

S I F A



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Los Angeles!

June ~ July 2021 edition

EVENT INFO

※Events listed here are subject to change or cancellation to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

※Please wear a mask and follow other safety protocols at our events.

English café ②

Chat in a relaxed atmosphere. English speakers can meet locals, learn about the area, and discuss various topics.

Our Japanese attendees this time will be Junior High and High School students. We will look forward to seeing our older Japanese participants at our English café ③ in September.

Date: Sunday, July 18th (7/18)

Time: 3pm ~ 4:30pm

Place: Citizens' Exchange Building ("lunchbox,") 2nd floor

Japanese signups: up to 12

Discussion leaders: International city residents (including the city CIR and city ALTs)

Target English level: Beginner ~ advanced

Cost: free for non-Japanese

Japanese: ¥300 (SIFA member,) ¥600 (general)

Signup deadline: Wednesday, July 14th (7/14)



"Let's Chat!" Online event

In this members-only event you can practice your Japanese or English during the day with our International Relations staff.

Why not chat with us in your language of choice?

Dates: Tuesday ~ Friday

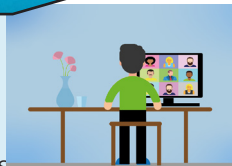
Time: 9am ~ 5pm, 15 minutes per signup, 5 chats available per member per year

Japanese discussion with Japanese city hall staff (Yamakawa or Nino)

English discussion with Daniel Cruse

No fee (other than your annual SIFA membership dues)

Once you sign up, we will send you a Zoom link. Please sign up with your name, top two requests for discussion time, and email address. Since the chats will be conducted using Zoom, please enjoy on your phone or computer.



If requests overlap at specific times, the chats may take place in a small group.

Circumstances may dictate adjustment to dates and times.

Beginner English ①

Level up your English in this friendly ESL (English as a Second Language) class.

We will start using a new textbook (Evolve 2 from Cambridge University press).

Dates: 6/16, 6/30, 7/7, 7/14, 7/21, 7/28 (Wednesdays, six meetings)

Time: 10:00am ~ 11:30am

Place: Citizens' Exchange Building ("lunchbox,")

2nd floor meeting rooms

Class size: 5 ~ 12 students

Instructor: Daniel Cruse (city CIR)

Target English level: Beginner

Cost: ¥3,000 (SIFA member,) ¥6,000 (general)

Textbook cost: ~ ¥3,000

Signup deadline: Thursday, June 10th



Results of the 2021 Annual Meeting mail consultation

Thank you very much for your continuing understanding and support for the activities of the Shikokuchuo International Friendship Association.

This year we held our Annual meeting deliberations by mail, and set a return deadline of May 22nd for the voting forms. The results of the written decisions are as reported below.

Agenda items

Item 1	Fiscal year 2020 activity report	Agree: 192 Disagree: 0
Item 2	Fiscal year 2020 budget report	Agree: 192 Disagree: 0
Item 3	Fiscal year 2019 audit report	
Item 4	Fiscal year 2021 proposed event schedule	Agree: 192 Disagree: 0
Item 5	Fiscal year 2021 proposed income and expenditure	Agree: 192 Disagree: 0
Item 6	Edits to the Association bylaws	Agree: 192 Disagree: 0
Item 7	Trustee and Auditor elections	Agree: 192 Disagree: 0
Item 8	Officer elections	Agree: 192 Disagree: 0

Result

All items were approved by a unanimous vote.

Derek Reiman' s Aikido Journey

My name is Derek Reiman. I lived in Shikokuchuo City from 2012 to 2014 and worked as an ALT. This was my first time to come to Japan and I did not know anything about Ehime or Shikochu when I first arrived. However, my supervisor asked me if there was anything that I was interested in trying when I came to Japan, and I told him that I was interested in Aikido. I had first read about Aikido when I was in middle school and was really interested in it, because of the philosophy behind it. This philosophy is hard to explain succinctly, but Aikido differs from most other martial arts in that it tries to cultivate a sense of connectedness and cooperation with an attacker, rather than one of antagonism and competition. I started practicing Aikido with the Shikokuchuo branch of Tanimotokai, which falls under the umbrella of the Aikikai school of Aikido. I started going twice a week and was able to pass my first black belt test at the end of two years of practice. Being part of this Aikido dojo helped me to feel like I was part of the local community. I made friends and learned a lot by watching, even before I could speak Japanese well. After I left Shikochu, I moved to many different countries and cities (Los Angeles, USA; Moscow, Russia; Shanghai, China; Nagoya, Japan) and practiced Aikido in many different dojos, but none of them felt as tight-knit and enjoyable as when I was in Tanimotokai in Shikochu.

Then, in 2018 I moved to Shimane and became the CIR in a city near Izumo. I looked for an Aikido dojo where I could practice and was extremely surprised to find that a branch of Tanimotokai had just recently opened in Izumo. Surely these were the ties of destiny (go-en)! Since then, I have been practicing Aikido at the Shimane branch of Tanimotokai, going occasionally to Ehime for Enbukai (Aikido performances) and for practices at the head dojo in Matsuyama. I see many of the people that I used to practice with in Shikochu, and in 2019, some of them even came to Shimane and performed at Hinomisaki Jinja near Izumo Taisha together with us. It was a great experience! Aikido is one of the things that brought me back to Japan again, and that helped me to thrive when I first moved to Japan. I was very lucky that I could become part of this community that accepted me, regardless of my nationality or Japanese language ability. We were connected by a passion for the amazing art of Aikido, something that continues to help me feel connected to those people and to the city of Shikokuchuo. I am very thankful to all of those people and really glad to still be involved in Aikido.



About the COVID-19 Vaccine

To non-Japanese Shikokuchuo residents, Shikokuchuo city has yet to begin the first stage of vaccinations of elders 65+. You will hear from the city once these vaccinations begin. For information on COVID-19, please check the 「COVID-19」 tab on the Ehime International center (EPIC) website: <http://www.epic.or.jp/index.php>

Section Head Welcome and Goodbye



Tetsuro Hosokawa

Hello SIFA members,
During the April staff transfers, I was moved out of the Community Development section (which oversees International Exchange) and appointed to be the Section Head of the Welfare Department's Elderly Care Section. Last year the COVID-19 pandemic made sport of our plans at SIFA, with cancellations or at least reductions in scope for most of our events. At one event I met a JHS second-year who asked, "Will there be a New Zealand trip next year?" Knowing that this student had been looking forward to this opportunity since Elementary school, I was at a loss for what to say. Transferring in the midst of this situation, I have many painful and reluctant memories. T though at the moment we can do nothing but pray for a speedy resolution to the COVID-19 crisis, I fervently await the day when we can resume our biggest program for developing international understanding: the Junior High overseas exchange. Thank you for the past two years.

I regret not studying English more. In university I went to New Zealand with the rugby club. I wasn't even a regular member of the team, but in this hallowed ground of rugby I was given the chance not only to join a match, but to join an after-match exchange event. I couldn't speak any English, so needless to say my conversation with the opposite team was limited to a bunch of gesturing. Thinking back on this experience, it was my first time being close to foreign people and cultures, and the first time I appreciated the importance of intercultural communication.

Thirty years later, this April I came to the Community Development section. As this is the section in charge of international relations, there is a rule here. Every week or so, the morning meeting is held in English. "Here's the proof that I should've studied English more seriously!" It's a regret I've felt many times. Prior to the meeting, I laboriously prepare with a translation app. Will there come a day when I can put down my English crib sheet?

To the SIFA members: we feel keenly the challenges of this unprecedented COVID situation where "up until now" doesn't apply. Despite these circumstances, I ask for your support as we work to further international exchange. I look forward to working with you all.



Hirotoshi Takahashi

Questions? Suggestions? Get in touch!

SIFA staff

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Submissions welcome!

Send us your artwork, thoughts, life updates, frustrations, memes, or anything that strikes you.

What are you homesick for?

How has international exchange enriched your life?