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MGGC

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Miyagi Goodwill Guide Club Newsletter
(HP; <http://mggc-miyagi.org>)

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2026 Tanabata Interpreter Volunteer Activity Summary

Kazuhiro Goto

みなさん、今年も記録的な猛暑（酷暑）の中、ご協力ありがとうございました。
報告は、仙台駅と勾当台公園を合計したものです。また、今回も夏休みボランティア
体験高校生の案内協力分も含めています。今年は、326人への案内となりました。

2026年 セタボランティア活動集計（人数）					
1) 国別人数集計（仙台駅/勾当台公園 人数合計）					
	国 名	8月6日	8月7日	8月8日	合 計 (人)
1	アメリカ	26	21	19	66
2	台湾	15	10	12	37
3	ドイツ	4	22	4	30
4	フランス	10	9	4	23
5	イタリア	15	7		22
6	チェコ	11	1	1	13
7	中国	6	4	2	12
8	香港	9	6		15
9	シンガポール	1	6	3	10
10	カナダ	6	5		11
11	スペイン	2	3	2	7
12	スイス		1	5	6
13	オランダ	5	3		8
14	イスラエル	5	0		5
15	フィリピン		5	1	6
16	ミャンマー		4		4
17	メキシコ	1	2		3
18	ハンガリー	1	2		3
19	ハワイ	2	1		3
20	イギリス	5	1	3	9
21	コロンビア		2		2
22	フィンランド		2		2
23	トルコ	2	0		2
24	韓国	2	0		2
25	ポーランド	2	0		2
26	ブラジル		2		2
27	タイ		2		2
28	オーストラリア	2	1		3
29	ロシア		1		1
30	ノルウェー		1		1
31	コスタリカ		1		1
32	ウクライナ	1	0		1
33	ペルー	1	0		1
34	モロッコ	1	0		1
35	インド	1	0		1
36	チュニジア		1		1
37	マレーシア		1	2	3
38	カタール		1		1
39	ネパール	2			2
40	アルゼンチン			2	2
合 計		138	128	60	326
※中国と香港・アメリカとハワイは別表記です（本人申し出を尊重）					
※そのため商工会からの集計とは若干異なります。					

2) 【案内人数合計】		(仙台駅・勾当台公園 対応人数合計)			
案内所	6 日	7 日	8 日	合計 (人)	
仙台駅	108	123	52	283	
勾当台公園	30	5	8	43	
合 計	138	128	60	326	
【特記事項】					
・七夕の場所以外に多かった質問として スズメ踊りの場所と時間、牛タンの食堂、					
ナイトイベントの場所と時間、るーぷるバスの場所と時間等がありました。					
・勾当台公園は昨年に比べて件数は少なかったが、短冊に願いを書いて笹の葉につけるのは、					
去年同様人気だった。しかし、こちらが声掛けしないと素通りしてしまう場合が多かった。					

Reports from Participants

A fruitful volunteer experience

Kenji Sato

I would like to share my impressions of participating as a volunteer interpreter at the Tanabata Festival in Sendai, one of Tohoku's major summer festivals. I spent two of the three days with Mayumi Seki, an English teacher at MGGC, which made me feel very reassured, and I was thinking about having a memorable conversation with a traveler from abroad.

From the very first day of the Tanabata Festival, Sendai Station was packed with Japanese travelers. Among them was an American who had come in a group of several people. For detailed directions, Mayumi spoke to me, and I focused on the T-shirts they were wearing. It was a ninja emblem. I asked, "Are you interested in ninjas?" They seemed a bit surprised, but quickly laughed and the conversation turned to ninjas. We were asked to shake hands as we parted. Also, a foreigner from another group came wearing a figure painted with pictures of Mt. Fuji. "Did you climb Mt. Fuji?" He immediately said, "I climbed Mt. Fuji." After replying, "I climbed it myself a long time ago," the conversation turned to climbing Mt. Fuji.

A young woman came by. She said, "I'd like to take the loop bus for sightseeing, so please tell me the stop," but since she didn't seem very good at English, I asked, "Which country are you from?" "I recently came to Sendai from Germany as an exchange student at Tohoku University," "Today, I'm planning to visit the



High school students participating as

Tanabata Festival and Sendai's famous spots." Then I guided her to the loop bus stop. I was a little impressed by her initiative and curiosity. A Japanese parent and child came. An elementary school boy asked me a question. "What will you do with the decorations after the Tanabata festival ends?" I was at a loss for an answer and asked the Chamber of Commerce for an answer. The boy agreed, thanked him, and said, "Please tell me your name, so I'll write it in my diary," and left.

The three volunteer high school students were full of energy and actively engaged in volunteer activities. I was moved to believe that such young people would carry the next generation of Japan. There were various other stories of encounters, but I myself was a very educational volunteer interpreter.

As expected, the Sendai Tanabata Festival is truly luxurious.

Yuko Sasa

On the final day of the Tanabata Festival, Saturday, August 8th, at Sendai Station. The station was more crowded than expected. I worked at the station booth in the 14:00~16:00 slot



Chiikawa decoration

together with Takuo Ito. International tourists visiting Japan included Filipinos, Swiss, British, and Zainichi Americans. Several people asked questions fluently in Japanese.

This year, the number of tourists from outside the regular host countries (China, Taiwan, Hong Kong) has increased, and perhaps the Tohoku region, including Sendai, has started to gain recognition—that's the impression I got. This year's highlight was

the character funakishi. Chiikawa, Haikyuu, a volleyball hit popular from manga, and more. On the first day, a member of the Chamber of Commerce took a photo of the place where the funagashi was set up and created a map for us. This was very convenient. Main inquiries include: (1) luggage storage, (2) **Chiikawa and Haikyuu free-flowing water drinks**, (3) Chiikawa GOODS special sales area, (4) Zunda drinks and souvenir shops, etc., (5) Main event locations for the Tanabata Festival (Day: Kotodai Park; Night: Aoba Castle Ruins Concert, etc.).

This year, there was no temporary luggage storage on the first floor; instead, we guided visitors to coin lockers and temporary luggage storage on the third floor. We saw tourists moving around with suitcases, seemingly full.

Sorry for the personal matter, but from last autumn to this spring, we introduced Japanese and Japanese culture at public and private colleges of technology in West Java, Indonesia. The Tanabata festival is popular throughout Java. Writing stories about Tanabata and wishes on tanzaku and attaching them to bamboo leaves seems mysterious and novel to the students. I had the opportunity to introduce Sendai Tanabata and was also able to promote Sendai, which made me happy. Looking up again, I was amazed, "How beautiful~" I hope that, beyond traditional decorations, they will continue to pass on this wonderful tradition to the next generation by incorporating modern ideas. I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Goto, who is in charge of Tanabata, and to everyone involved in this newspaper.



**Making Bamboo Ornaments in
Indonesia**

(*) At Kotodai Park, tourists were seen enjoying the work of decorating wish tanzaku



(wish strips).

Posts from high school students

Participating in Tanabata Volunteer Work

K.S.

From August 6th to 8th, I participated as a volunteer member of the Miyagi Goodwill

Interpreters Association for the Sendai Tanabata Festival. Until now, I had been the one who visited and enjoyed the festival. However, this time, I wanted to know what the festival is like from the perspective of those who support it from behind the scenes, so I participated.

What impressed me through the activities was that many people from abroad gathered information on their own using smartphones and other devices as they acted. Therefore, I did not have many opportunities to actually guide them. Even so, when there were people in need, I made sure to guide them carefully according to each individual's needs so they could enjoy the festival with peace of mind. When I received words of thanks from the guides, I felt the joy of being able to be of some help, and I felt glad I participated.

Through this activity, I also realized that the Sendai Tanabata Festival is something supported and passed down by many people. Until now, the Tanabata Festival was simply something to enjoy, but by looking at it from the perspective of those who support it, I was able to pay attention to the efforts of the people behind it.

This experience inspired me to become someone living in Miyagi who can learn more about my own region and convey its charm in my own words.

A summer to meet a new version of yourself

K.S.

Before summer vacation, I wanted to try something new. At that time, I noticed a flyer for volunteers posted at the school. Among the various volunteer activities, I felt no resistance to using English and was confident that I could test my language skills. Because of that, I thought it would be easy to volunteer for the first time and chose the activities of the "Miyagi Goodwill Interpreters Association."

In actual activities, I guided people walking around Sendai Station and its surroundings. While touring as a guide, I was able to receive many requests from people. People from overseas asked me how to get to the arcade street with Tanabata decorations and where to stand for the subway. Also, Japanese visitors from outside the prefecture asked about hotel locations and bus stops.

The three high school students, including myself, handled these guidance together. In this activity, where we approached using English and talking with strangers without hesitation, we fully utilized our skills and were able to guide smoothly while cooperating with our peers.

When we were able to properly respond to others' problems, everyone would smile with relief and express our gratitude, and I felt a strong sense of help that my language skills were helping others. By taking the first step myself and actually putting the skills I had to work, I truly feel I had met a new version of myself. I want to use this valuable experience as motivation for my future school life and further language learning, and to improve myself.

Second Volunteer Experience

Y.I.

From August 3rd to 6th, I participated in volunteer activities with an organization called the 'Miyagi Goodwill Interpreters Association.' The main activities involved interpreting and guiding tourists who came from overseas to see the Tanabata Festival. In fact, I had also participated in the activities of the 'Miyagi Goodwill Interpreters Association' two years ago. Why did I choose the same group again among so many others? If you ask me that, it might sound blunt, but 'Because I had fun.'

It comes down to this one sentence. I'm not particularly good at English, and I can't converse fluently with people from overseas. Even so, since it was my second time participating, I was able to work with more confidence than two years ago. This time, I made my own ideas, such as making posters in advance so people would notice that we were volunteering.

Even if I couldn't have a good conversation in English, there were people who would wave back or smile back just by waving with a smile. I felt that even if you don't understand the language, there are things that can be conveyed between people. There wasn't much I could do, but I did my best to do what I could. I also guided not only tourists from overseas but also Japanese people. Among those visiting the Tanabata Festival with their families, I was especially impressed by the small children who smiled and talked to me and became attached. I felt as if I had become part of someone's joyful memories, and I felt

fulfilled. This activity was a great inspiration for me when thinking about my own future. I realized the importance of directly interacting with people and acting with their perspective, and I want to continue accumulating experiences in interacting with people. Someday, I hope to officially join the 'Miyagi Goodwill Interpreters Association' and work as a member.

Above all, I find joy in meeting and getting to know various people, which helps me expand my world. I don't want to make the experiences gained from this activity just a one-time event; I want to continue interacting with many people and encounter new worlds.

(Reference Materials) Pre-study Session Materials

(*) Here is a portion of the materials (about half of the total) created by Mr. Seki used in the preliminary study session on August 1. I think it will be helpful for those who will be attending in the future.

The Origin of Tanabata

In ancient times, people held ceremonies where maidens chosen in summer wove kimonos and offered them on shelves, welcoming the gods to pray for a bountiful autumn harvest and to

cleanse the people's impurities. These maidens, called 'Tanabatatsume,' would seclude themselves in weaving workshops located by pure rivers and other watersides, weaving kimonos with all their hearts for the gods. The loom used at that time was called a 'Tanabata.'

Eventually, as Buddhism was introduced to Japan, this event began to be held on the night of July 7th as preparation for Obon.

The current Tanabata festival is said to combine this ritual with the legend of 'Orihime and Hikoboshi,' which comes from the Chinese tale of 'Kikoden,' to form Tanabata, one of the five seasonal festivals of the imperial court.



In ancient times, people used to hold an event in the summer where selected maidens would weave kimonos and place them on shelves to welcome the gods, pray for a good autumn harvest and cleanse people of their impurities.

These maidens, called 'tanabatatsume', would stay in a hut by a river or other pure water and weave kimonos with all their heart for the gods. The loom used for this was called a 'tanabata'. When Buddhism was finally introduced to Japan, this event was held on the night of 7th July in preparation for the Obon festival. The current Tanabata event is said to be based on the legend of the gods Orihime and Hikoboshi in the Chinese tradition of 'Kikokuden'.

Tanabata Guide Course: Simple Conversations and Important Points

1. When explaining how to get to the evening venue on Chris Road. It's best to explain using a map for simplicity. If you explain in simple English,

Please get out of the exit and turn right - there is a big sign 'PARCO' Turn left there – and walk toward to the end - go down the stairs - The Sendai Festival begins right from the bottom of those stairs.

2. How to get to Loople Bus stop 16. This is also easy and helpful to explain using a map. If you want to explain in English,

Please get out of the exit - turn left- and walk toward to the Bus Pool on the ground.

Please go down the stairs marked No.16 bus stop. - You can find No.16 bus stop .

(with Sendai station on your back side , go down the stairs at second corner)

3. About the explanation of Loople Bus. It is called Loople Bus, which means one way.

Sendai city offers a convenient sightseeing bus service. It's LOOPLE SENDAI for Sightseeing in Sendai city and looks like a Classic car. One ride is ¥260, and One-day ticket is ¥630 for adults, ¥320 for children. One-day ticket would be useful as this ticket is free to hop on and off.

4. How to ask about nationality and origin

Where are you from? If you ask, you might be asked 'Why' in return. How should I ask?

Countermeasure (1) Rather than asking first, it's less rude to guide after the guide.

By the way, may I ask you a few questions?

Excuse me, we got few questions.

Countermeasure 2: Be careful when asking.

May I ask where you are from?

If you don't mind me asking, what(which) country are you from?

Countermeasure (3): If you ask me why I ask that question, If you are asked,

(For survey is not good—probably not.) It's not my business! Some people think this has nothing to do with me.)

Sendai City would like to get some more information about foreign travelers. If so, we can provide better service to visitors.

5. How many people are traveling together? /How many days do you plan to stay in Sendai?

How many people are travelling with you?

How many days do you plan to stay in Sendai city?

6. What should I do if someone asks me something I can't (or don't know)? I don't know is not appropriate.

It can leave a very blunt impression.

I'm sorry, I'm not sure. One moment please. Let me find out someone who knows about it.

(I'll ask someone who knows about it.)

There is an interpreter counter over there. Some interpreters can give you information in English.

I'll be with you in a moment. (I'll be there right away. Please wait a moment) and ask someone nearby.

7. その他 —Simple is best !!—

Make sure to briefly understand the content of the tourist attractions. It's best to give your first explanation briefly and clearly. Also, if they ask, make sure to explain it.