Jun.10,2026

MGGC 2026 NO.1

Miyagi Goodwill Guide Club Newsletter

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foreword

Welcoming the 2026 Academic Year

Hitoshi Ito

Although the 2026 general meeting was attended by a small group, it concluded successfully. The first year of my second term since I became president for the second time has come to an end. I want to serve as president for another year and leave it to the next generation. In fiscal year 2025, we will celebrate our 40th anniversary and create a commemorative magazine, marking the year we will move forward into the next decade. Although the burden of tourist guide volunteer work is somewhat concentrated among some members, there are still quite a few requests. We report in the newsletter each time, so even members without experience as guides are encouraged to try it out.

Volunteer guides at Sendai Station and Kotodai Park during Tanabata are the first steps toward their first guided experience, so we hope many members will participate. MGGC is supported by highly capable members. Although the group is held once a month, we hope to hold English study sessions to help with self-improvement.

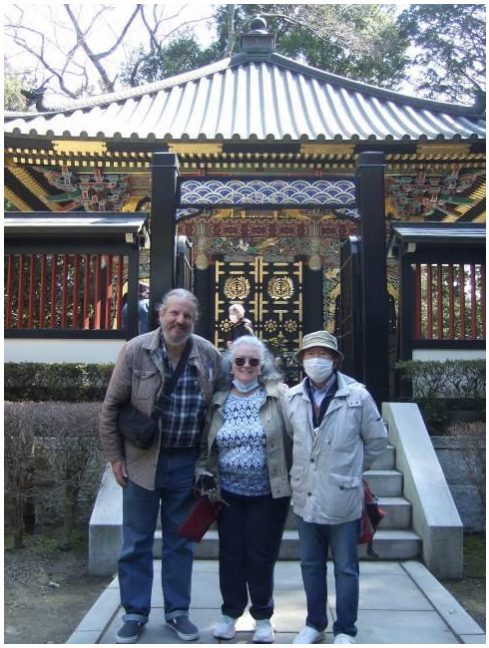
As for my own activities, I brought high school students to the United States in Dublin, Georgia, our sister city, as part of a local sister city exchange program. Additionally, as part of the International Grassroots Exchange Summit, we plan to visit Philadelphia, USA, which is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year, in October. This is also a homestay, so I'm looking forward to interacting with the locals.

Regarding foreigners within the prefecture, the number of permanent foreign residents is rapidly increasing, and efforts toward realizing a multicultural society continue. There is also a growing demand for support at schools for elementary and junior high school students with foreign roots, as well as for foreigners using government offices and medical institutions. Mr. Arun, who is from Nepal and received support after this general meeting, is also supporting Nepalese living in Sendai. We hope to consider the need not only for support for foreign travelers such as tour guides, but also for foreigners living in Japan. I believe it is also our role to help promote society's understanding of such multicultural coexistence. As an association, we want to work to fulfill diverse roles.

Guide Report

Guided by a couple from Massachusetts, USA

Shoji Matsuda



At Zuihoden

On November 18th last year, a guide named Hanna requested us to be a guide. And that request was to guide Susan and her husband, a passenger on the cruise ship on March 24 this year, Hanna's friend.

On November 26, Hanna gave us their names and ages. There wasn't a particular place she wanted to be guided, but she was interested in history, culture, and Japanese cuisine, and furthermore, I learned that Susan had studied abroad at a Japanese university. After that, I lost contact and thought it was canceled. However, on March 4th this year, just 20 days before the guide, guide requests were reinstated.

I was given the phone number 10 days before the guide's day, but I couldn't reach them. Moreover, they can only communicate via WhatsApp. So, in a flash, I had a mobile phone store connect to WhatsApp. In English, you write one line and receive a ten-line email from the other person. They even sent me a photo of my face. Emails came in rapidly. I desperately sent them to respond. Eventually, I decided to talk in person, but I was too unprepared to talk, and due to the time difference, were reversed. Three days later, I was day and night manuscript and talk again, and we able to write a get in touch without any issues. What were able to was that both of them were proficient I found out computers and finally managed to with via computers. In advance, I had communicate explanations about Sendai, Date emailed Hasekura Tsunenaga, and others.

On the day of the guide, despite time constraints, we used the loop bus mainly to visit Zuihoden, the city museum, and the Sendai Castle ruins.We guided them to the location. From the city museum, I took a taxi to the Sendai Castle ruins, but I called Susan on her mobile phone and paid by mobile as well. At the Sendai Castle Ruins, I rented VR Go, which explains only in Japanese, but once again,

Susan's phone instantly translated and explained everything in both text and voice. In the end, during the guide, I used the scripts I had prepared to guide the tour.

After the guide, they asked for the manuscript, so I sent them materials used in the guide on A4 or 8 sheets, including photos of the snowy Zuihoden. After that, 2~3 days later, they sent me 127 photos taken during the tour via WhatsApp. Through this guide, I feel like I learned a lot about new ways to use my phone.

At the Aoba Castle Ruins

Additionally, the three knock-knock jokes that came up during lunch with the two of them, including explanations, are listed on pages 7~8. For your reference.

American Couple Travel Guide

(1) Within Sendai City

Takuo Ito

On Saturday, May 9th, we guided a couple in their 60s, believed to be in their 60s from Ohio, USA, on a half-day city tour. This was his second visit to Japan; last time, he visited Ise, Nagoya, and Kyoto. In advance email, I requested a tour of the Nikka Distillery in Aiko, arriving in Sendai after 12:00, but to join the final tour of the distillery, I had to join it at 13:00. I had to take the Senzan Line beforehand, which turned out to be a bit tight in terms of time. After explaining the situation and getting their approval to change the plan to sightseeing within Sendai City, we decided to meet at the hotel 'Nonoya' at 13:00. Later, I learned that John loves whiskey and visits distilleries whenever he gets the chance while traveling.

On the day, strong winds caused a significant delay in JR, and I boarded the train with plenty of time in anticipation, but near Higashi-Sendai Station, a bush of grass by the tracks caught fire and the train was temporarily stopped for digestion, resulting in an accident where I arrived at the hotel nearly an hour later than planned. Since we were constantly communicating about our situation via WhatsApp email, neither of us panicked, and we agreed to meet first and then discuss it, so I think we both stayed calm. Advances in communication methods vary widely.

At Zuihoden

After briefly explaining the loop bus route, we got started. I bought a one-day pass at the nearby Hotel Koyo and boarded the 14:24 bus departing from the Aoba Street bus stop. You can

visit three places: Zuihoden, Aoba Castle Ruins, and Osaki Hachiman. After getting off the loop booth in front of City Hall, we walked along the first street to get to the hotel. It was a bit rushed, but I managed to visit three places.

Now, John's first question was the name of the street tree on Aoba Street. I answered Zelkova, but John said he didn't know his name. They told me to look it up on my smartphone and say it's American elm. That name seems to be common in the United States. There were many other topics related to trees, and the reason was that John's hobby was woodcraft. They showed me a little of the work, and as you can see in the photos on the next page, it looked professional-level. Actually, woodcarving is my hobby too, and I showed you a bit of my own work. I'm the type called relief, but John was also interested (probably with some compliments included), so we had a fun time first. Also, unlike John, Megan is a wine enthusiast, so I was able to chat with her about grape varieties and other things as much as I knew. It was a short time, but I think you enjoyed it to some extent.

We would like to take this opportunity to share some of the works introduced by each other on the day.

(Photo top) Rocking chair made by John

(Photo right) The author's relief work, 'Sankyo

(2) Matsushima

Miruka Endo

On Sunday, May 10th, we showed John and Megan from Ohio, USA, a visit to Matsushima. I traveled to Matsushima via the Senseki Line, and thanks to the Sendai Half-Up Marathon, it was bustling with people wearing sportswear. John seemed to like the melody of the Senseki Line departure and arrival and hummed it many times.

When I arrived in Matsushima, I first went to Zuiganji Temple. At Zuigan-ji, we explained Japanese Buddhism and what is depicted in sliding door paintings. I admired the garden and flowers visible from the kitchen area, admiring the view. I remember John jokingly saying, "My mind is blank too," when I explained that the garden was beautiful. At this time of year, azaleas are in full bloom, and Megan told me that azalea means azalea in English. Among the sliding door paintings, there are wisteria flowers depicted, and apparently they've never seen wisteria flowers in America. It was heartwarming to see wisteria flowers when they came across while traveling.

After Zuiganji, I moved on to Fukuura Bridge. When heading to Benzaido, after my trip to Sendai, I was supposed to visit Yayoi Kusama's museum in Hachinohe, Hakodate, and Tokyo. Since I had just visited Hachinohe at the end of March, I shared some delicious restaurants and sightseeing spots that moved me. I hope you enjoy Hachinohe as well.

I had lunch at a restaurant near Fukuura Bridge. We were shown to seats with a sea view. John ordered the sashimi set meal, and Megan ordered the fried oyster set meal. Megan especially loves oysters, and since oysters are expensive overseas, she was happy to enjoy them cheaply in Japan. After that, Zunda Beer was sold nearby, and the two of us shared and drank together. They said it was greener and sweeter than regular beer, with a flavor like zunda.

Finally, we stopped by Godaido to pay our respects and then headed to the souvenir shop. I was a little scared by the see-through bridge of the Five Great Halls. At the souvenir shop, both of them seemed to like Musubimaru, so they bought sweets and socks printed with it. I got tired from sightseeing early in the morning, so I spent the night sleeping on the train on the way back. When we parted, he gave me Ohio sweets as a gift, saying I was studying food at university. The maple-shaped cookies were adorable.

(Photo right) Couple at

Notice from the Secretariat

2026 42nd Miyagi Association of Good Interpreters General Meeting

Toshiko Oda

On Saturday, April 25, the 42nd General Meeting of the Miyagi Goodwill Interpreters Association 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 36. Of these, 9 were present at the general meeting, and the agenda was deliberated by those 9 members. As a guest, we welcomed Mr. Takahiro Oizumi, General Manager of the Miyagi Prefecture International Association (MIA), who offered words of encouragement for MGGC's activities.

In the subsequent deliberations, each person in charge reported on Agenda Item 1, and from Agenda Items 2 to 4, the accounting deliberations were conducted smoothly and received support. There will be no executive reshuffling this year; instead, last year's executives will continue in office. Since the accounting officer couldn't be found, Chairman Ito is holding the position concurrently, and it looks very busy. I would be grateful if any member would be willing to take on the role. Thank you in advance.

To all attendees of the general

After the general meeting, a lecture was held as usual. The instructor is Mr. Dwadiarun, a counselor at the Miyagi Foreigners Consultation Center. A person from Nepal shared many interesting stories about Nepal. Nepal's social situation, culture, politics, official language, direct flights to Nepal, the meanings of the colors of the national flag–there's no way to talk about it. The discussion was decided to continue at the social gathering.
After the lecture, a social gathering was held with Mr. Oizumi and Mr. Dwadiarun. It was a lively, warm, and enjoyable networking event.

Contributions

Knock-knock joke

Shoji Matsuda

For those who don't remember much about the knock-knock joke, I'd like to explain. In English, there is a two-way joke called a knock-knock joke. In the underlined area, you can include various personal names (which don't have to be others), and finally add phrases or sentences that start with that (a play on words) to create punchline. Needless to say, the more

unexpected the effect, the better the response. At parties and similar events, when someone says "Knock, knock," the participants respond with "Who's there?"　With that, the joke begins. (In the case of the United States)

First, let's try doing it in Japanese.
(Example 1)
You: Knock knock.
Everyone: Who are you?
You: America
Everyone: America, Mr. He?
You:　Don't be American. It's exhausting. (Don't think too much about it. It's exhausting.)

(Example 2)
You: Knock knock.
Everyone: Who are you?
You: Yamada.
Everyone: Mr. Yamada, what is it?
You: Yamada: I'm a future person. (Well, I'm still just a new person.)

Below are three examples of questions that were presented on the day.

(1) A: Knock knock:
B: Who's there?
A: Amos.
B: Amos who?
A: A mosquito.

(2) A: Knock knock:
B: Who's there?
A: Anna.
B: Anna who?
A: Another mosquito.

(3) A: Knock knock
B: Who's there
A: Alison.
B: Alison who?
A: Alice in wonderland. (Alice in Wonderland = Alice in Wonderland)

These are some examples of beautiful knock-knock jokes, but in English, a ″cold joke" is called a groaner. Knock knock jokes have the characteristic of having many groaners, and if you understand this, you can avoid unnecessary tension. What do you think? It's quite deep, but people have likes and dislikes, and some say it's boring.