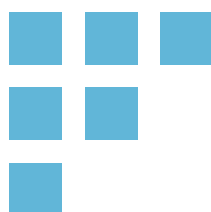




2010 いわて国際交流

Iwate International Association 2010

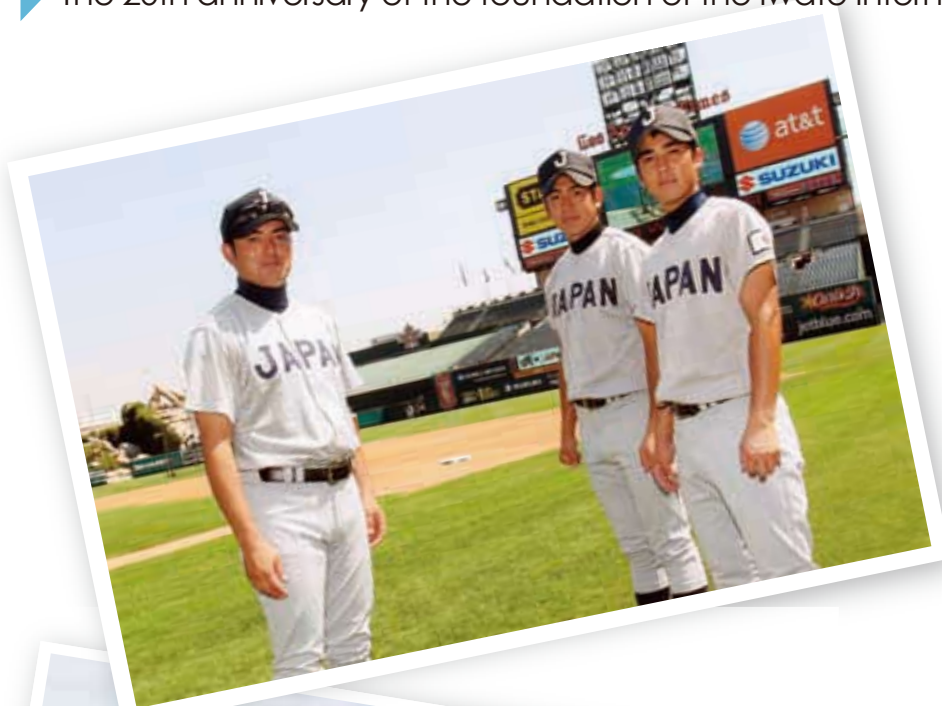
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Special Features :

▶ International Exchange Through Sports

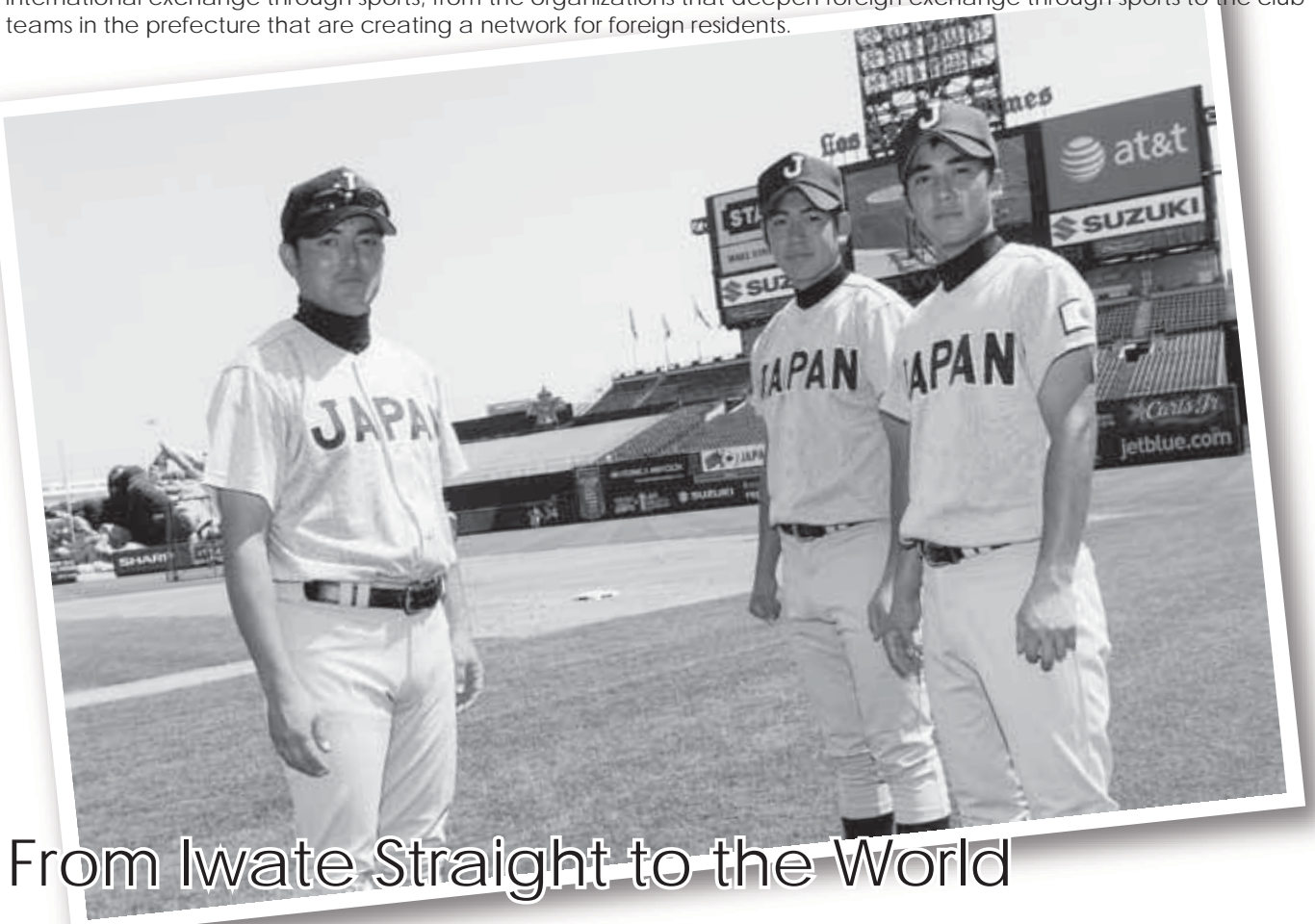
▶ The 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Iwate International Association



English

International Exchange Through Sports

From the Olympics and World Cup to a simple game of baseball on a grass-lot, sports are a common interest for everyone in the world, something that rises above differences in language and nationality. In this issue we take a look at international exchange through sports, from the organizations that deepen foreign exchange through sports to the club teams in the prefecture that are creating a network for foreign residents.



From Iwate Straight to the World

In the summer of 2009, the Hanamaki Higashi High School baseball team made it all the way to the top four at Koshien (the Japan National High School Baseball Tournament), something an Iwate Prefecture school had not accomplished for 90 years. The team gave the people of Iwate hope, courage, and excitement as the drama of the game-changing reversals unfolded. The coach of the team, Hiroshi Sasaki, spoke with us about creating a team completely different from previous Iwate teams, and his outlook on the world of Japanese baseball.

Becoming Top in Japan with just Native Prefectural Players

When I became the coach of the Hanamaki Higashi High School baseball team, I made it our goal to become the best team in Japan and win the national tournament. And how do I win with just native prefectural players? - I thought that once I saw the Iwate players. They compare favorably to other high schools (skill-wise). Certainly, Iwate players until now have never made it past the first game of Koshien, and they've lost a lot of games. They have too much of that Iwate niceness, that kindness, that humbleness. They're too nice and they have a tendency to become overwhelmed. But I think that if they just let out their indomitable spirits, even if just on the field, that things would be different. I'm a high school baseball coach - it's different from pro coaching. It's not just about winning. Of course you need to win as well, but what's most important is creating character. There are a lot of horrible things happening in society lately. More

people are committing suicide, homicide rates are going up, there's bullying and truancy - I could go on and on. I feel like encouraging baseball and sports will be our last defense.

Great People Who Can Also Play Baseball

What I tell the students is they have to have goals, they have to persevere, and they have to cooperate with other people. Baseball teaches you something precious about life, and because of that, you can't just coach baseball, you have to be a sort of teacher as well. I think in baseball and in education, the teacher has to be a pro. One of the things I believe in is raising not great baseball players, but great people who can also play baseball. I'm not producing a robot who can only play baseball. What a coach is concerned with is awakening passion and drive in their players.

I set aside time for my students to create goals. I think about how I'm going to get my players passionate, and I

Mini Interview

What I Felt in America

We talked with Yasutaka Kashiwaba and Takuro Sarukawa, two Hanamaki Higashi High School students who participated in the 2009 U.S.A.-Japan High School Baseball Games.

□ Kashiwaba

(Position: Second base, Hometown: Morioka, University: Meiji University)

I learned how important it was to focus not just on the technical stuff but also on developing as a person. It's also important to hold on to your will to win. In America I experienced a dynamic version of baseball. The batter swings with all his might. I also saw baseball being played the Japanese way; it was a meaningful experience. I was also surprised at the size of their meals and how much meat they eat, along with the difference in body sizes. I felt how necessary it is to focus on fitness. I want to become a regular member on my university team, and once again play in America.

□ Sarukawa

(Position: Third base, Hometown: Morioka, University: Tokai University)

I learned not to give up, to work hard, and how to live. American high schoolers are just as passionate about leveling up their skills as Japanese players. There were a lot of people who wanted to learn no matter what their age. From now on, I want to do my best at baseball in university, get picked for the Japan-U.S.A. University Baseball Games, and play once more across the ocean. And this time I want to be able to speak English.

concentrate on creating motivation. We make goals for baseball, study, and for their own lives. I tell them to make a goal before anything else. To realize that goal, they think about what they should be doing right now. I want to instill in them the ability to think for themselves.

Participating in the U.S.A.-Japan High School Baseball Games

During my time in America, I was surprised because everyday I kept meeting more and more people from Iwate. They were so nice, and I really felt the warmth of their hearts. I kept hearing, "We saw what a great job you did at Koshien!" To have such a warm reception on the other side of the ocean really made me happy. There were more people from Iwate than any other prefecture.

The power in American baseball is different. The speed of the pitches is different. The distance of a hit ball is different. Even the drinks and food sizes are different. I acutely realized the difference in power. It's just that I feel that Japan has more technical skill. We can't compete in speed, but in the technical aspect of baseball, we're really trying hard. We're proficient at neutralizing that speed – that's the high level of the Japanese's skill.

I was able to learn a lot from their coaching style too. The main feature of American coaching is not teaching too

much. They concentrate on the timing of the coaching. In Japan, they have times when they just teach too much. I want to think about a coaching style that uses the best of both worlds.

Spreading Their Wings from Iwate to the World

This is not a time to think about just the islands of Japan. This is the era of jumping over the boundaries of our region and country. Business takes place on the global stage. Matsui and Ichiro are playing at the global level. The level of our Japanese players has without a doubt reached a level comparable to the rest of the world. There's going to be more and more players setting off into the world from now on. There's also players coming from all over the world to play in Japan. Players are increasingly coming and going, and it's going to be an era where it will be easier to get to the major leagues. I think that time has already come. This time the major leagues seriously wanted a pitcher from Iwate. From now on, there's going to be cases of players starting out immediately in the major leagues, without spending time in Japan's pro league first. This is not some fairy tale, you know. It's all because those teams wanted Yuusei Kikuchi, and it would have been possible for him to start in the majors. From now on, I would like to see players spread their wings and set off from Iwate for the world, always keeping in mind the kindness and pride of Japan and Iwate.



We also talked with Yusei Kikuchi

Position: Pitcher, Hometown: Morioka,
Team: Seibu Lions, Uniform number: 17

Ever since I got into high school, my desire to play overseas has grown stronger and stronger. There's a lot more Japanese players in the majors now, and I really wanted to become one when I'd watch them on TV. It was such a surprise when the major league scouts came from overseas. I thought it was great that I could continue playing baseball, believing in my dream. Don't give up on your dreams. The only one who can give up your dream is you. I want the young people of Iwate to spread their wings and set off for the world, always holding onto their dreams and the pride of Japan and Iwate. I want to be the kind of person that young people in Iwate look up to.

Hanamaki Higashi High School Baseball Coach
Hiroshi Sasaki

Born in Kitakami and attended Kurosawa-jirikita High School and Kokushikan University. After coaching at Yokohama Hayato High School, he got his current post at Hanamaki Higashi in 2001. Representing Iwate, the team finished as first runner up National High School Baseball Invitational Tournament in the spring of 2009. That same year he participated as the Japan representative coach in the U.S.A.-Japan High School Baseball Games in Los Angeles. He is 34 years old.



Putting our Dreams in the Trees that become our Bats

Mr. Osamu Hara, who runs a sports supply shop in Shiwa, has raised aodamo trees alone for nine years. The wood of the aodamo, or Japanese ash, is a material used in baseball bats but global supplies have been drying up. He started corresponding with Danny (Tsutae) Maruyama, a man from Nedamo, Morioka currently living in Australia, and with the help of Mr. Maruyama they started an "Aodamo Exchange" in which Australian teams visited Iwate.

The Birth of the "Aodamo Association"

Osamu Hara invested in some private property and steadily planted seedlings in the borrowed ground, and currently he has raised over 15,000 trees. He does all the weeding himself - a very time-consuming job - and because aodamo need 70 years before they can be made into bats, this is a venture that requires a lot of patience.

One day by chance, Danny (Tsutae) Maruyama picked up a newspaper and read about Mr. Hara's aodamo activities. Mr. Maruyama had gone to Australia in his mid-twenties and became a successful businessman, and continued to participate in volunteer activities to help spark interest in baseball. In 2008, his 30 years of service in the field of baseball promotion was acknowledged, and he was the first Japanese person to ever win the prestigious President's Award from the Australian Baseball Federation's Baseball Australia Diamond Awards. This conductor of "international exchange through baseball," was moved by Mr. Hara's activities and way of life, and went to visit him during a trip to Japan. There, his support of Mr. Hara and his activities began, and they gathered members of the baseball community together to form the "Iwate Aodamo Growers Association," with Mr. Hara acting as president.

Highly Esteemed Exchange in Iwate

In May, 2009, Mr. Maruyama led the Australia Baseball Club's Australian Provincial team in Japan as an advisor, and for one month, the team played games all over Japan, starting from Iwate and going to places like Niigata and Gunma. Every year the Australia Baseball Federation picks a team to play overseas in the interest of international goodwill, and these exchange games were able to take place because Japan was chosen as the foreign host last year.

In their starting place of Iwate, they held a children's baseball workshop along with games at Fuji University, Morioka University, JR Morioka, and Pheasant Iwate. There was a cultural exchange party where people of all ages could come and interact with the foreign players at Kawame Elementary School, a place where Mr. Maruyama had previous correspondence. On the last day, children and baseball players, coaches, and other related people planted a memo-

Memorial aodamo tree planting at the prefectural baseball stadium
© Photo Studio Natura



(left) Vice President Kichiji Nagayama (right) President Osamu Hara

rial aodamo tree at the Iwate Prefectural Baseball Stadium, the tree that had brought everyone together. It was a spirited exchange, with Morioka University students acting as interpreters and Iwate Prefectural University students acting as photographers at the matches. The team evaluated Iwate very highly in their report to the government when they returned to Australia. The players said that they hoped to travel to Iwate again, and that the cultural exchange had succeeded marvelously. A Dream for the Next Generation

The Iwate Aodamo Growers Association have designated this second year of their existence as a time to strengthen their foundation, and are planning ways to increase recognition of their activities. The Growers Association Vice President, Kichiji Nagayama said, "Growing aodamo is not just about baseball, it's also useful as a global warming counter-measure and an educational tool about the environment for our young people. We want to create an organization that continues into the future." With a striking smile on his face, President Hara added, "These trees take quite some time before they can be used as bats, so we're entrusting this dream to our grandchildren."

Iwate Aodamo Growers Association

Created in April, 2009. They plant aodamo seedlings and develop activities that will aid the conservation and preservation of nature. At the same time, they also aim towards creating systems that will ensure that the baseball world will be able to reliably secure wooden bat materials for years to come. Its president is Osamu Hara, with Yoji Yoshida and Danny Maruyama acting as advisors.

Yachting is our common language. New Zealand has so much to teach about sailing and the importance of the environment.

International Exchange through Yachting

Iwate Marine Field – an NPO based in Miyako – holds a training event for sailing in New Zealand every year as a way to promote international exchange amongst youths. Participants learn a great deal of things from their experience at the New Zealand yachting club, from yachting skills to environmental issues, and even how to lead a rewarding life.



President – Hisao Hashimoto

This exchange began in 2003 when a university student from New Zealand named Stuart Innes came to Miyako as a Sports Exchange Advisor to help coach yachting. He started coaching in the summer, but when he finally got used to the conditions in Japan and was ready for serious training it was the off-season. At that point, Stuart made a proposal. “It’s winter here in Japan, but back in New Zealand it’s going to be summer. So why don’t we just go to New Zealand and train?” Marine Field from its inception had international exchange as one of its purposes, so we felt that this would just be an expansion on that and so decided to start from there. We began preparations immediately and left for New Zealand the following year, in January 2004.

The first trip consisted of seven Miyako youths, from ages 10 – 16, who were all participants of Juniors. There was also a lack of funds, so all of the participants stayed at the homes of yacht club members. The vocabulary used in yachting is mostly English anyway, so the training went very smoothly. The children were also able to communicate well with the families; the families would ask them questions at the end of the day like, “How was sailing today,” or talk with them when the children left in the morning saying, “There’s a nice wind blowing today.”

The program involved going out on the water and doing yacht training from 10 in the morning to 2 in the afternoon. Afterwards, they would play sports or go mountain climbing, or tour various facilities. Yachting is at an advanced stage in New Zealand, and there exists a system that teaches not just yachting skills, but also includes environmental education. The Water Wise Program is a fantastic program, with a comprehensive approach that includes teaching about nature, the environment, sailing, and weather. Not only did the children learn on this trip, but we adults also learned so much that we could use for our NPO activities, such as for experience programs we run for children.

The coach for the following program was a member of

the female Olympic team. Half of the participants that year were high school students and were able to use their training successfully in national athletic competitions. I believe their varied experiences helped them to grow as people. Among past participants, there is even one studying abroad in New Zealand right now.

Now, there is even a program where people from New Zealand come to Miyako for training. It takes place once every two years. One of the participants this year is a World Youth athlete who competed at an event in Brazil just before coming to Miyako. This is an amazing program because we can bring athletes who compete around the world to our town of Miyako.

The youth program has almost made a complete round, so from now I would like to start an exchange program for adults. We will look at various programs that we can learn from for our organizations activities and to expand business exchange. For example, one of the foreign program participants that came to Miyako this year is the owner of a flower nursery. He suggested to us, “Flowers are so expensive in Japan. Would you be interested in importing my flowers here by container?” The reason this exchange came about was because of the trust brought about by our mutual interest in yachting. I would like to be able to use capital raised in this manner to support our NPO activities into the future.

NPO Iwate Marine Field

Marine Field holds various educational classes and events to promote marine sports. In addition to the event introduced in this article, Marine Field holds sea-kayaking seminars, provides yachting and kayaking lessons for groups, and conducts environmental protection activities.

Crossing Swords, Knowing Love

Iwate Prefecture's Tono city has a sister-city relationship with Salerno, a city in southern Italy. There was a request for instruction of kendo, or traditional Japanese swordsmanship, during an exchange between the two cities, and in 2005, nine kendo practitioners from Tono were sent to Salerno. This international exchange through kendo is rare at the municipal level. Kendo instructors Mr. Choetsu Kikuchi and Mr. Kazuhiro Kikuchi talked about their surprise when meeting the enthusiastic participants.

Participants from throughout the Nation

Kendo is rather popular in Italy, but the standard level in Salerno was not that high. We decided to gather instructors mainly from the Tono Kendo Association and see if we could be of use. Once we got to Italy, we were surprised that there were quite a lot more participants than previously expected. We asked what was going on and found out that people had come from all throughout Italy to come train with us. There were even representatives from the former national team. Originally, the instruction and exchange with the participants was to be done only among Italians, and those of us from Tono were not supposed to do the whole thing ourselves. However, it was such a good opportunity that we decided to separate the students by skill level and train them.

Even though we were there to teach kendo, most of the people from Salerno were students of "bushi" or martial arts as a whole, with kendo being only one facet of their training in judo, aikido, karate, and more. There were people only wearing karate or judo uniforms, thinking that if they wore some protective gear they would be fine for kendo. Kendo equipment is also extremely expensive in Italy, so they could not collect very much of it. Items like the shinai bamboo fencing stick fetch prices much higher than in Japan, and you can't even find the gum used to affix the tsuba protective stopper to the shinai. There was no specialized area for kendo so they would practice in a gymnasium. Even sliding their feet into position would take a toll on their knees because they were practicing on a hard basketball court floor. After three days practice, our bodies were falling apart.

The Sight of Enthusiastic Learning

Even though there were students of many different levels, once the participants heard that instructors would be coming from Japan they prepared to make the most of this chance and were serious about training. Even when they were not crossing swords they always paid us the utmost respect. The fact that they probably did not know all the rules yet tried anyway made them seem more amazing than the Japanese kendo players. In Japan, we usually have



People from throughout Italy gathered at the kendo seminar



Participants of all different shapes and sizes, even earnest children in their judo uniforms

simple bouts during practice, but perhaps they thought it was a rare thing so they watched earnestly.

Even though kendo is popular in Italy, it is unfortunately still not a very well known sport in Salerno, and their level of play is not very high. Although they appeared to be competent at the form and etiquette of kendo, it is difficult to improve from just that. Basic practice is not going to help improve your skill – it is absolutely essential to attend matches and form strategy, learning how to predict your opponent's next move. This kind of mental training requires some very powerful instruction, and unfortunately those instructors are lacking in Salerno.

The students' desire to understand "bushi" was much stronger than the Japanese. Even though they realize they do not have adequate equipment or a place to train, they still strongly hope to improve. I believe their skills would advance if proper instructors were there for a long period of time.

The Exchange between Sister Cities Tono and Salerno

The relationship between Tono and Salerno started when the film "Tono Monogatari (The Tales of Tono)" won the Grand Prix at the 35th Salerno International Film Festival. The friendship between the two cities has continued to deepen through cultural exchange since the sister city relationship was formed in 1984. In 2009, 25 years since their twinning, a group of Tono representatives visited Salerno to share the Tono tradition of storytelling, as the following year, 2010, would see the 100th anniversary of the printing of Tono Monogatari.

In 2005, a group of 11 kendo instructors visited the Italian city to honor a request from Salerno. Around 200 people came to participate, including some students who came to Iwate to study kendo afterward.

If you hit the wicket (the three poles) with the ball it is an out.
The batsman hits the ball to prevent the wicket from being struck.



PR Manager: Dean Ruetzler

Cricket Exchange Founded by Iwate Foreign Residents

Foreign residents of Iwate founded the very first cricket team in Morioka in 2006 and spurred lovers of the sport to create similar organizations throughout the Tohoku region. Although the sport is relatively unknown in Japan, the club has brought together experienced players and Japanese people with an interest in trying new sports; the club serves as an important way to connect Japanese and foreigners from all over the world.

The sport of cricket originated in England, but became popular around the world in countries that were part of the English commonwealth; the sport is quite popular in countries like India and Australia. Cricket is similar to baseball, and is said to be the second most played sport in the world after soccer. The Morioka Cricket Club was founded after a group of Canadian English language teachers living in the city found a plastic baseball bat and ball. As a club we have been active for the past four years and currently have more than 50 active members, both foreign and Japanese. There have been participants from 19 different countries: Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey and China to name a few. About half of our current participants are foreigners, so the club has a very international feel. Many of our members have little experience with the sport, so an emphasis is put on safety. Soft balls are used during practices and games, and we are proud to boast that we have never had a single injury.

Until the Morioka Cricket Club was founded, there had been no teams registered with the Japanese Cricket Association in the Tohoku area. I think because there probably were no existing teams in the region. The network of cricket clubs is expanding in Tohoku. Foreigners living in other parts had heard about the formation of the Morioka Cricket Club and after a couple years clubs have formed in places like Sendai and Akita. I hear there will also be a new team in Fukushima soon. The teams in this network have a tournament every year, and in 2009 Morioka beat Sendai and Akita to become the region champions. The winning team hosts the tournament the following year, so this year the competition will be held in Morioka. There are not many opportunities to see a cricket match in Japan, so I would like to invite many people to come and watch.

Besides the promotion of cricket and enjoying the

game, there is another important goal of the club: to create an opportunity for exchange between peoples of many different nationalities, including Japanese. So that is why we hold a barbeque after every practice. We all have an interest in cricket, so we can talk and enjoy ourselves. The barbeques are so enjoyable that there are many people who join the club just so they can come to the barbeques. Participants come from varying countries with different religions and customs, so some are unable to eat meat. Vegetarian foods are also provided so that people of different cultures can enjoy one another's company.

I hope in the future to welcome more members and introduce cricket to them, and also to expand the exchange between people. Age, nationality, gender, skill at cricket, these things are not important, only that everyone has a good time.

Whether you were born with a cricket bat in your hands, or you think cricket is a confusing version of baseball, Morioka Cricket Club is the club for you! We hope to continue to provide an enjoyable way to interact through playing the sport of cricket.

Morioka Cricket Club

Formed in 2006, the club was founded by foreign English language teachers to introduce the culture of cricket to Tohoku. During cricket season there are two practices a month at either Kitakamigawa Park or Shijushida Dam Grounds.

Homepage: <http://moriokacricket.wordpress.com/>

The 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Iwate International Association

20 Years



The 20th anniversary celebration of the foundation of the Iwate International Association took place on October 18, 2009, with commemorative events and many guests from throughout the prefecture.



Anniversary Celebration

Time: 13:30 - 14:30

Place: 804 Meeting Room, 8F Aiina

An anniversary ceremony was held with our guests including award winners, international exchange organizations, previous association members, and ordinary citizens. Our chief director, Atsushi Ando, started with a greeting: "The association was made to respond to the calls for exchange at the regional level. With our prefectural citizens at the forefront, our association was founded with the support and cooperation of the prefectural government, municipalities, and businesses within Iwate. At the time of founding, there were only 2,000 foreign residents within Iwate, but now that number has risen three-fold to 6,500 people, and the activities desired by the people in the prefecture have changed from simple international exchange to international cooperation and the promotion of a multicultural society. As the core organization promoting prefectural international exchange, we will teach the spirit and intentions of our predecessors and pour our energy into regional international exchange activities, contributing to the improvement of our homeland of Iwate, to make it rich in mind and matter."

Iwate Prefectural Governor Takuya Tasso, Iwate Prefecture Mayoral Association President and Morioka city mayor Hiroaki Tanifuji, and CLAIR Chief Director Michihiro Kayama gave congratulatory addresses.

At the International Exchange, Cooperation, and Multicultural Society Promotion Award Ceremony, Governor Tasso handed the Governor Appreciation Award to Mr. Ryuji Ishiwata, and Chief Director Ando handed the Chief Director

Certificate of Commendation and Chief Director Appreciation Award to the winners, with a slideshow of the their activities being shown in the background (Award winners have been printed below). Mr. Ishiwata made a speech on behalf of all the award winners. At the conclusion of the ceremony, a short film was shown looking back the past 20 years of the association.

Anniversary Lecture

Time: 14:30 - 16:00

Place: 804 Meeting Room, 8F Aiina

Topic: Seeing the World through Food

Lecturer: President of the NGO Daichi wo Mamoru Kai
Mr. Kazuyoshi Fujita



Mr. Kazuyoshi Fujita was born in Isawa, Oshu to a family of rice farmers. Before founding the NGO Daichi wo Mamoru Kai, he took part in planning the foundation of the Daichi company (now Daichi wo Mamoru Kai Company), and starting with organic farming activities, he is expanding his organization's activities towards dealing with food supply, environment, energy, and education.

The summary of Mr. Fujita's lecture is written below.

It has been 35 years since we started selling organic vegetables, and now we deliver to 91,000 homes. Using our network of organic growers and consumers, we carry out activities that have captured the world's attention. We have a policy of carrying products from domestic farmers, but under the mantle of "Fair Trade" we also import crops that cannot be grown in Japan or will not have an effect on Japanese farmers. We call on our members to support situations where aid is necessary, like construction of farm roads in Palestine or urgent aid to the Gaza Strip. Old clothes collected by our members are sent to Palestine and sold, and that money can be allotted to operating costs of elementary schools in the region. Currently, Japan makes 40% of its own food, but we would be powerless if there were a crisis with the global food supply. We must act now lest we have to plunder the global food supply or subject our children and grandchildren to famine.

Cultural Exchange Party

Time: 16:00-17:30

Place: 803 Meeting Room, 8F Aiina

The cultural exchange party was held in a separate room from the ceremony. There were participants in kimono and native dress, bringing a lively atmosphere to the venue. There was food on the tables from the various ethnic restaurants on the association's Ethnic Restaurant Map, making dinner a very international affair. The dish high school students created for the Fair Trade Curry contest also made an appearance.

After Iwate Prefectural Mayoral Association Vice-president and Yahaba mayor Mitsuro Kawamura made the toast, everyone was able to spend their time chatting freely. Former Association Chief Director Norihiko Kaizuma and Iwate University President Katsumi Fujii gave speeches and Mr. Zhao Lumen played a selection on the morin khuur, a Mongolian bowed stringed instrument. Our guests stood in silence for a time, listening to the music reverberating throughout the whole venue. The party ended after Japan International Cooperation Agency Tohoku Branch President Naoki Kai said a few words in closing.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in our 20th Anniversary Ceremony, Lecture, and Cultural Exchange Party.



Award Winners

Iwate Prefectural Governor Appreciation Award
Ryuji Ishiwata

The Iwate International Association Chief Director
Certificate of Commendation
Ayako Taguchi
Iwate International Understanding, Education, and
Research Association
Oshu International Association
Zonta International - Morioka Zonta Club
Japanese Language and Exchange Class "Joy"
Shirayuri Academy High School in Morioka
Morioka Chuo High School

The Iwate International Association Chief Director
Appreciation Award

(Organizations that have contributed money)

Ishida family
The Bank of Iwate
The Kita-Nippon Bank
Tohoku Bank
Wakana

(Supporting Members)

Akira Takada
Kenzo Fujimura

(Organizations that have cooperated on projects)

Iwate Prefecture Administrative Scriveners
Association
A.Y.C.L.
The "Ippo Ippo" Japanese Class
Iwate/Multicultural Children's Classroom "Mutsu-
mikko Club"
Oceans Miyako International Club
Kawasaki 21st Century International Exchange
Club
Japanese Support Club NIKK
Hanamaki Japanese Supporters "Step"
Yu-no-kai

(Individuals that have cooperated on projects)

Yamazaki Tomoko
Yoko Matsuoka
Kishu Chiba
Hisae Ohtaka
Fumiko Obara
Yukiko Kimura
Yoko Takanohashi
Miwako Nagaoka
Yutaka Hayashi
Yoshiko Murai

(Previous Employees)

Keiko Chida
Yoko Karuishi

20 Years

From Award Winners

Iwate Prefectural Governor Appreciation Award



Mr. Ryuji Ishiwata

President of the Juwari Soba company, professor emeritus of Iwate Medical University, and chief director of the Morioka YMCA. He has worked tirelessly as chief of both the preparatory committee for the foundation of the Iwate International Association and the Association planning committee. As the president of the Iwate-Rhineland Exchange Association, he is currently running a program that brings over German university students on research.

Preparations for the International Association started one year before its foundation in 1989. I became a member of the committee and then was elected to serve as chief by my peers. I used my office at Iwate Medical University as a base for negotiations with various commerce and industry organizations, business-related parties, and members of youth organizations, and pushed along the preparations towards the association's foundation. At the same time, there were a number of private international exchange organizations within the prefecture, and as the planning committee chief I worked very hard to figure out just how a prefectural association would distribute roles to and coordinate opinions with those organizations. If you were to classify the existing international exchange bodies within the prefecture, you would have people who were concerned with mainly western developed countries, and then groups that were enthusiastic towards Asian developing countries – and there a large gap in international awareness between the two groups. What we as the association were aiming for was to make a distinction from the individual organizations and their activities - a new global society that had risen from the remains of the cold war, and from that common vantage point we wanted to spread mutual understanding of foreign culture and acknowledge our common value as human beings so that Japanese and foreigners within the prefecture could create relationships naturally with each other, thus creating a stage for international exchange.

I personally became involved with the Iwate-Rhineland Exchange Association, an organization that brings German university students over to Japan for a year to study Japanese economic society. Through the help and support of many business organizations throughout the prefecture, equal amounts of European and Asian students from the Rhineland-Palatinate Industrial Economics University have come to Japan, and Japanese young people have been able to interact with them in many different ways. I pray that the international exchange activities of Iwate Prefecture nurture the hope that we will become more globally connected, just as those same activities have opened my heart to the wide world around me.

The Iwate International Association Chief Director Certificate of Commendation



Oshu International Association
President: Mr. Tsuyoshi Sato

In 2008, the Oshu International Association was the first municipality in Iwate Prefecture to create a Multicultural Society Master Plan, and determined basic guidelines regarding living with foreign residents and treating them as members of the same community. They are currently aiming for a multicultural society and, along with the administration, implementing measures such as support of Japanese language study, multilingual information, and daily life support.

Even though there are many foreign residents and foreign brides living in Oshu, everything is written in Japanese in our area and important information is not adequately provided. Our support towards our foreign residents is insufficient. Therefore the Oshu International Association created the “Multicultural Society Master Plan,” and is working towards implementing those measures in Oshu. The understanding and support of those in the administration, including the mayor, have been vital in this task. There were two foreigners employed in our recent urgent employment plan, and we have been promoting the translation of guide signs and creation of pamphlets. We are able to do this only because we have that understanding already in place.

As part of our multicultural society plans, we are focused on training volunteer instructors in an effort to create Japanese classes. Even with Japanese classes, it is very important to cooperate with the administration. For example, a foreign bride living in a rural village might rouse the suspicions of her family and not be able to attend a class sponsored by just the international association, but if the Oshu city government has its name attached, she might find it easier to participate.

If you look at it from a historical perspective, there are places like the Mizusawa Latitude Observatory in Oshu where the world and information are linked. Oshu turns out great men and women who hold international perspectives, and has become a place where foreigners are welcomed without discomfort or discrimination. We want to show our support by first acknowledging that there are foreigners here, and then understanding that we all have the same blood running through our veins; together we can think of what we can do to make this region a place where we can live together peacefully.



Japanese Class “Ippo Ippo (Step by Step)”

Teaching Japanese, with Enthusiasm

This Japanese class was established in 2007 by Junko Aoyama, Kyoko Kasamizugami, Kyoko Kisaka, Fusako Minamidate, and Teiko Murai. These five women hold a Japanese class for foreign residents every Friday at Aiina, west of Morioka station.

The “Ippo Ippo” Japanese class was honored at the Iwate International Association’s 20th Anniversary Celebration with the Chief Director Appreciation Award.

We Are “Sukiyaki”

We started a study group because we thought that teaching Japanese properly meant we had to study systematically. The “Ippo Ippo” Japanese class was started with other like-minded people. Using our experiences, we are striving so that our enthusiasm and effort level is the same as any professional Japanese teacher. Because we are a bunch of people with different ages and backgrounds, and we all come together with different teaching methods and materials for “Ippo Ippo,” we thought we were just like “sukiyaki,” a Japanese dish with a lot of different ingredients.

That study group that started by analyzing textbooks is still continuing today. We share opinions on how to promote comprehension along with creating systematic curriculum and lesson plans. We prepare materials for “Ippo Ippo” that help students understand parts of general textbooks that may be a bit difficult to comprehend. Some students will understand something right away while some may have trouble with that same material for a while. Instead of ignoring the problem, we learn from these discoveries and implement those findings into teaching the next students.

The Joys and Challenges of Teaching

I got a call from a previous Bangladeshi student of ours in superb Japanese, “I’ve come to Japan on Kyoto University’s doctoral course foreign student invitational research project.” I feel like people from developing countries are similar to the Japanese during the Meiji Restoration, where we absorbed knowledge from the west with amazing speed. The joy of being able to teach these people is the major driving force behind why we continue to instruct Japanese.

Even though students are accustomed to speaking Japanese if they study steadily until the course completion, there are some students who will learn a certain amount of Japanese and then just stop coming to class. When I meet someone whose skill level has dropped, I get a little disappointed. In particular, there are a lot of people who make their living in Japan, find jobs and start working, or they’ll have a baby and get too busy to come. For young mothers, there is a serious demand for Japanese study so that they can read letters from their child’s preschools or communi-

cate with other mothers. I think it’s a shame because they would be able to continue on our program if only there was a free day-care facility in place that would watch their children for the small amount of time required for our class.

Exchange, Step by Step

We set aside a tea-time interval during class so that our students can speak and communicate with people not from their own countries. A pregnant woman from Tanzania spoke with a Chinese woman who had experience giving birth, and even though the exchange was in simple Japanese, she was able to ask many different questions. I think she was anxious, absolutely. But I think students who come to our class can speak and exchange information with each other easily.

When you move in Japan, you usually go and introduce yourself to your neighbors, but in America, the neighbors are the ones who ask whether they can do anything to help you out. I think the American way is much better – Japanese people should greet the new person. Just as students progress in their studies one step at a time, we too should work step by step to shorten the distance between us.

Just as there are people who want to study not just the basics but also Chinese characters, there are people who are aiming to take Japanese proficiency tests – in order to answer these various demands, we want to keep studying so that we can teach content that is highly improved from before. I hope that more people will start to think this way.



From left, Teiko Murai, Kyoko Kisaka, Sumiko Aoyama

2010 いわて国際交流

Iwate International Association 2010



English

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