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MGGC

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Miyagi Goodwill Guide Club Newsletter

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foreword

Thoughts at the beginning of 2026

Chairman: Hitoshi Ito

2025 marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Miyagi Association of Good Interpreters. MGGC's activities include responding to cruise ships that visited Sendai Port in April and October. Several members personally attended the Sendai International Music Competition held in May and June. Sendai Tanabata was also lively with many foreign visitors despite the intense heat. In October, we held a 40th anniversary dinner and published a commemorative magazine. The commemorative dinner was attended by Yoshimichi Furukawa, representative of Shishido; Yoshimichi Matsushima, chairman Aizawa; and former MGGC chairman Mr. Yamauchi, making it a small but enjoyable and meaningful event.

Last year, the Osaka Kansai Expo was a huge success, with many people gathering here. In MLB, the Dodgers fought a hard-fought battle against the Blue Jays in the World Series to achieve back-to-back championships. Moreover, the fact that three Japanese players−Ohtani, Yamamoto, and Sasaki−all performed exceptionally well to win the championship sparked a huge excitement throughout Japan. Sanae Takaichi has become Japan's first female prime minister, and her cabinet has high approval ratings, raising expectations for her future leadership. However, due to rising prices, rising rice prices, and the weak yen, our lives continue to be tough. Bear sightings are common nationwide, and sightings of bears have been frequent even within Sendai City, creating a troublesome situation. Personally, I participated in an international grassroots exchange project in June and visited San Francisco for the first time in 40 years. I stayed in Silicon Valley and had a memorable experience.

After returning to Japan, I was hospitalized and underwent surgery, but I have been healthy without serious issues. 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, and our grassroots exchange program is planning a Philadelphia convention in October. If possible, I would like to participate as well. Separately, in March, I have a high school student dispatch program for my local sister city exchange, and as the leader, I plan to visit Dublin, Georgia for the 10th time. We are currently preparing for pre-training and other activities. This is also an exchange program that has been running for 28 years, so I'm really looking forward to reuniting with the Dublin City associations. That said, since I am a pensioner turning 71 this year, I plan to gradually reduce the many positions I hold in both hands. I'm getting better at skiing. I also hope to keep my English as is and gradually improve my skills.

Although I am an unreliable chairman, supported by the excellent members, I hope to energize the association again in 2026, so I look forward to your continued support. This year, we were amazed by Aoyama Gakuin's three consecutive victories at the New Year's Hakone Ekiden, and we can't take our eyes off sports events like the Winter Olympics, Paralympics, WBC, FIFA World Cup, and the Dodgers–whether there will be a three-peat victory. We wish all members good health and a fulfilling year.

MGGC 40th Anniversary Celebration

Attending the Founding Commemorative Dinner (1)

Mayumi Seki

I attended a dinner celebrating the major milestone of our 40th anniversary and spent a memorable moment. The restaurant attached to the Kirin Brewery, which served as the venue, was enveloped in a vibrant atmosphere that was perfect for celebrating the journey so far and discussing the future. The hotel was filled with the voices of many people enjoying beer, and lively laughter from the neighboring room reached our private room. This is a unique charm of this place and felt like a fitting backdrop for the celebrations of our association, which has been held for many years. Also, despite some noise, the atmosphere where they encouraged each other to say, "Since this is a milestone, we won't lose to the neighbors! Let's all get excited together," I felt the cheerfulness and strong unity of the seniors, adding the joy and festivity befitting this celebration. The scene of the president, officers, and both new and returning members gathering together quietly spoke to the weight and warmth accumulated over the years our association had built.

From the stories of past presidents and seniors who have managed operations since the founding, as well as the many past activities displayed on the screen, I felt their unwavering commitment despite social changes, which earned me deep respect. Also, being able to leisurely chat with members whom I rarely meet during the shuttle bus or at the dining table was a unique joy of this experience. In casual conversations, I felt once again the experiences and feelings each cherished, as well as the connections as comrades who share the same aspirations.

I am currently in charge of English study groups, and listening to the journeys of these seniors, I was reminded once again that a place for mutual learning connects people and becomes a source of support for our activities. Although our study sessions are small in size, we continue in a friendly manner, and I hope they will continue to expand as a small part of our event.

While cherishing the solid progress built by our seniors, we hope to support future activities and gradually build on what we can do—this was a memorable celebration that renewed my

heartfelt wishes.

Attending the Founding Commemorative Dinner (2)

Kazuharu Saito

I was invited to join our association last October. The promptly held "40th Anniversary Dinner" was a very fortunate event for me. As a newcomer, I knew very little about the association's contents, but from photos of past activities projected on the wall, as well as greetings from President Jin Ito, former President Misao Yamauchi, Taeko Aizawa, President of the Matsushima

Interpreters Association, and President Junichi Shishido of the Furukawa Interpreters' Association, I was able to understand how actively this group has been. Also, as I listened to everyone's stories afterward, I learned that there are people who have been active in regions I didn't know about, such as Africa, Brazil, and Portugal, and that the association's activities span not only volunteer interpretation for the Tanabata festival but also from imoni gatherings to ski exchange gatherings and tourist information in Sendai and Matsushima. My impression was that Americans were cheerful, but I was surprised to find that everyone was even brighter than Americans. I was shocked to realize that 'international people' are people who always act cheerfully. In the blink of an eye, two hours passed, and the next room ended the banquet with a loud "Ippon Shutdown." Again, under Chairman Ito's voice, the event ended brightly with a louder shout that surpassed the previous one-line closure. Every day, I felt the underlying strength of everyone contributing to the internationalization of Miyagi Prefecture. The food was delicious, and it was a wonderful time that moved me deeply with everyone's informative stories.

Record of Activities

Guide interpretation for cruise ship passengers

Masatoshi Sato

On October 4 and October 18, 2025, the luxury cruise ship Seven Seas Explorer arrived at Sendai

Port, and Takuo Ito and I were in charge of interpreting and guiding the guests to these guests, so we are pleased to report this.

On both days, about 20 individually guided paid bus courses were prepared, including visits to Zuihoden, Sendai City Museum, Osaki Hachiman Shrine, and Kinjasui Shrine. Each course had a dedicated interpreter guide, and those who made reservations traveled by their respective buses.

Separately, a shuttle bus was prepared, offering a free shuttle bus between Sendai Port and Hon-Shiogama Station on the Senseki Line. Mr. Ito and I were in charge of guiding the shuttle bus; Mr. Ito guided passengers boarding from Sendai Port, while I handled boarding and alighting for those getting off at Hon-Shiogama Station and returning to the port by bus. Last year, I was in charge of Hon-Shiogama Station alone, but due to discussions about where to visit Shiogama City, I couldn't even take lunch breaks, so this year I asked for a two-person team. This year, YMCA students A and B-ko joined the team, and A worked with me to manage Hon-Shiogama Station.

Ms. B was in charge of the port together with Ms. Ito. Mr. A is fluent in English and knowledgeable about Indian cuisine, and was surprised when he introduced restaurants near Hon-Shiogama Station to customers. This year, I was able to take lunch break and had a great time. I lived in Hon-Shiogama until I was in first grade, and I was so nostalgic as I guided the way around, reminiscing about the past. Most of the passengers on the boat were elderly, and only one group went to Shiogama Shrine, but they said it was wonderful and made me very happy.

A and B-ko, who were interpreting for the first time, expressed their aspirations to study Japanese at the YMCA and then work at a hotel in Japan. We also had lively conversations about the future activities of the two of them. I also mentioned that I would like to be in charge of the next announcement.

Shuttle bus guidance

Introduction of New Members

Kazuharu Saito

Nice to meet you. Currently, I teach political economy and ethics at a private high school, which is my second workplace after retirement. Recently, a difficult task has been assigned to quantify students' motivation, interest, and attitudes, and we are struggling to tackle it. That said, seeing the faces of students lifts my spirits, so going to work itself is a big pleasure. The reason I joined this association is because I want to share the local charm with foreigners who come to Miyagi Prefecture and gain satisfaction through enjoyable conversations, and I also want to grow by experiencing unknown cultures.

My English was triggered 50 years ago when I heard the U.S. military radio broadcast "FEN" in Tokyo. I was very happy when I could catch a bit of simple English like the weather forecast in the fast-paced English that made no sense. After that, I have been self-studying, so I haven't improved much. However, when I speak English, I feel comfortable that my personality changes a little, and even though I know it's a nuisance, I still seek opportunities for English conversation. Thank you very much for your continued support.

Other

A letter from Michel in France

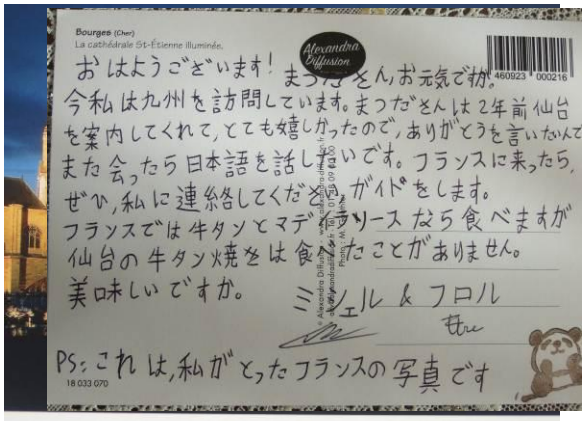
Shoji Matsuda

It's been over ten years since I became the English teacher, but I never imagined I'd be so fortunate to have such an opportunity. One day in August 2025, I suddenly received an email from France. "I'll send you a postcard, so please give your address." If I remember correctly, two years ago, I was asked to be guided by Ms. Naruge and Ms. Ito with Michel.

At the end of August, I received another email from Michelle. The slides attached to that email were photo collections featuring over 500 edited photos from his four visits to Japan: 2013, 2017, 2018, and 2023. During one visit to Japan, about 20 days later, he traveled around various parts of Japan, collecting photo books of local landmarks, World Heritage sites, festivals, and local specialties. It also listed the locations of each visit and the costs incurred (from transportation to meal costs). Furthermore, it even mentioned a place to visit in autumn in 2025. I simply felt like I had received something amazing.

Then, about a month after sending the address, at the end of September, I received an envelope with both the address and letter written in Japanese, along with a postcard and several photos. The postmark was from Fukuoka, Kyushu. I was surprised when I saw the text on the postcard. Mr. Ito, who actually guided us, made a mistake and found that it had changed to 'Matsuda'. But even with this mistake, it's true that email exchanges continue.

The postcard was a picture postcard taken by Michel, featuring the Bourges Cathedral, a World Heritage temple where he lived. When I looked it up, Bourges Cathedral was listed as a cathedral alongside Reims Cathedral, Chartres Cathedral, and Notre-Dame Cathedral. From several emails, I learned that I started studying Japanese in 2013, when I first came to Japan.



Michel, front (left) and text (right)

Another thing: currently, she is learning Japanese through private tutoring on the italki website. In my October email, I wrote that on my fifth trip to Japan (Kyushu, especially Yakushima), I discovered many things. On Yakushima, it seems they enjoyed hiking and snorkeling. I also received 4 or 5 photos.

Finally, when I emailed her, saying, "I've never been to France yet," Michel sent me photos from various parts of France in a November email. This is the French version of the Japanese slide collection, labeled as Jong Chan's trip, so it is believed to be a photo book created by a person of Chinese descent. Regardless of that, it is divided into 13 categories (place names), each marked as (1) a must-visit place, (2) a place to visit if you have time, and (3) a must-eat if you find it. Here are a few excerpts: 1. Paris starts with the Louvre Museum, followed by the Palace of Versailles, the Eiffel Tower, etc. 2. The typical 'flea market' 3. Normandy 4. Mont Saint=Michel 5. Bordeaux ・・・・・・ 13. Alsace, and so on. Each item came with 10 to 20 photos. Anyway, this is also an amazing collection of works.

From my side, I sent photos of the Sendai Kannon statue, beef tongue, Sendai Tanabata Festival, red spider lilies, shumaigiku, a flame-emitting ramen shop, and soba noodles. So, I enjoy exchanging emails with Michelle like this.

Year-end party

Mieko Koike

We held our annual year-end party at 'Shugurō Hanare'. There were 10 participants. I'm excited and excited to hear about everyone's events from the past year each time. I joined a little late because Sumio Suzuki had gone to Yudonosan Ski Resort for his first ski ride.

Chairman Ito went to Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Mr. Oda had a tough time after a fire broke out on the floor above his apartment, causing water leaks and other damage. Naruke-san was involved in various incidents at work (school). Even after getting injured in skiing, Chiba's passion for skiing remained strong. Wakako Sato continued as a 'meddlesome lady' and was able to help a Chinese person who was struggling with a corrupt administrative scrivener by chance with the help of Sumio Suzuki (a unique encounter at MGGC).

Koike was a Bangladeshi international student who had previously hosted a host family. When she was promoted in Japan and went on a business trip to Tokyo, she came to see Sendai and was able to talk with her husband about her family and recent life, for which she is grateful. Masatoshi Sato talked about his 40th anniversary, work, and family. We were able to hear from Mr. Sumio Suzuki about Wakako Sato's story and the current social situation surrounding international students. Mr. Matsuda shared his concerns and difficulties as an interpreter, as well as his own health.

Notably, Mr. Tadano was the one who stood out. As a hobby, he created a translated book of short story collections that won the O. Henry Award for Outstanding Works. Although it was not for sale, they shared it among all participants. I have deep respect for the fact that English is a hobby regardless of age. I'm currently reading it at home.

I'm truly happy to hear all sorts of stories at the year-end party that I can't experience myself. I also felt proud of the MGGC members who are active in various fields.

Editor's Note

Takuo Ito

Although this is a period of low activity, thanks to everyone's submissions, we were able to publish No.3 again in fiscal year 2025. Thank you for your cooperation. Please continue to post actively next fiscal year.

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