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Miyagi Goodwill Guide Club Newsletter

---------- Table of Contents ----------
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foreword

Welcoming the 2025 Academic Year

Guide Report

A pilgrimage to JoJo under the rain

Cruise ship support and interpretation support

Guided three visitors in their 30s from China

Guided a sixth-generation Japanese American youth

Guided by a British couple

Guiding International Students from Oklahoma

Social Gathering Events

MGGC Ski Tours

Cherry Blossom Viewing in 2025

Notice from the Secretariat

Report on the 2025 General Meeting of the Miyagi Association of Good Interpreters

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foreword

Welcoming the 2025 Academic Year

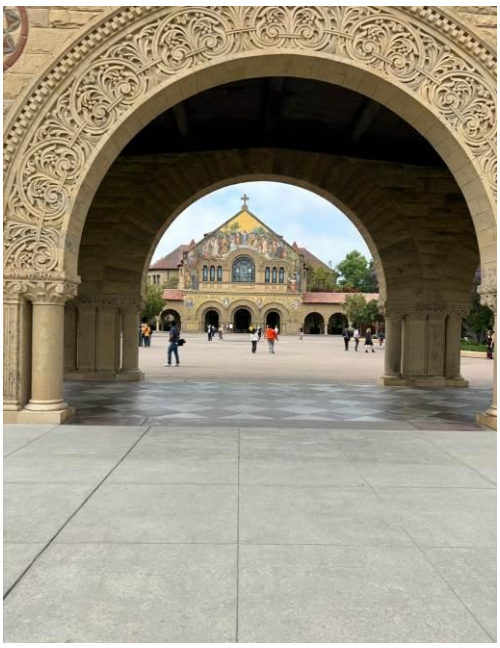
Hitoshi Ito

I served one term as chairman for the first time in 20 years. Since it was approved at the April general meeting, I will continue my activities as chairman, including projects for the 40th anniversary. Currently, there are 40 members. Thanks to that, we have had young members join, and I believe the association's activities are progressing smoothly. Japan is seeing increased demand for inbound tourism, and overall, the number of foreign tourists is rising rapidly. Although it is not yet noticeable in Miyagi Prefecture, the number of foreigners is increasing.

The visiting delegation

Sendai has always had a large number of international students, and I believe many of our members have interactions with international students. Additionally, there are technical intern trainees and students from a Japanese language school that opened this year in Osaki City, and many initiatives and events aimed at multicultural coexistence are being held. Language issues have become increasingly demanded not only in English but also in multilingual support. There is also a growing demand for support at schools for foreigners learning Japanese, technical intern trainees, and children of foreign nationality.

The use of 'Gentle Nihongo' for such foreigners is also being promoted. Aiming for multicultural coexistence and creating a society that is tolerant of foreigners is essential for Japanese society, which faces a declining birthrate and aging population. Fortunately, technology has advanced, making multilingual translation possible on smartphones.



Stanford University Campus

On June 3rd, I traveled from Haneda to the United States, sightseeing in San Francisco, and stayed with a family in Cupertino, Silicon Valley. We also saw Stanford University's vast campus, the Intel Museum, HP Garage (the birthplace of Silicon Valley), and the Tesla showroom. There were riots in LA, but California was booming, and everyone I met my age was energetic and enjoying life. It seems that exchanges with Japan are also active, and I was able to hear many stories about inter-city exchanges and useful experiences for the future, which was a very valuable experience. After a short stay, I returned home on June 10. During the round-trip flight, I watched the movie "A Complete Unknown" in Japan that I had missed. Since the subtitle was in Korean, I watched the same movie seven and a half times without sleep to understand English.

Guide Report

A pilgrimage to JoJo under the rain

Yuki Chiba

On April 13, I gave a tour to Yu Yijun, a graduate student at Guangzhou University of Foreign Studies. The client, Yu Yijun, wished to visit the Tohoku University Archives to explore Lu Xun's relationship and the pilgrimage to JoJo's sacred sites. I knew that the Tohoku University Archives was located on the Katahira Campus. Or rather, about 30 years ago, I myself entered the stairway classroom where Lu Xun studied. But I remember hearing about ten years ago that it's not so easy to visit nowadays. Moreover, Yu's request was on a Sunday. As a university archive, it is closed on weekends. I don't feel like I can guide them at all. Even on weekdays, advance reservations are required to observe the tour. With no other choice, I informed Yu of this by email.

'JoJo' refers to the shonen manga 'JoJo's Bizarre Adventure,' while 'pilgrimage to sacred sites' refers to visiting places that serve as settings in manga and anime, reminiscing about the main story. By the way, all I knew was that JoJo exists, that there are stories set in Sendai, and that people often come from overseas to visit places where JoJo originates under the name of pilgrimage.

On the condition that guidance in both Chinese and Japanese was acceptable, I suggested two courses for the day. The following courses were selected.

Plan B: 10:00 Sendai Station →Sendai Ryokusaikan→ Sendai Castle Ruins (climb on foot), 11:30 Date Warlord Corps performance → Sendai City Museum→ lunch (beef tongue restaurant), → JoJo-related

It felt like I had packed too many things in the morning, so I declined to have lunch a bit late.

On the day, we were able to meet up on time, and I felt relieved, but then Yu's friend Mr. Zhang asked me to go to Uniqlo first, which made me anxious. Sendai is colder than expected, and they want to buy a jacket. Indeed, it was cold for April, so I headed to UNIQLO in Aer. So I bought a hoodie, and just as I stepped outside to take the subway to the International Center, it started to drizzle. I canceled my plan to hike to Sendai Castle Ruins on foot and decided to use the Luplu Sendai to reach the castle ruins. The goal was to perform the Date Warlord Troupe at 11:30, but the crowd at Luplu Sendai was just too crowded. Just getting on took about 30 minutes, but I managed to reach the Sendai Castle ruins just after 11 a.m. I explained the 'kake-zukuri' and took photos with Mr. Masamune Date, who was serving customers. After receiving Yu's Japanese comment that it was 'cool,' I went to the site of the grand hall and the castle entrance to see the stone walls and explained that Chinese stone was used during the restoration. Even around 11:30, there was no sign of the performance starting, so when I checked with Tsunenaga Hasekura, he said it was canceled due to a rain forecast. Disappointed, I descended the mountain again at Roopful Sendai and headed to the Sendai City Museum. Even though it was April, the temperature had dropped so much that my breath turned pale.

Commemorative photo with Mr.

At the Sendai City Museum, we first went around the back to see the Lu Xun monument, then toured the exhibits inside. By the time I left the museum, it was already past 2 p.m., so I took the subway to Sendai Station and headed to 'Kisuke' on Minamimachi-dori. This was to fulfill Yu's wish to eat miso flavor. "Miso-flavored beef tongue" holds special meaning for JoJo fans. At Kisuke, there are salt, miso, and sauce flavors, so since it was a special occasion, Yu ordered the miso flavor, Zhang ordered the salt, and I ordered the sauce flavor, sharing them and tasting all three. "Of course, the miso flavor was my favorite," said Yu.

After that, we walked to the Gangyo Grand Hotel. It is the sacred site of JoJo. Yu-san, who said he was satisfied with his appearance, was pulled inside by saying, 'Since it's a special occasion,' and took him inside to watch. Both Yu and Zhang were stunned, and I felt deeply glad I had taken them inside. After Yu checked into the inn for that day, he headed to the JoJo sacred site, 'Hundred-Footed House.' At Hyozokuya, if you say 'JoJo, please' on receipts over 2000 yen, they'll cut a special receipt for you. Holding that special receipt, I took a smiling commemorative photo. I wanted to take a commemorative photo with the standing statue on Jozenji Street, so I went straight to Jozenji Street. However, Nakanoshima is under construction, and the area around the statue is off-limits. Once again, I'm disappointed. Taking commemorative photos in front of this standing statue, which looks like it's standing in JoJo, is a common thing for JoJo fans. Disappointed, I headed to Kotodai Park, where construction was also underway. The rain was getting heavier, and it was past 4 p.m., so Yu decided to go to another JoJo mecca, Lawson in Yanagimachi, by himself tomorrow, so we parted ways. Yu said, "I'll come again."

The two enjoying beef tongue

Cruise ship response, interpretation support report

Hitoshi Ito

On April 28, when Golden Week began, the cruise ship Oceania Riviera arrived at Takamatsu No. 2 Pier at Sendai Port, Masatoshi Sato, Osamu Abiko, and Shishido, the representative of the Yoshiyoshi Furukawa Interpreters' Association, handled the interpretation volunteer work for the passengers of the cruise ship Takamatsu No. 2.

The job involves guiding passengers participating in optional tours to their desired buses. They will definitely guide and board participants on 22 course-specific buses. I took on the job of guiding participants onto buses heading to sake breweries in Sendai City, Matsushima, and even as far away as Osaki City. At the same time, we guided them to a shuttle bus that runs back to Hon-Shiogama Station. We divided the work between the pier and Hon-

To all participants

Shiogama Station to ensure smooth operation by having passengers board shuttle buses that departed every 30 minutes according to capacity. Passengers who do not sign up for optional tours or cruise ship crews take a shuttle bus to Hon-Shiogama Station, then take a train from the shopping mall in front of the station or the station to Sendai, and then return by shuttle bus. At Hon-Shiogama Station, Mr. Masatoshi Sato and representative Shishido were busy with various questions as they gave advice to passengers who got off.

I assisted passengers boarding shuttle buses departing from the pier. Check the number of passengers who couldn't be confirmed so that those in line can board at full capacity. It seems that most of the passengers on the cruise ship were elderly couples. From what I have talked about, they came from various countries. It seems that some came from Canada, the United States, countries in South America and Europe, and even Russia. It seemed that most of the crew members were of Southeast Asian descent.

As for the staff and government officials, the staff and officials from the prefectural port division, members of Sentia, representatives from Sendai City's tourism department, and the Date Warriors Unit also joined with Mr. Masamune Date and another group to warmly welcome the passengers. The person giving us instructions was someone who was requested by Destination Asia, the client for this job, who arrived on an optional tour and supervised the tour guides. He gave us precise instructions and was a reliable presence. I had the chance to talk with professional interpreter guides, and it was a great experience. I have another request in October, so I'm looking forward to that as well.

Guided three visitors in their 30s from China

Gao Na

On April 29, we provided a sightseeing tour of Sendai city for three tourists in their 30s (two men and one woman) from Shenzhen, China, as shown in the course below.

The Westin Sendai Sendai ➡ Station (Loop 1-Day Ticket Purchase), ➡ Zuihoden ➡ Museum Nearby Spots ➡, Aoba Castle ➡, Osaki Hachimangu Shrine ➡, Jozenji Street, Ichibancho

In front of the

There were originally four people, but one person had to cancel due to work commitments. They are interested in Sendai's culture and customs, and although they don't have specific travel plans, they are looking forward to learning together.

We met at the hotel at 10 a.m. on the day and proposed two plans: sightseeing in Sendai and sightseeing in Matsushima. People from the coastal areas chose Sendai City and started their sightseeing journey. Until the day before, the weather forecast said there was an 80% chance of rain, so I was worried, but when I arrived at Zuihoden, the blue sky spread out everywhere, making it perfect for taking photos. While talking about the domain lord Date Masamune, who laid the foundation for Sendai, we took plenty of photos and enjoyed ourselves.

Next, when we were about to visit the museum, we noticed 'Aobayama Park Sendai Ryokusaikan' and wondered when it had opened. Everyone was instantly energized and thought, 'The changes in the city are so great that even locals can't tell it.' So we decided to stop by. Here, various information about history and culture is shared, and permanent displays include floats such as yamaboko floats and shichita decorative free-flowing floats. You can visit even outside the season, and we also introduced the festival situation in Sendai. Finally, I bought a souvenir inspired by Sendai at the gift shop. Here, too, there's a trick: don't buy 'Made in China' (laughs).

While debating whether to enter the museum, I decided to first visit the bust of China's literary giant Lu Xun and the place where former President Jiang Zemin planted trees. This was also a photo spot, and I enjoyed taking pictures from every angle. By the way, the most time-consuming part was something I never expected. That is the water fountain. When I lightly suggested that I could drink it, all three of them kept turning on the faucet and tried it over and over. There was wind mischief, and sometimes the water came out too strongly, getting soaked on my face, but I didn't bother with it—I just had fun and took photos and videos of myself drinking water. I casually asked, "Are there any drinking spots in Shenzhen?" and the moment I heard the answer, "I can't drink tap water directly, so there isn't," I thought, "Ah~ I did it!" It was a silly question. It was so common in life in Japan that I had no doubts about it. It was a moment when I realized once again the 'normal' I had. This experience taught me to put myself in the other person's shoes and see the world. In the end, I decided not to enter the museum and instead walked straight to Aoba Castle. There was a fortunate event here as well. During a break, I bought grilled squid skewers and tornado potatoes, and since the owner was last, he gave me a complimentary pack of tornado potatoes. Blessed with good weather, everyone was delighted by what a lucky day.

Afterwards, we stopped by Osaki Hachimangu Shrine to experience amazake. Finally, I strolled along Jozenji Street, and around 4 p.m., I went to a 'beef tongue shop' for a late lunch, but since the ta-shi service starts at 5 p.m., I decided to look for Japanese materials at a nearby bookstore. All three love Japan, and especially the women are anime fans, having obtained the N1 Japanese Proficiency Test (N1). I can understand it, but apparently he's a bit uncomfortable talking. The other two are currently studying Japanese. According to the story, the three of them have traveled around various places in Japan, and last time they had just arrived in December. On Xiaohongshu (the Chinese version of Instagram), there were many posts about Zao's Fox Village, and the stories about it were always lively. Next, they plan to visit Aomori. Around 5 p.m., we parted ways with everyone in front of the beef tongue dishes and decided to end our day's guided tour. After a long time as a guide, I made many new discoveries. As inbound tourism rapidly accelerates, we have realized the growing demand for guides. We want to continue our activities as much as possible going forward.

Guided a sixth-generation Japanese American youth

Shoji Matsuda

On May 22, a 24-year-old young man (Trace Hamada) from Dallas, Texas, was guided using a loop bus. This is his second visit to Japan. The first-generation Hamada is from Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, and on his first visit, he toured Yamaguchi Prefecture and Kyushu. This is my second time, and I'm planning to visit Hokkaido, Morioka, Sendai, Aizuwakamatsu, Niigata, Sado, and Izu.

First, we guided us to the mausoleum of Date Masamune: Zuihoden. Although it was raining, there were few tourists, so I was able to take my time to enjoy the view. Next, we guided visitors to museums in Sendai City. He showed interest in Jomon pottery, ancient burial mounds, and also in history. Date Masamune's helmet and armor are genuine, and apparently it was an imitation of a replica until two or three days ago. In that sense, I was lucky. He was also aware of Hasekura Tsunenaga's Keicho mission to Europe, but last year, while traveling in Italy, he seemed to have thought the statue he saw in Rome's Tibetavecchia was Date Masamune. Perhaps thinking about traveling in Japan, I also took Japanese classes at university, and I understood not only hiragana but also some kanji. As the guide's time passed, I felt like Japanese was increasingly used in the conversations.

At Zuihoden, with Trace,

At Sendai Castle Ruins, we started with lunch. He skillfully used his chopsticks and ate the beef tongue bowl. Apparently, when serving Japanese food, he always uses chopsticks. I photographed a statue of Date Masamune on horseback and viewed the high-definition CG video 'Sendai Castle' at the Aoba Castle Museum Exhibition Hall. The knowledge gained at the city museum became even more certain.

At Osaki Hachiman Shrine, there was a sign showing how to visit, and I followed it as we were. On the way back, I stopped by Mediatheque, but it happened to be closed that day. But since it's a glass building, I was surprised by the innovative structure that looked like it was made of pipes instead of pillars. In any case, I feel like I learned more than I could tell about Sendai or Japan.

Finally, here is a thank-you email from him.

Thank you for the tour last Thursday.
I really enjoyed learning about Sendai's history, seeing some of its famous sites, and trying its specialty food Gyutan. From the history museum it was interesting to read about the connection between Japanese and European history with Hasekura Tsunenaga. Also seeing the mausoleum of the Edo period's Date Masamune was a site to behold. Though it wasn't open it was also fascinating to see the way Sendai's glass building didn't use pillars.
Thank you again and I hope to visit Sendai again in the future.
Sincerely,
Trace

Guided by a British couple

Takuo Ito

On Friday, May 23, I served as a guide for the Smiths in their 60s visiting from the UK, leading them around Sendai city. The two have already visited Japan multiple times, visiting places like Kyoto, Nara, and Hiroshima. It was my first time in Sendai; this time, after spending one night in Hakodate, I had arrived in Sendai by train the night before.

I had introduced the Loople Bus route in advance and agreed that it would be OK to visit the spots they proposed, so I adopted the classic route of visiting Zuihoden, Sendai Castle Ruins, Osaki Hachiman, and Mediathek, and on the way back from Mediathek, I strolled slowly along Higashi Ichibancho and Chris Road.

At Zuihoden, with the

On the day, we met at the hotel at 9:20 AM to start the one-day tour. That day coincided with the "field trip" of several junior high schools in Fukushima Prefecture, so junior high school students joined the regular tourists, and the bus we took was almost full. Furthermore, a major event was held at the International Center, causing a huge traffic jam around the area, and the Roople Bus schedule was significantly disrupted. When heading from the Sendai Castle ruins to Osaki Hachiman, the bus was significantly delayed, and I had to wait at the bus stop for over 30 minutes. Honestly, the long wait made me a bit tired, but I managed to complete the planned course, so I guess that's enough.

Is it a stereotype that is very British?) Since the couple gave a calm impression, they didn't express their impressions with gestures, but the luxurious decorations of Zuihoden and Osaki Hachiman left a strong impression. As the term 'date-otoko' (date man) still used to suggest, I think people remember that Date Masamune loved to show off.

The couple are a bit younger than me, so they didn't seem particularly tired and were energetic for about 20 minutes walking from Mediatheque to Sendai Station. They seemed surprised by the crowds on a weekday and the large number of shops on both sides of the street.

The couple also has extensive overseas travel experience and is especially fond of Africa. They showed me videos of elephants, giraffes, hippos, and other animals taken up close to the animals. We discussed various topics like our family backgrounds and daily lives, but since I wasn't used to British pronunciation, I often couldn't understand it and had to listen over and over. You mentioned that you had experience being guided by volunteer guides in other cities in Japan and had a good impression, so you contacted MGGC this time. I hope my poor guide did not lower the evaluation of volunteer guides.

Guiding International Students from Oklahoma

Miruka Endo

At Arahama Elementary

On June 7, we gave an explanation about the former Arahama Elementary School and the earthquake to international students from Oklahoma, USA. I hope that those living in areas unrelated to tsunamis or earthquakes can understand the situation and the threat of tsunamis at the time. Since I was young at the time of the disaster, I learned more about the situation from the internet. I can't forget how the tsunami landed in an instant and quickly swallowed cars and houses than I imagined.

Although they are of different nationalities, I want to thank them for showing compassion for the victims of the disaster. As more generations have not experienced the disaster, I hope we can share the horrors of the tsunami and the strength of those who have recovered.

Social Gathering Events

MGGC Ski Tour (March 1~2, 2025)

Yuko Sasa

This is my first time attending a ski class in Zao, Yamagata. The mild winter made the snow quality a concern, but except for some ice runs on certain courses, the snow was generally sufficient for beginners. Participating in skiing for the first time in over a decade. The rental process was completely like Urashima Taro, but I was very grateful to all the participants. The lodge in Zao Yamagata has also become quite stylish, and now there are separate courses for snowboarding and skiing, but it seems difficult for foreigners to distinguish between them. I saw several scenes where lost children were guided and guided several times.

It's been a while since I last skied. It really takes time for the snow to settle into my legs, and I fall many times, so getting up is a real challenge (sweat). Ski instructors Mr. Suzuki, Mr. Chiba and his wife, and President Ito also taught me tips for skiing, so I gradually got the hang of it and felt like I was improving even a little (laughs).

Against the blue sky

Zao frost trees on a clear day. Natural beauty is truly wonderful. Inbound tour groups arriving at the summit one after another to see the frost-covered trees from the gondola arrived one after another, earning high praise. A traveler from Pakistan said, "The snowy scenery is the best!!

Day 1 ended with my legs shaking. At the evening social gathering, Suzuki sang the lyrics of The Beatles' Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da (Life Goes On) prepared by Mr. Suzuki. Should this song be the MG theme song? From that idea, the night was lively even with Chairman Ito's talk about calligraphy masters. The room at the hotel was clean, and the food was delicious. The bath is relaxing and feels like paradise. The price is reasonable. We would like to once again express our gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Chiba, who arranged accommodation through the planning process.

Cherry Blossom Viewing in 2025

Masatoshi Sato

On Saturday, April 5th, this year's cherry blossom viewing was held at Tsutsujigaoka Park together with members of the English study group. Mr. Seki explained the history of Tsutsujigaoka Tenmangu Shrine, and Mr. Chiba wrote the English translation, making it a very meaningful study session. Mr. Seki also shared a story about his visit to Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine in Fukuoka. They told us the story of the three drum bridges,

When crossing the bridge of the 'past,' do not look back.

When crossing the bridge of the "present," you do not stop.

When crossing the bridge to the "future," you won't stumble.

That's what they said. It was a very profound story and very educational.

Now, finally, it's time to toast. This year, a total of 10 people participated, making for a lively cherry blossom viewing. Each person brought their own bento and drinks, and the conversation continued. Tsutsujigaoka is said to have various types of cherry trees, and you can enjoy them from early April to the end of April. It is one of Sendai's top cherry blossom viewing spots, and it was very impressive to see many people and children energetically enjoying it, making it a very enjoyable cherry blossom viewing.

On April 4th, the standard cherry blossoms at the meteorological observatory announced the blooming, but on the 5th, the weather was very good all day, with clear skies to the point where sunburn was a concern.

(At first, I contacted them about the cherry blossom viewing in the newsletter, then only emailed them about the change, but some members hadn't read the emails, so the day before, I quickly informed them of the change from Shiroishi Castle.) This serves as a case study to be careful about in the future and should be used as a reference. ）

Blessed with perfect spring

First, a study session

Communication from the Secretariat

Report on the 2025 General Meeting of the Miyagi Association of Good Interpreters

Toshiko Oda

On Saturday, April 12, the 41st General Meeting of the Miyagi Association of Good Interpreters was held at the Sendai Civic Activity Support Center.

We began by reporting the number of attendees at the general meeting. As of April 1, the number of members is 40. Of these, 12 attended the general meeting, 8 received proxies, and a total of 20 members participated in the deliberation of the agenda. As a guest, we welcomed Mr. Takahiro Oizumi, General Manager of the Miyagi Prefecture International Association (MIA), who shared his expectations for MGGC's future activities.

In the following session, each person in charge reported on Agenda Item 1, and from Agenda Items 2 through 4, the deliberation on accounting-related matters was thoroughly conducted smoothly and received support. This year is the year of executive elections. Hitoshi Ito was re-elected as chairman, and Wakako Sato was chosen as vice president.

A moment from the social

After the general meeting, the customary lecture was held. The lecturer is Mr. Mom Sopeakpolin, an international student at Tohoku University's Faculty of Engineering, MIA Foreigners Support Interpretation Supporter, and MIA International Understanding Education Project instructor. He shared his experiences leading up to coming to Japan and living in Sendai.

After the lecture, a social gathering was held with Mr. Oizumi and Mr. Polin. It was a lively, warm, and enjoyable social gathering. We have renewed our expectations and thoughts for activities in fiscal year 2025.

Editor's Note

Takuo Ito

I will continue to be responsible for the newsletter this fiscal year as well. Depending on your activity level, we aim to publish 3~4 issues per year. I want to document all of my activities as MGGC. As far as I know, please ask each person individually, but there may be omissions. Even if you have activities as MGGC other than our requests, I would appreciate your active participation in posting such records. Thank you for your cooperation.