in this case, we would say we took our son (for example) “to the doctor” rather than “to the hospital.” Therefore, for a mother to say she had taken her son to the hospital, would usually mean something seriously bad had happened. Something like cancer. The second misunderstanding, of course, is that “*kensa*” means “check up,” which is exactly the OPPOSITE of a seriously bad reason to go visit a doctor. Thus, my confusion as the ladies in my class smiled and chuckled while their classmate told them (I thought) that her son had cancer.

I learned a lot through these misunderstandings! Now that you are in the US, be prepared for Americans to overreact if you tell them you went “to the hospital.” Better to say you went “to the doctor.”

1990年代に私が日本に住んでいた時、英会話スクールで働いていました。クラスの1つは、フレンドリーな主婦達の少人数グループで英語の中上級レベルでした。ある日、1人の生徒さんが15分遅れでクラスに到着しました。彼女は病院に息子さんを連れて行ったと元気な声で説明しながら、遅れたことを謝罪しました。

私はすぐに心配になり、『彼は大丈夫か？どうしたのか？どうして病院へ行く必要があったのか？』と聞きました。彼女は笑顔で、『おー、彼は…。』と言って、その時は英語の単語がわからずに、彼女は日本語の『ケンサ』という単語を使いました。彼女が英語を話していたので、私は彼女が英単語を使おうとしていると想定しており、『キャンサー』と聞こえ、恐ろしくなりました。日本に滞在中、とても困惑することがよく起こりましたが、全てについて誤解がありました。

1つ目の誤解は、日本ではほとんどの医者が患者を実際の病院で診ますが、アメリカでは、病院（大きな建物としての）には重大な病気か重傷か他の緊急時のみにしか行きません。定期的な医者への訪問は、私たちは病院には行かず、小さなビルの医者のおフィスへむしろ行きます。このような場合、息子を『病院に連れて行った』と言うより、『医者に連れて行った』と言います。そのため、母親が息子を病院に連れて行ったと言ったら、何か深刻な悪いことが起こったとたいい意味します。『キャンサー』（ガン）のような…。

2つ目の誤解は、もちろん、『けんさ』は『検査』つまり深刻な悪いことを医者へ診てもらおうとは全く反対のことを意味します。このように、クラスの中で女性が笑顔で他の生徒さんに息子がガンだと話していたので困惑しました。

私はこのような誤解からたくさんを学びました。今、皆さんはアメリカにいらっしゃいますが、もし病院へ行った、とアメリカの方に話した時、過剰反応されると心の準備をしておいてください。『医者へ行った』と話した方が良いですよ。

Liz Bigler is the owner of Bigler ESL, which provides personalized English coaching for individuals and families to help make life in America productive and painless. www.BiglerESL.com



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