

ENGLISH TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
of
WESTERN HARIMA



NEWSLETTER

GREETINGS!

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Inside this issue:

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT 2
By Hisaaki Harada

HISTORY AND ENGLISH EDUCATION OF TOYO HIGH SCHOOL - Part 1 - 3
By Kazunori Harada

A VISIT TO THE HIGH SCHOOL OF UNIVERSITY OF HYOGO 8
By Ishmael Ho

THE ADVENTURES OF MISCHIEVOUS BOYS IN CHIKUSA 10
By Futamu Kishimoto

Welcome to this issue of the English Teachers Association of Western Harima Newsletter. With the busy events of April behind us, now seems like a good time to dive into the first issue of this academic year.

A new school year means many new faces around school. Both ALTs and JTEs embrace new teaching partnerships, and reflect on the previous. Many of us have been rediscovering some old teaching plans, searching for tried and tested teaching

ideas. Or perhaps you have been trying a new teaching approach. Either way, this time of year is definitely a highlight.

The humidity appears to be increasing week by week, which is certainly a sign of the rainy season to come. Maintaining concentration levels during times of high humidity is not easy, but we must do the best we can. Most teachers and students are glad to switch over to 'cool-biz' and put away jackets and neckties during

the hot and humid weather to come.

Culture festival preparations are in full swing. Students are coming together with the support of their teachers to create an enjoyable and memorable event. From good food to exciting performances, there will be something for everyone to enjoy. What will be the highlight of your culture festival?

As always, thank you for reading!

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

We are happy to present a range of interesting articles in this first issue of the academic year.

First, Mr. Hisaaki Harada, the new principal of Yamasaki Senior High School, and president of English Teachers' Association of Western Harima has written an article to reflect on the conception and history of this very newsletter project. His effort and commitment to this newsletter is always highly appreciated.

Our second article is provided by Mr. Kazunori Harada. It features valuable

insight into the history and the English department of Toyo High School, detailing their numerous International Programs and opportunities for students.

Mr. Ishmael Ho continues his great contribution to this newsletter with the third article of this issue. This time, he describes his experiences of his recent participation in the 'InterPeople Day' of the Junior and Senior High School of the University of Hyogo.

Last, but not least, is a story from the village of Chikusa written by our great senior teacher, Mr. Futamu

Kishimoto. This issue's story is titled 'The Adventures of Mischievous Boys in Chikusa'.

Finally, I will take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Luke Stoneman, the ALT of Yamasaki Senior High School. I am happy to be a part of this newsletter project, though only for a few months longer as my time as an ALT here is coming to an end.

With all of the greetings and introductions out of the way, please enjoy the articles!



GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

— *Volume 3, A New Step of Our Newsletter Project* —

By Hisaaki Harada

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to extend a hearty welcome to all the readers of this English newsletter. I remember quite well that I declared on May 27, 2016 that a new era had finally come in the history of English Education in Hyogo Prefecture when we first published the first issue of this new project. However, I must honestly confess that I was not at all confident about the future of this new medium two years ago. No one was certain for how long it would be published, but the very fact behind us is that we have so far produced twenty issues, ten issues each for Volume 1 and 2. Here, I would like to express my hearty thanks to all the contributors, ALTs and JTLs, who have earnestly written about various kinds of topics on English education, cultural experiences, international exchange programs, and so on. I believe that this newsletter opened up new horizons and brought a new dimension to our daily life.



The greatest contributor to this English newsletter project is, of course, Mr. Ishmael Ho, who has taught English at Fukusaki and Kanzaki Senior High Schools for roughly three years. When I first met him and exchanged a few words at the entrance hall of Kanzaki Discovery High School in April, 2016, I instantly recognized that we could create something new for the development of English teaching/learning activities in Hyogo Prefecture. He kindly and immediately accepted my request to be an editor of a new publication, and since then he has presented creative works of English teachers almost every month to share views and bright ideas on English education from all over Nishiharima and Hyogo Prefecture. I was personally mesmerized by his profound knowledge of Japanese swords and the *tatara* method of iron production, and he himself is an embodiment of traditional Japanese spiritual values by practicing *iai-do* every day. I strongly believe that his courtesy and his philosophy of life are deeply reflected in each issue of this English newsletter.



Ishmael, Performing *Iai-do* at the Culture Festival of Kanzaki H.S.

In launching the production of Volume Three or the third-year newsletter project, I would like to express my own gratitude to be able to start a new school year as President of English Teachers' Association of Western Harima again with this English newsletter in our hands. This is all thanks to Mr. Kazuhiro Ouchi, former president of our society and present principal of Amagasaki Nishi Senior High School. He kindly supported the idea of publishing the newsletter and patiently kept sending it to each high school throughout the last school year. With his great assistance, we can now create a new history and pass it onto the next generation. This April, I was transferred to Yamasaki Senior High School, my own alma mater. When I started the activity of Koeiken in 1986 as one of the staff of the 1st Prefectural English Speech Contest, the president of our society, Koeiken Nishiharima Branch, was Mr. Kakuji Kojima sensei, the 23rd principal of Yamasaki Senior High School. It is often said that history repeats itself. With the announcement of the new Course of Study on March 30 and with the advent of the new volume of ETWH Newsletter, I do hope that we can actually create a new era of English education from Nishiharima. Thank you very much.

Hisaaki Harada, Principal of Yamasaki Senior High School

President of English Teachers' Association of Western Harima

Vice President of Hyogo Prefectural English Teachers' Association (Chief of English Debate Contest Committee)

HISTORY AND ENGLISH EDUCATION OF TOYO HIGH SCHOOL - Part 1 -

By Kazunori Harada

At the foot of the sacred mountain of Shosha stands the renowned private Toyo High School with its glorious history of over 50 years. This month and the next month, Mr. Kazunori Harada, who has been teaching English for more than 40 years there, introduces the history and its English education by focusing the international programs and three great English teachers in the history of the school.



1. The history of Himeji High School affiliated with Toyo University (Toyo High School).

(1) Until national championship of our baseball club

It was in 1963 that Toyo High School started its history as a boys' high school with 3 school mottoes, "Independence," "Friendship," and "Wisdom." With the teachers and students being quite energetic from the beginning, Toyo High School soon became renowned for its strong sport teams. Within 10 years of its foundation, our Judo and Kendo clubs as well as our baseball club won the prefectural championship, and their successes were later followed by the table tennis and the Japanese archery clubs. When I became a teacher in 1977, our baseball club won the championship in the national tournament at Koshien stadium. All the Himeji citizens were at the height of excitement, when the victory parade was carried out.



Toyo Players with the Champion Flag



The Victory Parade in 1977

Around this time, Principal Takao (1974-1979) adopted a new system to educate students to achieve academic successes. He set up the advanced course to send students to prestigious universities. Even now, I can vividly remember some enthusiastic students participated in a week-long summer intense study camp at the skiing resort of Hachibuse in the northern part of Hyogo.

(2) The new start with co-education

In 1989, with the new second school building constructed, Toyo High School became co-educated for the further successes of education, and the number of the students who entered famous universities remarkably increased. Also, in sport clubs, there were progresses. The female players of our table tennis,

(continued on page 4)

HISTORY AND ENGLISH EDUCATION OF TOYO HIGH SCHOOL - Part 1 -

By Kazunori Harada

(continued from page 3)

Japanese archery, kendo, judo, skiing, and fencing clubs won championship in Hyogo prefecture. Our baseball club revived, too. In 1996, Mr. Fujita, who used to be the head coach of “Toshiba,” a semi-professional team, was employed and made our team successfully become the champion team of Hyogo prefecture, for the first time in twelve years. In the same year, the boys’ softball club stood on the top of the prefectural tournament and participated in the national competition. (The softball team was invincible in Hyogo prefecture from the late 2000s to the former part of 2010s.)



Baseball



Japanese Archery (Kyudo)



Kendo

(3) The academic successes and their decline

On the academic side, in 2002 our students passed 31 national and public universities (Osaka University, Kobe University, and Tohoku University were included.), and in 2006 the total number of 63 students passed, so-called, “Kan-Kan-Dou-Ritsu” universities. However, the academic successes came to be overshadowed by the prefectural government’s policy to permit junior high school students plural applications for different public senior high schools, while sport clubs continued to achieve good results.

(4) The academic revival

Principal Hashimoto (2011-the present) started to take actions against the academic decline the moment he was in the post. He embarked on the construction of the new main 5-story school building, and also started the affiliated junior high school, headhunting of excellent teachers from other high schools both public and private, or employing experienced retired teachers. Thanks to his efforts, our school is regaining its momentum in university entrance examination results. Particularly, in 2016 some students passed many prestigious national universities like Osaka University, Hokkaido University, Kyushu University, and so on. On the contrary, the number of the students who want to get a job after graduation is decreasing, and some sports clubs are losing their power, while some others are making progress.



The Super Advanced Class

(continued on page 5)

HISTORY AND ENGLISH EDUCATION OF TOYO HIGH SCHOOL - Part 1 -

By Kazunori Harada

(continued from page 4)

2. Development of English education and “International Programs.”

(1) First ALTs from Montana University

When Toyo High School became co-educated in 1989, a male ALT was employed for the first time. He was a graduate of Montana University, a sister school of Toyo University, and afterwards, a new ALT was sent to our school by Montana University every two years. The first ALT was followed by young beautiful female ALTs who looked like fashion models. At one time, however, there was a discrepancy of views over the contract between the fourth ALT and the chief clerk. He stopped the Montana relation and decided to find a new ALT in and around Himeji.

(2) Today’s ALTs and their roles

Nowadays, we have 3 ALTs, two of whom are young Filipino female teachers employed by Toyo University. On the occasion of being chosen as a super global university in 2014, Toyo University decided to send Filipino teachers to affiliated high schools by way of a company which has language schools in the Philippines. As the 3 ALTs have their own splendid know-hows to teach English conversation, we often let them take leadership roles in teaching English conversation. In the classes, two Filipino teachers show their good teamwork, which is favored by our students. The other teacher is an experienced American female ALT. Her wit and a variety of teaching materials always assimilate students into English communication practice smoothly.

On the third floor of the main school building, just in front of the elevator, there is the compartment for English conversation. It is made of transparent glass and is called ‘Communication Square.’ Two Filipino teachers stay there during lunch time and after school, so enthusiastic students can enjoy talking with them in English freely.



Ms. Cecy Wales



Ms. Jasha Suriaga

Ms. Rayanne Atanacio

(continued on page 6)

HISTORY AND ENGLISH EDUCATION OF TOYO HIGH SCHOOL - Part 1 -

By Kazunori Harada

(continued from page 5)

(2) The start of our “International Programs”

By the way, back in the 1990s, Principal Kakiuchi (1991-1997) started to consider Toyo High School “International programs.” He recognized its importance, and sent the students and teachers to New Zealand in 1996. They visited Wainuiomata High School in Wellington and our students stayed with its counterparts (the teachers stayed at a motel), with the activities focused on interactions and learning history and cultures of New Zealand as well as English. This study tour to New Zealand was conducted twice, and the sister-school relation with Wainuiomata High School was on the verge of being signed.

(3) The shift of our “International Programs”

However, Principal Asai (1999-2007), who was appointed by Toyo University and came from Hokkaido in 1999, suddenly shifted the “International programs” to Adelaide in South Australia. As a specialist of “International programs,” he had decided to develop them in Australia. One of the reasons is the fact that Adelaide is among the sister cities of Himeji. Within the year of 1999, he went to Adelaide himself (I accompanied him) and found a friendly school, “Kings Baptist Grammar School,” whose teachers and students have continued to pay a visit to our school every two years since 2002. (At first, for 10 years or so, Kings’ students and teachers experienced only one-night homestay, but the stay was prolonged to two nights, so that the English speaking ability of the Toyo High School students could be better.)



(4) Sister-school relation

In 2000, Principal Asai employed another specialist of “International programs,” Mr. Miyahara, and in 2004, based on his advice, Principal Asai established the sister-school relation with Brighton Secondary School, one of the best high schools in Adelaide. From 2000 to 2014, we visited Brighton Secondary School twice every summer during the study tour in Adelaide, with the study center being arranged in another place. It is now a language school “SACE.” In the past, at one time “City Hall,” at another time, “a church.” Only once, in 2007 the study center was founded in a small classroom at Brighton Secondary School. Our students also experience a school tour, and participate in Japanese language classes, with their activities focused on self-introduction, playing some games, composition both in English and Japanese, and the like. A few times in the past, they took part in physical education, playing Aussie football. Lunch was of course served: mainly barbecue or sandwiches.



(continued on page 7)

HISTORY AND ENGLISH EDUCATION OF TOYO HIGH SCHOOL - Part 1 -

By Kazunori Harada

(continued from page 6)

(5) Toward the real “International Programs”

In 2009, I got an email from one of the vice principals, David Thomson that Brighton Secondary School was planning a study tour to Japan around in 2012. Also he asked for our providing a week-long homestay for his students. Principal Kato (2007-2011) soon accepted the request, but actually the students and teachers came to our school in October, 2015, for the first time.

This was the very beginning of the real interactions of the two schools. They experienced lots of activities: welcome ceremony, flower arrangements, calligraphy, a sports day, climbing Mt. Shosha, short trips to Himeji Castle and a steamed fish paste factory, and the grand farewell party. As I guessed the teachers of Brighton High School would be anxious to know what their students were doing at our school, I recorded what they experienced and emailed it to a Vice Principal, David Thomson.

This spring, our 20 junior high school students stayed with the counterparts of Brighton Secondary School and also enjoyed the interactions with those of Kings Baptist Grammar School. This summer our senior high school students are expected to go to Adelaide in South Australia. I hope the relations with Australian high schools will last forever.



Welcome Ceremony



Calligraphy Class for Brighton S.S. Students



Communication Square is one of the most popular places in Toyo High School.

(Continued to the next issue...)

A VISIT TO THE HIGH SCHOOL OF UNIVERSITY OF HYOGO - The Enlightening Experience of 'InterPeople' Day - By Ishmael Ho

I have been an ALT in Hyogo Prefecture for the past two years and nine months. In that time I've been fortunate enough to have met many wonderful ALTs and through them, visited their schools. Coming from a pair of small mid-level schools in the countryside of Himeji, it has been particularly eye-opening to see the difference in levels across different schools. Last week, I was invited to take part in the Junior and Senior High School of University of Hyogo's "InterPeople Day" and to be a judge at the student speech contest. It was an enlightening and extremely enjoyable experience, and one that showed me the power of Kendai Fuzoku's students.



The Entrance of Kendai Fuzoku

The Junior and Senior High School of University of Hyogo are situated on a beautiful campus in the mountainous area of Kamigori and Shingu. The commute to the school itself was a bit of a challenge, but nonetheless, the views of the mountainsides and the beautiful architecture of the school buildings give the campus a calm, tranquil atmosphere. The students however, were very much Hyogo youths, energetic, enthusiastic and boundlessly cheerful. Their voices rang out across the campus with the excitement of their school's special day. After the ALTs arrived, we were greeted by the schools' ALTs and educational staff. They directed us to a meeting room where we could prepare for the day's events.

I must admit, I felt a bit nervous walking into the school auditorium, just as the Inter-cultural activity session was set to begin. As we filed into the hall, spotlights shone down on our group; a motley crew of foreign visitors, all of us from different countries and backgrounds. However, my anxiety faded to appreciation as we were greeted by the applause and the cheerful faces of the gathered students. One thing that stood out to me, was how outgoing and courageous the students were! They all seemed confident and curious, wanting to say hello and several of them gave us "high-fives" as we walked to the front of the hall.



Self-introduction by Ishmael

In the auditorium, we were treated to performances by the student choruses, special speeches by students on a variety of topics ranging from traditional Japanese stories to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. The junior high school students also took part in a recitation contest. Their performances were remarkable for students of their age. They took turns giving their best renditions of Robert F. Kennedy's famous 1968 speech "On the Mindless Menace of Violence." The recitation contest then gave way to the high school speech contest, where students presented their own specially prepared speeches. We were all shocked by the high level of competence and creativity that each speech demonstrated, as well as the amazing performances by the students. In the end it was difficult to judge the best, of what were all very good speeches. Nevertheless one student was able to take the first prize for his brilliant speech writing, pronunciation and delivery. *(continued on page 9)*



Great Speeches by the Students

A VISIT TO THE HIGH SCHOOL OF UNIVERSITY OF HYOGO - The Enlightening Experience of 'InterPeople' Day - By Ishmael Ho

(continued from page 8)

Following the special cultural performances of Taiko drumming, a piano performance and a duet sung by students, our experience in the auditorium ended, and we were directed to prepare for our own presentations to assorted groups of students from the senior and junior high Schools. In my case, I was set to deliver a lesson about my home country to a class of junior high school students. At first, I was quite nervous, that the lesson I had planned might be a little too advanced for them. In fact it was a lesson that I would have been wary of teaching to my third grade students at senior high school level! However, I was surprised to find that not only were they able to follow the lesson completely, they were excited to learn about my country and asked a lot of questions!

This level of curiosity, confidence and language competence was something that I had not encountered at any other school thus far. For our own students I think it important to help them get over their own insecurities about trying to communicate in another language. Making a mistake should not be a barrier to expressing oneself. More often than not, native speakers are happier with the effort of someone trying to earnestly speak their language than with no effort at all (or worse, lampooning their language with meaningless and “humorous” catchphrases). It is no exaggeration to say I was thoroughly impressed and also very happy to chat with the students in my class that day.

After our classes, we were treated to a variety of activities at the students special InterPeople day booths and games. There was a game of “Hyakuninglish Karuta” in which the traditional game of Karuta was played with English readings of the 100 famous poems by famous Japanese poets, as well as several interactive games where the visiting ALTs had the chance to chat with and meet the students of both the senior and junior high schools.

Overall, seeing the InterPeople Day at the Junior and Senior High School of University of Hyogo was a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Through it I was able to gain a greater appreciation for the differences in educational levels of students, and to see the potential for students who had gone past their shyness or lack of confidence. I would like to thank especially the teachers and staff at the Junior and Senior High School of University of Hyogo for all of their hard work in putting the event together, coaching their students and for inviting us as visiting ALTs!

Thank you all so very much.



The Taiko Drumming Performance



A Scene at the Classroom Activity



The “Hyakuninglish Karuta” Game

THE ADVENTURES OF MISCHIEVOUS BOYS IN CHIKUSA

By Futamu Kishimoto

These stories take place during the ten years after the end of World War 11, from 1945 to 1955. These are the stories of a group of boys who spent their young lives during and after the war in a particular part of Chikusa, a village surrounded by mountains. It was at once a time when the atmosphere of war could be felt everywhere in the village and also a time when people were coming out of the post-war confusion. Though the radio was the main source of amusement in those days, TV was also gradually gaining popularity. The TV set, the fridge, and the washing machine were coming to be regarded as the three symbols of modern life in Japan. However, most families could not afford to buy them, and thus such items stayed beyond their reach.

The boys in these stories did not experience war themselves, but they suffered a lot of the after-effects. Their poverty was not that of those who had suffered loss. Rather, it was, from the beginning, a constant fact of life. They took it for granted. Thus, they were able to make the most of and enjoy the meager things that fate had bestowed upon them in the countryside. For example, in those times, children were free to do anything they wanted. Or, rather, their parents had no time to take care of them, because life was a constant struggle, simply to get food.

In a sense, for these naughty boys, those were the happiest and richest times of their lives. They were carefree and had control over their own world. Even now, their experiences during those years are irreplaceable treasures.

These stories take place in Chikusa, Shiso-gun, Hyogo Prefecture. There, the mischievous boys often played in a place called Kurotsuchi. The village was surrounded by high mountains, and through the center of the village ran a very clean river called the Chikusa River. The water was always clear and, when the boys stepped into the river, they could see small pebbles being washed along the bottom of the river.

The boys made glass boxes to catch fish. *Dasu* (bull fish) and *gigi* (fish similar to catfish) could be seen everywhere in the stream. Bull trout, which are now called phantom fish, also lived in the same stream, but the boys were interested in the round crucian carp, not the bull trout. The boys wanted very much to see this crucian carp, so they once went as far as Himeji to see the fish.

All of the boys who appear in this story were playful and full of life, and each one had his own characteristics. The group was close-knit and played together, without a single person leaving the group, until the sixth grade. Despite their unity, there was an unspoken rule that graduating elementary school would mean the dissolution of this naughty troop. The rule was without origin; no one had created it. Nevertheless, the boys accepted this as fact. Wearing the black uniform of junior high school would signify leaving the group.

Perhaps the most compelling and heart-warming feature of our young heroes is that they made every day of every season playtime. Unhindered by the lack of manufactured toys, they used their innate creativity and ingenuity to craft toys out of whatever they could find.

This is their heart-warming story.

(The End)



Original Illustration by Ms. Ryoko Tanaka