

## Witnessing their parent's commitment to learning Japanese greatly encourages children

Ms. Kawasaki Maria (From the Philippines. She lives and works in Japan with her daughter; currently a university student.)

My daughter moved here to Japan in October 2009. This was during her second semester in her first year of elementary school. When she came to Japan, I stopped working full-time and instead took on three part-time jobs to make sure I was able to adequately care for her. I was there for her when she left for school and waiting for her when she returned. In order to increase my daughter's Japanese vocabulary, so that she would fit in as quickly as possible, I practiced as much as I could, with the help of language cards I bought at a bookstore. I also encouraged her participation in local children's meetings, even though she couldn't understand the language yet. I thought that the time spent with other children her own age would encourage language learning and help her learn needed vocabulary as quickly as possible. I knew that my daughter likely would not be able to keep up with her studies to begin with. I also knew how very important it was for her to be able to express her feelings about any struggles in school. I wanted her to be able to enjoy going to school, so all my efforts focused on this. Finally the day came when she told me, "Japan is fun," and I thought, "I did it!"



I also encouraged my daughter to watch NHK morning programs, to give her added exposure to Japanese. I liked the Disney Channel when I was in the Philippines, so I made an agreement with her. She could watch it both in Japanese and English. When I didn't know an answer to a question or the meaning of a word, we checked online or looked it up together. Both my daughter and I studied kanji drills. We did this together. In the second semester of second grade, we also began learning multiplication tables. I thought to myself "Japanese is still so difficult. Learning multiplication tables is going to be a huge challenge!" To keep her motivated, I promised her that if she managed to pass the multiplication tables by Christmas, I would take her to Disneyland. Thanks to her determination, we were able to spend Christmas Eve at Tokyo Disneyland.

~ A message to everyone who is going to raise children in Japan ~

◆Believe in your own children! By doing so, your children's self-esteem will increase. We, parents and guardians alike, are our children's only allies, who are doing their best to navigate a new, different world amidst the many cultural and customary differences facing them. It may be hard, but let us remain strong and courageous for the sake of our children.

◆Listen carefully to what your child wants to tell you or feelings they wish to express. Make sure you understand how their school day was and look closely for any changes in their lifestyle or personality. Children tend to be reserved with their parents. Often they won't talk about the troubles or challenges they are facing at school. Many people tell their children simply to study hard, but it is important to determine your child's needs as well as their abilities. For example, if your child can't do math, think of ways in which you can support them in their learning, rather than blaming them for not studying enough.

◆Please do not hesitate to ask for help. Help is available from people around you, whether other guardians, people from your home country, or Japanese nationals. If you need an answer to any question, please feel free to ask. I myself have received a lot of information and support from the people around me. It is thanks to them that I have been able to come this far. If you don't know what you are doing and remain quiet, this will be disadvantageous for your children.

◆You must learn Japanese if living in Japan. By learning the language, you will be the support your child needs, as well as keep up open communication with your child. It is my opinion that through these communication skills, family relationships will be better and life in Japan will become more enjoyable. Also, if you are able to speak Japanese, more opportunities for good employment will be available to you. If you are not currently working, please consult with "Hello Work" about vocational training in Japanese. There are ways to study Japanese, as "Hello Work" offers a variety of job training programs that allow you to study free of charge. You will also be eligible to receive benefits and qualifications. The Inuyama International Association, in downtown Inuyama, also holds Japanese classes. Please feel free to contact them for more information.

◆If you are planning to stay in Japan for the rest of your life: It's important to gather as much information as possible, concerning for example the Japanese educational system, administrative system, emergency information, etc. Should you find yourself in need, you will then know what to do or where to go for assistance! Japanese schools will do everything they can to help you with your children, so please consult with your child's teachers or the school administration. In addition, the Inuyama International Association and the Inuyama City Hall both have a community interpretation system set up, so please feel free to ask for advice any time.

For the sake of our children's future, let us, parents and guardians, do our best to learn the language. There is no shame in learning new vocabulary as an adult. I sincerely believe that the sight of parents being diligent in their Japanese studies, sets a wonderful example and will be of great encouragement to your children.

## Prepare for earthquakes!

For the week following the August earthquake in Miyazaki Prefecture, Kyushu, a special alert for earthquakes was issued. The alert period has now ended, but the need to be prepared for earthquakes remains. The following steps are important.

◆ Fixing furniture



◆ Confirm evacuation sites



◆ Keep your passport, residence card, important documents etc., accessible to bring with you at a moment's notice.

◆ Have a stockpile of bottled water, emergency food, etc.



“Safety Tips” <Application for providing useful information in times of disaster>

- Languages supported: Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, Tagalog, Nepalese, Khmer, Burmese, Mongolian
- Application fee: Free of charge
- Push notifications: Earthquake Early Warning, Tsunami Warning, Weather Warning, Eruption Warning, Typhoon Information, Heat Stroke Information, National Protection Information, Evacuation Information

Android:



iPhone:



## Participating in the “Ishiage Festival,” a traditional Inuyama event

The fresh air and green nature made me feel happy. My body has become more energetic.

Mr. Rifqi Makosid (Indonesia)



The Ishiage Festival is held on the first Sunday in August every year.



Almost all of my colleagues from our company participated this year. It was a lot of fun.

Mr. Imam Syafii (Indonesia)

**There is a place where you can make new friends and communicate with others, even if you only know a little Japanese.**

We have exchanges where we enjoy festivals and different cultural events together. You will be able to meet people and develop new friendships outside of your workplaces and families.



2024.06.08 Exchange Party (Koryukai)→

←2024.03.03 Multicultural Exchange Cafe



Various events are guided here.

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The Inuyama International Association (IIA) holds the “Home Visit” program yearly. This initiative allows foreign residents the opportunity to experience real life in Japan by visiting a Japanese household. This mutual exchange between host and visitor promotes a deeper understanding between cultures, for all those who participate. We interviewed Ms. Harumi Kojima, who takes part in this program. She has hosted international students from Cambodia and Vietnam.

This year will be my third time to host international visitors. So far, I have had guests from Vietnam, Mongolia, and Cambodia visit my home. This year I hosted Oun, a student from Cambodia and Duyen, who is Vietnamese and currently working in Japan. The day of the home visit was a hot day. Our town’s summer festival was being held, so the three of us visited the shrine in front of my home. We purified our hands and mouths at the entrance and then threw money in front of the temple to pray. We also watched an energetic children’s portable shrine parade (Mikohsi), in which a papier-mâché horse was pulled along. The sight of the parade with its flutes and drums seemed to remind my guests of their home country. Someday I would also like to visit their home countries. Afterwards, we made Inarizushi together, followed by a nice meal of the Inarizushi, steamed egg custard (Chawanmushi) and salad. The dining table was very lively as we enjoyed our lunch together. The young ladies also went up to my hot balcony to take down the laundry, which they then folded as if they were my own daughters. It was so natural for them to offer this kind gesture.

Each year I have hosted foreign students, I have been very impressed by their excellent overall behavior and manners. They are bright, kind, sincere and very family oriented individuals and I always feel I have much to learn from them. The “Home Visit” program gives us as hosts, a valuable opportunity to broaden our knowledge of each visiting student’s home country. We are able to learn more of their culture, customs, religions, foods, etc.

I would like to take the program again next year. I also would like to encourage friends who are taking the IIA’s English conversation course or those who speak a little English to give the exchange a try. Please experience it and deepen your interaction with and understanding of, people of differing nationalities.



### Participants Reactions

- ◆ What I enjoyed most was cooking and eating our meals together.
- ◆ There was a summer festival at a nearby shrine, so the three of us enjoyed visiting it together.
- ◆ I was able to learn more about how older Japanese people live.
- ◆ Participating in the program is a good way to gain new experience. In particular, it is a great opportunity to learn about the daily lives and customs of Japanese people. If you have a chance and the time to do so, I would sincerely recommend you take part in the program.

## Introducing a very diligent student studying Japanese at Inuyama language classes.

Ms. Manabe Beatriz (A second generation Japanese Peruvian)  
Nationality: Peruvian  
Arrival date in Japan: July 2022.



I came to Japan two years ago because I wanted my two children (ages 7 and 10) to learn Japanese culture and language. I enjoy studying Japanese through the conversation classes held at the Inuyama Nihongo Kyoshitsu (Japanese Class) “Niji Class”. I feel it is fun to hear of the experiences of Japanese volunteers, as well as learn new information.



I want my children to speak Japanese fluently. At the same time, I don’t want them to forget their native language. For that reason we speak Spanish at home. I am studying Japanese so that I can help my children with their homework. I also study Kanji characters with my children. I like takoyaki, sushi, and Japanese key chains.

### <Comment from Oka Junko, volunteer in charge>

She (Beatriz Manabe) attends our classes faithfully. As she has previously lived in Japan, she speaks Japanese very well. When we inform our students of the next class topic, she eagerly prepares for class. She has brought to class many interesting items including a booklet with pictures of festivals around Peru and even handwritten drawings of famous Peruvian dishes to share with us. In our “Niji Class”, we learn Japanese through communication, the basis of building friendships, as we get to know each other.



## Creating Work conditions grounded in a relationship of trust.

-In order to create a workplace where people are able to work amicably, steady steps should be taken toward reaching that goal, based on a relationship of trust.-

### ■ We interviewed Mr. Uchida Nobuya (Taishin Juki Service Co. CEO)



Left: Mr. Sotto Right: Mr. Uchida

Current times have made it difficult for small and medium-sized businesses to secure enough employees for their companies. Mr. Uchida became interested in the possibility of employing foreigners, after hearing a presentation given on the technical internship system. He decided to accept a technical intern from the Philippines beginning back in 2019, after he himself became a certified lifestyle instructor.)

Mr. Uchida: "In production, safety comes first. Accidents should

never happen. However, when training foreign nationals we faced a "language barrier" in the workplace. This prevented our trainees from being fully able to understand the content of their work. The factory manager would instruct the trainees, but at times would become very frustrated, which strained relationships within the company.

The company reviewed our work rules and regulations. We made every effort to create an environment in which all employees could work together comfortably. We also applied for subsidies so that necessary procedures could be taught not only through instruction, but by using video clips. The company also prepared a work manual that allows students to learn about each item.

Originally, the company banned the use of smartphones in the workplace. However, we soon learned that smartphone translation was very helpful and actually essential for work-related communication. We therefore changed our rule and allowed the use of mobile phones on site.

Although there was some concern that smartphones could be misused for private purposes during work hours, we trusted our employees. I had a change of mindset. At the time, I may then have said, 'I would like you to learn more Japanese through using your mobile phone.' Work is about trust." Now, two of his four trainees have obtained the No. 1 Technical Skills Certificate.

"Working with people who speak a different language and have another culture can be challenging, but our interns have very friendly and likeable personalities. We are all people, no matter our differences.

By showing understanding, our work environment brightened.

I expect that in the future, when newcomers arrive, they will be treated with love and affection by their seniors, due to the lessons learned and difficulties overcome.

Sotto (Second from left) and his colleagues in the workplace⇒



### Comments from Alexander Sotto (From the Philippines)

"I learned the importance of diligence in my work ethics, as in Japan if a mistake is made and an accident occurs, the company is held responsible. Therefore, it is very important not to make decisions on your own. In order to avoid inconveniencing the company, I always confirm each step; making sure to consult with others before proceeding."

In the interview with Sotto, he confided: "My two older brothers in the Philippines told me if I wanted to work in Japan, I should be willing to have patience." Interviewer's opinion: Due to the importance of Japanese manufacturers striving to ensure quality control and complete production without mistakes, by putting "safety first", this high standard may create friction in the workplace, due mainly to "language barriers" which prevent trainees, from fully understanding the instructions they are given.

Our interview clarified that in order for a company to earn the trust of its customers, while simultaneously striving to overcome language and cultural barriers in the workplace, trainees play a vital role. By making tireless efforts to communicate on a better level, progress will result and stronger bonds in working relationships will be built. (Interview held by Tsuji Aiko)

## Interview with a language instructor

The Inuyama International Association offers several foreign language courses taught by native speakers. For this issue of our “Inuyama Newsletter”, we interviewed Ms. Michelle Kuwagaki.

**Home Country:** Columbia

**Likes about Japan:** Japanese people, as they are kind. Mt. Fuji is my favorite place and I enjoy eating soba-noodles.

**Fun facts about learning Spanish:** The pronunciation of vowels in Spanish is the same as in Japanese. This makes Spanish easier to pronounce than English for Japanese speakers. Spanish is spoken in 21 countries around the world, so, knowing some Spanish would be useful for travel abroad. You could communicate with people in any of the Spanish speaking countries you will possibly visit.

**As for this Spanish course:** I focus on conversations which are likely to happen in a travel situation. As you are exposed to natural Spanish conversation in the class, you will be better

able to communicate during your travels. This will make travel to South America or other Spanish speaking countries much more fun. I always recommend taking my class when I meet someone who would like to travel to South America.

**Message to Japanese residents:**

As my hometown is on the opposite side of the globe, so is the culture and language very different from yours and what I am familiar with. I would like you to broaden your views; to allow yourself more communication opportunities. Becoming “amigos” is so important. Let’s all be friends (“amigos”), Japanese with non-Japanese! There is a Japanese proverb that says, “After living there for a while, you will become as comfortable as if you were living in a big city”. So, likewise, non-Japanese residents should also do their best to try to be “amigos” with Japanese people.

I was impressed by Michelle’s attitude of pride in her background (her culture, language, food culture, etc.). She is keenly motivated to convey this knowledge to those with whom she interacts. (Interviewer: Kiyohiko Ogino)



\* QR code for language course information⇒

## The IIA offers an opportunity to enjoy open communication with people from around the world.



Once a month, the IIA offers Japanese together with non-Japanese residents, an opportunity to talk and get to know each other. A specified speaking topic is usually chosen. Participants are able to converse with each other for an hour. This is an opportunity to learn about each other’s cultures and customs. You are also encouraged to express ideas and opinions. There is always much to discover when you listen to the stories of foreign nationals.

◆ URL for applications⇒



「Multicultural Chat Club - Online」

※Held alternately on weekdays and Saturdays.

Next meeting date : 7:30 p.m. ~ 8:30 p.m., Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> (Fri.)

The IIA also interviewed Anh-san, who was a part of our “Operation Support Staff” from April through August, 2024.

◆ Could you tell us what amazed you most during your time here?

Anh-san: It has given me the opportunity to make friends with many people. Thanks to my friends, my experiences in Japan have been unforgettable; with many happy memories.

Votuyet  
Anh san  
(Vietnam)



◆ Please give a message to people who haven’t yet taken part in the “multi-culture chatting club”.

The “Multi-Culture Chatting Club” is a place where we are respectful of each other and listen to one another. I was able to try speaking Japanese without feeling shy or hesitant. This club offers a good opportunity for Japanese to make friends with non-Japanese nationals. As for those learning Japanese, it gives you an ideal chance to practice your language skills.

## Interesting Customs: Vietnam

Here is an incident which took place during a Japanese tourist's visit to Vietnam.

When the tourist dropped by a retail shop, he was shocked to see a shop-clerk taking a nap underneath the shop's display shelf. In Vietnam, it is a custom to take a nap during the day. Taking even a short nap is said to improve focus and therefore job efficiency. Do you have any special customs in your home country? Please tell us about them.



## It's fun to learn Japanese onomatopoeia!

Do you know what onomatopoeia is? It is a category of words or syllables that imitate the sound associated with a condition or situation. Once you learn Japanese onomatopoeia, it will make communication much more fun. Why don't you try it?

Doki-doki



This onomatopoeia imitates the sound of heartbeats. This is often associated with an upset mood of some kind, caused by anticipation, anxiety, nervousness, or fear. Or, it may refer to the physical condition of the heart when beating too vigorously, such as, immediately following strenuous exercise.

Run-run



It describes a mood full of joyful fun because of a happy surprise or occasion.

Hin-yari



This describes a cold temperature or atmosphere which gives one a pleasant, comfortable feeling.

Kusu-kusu



The way in which a person laughs in a controlled voice. It can also mean "the voice".

## Cool Japan

### Bon dancing

Every country has its own customs concerning dances performed at festive occasions. For instance at a wedding, a traditional event or when friends meet. During summer in Japan, we gather at a local shrine or a square to enjoy "bon dancing". A scaffold or raised wooden platform is erected at the center of a square, and everyone dances to music, forming a circle around the platform. For this event, many people dress in yukata (or summer-style kimono). Anyone can take part in this event. Age and gender do not matter. It is a nice opportunity to meet new people. This event promotes a feeling of friendship and closeness, as everyone happily dances together around the platform.



#### Editorial Post

I am writing this document while perspiring in the midst of this unusually hot weather. The term, "extreme heat" is very fitting. As this "Inuyama Multi-lingual News Letter" is issued in 7 languages, I always appreciate the support of our volunteer translators who are pictured below. Prior to the publication of our newsletter, we always hold a meeting on translation work. In a recent meeting, we discussed the topic of "What are the most important points to be considered when thinking about those of various cultural backgrounds, living together in the same general area." Here are some of the opinions mentioned. Each of us is an individual resident. I feel offended when I hear myself being referred to as a "foreigner". Categorizing someone as a "foreigner" may lead to prejudice. During the periods I spent living in Brazil, I was treated as a foreigner. Then, after moving to Japan, I have continued to be treated as a foreigner. There is no one whose name is "foreigner!" The opinions offered above have impressed upon me the importance of treating each person as an individual. Each person is a resident who deserves to be respected for who they are, independent of anyone else.

#### Inuyama Multilingual News

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※Data Version⇒

