



### ~Let's Talk About the World in Kagoshima!~ 30th Japanese Speech Contest for Foreign Nationals



Participants in 2024

30 foreigners (from 10 countries) living in Kagoshima Prefecture participated in the preliminary rounds, and 10 of them (from 8 countries) gave their speeches at the final round held on 25 January 2025, at the Kagoshima Prefectural Museum of Culture Reimeikan.

Ms. Kodikara Arachchilage Delki Punyaja from Kamimura Gakuen College, is from Sri Lanka and her speech titled "My Encounter with Kimono" won the grand prize.

While clad in a beautiful kimono, she spoke about her experience of wearing kimonos which started after being invited by her school teachers, and her speech drew in an audience of about 223 people.

This time too, the confident manner in which each contestant spoke about their own lives and experiences here in Kagoshima while using the Japanese that they had learnt, clearly showed the effort that they have put in while in Japan, and captivated the hearts of the audience.

### Japanese Language and Culture Class for Foreign Residents



While performing a skit

From May 2024 to Feb 2025, 60 sessions of Japanese Language and Culture Class was held for foreign residents living in Kagoshima, with topics such as Japanese language useful to daily life and Japanese customs. Of these classes, 30 were held in-person on Wednesday afternoons and 30 on Thursday evenings. In addition, an online Japanese language course was also held in August as a commissioned project by Kagoshima Prefecture.

For the in-person classes, students were split into small groups where they learnt expressions useful in daily life, and also performed skits using the words that they had learnt. Japanese language was also learnt from various angles, such as interacting with children from an elementary school nearby, and at the start of the new year the students wrote calligraphy together as an experience of Japanese culture.

For the online course, the attendees are those who were unable to attend the in-person classes due to work or family commitments, or those who do not have any Japanese language classes nearby, resulting in a different experience from the in-person classes.

Some feedback from the participants includes, "I was able to learn useful expressions because the topics were practical and relevant", "I want to learn more and be able to speak Japanese", and from these comments their enthusiasm about learning Japanese can be felt.

## Training for Volunteers to Support Foreigners during Disasters



In the event of a large-scale disaster in Kagoshima Prefecture, it may be likely that foreigners who have no experience with disasters and do not understand Japanese would have some difficulty in accurately grasping the necessary information. Therefore, we held both in-person and online courses in July 2024 in order to train volunteers to support foreigners in such scenarios.

Both courses are taught by Mr. Akiyoshi Kikuchi of the Japan Multicultural Society Professional Organization, who was pivotal in running the Sendai Disaster Multilingual Support Center during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. In addition to discussing the current situation and challenges faced by foreign victims of disasters and conducting workshops on easy Japanese, there are also several other segments.

The in-person course has an interpretation and translation exercise (in English and easy Japanese) in which participants engaged foreigners in a mock-up of a disaster evacuation shelter, and the online course included a Multicultural Disaster Prevention Workshop on the topic of issues that arise due to cultural and linguistic differences in evacuation shelters.

According to the participants, "It was very meaningful to hear the instructor share his experiences and the many suggestions he made based on them", "I felt the importance of flexible responses in times of disaster", and "I realized that in order to support foreigners in times of disaster, it is important to be actively involved not only in emergencies but also during times of peace". By understanding what kind of situations will arise when a disaster occurs and what kind of responses are required, the participants can be seen taking part in the activities with a sense of ownership.



## Community Development Project for Mutual Aid during Disaster



We co-hosted a disaster prevention course and workshop with Izumi City in December 2024. It was part of the Community Development Project for Mutual Aid during Disaster for Japanese and foreign residents in the area, and 17 Japanese and 13 foreigners participated.

It included a course for Japanese residents to learn easy-to-understand Japanese for use towards foreigners, and a basic course for foreigners to learn about disasters and disaster prevention measures in Kagoshima.

In addition, there was a joint workshop for foreigners and Japanese people where participants made disaster prevention raincoats, and identified dangerous areas, evacuation sites and routes in their neighborhoods while referring to hazard maps. They also learnt how to use an AED as part of an emergency medical training course.

According to the participants, "I realized that easy Japanese is not a methodology, but rather that its importance lies in having consideration for others" and "In order to create a city where everyone can live in peace, I want to firstly be able to value interactions with the people close to me."

We hope that this project will serve as an opportunity to build up in-person relationships during times of peace, and that as a result both Japanese and foreigners will be able to help each other in times of disaster.





## Japanese Language Chat Room



Explaining about ceremonial occasions

This year, 4 sessions of the Japanese Language Chat Room was held for foreigners who can hold daily conversations in Japanese, with the aim of creating networking opportunities and improving their Japanese.

The themes for this year are 「Ceremonial Occasions (Customs in Japan)」, 「Traffic Safety for Cyclists」, 「Moon Viewing Party」 and

「International Exchange via Sports! (Walking Soccer Tournament)」.

Japanese participants and guests were invited to discuss the topics, and participants from various countries exchanged opinions while comparing it with their own culture.

During the session for 「Ceremonial Occasions (Customs in Japan)」 where Japanese customs were introduced, participants learnt about Japanese weddings, funerals and other ceremonies from guest lecturers from Sunbridge. Participants also had the opportunity to experience the incense burning process that takes place at funerals and some were surprised upon comparing it to the funeral customs in their own countries.

According to the participants, “I was able to interact with diverse types of people and my horizons were broadened” and “This was a good chance to learn more about Japanese culture”. We hope that the participant circle of the Japanese Language Chat Room would further widen, connected by their joint motivation of learning Japanese.

## International Exchange Booth Exhibition

This is a project which cooperates with foreign residents in the area and international exchange groups in order to raise interest in international exchange, and sets up international exchange booths from our association at events throughout Kagoshima.

This year, we set up an international exchange booth to share about Vietnamese culture at the 3rd Satsuma Town Industry & JA Agriculture Festival in Satsuma Town.

At the event, participants had the opportunity to experience making Dong Ho prints, which are a lucky charm for Tet (Lunar New Year) in Vietnam, and to try out coloring experiences. In addition, pamphlets introducing Vietnamese culture were also distributed.

While trying out these experiences and interacting with the Vietnamese instructors, participants were able to deepen their understanding of Vietnamese culture. It was not just children, but adults and Vietnamese residents of Satsuma Town also joined in the event, making it a fun experience for a wide range of people.

These events were a great opportunity for visitors to get a feel for international exchange by having the chance to directly interact with foreign people and foreign languages.

## Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers Alumni and Exchange Students as Teachers



Explaining about Malaysia

Every year, the Supporting Organization of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) in Kagoshima, the JOCV Kagoshima Alumni Association, and the Kagoshima International Association holds a joint project that dispatches JOCV returnees and international students living in Kagoshima Prefecture as lecturers to around 40 elementary and junior high schools.

The aim of the project is for students to learn more about international cooperation and understanding through the experiences of JOCV alumni and by interacting with foreign residents. This year too, we showcase topics which

cannot be found in textbooks alone such as introducing experiences and countries via photos and videos and trying on traditional clothing.

Some comments from the approximately 2,200 students of the 40 participating schools include, “This made me want to learn more about other countries”, “I realized there was so much that I did not know about”, and “When I grow up, I want to work overseas as a volunteer”.

This project not only is a good chance for students to deepen their understanding about international cooperation, but also for them to think about their own future.

## Guide to the International Exchange Plaza

### 【International Exchange Plaza】

- Event bulletin board
- Rental of national flags, traditional clothing, maps, UNICEF videos
- Free browsing of foreign-language materials such as newspapers, books, and magazines

### 【World Talk Salon】

Conversational classes in English/Korean/Chinese

### 【Japanese Language and Culture Class for Foreign Residents】

Classes: 1st Term, May-Jul (10 classes) / 2nd Term, Sep-Feb (20 classes) \*TBC

Wednesday Classes: 10:00am-11:30am every week

Thursday Classes: 6:30pm-8:00pm every week

Venue: Kakuix Exchange Centre (Kagoshima Prefectural Citizens Exchange Centre)

1F, Meeting Room A (in front of the shop)

Capacity: 15 people per class

Eligibility: Foreign residents of Kagoshima who are 18 years of age or older and are new to learning Japanese

Fees: 1st Term (10 classes) 1,000yen / 2nd Term (20 classes) 2,000yen

We also welcome enquiries on international exchange matters, registration of homestay host families and volunteer interpreters, etc. Please feel free to stop by if you have any enquiries.



## Consultation Desk for Foreign Residents

The Consultation Desk for Foreign Residents provides consultation services in multiple languages for foreign residents living in Kagoshima Prefecture.

○ Method of consultation: In-person visit, telephone, email, Facebook Messenger

• Tel: 070-7662-4541 / Email: [kiasoudan@gmail.com](mailto:kiasoudan@gmail.com)

• Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Kiasoudan>

○ 24 languages available:

- Japanese, English, and Vietnamese are available directly at the consultation desk.
- For the other languages, it would be via a multilingual call center.



↑ Facebook QR code

[For enquiries related to the International Exchange Plaza, Consultation Desk and our publications]

### Kagoshima International Association

Kakuix Exchange Centre (Kagoshima Prefectural Citizens Exchange Centre)

1F, 14-50 Yamashita-Cho, Kagoshima City, 892-0816

Tel: 099-221-6620 / FAX: 099-221-6643 / E-mail: [kia@kiaweb.or.jp](mailto:kia@kiaweb.or.jp)

HP: <https://www.kiaweb.or.jp> / Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Kagoshima.Intl.Assoc/>

Opening hours: 9:00AM – 5:00PM (Tuesday to Sundays)

Closed on: Mondays (if it falls on a public holiday, the Centre will be closed on the next day), end of year holidays (29 Dec – 3 Jan)

