



YAMADA HIGH SCHOOL

Honesty, Pride, and Determination!

About Yamada High School



Yamada High School is a school surrounded by rich nature in Tosayamada-cho, Kami City, Kochi Prefecture. It is more than 80 years old, and has a long history rooted in the local community. It has three courses: the General Course, Business Research Course, and Global Research Course. In each course we actively engage in activities that value not only the community but also a global perspective. These include collaborations with local shopping districts for product development, hosting a yearly education forum for Kami City, and international exchange programs.

What is inquiry learning?

Inquiry learning is a method of learning that is primarily student driven. Students, individually or in groups, choose a topic, research it, conduct experiments, and give presentations about what they have learned. Inquiry learning allows students to direct some of their learning and gives them an opportunity to work on important skills, such as time management, public speaking, and how to contribute to the community. Each course at Yamada High School does some inquiry learning, but the topics vary by course. Students in the General Course focus on local topics, such as using local specialty products or revitalizing local towns, students in the Business Research Course focus on business topics, such as creating business plans or product development, and students in the Global Research Course focus on a wide variety of scientific, literary, or local topics.



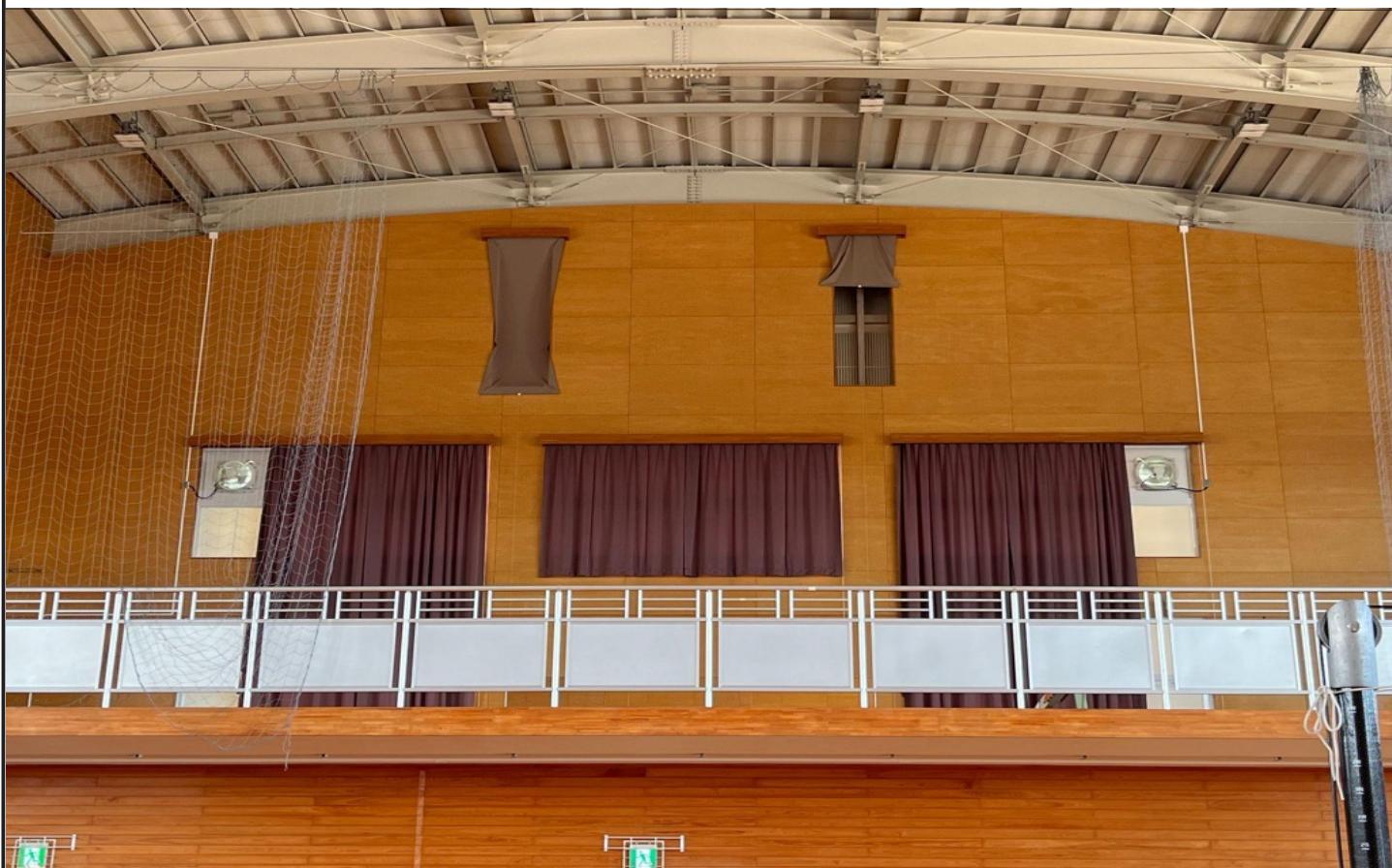
What is ALTidings?

ALTidings is a series of bilingual articles written in Japanese and English by Yamada High School's Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) from 2022-2026. They cover Yamada High School's events and unique aspects from a westerner's perspective. If you're interested in learning more about Yamada High School, or who that penguin is, then please take a look at some of the articles below!

Anpanman is Watching!

Anpanman is everywhere in Kōchi. You'll often find him, or his friends and enemies, smiling at you from unexpected places, such as the stairs at Kōchi Station. Kami City, the hometown of Anpanman's creator Takashi Yanase, might be the epicenter of this Anpanman phenomenon. Anpanman buses run through the area, Anpanman adorns Tosayamada Station, and Anpanman is featured at Kami City's Yanase Takashi Memorial Hall.

Anpanman is even hiding in Yamada High School's gymnasium. Looking at this photo, his big nose and cherubic cheeks come to mind. Whether this is an illusion I see as a result of living under the gaze of Anpanman or it genuinely looks like him, I'll leave it to you to decide. For me, thinking of Anpanman's face hidden in plain sight puts a grin on my face. It's fun to imagine him watching over the students as they exercise, protecting their dreams. If only he could also defeat any germs in the gym.



アンパンマンが見ている！

アンパンマンは、高知のあらゆる所にあります。高知駅の階段や他の意外なところから、アンパンマンと彼の仲間たちや敵の笑顔をしそつちゅう見かけます。アンパンマンを描いたやなせたかしの出身地である香美市はその中心にあります。アンパンマンバスが周辺を走っていて、アンパンマンが土佐山田駅にも飾られていて、アンパンマンが香美市のやなせたかし記念館で主役を勤めています。

山田高校の体育館にもアンパンマンが隠れています。この写真を見たら、なんとなく彼の大きな鼻と膨らんだ頬が思い浮かびます。私がアンパンマンの視線を受けて生きてきた結果として見える錯覚なのか、本当に似ているのかは読者の判断に任せます。私は、ありふれたところに潜んでいるアンパンマンの顔を思うとつこりしてしまいます。アンパンマンが子供の体育を見て夢を守つていることを想像するのがたのしいです。ばいきんを倒すこともできたらどんなにいいのでしょうか。



高知県立山田高等学校吹奏楽部

第31回定期演奏会



Regular Concert

On Sunday February 12th, I participated in the brass band's 31st Regular Concert. It was divided into two parts. In the first part, the 5 club members played 2 songs, and their centerpiece was "Riverdance," an alluring song based on Irish dance and traditional Irish music. In the second part, a total of 13 club members, alumni, current students, teachers, and other supporters came together to play 8 songs of various genres, including the energetic swing song "Sing Sing Sing" and "New Genesis Medley," a skillfully crafted medley of songs from One Piece Film Red.

Since everyone was busy, we only had two practices where everyone was present, including the day of the concert. Despite this, each song came together surprisingly well, and I felt a lingering feeling of unity left behind in the air after playing each final note, which I hadn't experienced since my own days in high school band. While it was far from perfect, I would say we succeeded at pulling off a moving, fun concert.

定期演奏会

2月12日（日）吹奏楽部の第31回定期演奏会に参加しました。二部に分けられていました。一部では、5人の部員が、アイリッシュ・ダンスやアイルランド音楽を中心とする「リバーダンス」をメインに二曲を演奏しました。二部では、合計13人の、部員、卒業生、本校生徒、関係者、と先生方が、勢いのあるスイングの「シング・シング・シング」やワンピース フィルム レッドの曲を巧みに組み合わせた「新時代メドレー」を含めた幅広い八曲を演奏しました。皆が忙しい中、当日を含めて全員出席の練習は二回きりだったけど、それぞれの曲が意外と形になって、最後の音符を吹いた後の空気に漂う団結を高校生ぶりに味わうことが出来ました。完璧からは、ほど遠いけど、感動的で楽しい演奏で成功したと思います。

これからも、高知県立山田高等学校吹奏楽部の活動にご理解とご協力のほどよろしくお願いいたします。具体的に言わせてもらえば、四階から楽器を運ぶのがマジで疲れることへのご理解と、エレベーターの設置のご協力をお願いします！

It's Cold Isn't It

While waiting for an opening ceremony in the gym to start, I saw a Jet Heater in use for the first time.



My initial reaction was to wonder about its efficacy as a heating method. Yet despite that, I stood near it throughout the day. I felt somewhat guilty since the students were all sitting in assigned seats far from the heater. But I was cold.

My hometown is colder than Kochi, and it snows enough to pile up, but I didn't feel as cold in my everyday life there as I have living in Japan. I think this is because even if you try to escape from the cold by going indoors, the buildings here have little insulation, so you'll still feel cold.

After researching a bit, it seems that throughout most of Japan, there is no requirement to include proper insulation when constructing a building, so it is cheaper for companies not to. A baffling consequence of this is that houses in Hokkaido are warmer than those in many other prefectures.

I'm not just complaining because I'm cold. In Japan, more people die from heat shock (sudden changes in blood pressure after getting in a hot bath) than from traffic accidents, and cold houses with little insulation are one cause. Houses with good insulation also don't require as much energy to heat, so they can help slow down global warming.

But I have to admit that it's not all bad. If you're ever unsure what to talk about, you can always rely on the trusty "samui desu ne" or "It's cold, isn't it." And I think the seasonal greetings used in Japanese and common at the beginning of speeches, emails, or letters, such as "Despite spring having begun according to the calendar, the unchanging harsh cold con-

tinues" carry more meaning the colder you feel.

Lastly, another heating method I saw here for the first time is a kerosene heater with a water-filled teapot placed on top, and I now have some great memories of huddling around it and chatting with the other teachers.



少し調べたら、日本の大部 分では、建築物を建てる際、断熱性を義務的に考慮する必要がないから、ちゃんととした断熱を入れない方が安いです。結果として北海道の家が他の県より暖かくて、どうかと思ひます。

たからです。私の実家は高知より温度が低く、雪が積もるほど降ります。しかし、日常生活が日本ほど寒く感じたことはなかつたです。日本は、外が寒くて屋内に逃げても、建物に断熱がまるでなくて、まだ寒いからだと思います。

体育館であるオーナーニングセレモニーを待っていたところ、初めてジエットヒーターを目にしました。効果的な暖房手段かどうかを疑問に思ってながら、その近くに立ちました。指定された席に座つていた生徒に申し訳なく感じたけど、私は寒かつた。

りではないと認めざり得ません。話の
いつも便利な「寒い」と
ですね」に頼れます。
「暦の上では立春とな
りましたが変わらず
の厳しい寒さが続い
ております」みたいい
な日本語ならではの
季節の挨拶も、寒く
感じれば感じるほど
意味を持つと思いま
す。そして、もう一
つ初めて見た暖房手
段、石油ストーブと
その上に載せた茶瓶
を囲んだ、他の先生
たちとの炉辺談話も
いい思い出になる
でしょう。

言いたいだけじゃありません。日本では、入浴中にヒートショックで死ぬ人の数は交通事故で死ぬ人よりも多くて、断熱があまりないのが一つの原因です。そして断熱性の高い家は、エアコンや暖房の負荷を減らしても温度が保たれるから、省エネでき、地球温暖化の予防にも役立ちます。

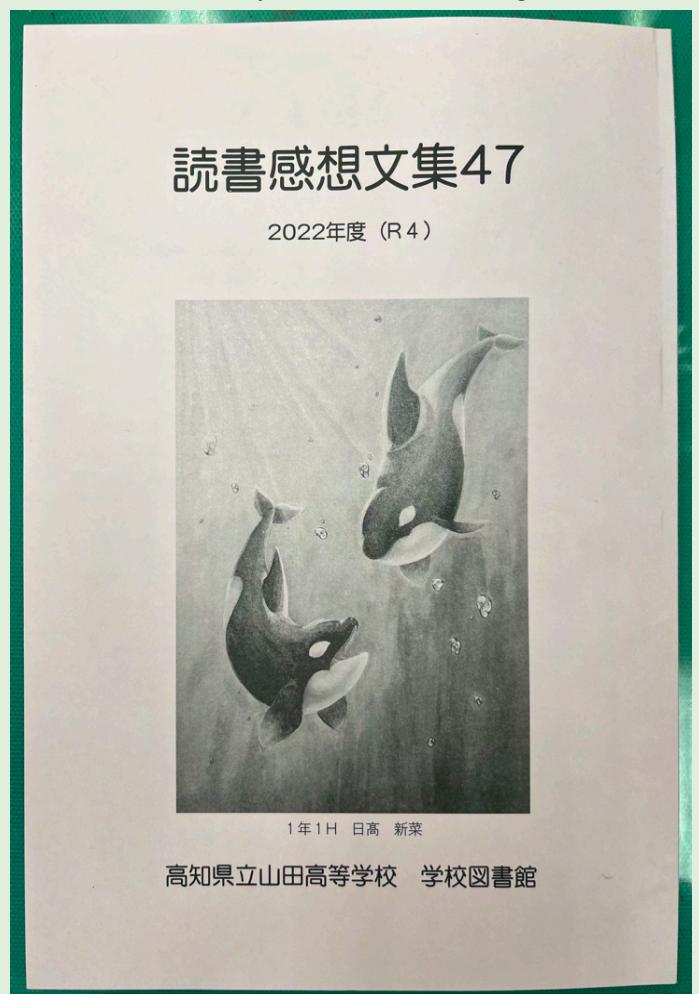
Thoughts on Yamada High School's 47th Collection of Book Reports

As an ALT during finals week, I don't have much work to do, so I've been passing the days by reading. Since I enjoy reading and was free anyways, I decided to read Yamada High School's 47th Collection of Book Reports. Students all wrote book reports as homework for Japanese class over summer break, and thirteen of them were selected and submitted to a Kochi Prefecture book report competition. One student won an award of excellence, two others were selected for competition, and the school overall won an award of excellence. This collection contains those thirteen book reports.

My thoughts in brief—reading this collection reminded me how valuable writing book reports can be. A book report is a layered format that interweaves your thoughts on the book, yourself, and the relationship between the two and can draw the interest of readers while also being invaluable to the writer. Reading this collection, I learned a little bit about a wide variety of topics, like synesthesia, Suguru Osako and long-distance running, dyslexia, an international science fair, and sudden cardiac death. More than just getting a peek at what students are reading about and interested in, I also got a glimpse of their thinking about life, whether it be choosing a certain career, using time wisely, or valuing every moment and not taking them for granted.

A book report is also valuable as a snapshot of your current self. Rereading it (and the book) after some time has passed lets you reflect on your life from the time when you wrote it to the present and see how your way of thinking has changed. I took this as an opportunity to reread some

of my high school book reports, and rereading them I was reminded just how much of a stubborn, aggressive idealist I was. Rereading was embarrassing, yet highly amusing, and although I see now how juvenile my thinking was, I'm still glad I was forced to write it. I think it would be wonderful if someday this collection, too, gets reread.



進路の選択であれ、時間の有効活用であれ、当たり前だと思われがちな毎日を大切にすることであれ、各自の人生の考え方も垣間見ることができました。現在の自分のスナップショットとしても有意義です。時間がずいぶん経つてから、感想（とその本）を読み返すと、書いてきた当時から今までの人生と考え方を深く省察できると思います。これを機に私は高校時代の感想文を読み返しました。読むだけでも恥ずかしくなり、頑固で、攻撃的になら、いかにも稚拙な理想家でした。今だつたと分かるけど、「そういう人間だつた書かれて良かつたね」と苦笑しながら、と思いまして。この返文集も、いつか読み返されたら素敵だと思います。

「読書感想文集四十七」を読んで

Pentan

Yamada High School's mascot is a penguin named "Pantan" who represents inquiry-based learning. He came to Yamada High School when the Global Studies course was established. Pantan's name comes from shortening "penguin" to "pen" and adding the honorific "tan," used for cute characters, and also works as a pun on taking the "tan" of "tankyuu," the Japanese word for inquiry.

Pentan has a simple but cute design, and I've liked him since I found him when I was still in America and researching Yamada High School. Since coming here in person, I've come to admire Pentan for two more reasons.

First is the wide-ranging usage of Pentan. You can find Pentan in various outfits striking different poses on the school's website, newspapers, flyers, comics, posters, and even sticky notes. When I found Hunter Pentan, it felt like I'd pulled a rare gacha. The penguins modeled after some of the teachers here are also delightful.

Compared to Pentan, my alma mater's plain mascot and design policy of just slapping on the school's logo feels a bit unsatisfying. I understand it's faster and cheaper that way, but I've come to enjoy seeing a cute mascot like Pentan every day.

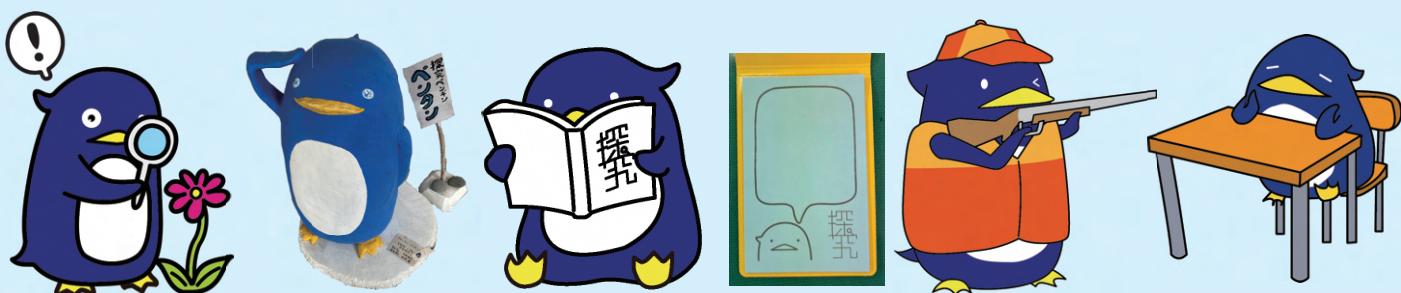
Second is the reason a penguin was chosen as the mascot. Pentan represents inquiry-based learning but is also a “first penguin.” This refers to the first penguin in a

group to dive into the ocean below to catch fish, despite the fact that predators might lie in wait. When referring to a human, it means the first person to take up a challenge despite the difficulties awaiting them.

The hope is that students will take after Pentan and also challenge themselves. As someone who left the US for distant Kochi, I agree that such courage is important. And, as a teacher, when a dead silence fills the classroom, as if anyone who makes a sound will be attacked by zombies, I appreciate a first penguin brave enough to take a stab at answering the question.



A poster which features penguins modeled after teachers and asks students to eat silently and wear masks when talking.



マスコットをはじめ、生徒たちもその勇気をもって行動したら、という旨です。国を出てはるばる高知まで来た身として、そこまでの勇気が大事だと同感します。そして教師として、すこし問うてみると、音を立てたらゾンビに襲われるかのようになります。沈黙よりも音を立てる方が質問に答えるフリがいいんです。

のない感じます。そ
のほうが早くて安い
とは分かるけど、やつ
ぱりペンたんみたい
な可愛くて癒される
マスコットが好きです。

Personnel Reshuffle

It's said that spring is the season of encounters and farewells. In Japan, the new school year, as well as a fair amount of new employment, job transfers, and retirements coincide with sakura, or cherry blossoms, in full bloom, and among all this change there is a strong feeling of impermanence. What has especially made me feel this is the personnel reshuffle of teachers. More than ten teachers are being transferred from Yamada High School this year.

Every year in Japan, some of the teachers working at public high schools are transferred by the board of education to other schools within the prefecture. I was surprised when I first learned about this since it's not something commonly done in the United States. My initial reaction was to think that it was a bit extreme; there are only two weeks between when transfers are announced and when teachers have to start working at their new school. One result of these transfers is that many students and teachers are prevented from having a relationship that lasts from when a student enters the school to when they graduate. This is quite different from what I'm used to, seeing as my favorite teachers from high school were there for the ten years that both of my brothers and I were in high school.

But, when in Rome, I think it's important to try and think from the perspective of the Romans. There are many advantages to such a personnel shift. Shifting teachers around allows for the gender, age, and experience of teachers to be better balanced between schools and facilitates the transfer of knowledge and techniques from one school or teacher to another. Regular transfers can also prevent teachers from getting too settled in and resting on their laurels and have the benefit of rotating the staff working at remote or island placements.

Although I can't say that it's altogether negative, saying farewell is still difficult.



人事異動

春は、別れと出会いの季節だと言われています。新学年・就職・転勤・退職などの春に纏めた人間社会のイベントが、満開の桜と相まって、諸行無常を深く感じさせる季節だと思います。私は春をとくに意識させたのは人事異動です。今年、十人以上の教員が山田高校から異動されています。

学校での人事異動というのは、毎年公立学校で働いている教員が県内のあちこちに異動することです。アメリカにはこんな異動がないため、聞いたときはびっくりしました。生徒と先生の入学から卒業までの関係を遮り、異動発表から新しい学校で働き始めるまでに二週間しか置かないのは不条理ではないかと思いました。私が高校生

として特に世話をなった先生は、私と兄弟が高校に通つていた十年間の間ずっと居たから、私の経験と大違ひです。でも、「郷に入つては郷に従え」の視点から考えてみると、人間の異動の長所として、教員の年齢・性別・経験を平均化し、異動した教員が別の学校と教員から得たノウハウをシェアする効果があります。それと一つの学校に慣れて成長しなくなることを防げて、片田舎や遠い島での教員を定期的に回すともつと平等かもしれません。

一概に悪いとは言えませんが、やはり別れは悲しいです。

Temporary Class Schedule

The beginning of the school year is always filled with uncertainty. Students and teachers alike worry about what kind of place school will be for them this year. But, in Japan, the reasons for my uncertainty are a bit different than they were in America.

The main difference for me is that, at the time of writing this, this year's class schedule is still undecided. Instead, the first two weeks of school are carried out using a temporary schedule. In the first place, an ALT's schedule is already flexible, with requests to come to a school or class just for this week or just once this month being regular. But not having a general grasp on what days, periods, or even the total number of classes I'll be teaching most weeks makes it hard to find my footing.

This temporary schedule situation is quite different from my old high school (and the US in general). Before school started, the overall schedule would be decided, as would be the schedules of each individual student. If you had an issue or complaint with your schedule, you could meet with a school counselor to get it changed. While it took a week or two to finalize all the student's schedules, the school's schedule was decided from the start.

But at Yamada High School (and Japan in general, from what I've heard), this is not the case. Although, instead of each student having their own schedule, each homeroom class has a schedule, which makes the temporary arrangement possible. The day or week's schedule is posted in the classroom, and if students forget, they can also ask their classmates or teachers.

If a temporary schedule was attempted at my American high school, I can only imagine the lost freshman wandering the halls like ghosts even after the bell has rung. And the resulting trauma.

I think it's likely that by using a temporary schedule, the barrage of events that come at the beginning of the school year in Japan, such as subject tests, club activity introduction assembly, physical exams, and class photos, and interviews can be carried out a bit more smoothly.

The first classes I've gone to have still mostly just been an hour to pass out and explain a syllabus, as I'm accustomed to. But here, that's also accompanied by receiving your marks on the aforementioned subject test that covered your spring homework. Welcome back to school!

			月						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1年	1-1		生物基	数学I	英C I	公共	書道I	書道I	
	1-2		物理基	数学I	英C I	家庭基	音楽I 美術I	音楽I 美術I	
	1-3		理数I	物理基	家庭基	総英I	理数I	現国	情I
	1-4		ビジ基	言文	情報処	英C I	数学I	現国	
2年	2-1		国表	英表現	古典B	体育	現文B	数学II	
	2-2		総英I 総音I 総書I	英表現	現文B	化学基 地学基	日史B 地理B	数学II 数I 演	
	2-3	科	英表	理数II	化学基	物理 生物	現社会	体育	英理
	2-3	人	英表	古典B	理数II	世史B 日史B	倫理	体育	英理
	2-4		化基 生物基	国表	コミュ	ビ経B マーケ	総合実	総合実	
3年	3-1		コミュ	体育	化基探	数演I	英表現	政・経	
	3-2		コミュ	体育	地基探	数演I 数演II	英表現	現社探	
	3-3	科	政・経	理数特	現研	古典B	体育	化学	英理
	3-3	人	現演 演演	世演 日演 地演	現研	生基演	体育	数研	英理
	3-4		総合実	ビ語 球法 ピジム	体育	世史A	現A	コミュ	

Last year's Monday schedule. The y-axis shows the homeroom and the x-axis shows the period.

新学年の始まりはいつも不安に満ちています。自分にとつて今年の学校はどんな場所になるのか、悩みます。でも、日本では不安になる原因がアメリアと少し違います。私にとつて最も違うのは、これを書く時点で、今年の時間割がまだ決まってないことです。学年の最初の1週間は、臨時の時間割で授業が行われます。ALTのスケジュールはそもそも曖昧で、あるクラスや学校に今週だけとか月一回とかの依頼があります。でも、依頼があります。でも、何時間教えるのか、何曜日のなのか、何時間目などのか、大体の概要すら分からぬから、少し落ち着かないです。

私の母校へアメリカ全体がそうだと思ふう」とずいぶん違います。学校が始まる前から、学校の時間割が決まつていて、生徒一人一人のスケジュールも決まつています。もしも自分のスケジュールに問題や不満があつたら、学校カウンセラーと相談して変えてもらいます。全生徒のスケジュールが最終的に確定するまでに一週間から二週

間かかっていますが、学校としてはもう最初から決まっています。でも、山田高校（これも日本全体がそうだと聞く）では、決まっていません。でも、ホーム制度だから一人一人じゃなく、クラスごとにスケジュールがあり、臨時時間割が成り立つわけです。教室にその日と週の時間割を掲示できるし、生徒が忘れたらクラスメイトや先生にも聞けます。

アメリカの学校で臨時時間割が使われたら、チャイムが鳴つても迷つて一年生が、幽霊の群れのように、廊下を彷徨うのは目に見えています。トラウマもいいところです。

臨時時間割を使うと、新学年の始まりに来る、対面式、課題テスト、部活動紹介、身体測定、ホーム写真撮影、面談等々の、数多くの学校行事をよりスマートに行えるかもしれません。

アメリカとの共通点として、私が見た初めての授業は大体シラバスを渡すだけの一時間です。春休みの宿題範囲の課題テストも一緒に渡さされるのがなんかアだだと思います。

Club Activity Introduction (1)

Clad in hakama, members of the kyūdō (Japanese archery) club line up on stage. One member steps up and, bow in hand, stares down a nearby target while gently pulling back the bowstring. The gymnasium, previously full of noise, is smothered in silence in just moments. A few long seconds pass. Thwack! The arrow hits the mark, and applause follows.

During the club activity introduction assembly on April 11th, each club, just like the kyūdō club above, took turns trying to entice new first year students to join their club through speeches or demonstrations.

Many different methods were put on display. The club president of the literature club stood alone on stage and, appealing to his loneliness, asked for someone to please join his club. The basketball club promised

that you would become jacked and popular with girls if you joined. The English and manga clubs were introduced as clubs perfect for slacking off or joining multiple clubs.

There are a total of 30 clubs, and with most having less than ten members, each wanted to increase their ranks by even one person. Hopefully this year's batch of first years all found at least one club they want to join.



部活動紹介（上）
袴を身に着け、弓道部員がステージに立つります。近距離の的を睨んで、ゆっくり弓を引き始めます。雑音に満ちていった体育館が、一瞬にして静寂に覆われます。何秒か立ち、だんだん緊張が高まり、ピークに達しているところです。矢が放たれます。見事に的中して、拍手が続きます。

四月十一日の部活動紹介の話です。前述の弓道部のよう、各部が演説や技術を見せることで新しい一年生を勧誘する行いです。

一人でステージに立て、一人ぼっちの自分の部に入らないかとアピールする文芸部部長、入ったらムキムキになり、女にモテると主張するバスケ部、楽で兼部できる部活動として紹介された英語部とマンガ部、様々な口説き方が披露されました。

全部で三十部あります。十人以下の部が多く、みな一人でも部員を増やしたかったようです。今年の一年生も全員入りたい部を見つけられたらいいなと思います。

部活動紹介（上）

Club Activity Introduction (2)

Watching the club introductions I wrote about in the last issue, I was inspired to introduce some of the differences I've noticed in American and Japanese club activities.

Beginning with an obvious difference, which clubs even exist in the first place is quite different. What stands out the most are clubs for traditional Japanese arts such as kendō, kyūdō, the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and shodō (calligraphy). Given America's shorter history as a country and much different attitude towards tradition, these clubs almost seem novel rather than traditional.

Which sports are popular is also a bit different. While in Japan you're quite unlikely to see a football or lacrosse club, table tennis, boy's volleyball, and badminton are more popular. In addition, school sports in America are more seasonal. For example, football is in the fall, boys basketball is in the winter, and track and field is in the spring, and it is possible for one student to do all three. In Japan, however, it's common to only be able to join one sports club, and it goes year-round.

Speaking of joining multiple clubs, during my time in high school, it was quite common for students to do many clubs. It was not surprising to hear of someone in five or more clubs. Of course, some of those clubs were probably not very active. But, there is a much stronger trend in Japan towards joining one club, and if you want to join multiple clubs, you need permission.

The last difference I'll touch on is "retirement." This is when 3rd year students (the equivalent of seniors) stop club activities partway through the year in order to focus on studying for exams or searching for employ-

ment. In my experience, seniors in America remain the focus of clubs until the end of the school year. The passing of the baton for club roles, such as president, also happens in the middle of the school year, rather than at the latter end, which I was accustomed to in the states.

Whether it be “retirement” or graduation, regardless of country, hopefully everyone has one last chance to show off their skills and leave behind some good memories. Even if the year ends in frustration or regret, I think most people look back on their club fondly. At the least, I know I do.

文化部 (Culture)		体育部 (Sports)	
放送部	Broadcast Club	陸上競技部 (男)	Track and Field Club (Boys)
英語部	English Club	陸上競技部 (女)	Track and Field Club (Girls)
地域みらい部	Regional Future Club	バレー・ボール部 (男)	Volleyball Club (Boys)
演劇部	Drama Club	バレー・ボール部 (女)	Volleyball Club (Girls)
美術部	Art Club	バスケットボール部 (男)	Basketball Club (Boys)
書道部	Calligraphy Club	バスケットボール部 (女)	Basketball Club (Girls)
吹奏楽部	Brass Band Club	サッカー部	Soccer Club
写真部	Photography Club	ソフトボール部	Softball Club
ハンドメイド部	Handmade Club	ソフトテニス部 (男女)	Soft Tennis Club (Co-ed)
華道部	Flower Arrangement Club	剣道部 (男女)	Kendō Club (Co-ed)
茶道部	Tea Ceremony Club	弓道部 (男女)	Kyūdō Club (Co-ed)
マンガ部	Manga Club	水泳部 (男女)	Swimming Club (Co-ed)
文芸部	Literature Club	バドミントン部 (男女)	Badminton Club (Co-ed)
新聞部	Newspaper Club	ダンス部	Dance Club
自然科学部	Natural Science Club		
ボランティア部	Volunteer Club		

Table with all the clubs at Yamada High School

前号に書いた部活動紹介を見て、やはり部活動は高校生活の大半部分だなと思いつつ、私も今まで見てきたアメリカと日本の部活動の違いをいくつか紹介しようと刺激されました。簡単な違いから入つたら、そもそも何の部活があるかが違います。一番目立つのは剣道部・弓道部・茶道部・華道部・書道部などの日本の伝統的な技を修行する部活があることです。国としての歴史が短く、伝統に対する意識が全然違うアメリカから見るとこういう伝統的な部活は興味深いです。スポーツに話題を移したら、どのスポーツが人気なのかが違います。日本ではアメリカンフットボールやラクロスはあまり見ないけれど、その代わりに、卓球・男子バレーボール・バドミントンがより人気だと思います。

トは秋、男子バスケは冬、陸上部は春、と一人の生徒が全部をするのは可能です。日本の場合は普通一つの運動部しかできません。兼部と言つたら、私の高校では、複数の部活が当たり前で、五つの部に入つていってもそんなに驚きません。もちろん活動が少ない部かもしけれませんけど。でも日本では一つの部活に絞る傾向があつて、兼部したかつたら、許可が必要です。最後の違いは引退です。就職と試験に集中するため、日本の三年生は学年の半ばで部活をやめます。アメリカでは十二年生（三年生と該当する）が最後まで部活の中心です。部長などが変わるもの学年の前半じゃなくて、後半です。

Partner

As someone who spent the better part of their life living in a dry, arid climate, tsuyu (the East Asian rainy season) is taking some getting used to. In the past, I usually haphazardly stored a folding umbrella in my backpack, but I never really checked if it was actually in there or in usable condition. But since living in Japan, every day I check if my folding umbrella is in my bag and when the weather forecast says it'll rain I carry around a long umbrella too. But the gloomy rain and resulting soggy shoes are just depressing.

Although I haven't gotten used to the rain, I have gotten used to how ubiquitous umbrellas are in Japan. Ever since arriving at my new apartment in Japan, seeing ten umbrellas which previous ALTs had borrowed from the school, and returning all but one of them to the school one by one, the umbrella situation has been in the back of my mind.

You can buy cheap, sturdy umbrellas at any convenience store, and there are also many places you can borrow them. Umbrella stands are placed conveniently wherever you go, and you can use them without worrying about your umbrella getting stolen. At least, as someone who went to a university where I would come across bicycles which, despite being properly locked up, had had their wheels removed and stolen, I'm not too worried here.

Living in such a convenient environment for umbrellas, the average Japanese person owns three to four umbrellas, and by some surveys Japan has the highest ownership rate of umbrellas in the world. Along with this, however, comes high turnover, and Japan's consumption rate of umbrellas is also number one in the world, and this has come to be seen as an environmental issue. It's probably somewhat common to encounter a sudden downpour and quickly buy an umbrella at the

ぐに日本では傘が至る所にあることに慣れました。高知に着いたとき、前のAHたちが学校から借りっぱなしの長い傘がアパートに十本あるのを見て、一本だけ選んで保有して、残りを一本ずつ学校に返しながらずっと傘について意識していました。

傘を使い捨ての道具扱いする傾向をよそに、私はなんとなく自分の中古で漆黒のわけあり傘を気に入っています。この季節を乗り越える相棒です。前の持ち主たちはいつも十本を周りに置くような人だったのですが、この傘も喜んでるはずだと思います。

nearest convenience store, only to throw it away or aimlessly store it somewhere afterwards.

Despite this trend towards treating umbrellas as disposable, for some reason I've taken quite a liking to my used, jet black umbrella. It's my partner for weathering this season. As an umbrella whose previous owners always had ten other options lying around, I'm sure it's happy too.



雨の少ない乾燥した土地に長年生きてきた身として、梅雨は慣れろはりユックに適当に折りたたみ傘を入れておいたけど、本当に入っているのか、壊れてないのかを細かくチェックしながら毎日、日をくしませんでした。日本に住んでから毎日、鞄に折りたたみ傘があるか確認して、天気予報が雨だったら長い傘を持ち歩くようになりましたが、うつとおしい天気と雨に濡れてジメジメした靴に気が滅入ります。

ます。少なくとも、しつかり施錠されたのに自転車の車輪だけが外されて盗まれたありさまを目の当たりにする、私が通っていた大学に比べたら、ここではあまり心配していません。こんな便利な環境だから、日本の傘の平均所有数が三本から四本の数本で、いくつかの調査によると世界一の所有率らしいです。その反面、消費率も世界一で、環境問題として見られています。俄然に遭つてすぐに買い、その後に捨てるかどつかに放置するのが多い

Advanced English Workshop

Right after coming back from a trip during the Obon Holiday (a Buddhist holiday for honoring the spirits of one's ancestors and one of the busiest travel seasons in Japan), I helped out at an "Advanced English Workshop" held at Yamada High School for three hours each day from August 21st to 23rd. This workshop is part of a collaboration project in which professors and students from Kochi University of Technology (KUT) and Yamada staff facilitate a variety of English activities for students in the Global Studies Course.

For three days, after doing an ice-breaker and warm-up activities, such as impromptu speaking or a mini-debate, students divided into groups and worked on Instagram posts and a presentation, both with the target audience of participants on the Ship for World Youth, an international exchange program taking place on a cruise ship, which will stop by Yamada High School in February.

Each group's Instagram post introduced an interesting spot at Yamada High School. For example, trees trimmed into the shape of Totoro or a hidden Mickey Mouse drawn by the students. There were even a few I didn't know about despite being here for a year already. I think visitors being able to read about these spots and then actually see them in person when they visit is a fun idea.

The presentations were around 10 minutes long and divided into three broad themes: "Questions & Messages to Passengers on SWY (Ship for World Youth)," "Messages to Young People

of your Generation in the World," and
"This is the REAL Japan."

For example, 3 groups chose the topic of "This is the REAL Japan" and presented about Japanese food, Japanese houses, and Japan's cleanliness. To summarize, the first group talked about how, while most people typically imagine sushi or tempura when thinking of Japanese food, there are also many local dishes throughout Japan that should be considered. The second group discussed how, although some people might imagine Japanese homes as primarily using tatami flooring and Japanese people sitting seiza and putting out futons on said tatami every night, the reality is not so different from Western homes. (And, after being asked about their habits, everyone in the group declared their dis-

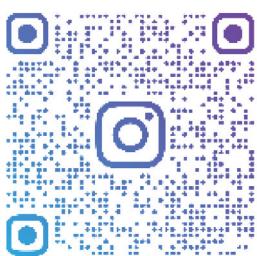
like of sitting *seiza*.) Finally, the third group talked about how one of Japan's strengths is its cleanliness, seen in its potable (and decent tasting) tap water and clean toilets, although some toilets in more remote mountain regions could use some more investment.

At first, helping out at an event immediately after returning from a trip felt like a chore, but by the end, I was satisfied with the students having practiced some English while also creating interesting messages in multiple formats. The aforementioned Instagram posts are also being used in a competition to see which team gets the most likes by the end of September. If you're interested, you can check them out using the QR code in the bottom left!



アドバンスト講座 お盆休みの旅行から帰った直後、八月二十一日から二十三日の三日間、毎日三時間、「アドバンスト講座」という高知工科大学と山田高校の英語教育協同プロジェクトを手伝いました。アドバンスト講座は高知工科大学から数人の教授と生徒が、グローバル探究科の生徒と何らかの英語活動をするイベントです。三日間、自己紹介等のアイスブレイクやそつこうスピー^チ・ディベート等のウォームアップをしてから、グループに分かれて世界の人々（具体的に二月に山田高校に来校する予定の世界青年の船の若者）に発信する設定で、インスタグラムポストの原稿を書いたり、プレゼンを作つたりして、最後の日に両方を完成了しました。

インスタグラムポストの内容は山田高校の面白いところを写真と英文で紹介することでした。私もそれらどがあります。私もそれらトロの形にした木々や生徒が描かれた隠れミッキーなどを読んで新しい発見をしました。来校者がもし読んだら、実際に見せるのが樂しい仕組みだと思います。プレゼンは十分以内で三つの幅広いテーマに分かれました。「青年の船の若者へ今、伝えたいこと」と、尋ねたいこと、「世界の同世代の若者に伝えたいこと」、「これが本当の日本だ！」というテーマでした。



YAMADA GLOBAL

最初は休みから帰った直後にイベントに参加するのが億劫だったけど、最後は生徒が英語の勉強と兼ねて面白いメッセージを発信したことにして満足しました。インスタグラムのポストは、9月末まで、どのチームが最も「いいね！」をもらえているかの競争にもなつてるので、興味があつたら、ぜひ左のQRコードを使つて見てください！

例えば、「これが本当の日本だ！」のテーマで、三つのグループがそれぞれ、和食・日本の家・日本の衛生について発表しました。要約すると、「和食は寿司や天ぷらだけじゃなくて郷土料理もあるよ！」「日本人はフローリングを畳にしても正座で座り毎晩布団を敷くイメージが現実と反して実際は家が洋式とそんなに変わらない」（聞いたところグループの皆さんは正座が好きじゃない）。「日本は衛生管理がとても良くて水道水が飲めるしトイレが綺麗だけど、それほど整つてない山等のトイレにもっと金を回すべきか」というメッセージででした。

School Marathon

In terms of children's physical health, Japan ranks highly among developed countries, and, depending on the study, sometimes number one. Japan's low child obesity rate seems to be a large factor. There are many reasons it's low, but one that I see firsthand working at a high school is the long-distance running and walking done in PE, common at most schools throughout Japan. Specifically, school marathons or walkathons and the practice leading up to them.

Yamada High School's school marathon was on November 14th. Although called a marathon, it was not the official 42 or so kilometers. Instead, the girls and boys of all three grades ran an 8.2-kilometer course passing through the surrounding community.

I was curious about what the average length of such events is, and although I could not find a definitive study, some schools don't have such an event, and it varies widely by school, around 10 kilometers for boys and 7 kilometers for girls seems to be average. For walkathons, a distance of more than 25 kilometers is common. Regardless of the specific distance, (and although there is also variation among American schools) compared to my high school's one year of PE and at most having to run a mile (1.6 kilometers), it's quite a difference.

Despite a school marathon being an event about just running, I was somewhat interested in seeing one firsthand since they often play a prominent role in many anime or novels. One example is the Classic Literature Series' 5th book, the title of which loosely translates to "Approximating the Difference Between Two People." In it, the main character solves a mystery while running the school marathon, and the title is a double meaning of the physical and relational distance between the main characters.

Anyways, teachers and non-participating students were divided into

roles patrolling the course, guiding students at turns or crosswalks, measuring and recording times, handing out drinks, etc. I was on drink duty, handing out sports drinks to students after they finished running and having them write their names on the bottles to prevent issues with littering.

The noteworthy results were the girls' track team taking all the top spots in the girls' division and, for both the boys' and girls' divisions (excepting said track team), a third-year student achieving an impressive three-year consecutive win streak.



マラソン大会

納上一部ば た前渡い帰り走り出を係り時学 で大して会二ぜなけ だに
め部人の特 た初なす間生と す。大したも
たをの圧女筆 しイらへりりしめどるを徒に う。大したも
こ除三勝子で てオ才なボトルを家までした。が精女配した。はを子付た。
とけ年部門べき しイケなぬ持ちカでし名をる仕事でし
です。三連某女子陸上を陸上を

Home Match

Jenga is a classic game around the world, and Japan is no exception. Despite its simple rules, the mounting excitement and pressure peaking spectacularly as the tower comes tumbling down can be quite addicting.

I had, of course, played Jenga before. But a Jenga tournament at school, with a proper bracket, was something I hadn't experienced until I came to Japan.

A Home Match at Japanese schools is a sports tournament held between homeroom classes. Across multiple events, homeroom classes make teams and compete to win each event and get the highest overall points. Yamada High School's Home Match was on December 21st, and the four events were volleyball, soccer, table tennis, and Jenga. Each student participated in at least one event, and I filled in for another teacher on a Jenga team with three boys.

As one would expect from a tournament with a proper bracket, the rules were also clearly laid out. Each match began with six minutes where each team took turns pulling out one block and placing it on top with one hand while following the order of players within their team. If those six minutes ended without one team winning, the expedite rules would go

into effect. Beginning with the team that lost in rock paper scissors, one player had to pull out three blocks consecutively within two minutes. That continued until one team won.

The first two matches were double elimination. In our first match, we made it to the expedited



rules but eventually lost. We also made it that far in our second match, but this time, despite the tower coming close to collapsing several times, we managed to win. Managing to pull out three blocks in a row from a tower that at first glance seemed to have no safe moves was surprisingly fulfilling. With that win, we moved on to the single-elimination part of the tournament.

Right away, however, our first opponent was the girls' team from the same homeroom class. While it was a match filled with sportsmanship, eventually one of us had to lose. After a good fight, we managed to win during expedite rules. Just like in a shōnen manga, we were told, "You have to win finals, for us!" With this encouragement, we cleaned up the next match in expedite rules.

And with that, we had made it to finals. For the sake of our comrades who we had defeated with our own hands, we went into the match in high spirits. But... lost on the fifth block. Losing like this was a bit deflating, but life isn't a shōnen manga, after all. This Home Match was, however, an enjoyable event to close off the semester before winter break.

組み合わせ表があるジエング大会だけあってルールもきちんと説明されていました。試合はまず六分間の間、チーム内の順番を守りながら交互に片手で一本を抜いて上に乗せます。その六分が終わったら、促進ルールが有効になります。じやんけんで負けたチームを先行に、一人の選手が一本じやなくて三本を二分間の間に抜かなければなりません。

は、学校のホーム同士のスポーツ大会です。ホーム内でいくつかの種目でチームを作り、それぞれの種目と全体のポイント数で競い合います。山田高校のホームマッチは十二月二十一日（木）に行われて、バレーボール・サッカー・卓球・ジエンガの四つの種目がありました。全校生徒が少なくとも一つの種目に入つていました。私も補欠として三人の男子とジエンガチーに入つていました。

ジエンガは日本だけではなくアメリカでも人気のゲームです。シンプルなルールながらも、一本を抜くたびに募るドキドキと緊張が塔の崩壊とともに爆発するのが病みつきです。もちろん私も何回かやつたことがありました。しかし組み合わせ表まである学校でのジエンガは日本に来てからでした。

それで決勝戦までたどり着きました。自分たちの手で倒した仲間のため、意気揚々と立ち向かいました。が、あつきりと五本目で負けました。ちょっと拍子抜けでしたけど、まあ、人生は少年漫画のようには行きません。冬休み前の行事としては楽しかったですけど。

た。ネーション部分に入りまし
た。でも、すぐに同じクラス
の女子チームと当たりまし
た。スポーツマン精神に溢
れた良い試合だったけど、
いずれかのチームが負けて
しまう運命です。善戦のあ
と、私達が促進ルールで勝
ちました。少年漫画のよう
に「私達のため、絶対に決
勝に勝つて！」とか言われ
ました。その励ましをもつ
て次の試合も促進ルールで
勝らました。

せん。勝敗が決まるまでそ
のルールで続きます。
最初の二試合は敗者復活
戦があるダブルイリミネー
ション方式でした。第一戦
で促進ルールまで行きまし
たが、負けました。第二
戦も促進ルールまで行つ
て、何回も塔が崩れそうに
なりながらぎりぎり勝ちま
した。三本連続抜きに成功
したときの達成感は半端な
かったのです。その勝ちで決
しました。

Bibliobattle

I know this is sudden, but when you read the word “bibliobattle,” what do you think? As for me, you can get the gist of it even if seeing it for the first time, and I dig the “b” alliteration, so I would say it’s a charming wasei-eigo word. (Wasei-eigo, or Japanese-made English, is Japanese words made by combining originally English words, often with interesting results. Some gems include “pipe cut” for a vasectomy or “skinship” for physical affection.) Just from a glance, we know it’s some sort of battle of books.

And what kind of battle, specifically? To start, each participant brings a book they want everyone to read, introduces that book in five minutes, and does two to three minutes of Q&A. When all the participants have finished, everyone, including both presenters and spectators, votes for the book they became most interested in reading. Whichever book receives the most votes wins. That’s right, the book wins. Rather than calling the winner a “champion,” we call the winning volume the “champ book.”

Bibliobattle was created in 2007 at Kyoto University, but despite being rather new, there are already national middle school, high school, and university tournaments. I’m sure you’ve already guessed, but some students from Yamada High School participated in a bibliobattle tournament.

The national high school tournament has preliminaries in each prefecture. Kochi prefecture’s tournament was on November 23rd and held at Otepia, a beautiful library opened a few years ago in Kochi City. Three members of the literature club participated, with “The Summer of the Ubume,” “The Will to Keep Winning,” and “Eve of Paradise Lost” in hand. (As of writing this, the first two have English translations.) In addition to this, the literature club’s advisor, six other club members, and three teachers including myself went as spectators to cheer them on.

In total, there were sixteen participants. Participants and spectators were divided into A and B sections for a preliminary round. First and second place in both sections would advance to the final round.

Ranging from mystery to self-help, all the way to children’s books, a wide variety of books were on display. And excepting the “I know this is sudden, but...” intro I heard four times, there was also a variety of speaking styles, from a gentle, intellectual style that drew in the audience to a style composed of passionate, actor-like appeals.

At any rate, after hearing eight presentations, it was time to vote. Since “became interested in reading” has barely a shred of objectivity as a standard, it was an unsure vote, but more than just hearing about new books, that completely different reactions can emerge from the same book or presentation is surely one of bibliobattle’s interesting points. In the end, one Yamada student from section A and one from section B advanced on, so Yamada High School alone made up half of the finals.

There being two students from our school, it was not an easy vote, but in the end, “Eve of Paradise Lost” was crowned champ book (1st place), and “Summer of the Ubume” received the Otepia Prize, equivalent to third place. With that win, “Eve of

Paradise Lost” was headed to the national tournament.

Throughout December and January, I went to some practices and gave advice. While “wanting to read the book even more” wasn’t something I could measure, that the speaking style and script became gradually more polished is for sure.

And at last the national tournament was on January 28th. Since it was held in Tokyo, I was not able to see it in person, but there was a live stream of the eight person final round. Unfortunately, “Eve of Paradise Lost” was eliminated in the preliminaries. Despite this, because of skilled speakers drawing laughs out of the audience, a mystery written only in conversations, a book that you have to flip the orientation as you read, and more, it was definitely worth watching as someone who loves books.

Returning to my original question, when you read the word “bibliobattle” now, what do you think? As for me, I think it’s a great way to celebrate a shared love of books, and it would be neat if it became popular outside of just Japan.



The 16 participants of the Kochi tournament and their books.

いすし向 で一らがし きとし文て力ぶ芸さ月あ校りす のなのに すなし た入番加皆分分持参 なし和「意 すと
たがたけミし位れ予た合まいて芸参・め部れ二りレオがが全つな京ビ く勝そ本れ読者が間間つ加具りた製「味私かい突
ら、と本スたと、選計しう私部加「員ま十まババ、す国ての都ブ てつうがて、みと本のでて者體的 がだつ う言葉を読んでどう思いま
そい回で、と四まテ 二両のまで。応をのし失のがし三すルト 田が大いに大り 全員に何の がんたら、初めで読んでも
れう聞でり 位方たず十 援含顧ま園「れ に高もが、学でバ 「ら本つ、「た、勝 がんたら、初めで読んでも
にイカ本・ がのめは六 団め問しの。・れ に高もが、学でバ 「ら本つ、「た、勝 がんたら、初めで読んでも
比ンさの自 決部A、人 もたとた。イ 勝れ人!県大加生します。・ならル 「ら本つ、「た、勝 がんたら、初めで読んでも
例トレ種己 勝か部参の 戰らと加参 観人入そ「ち 一のテの会し察します。高どれは 「ら本つ、「た、勝 がんたら、初めで読んでも
し口た類啓 ま投B者加 と先部に手け獲田ア会県し数と 大は最〇 「ら本つ、「た、勝 がんたら、初めで読んでも
たを「が発 で票部と者 進数に参が し生員加に鳥高ではごた人思 レ人近〇 「ら本つ、「た、勝 がんたら、初めで読んでも
話差突豊・ しし然富子 むで分観い 形のけ者ま 行ちそてつ志う文催一に高づま ルにも年 「ら本つ、「た、勝 がんたら、初めで読んでも
方引で供 えもかくし勝10しどう しきけ笑選念のたた会 すがね読に 国 ら位に楽たに で勝Bしの出じ新いたて る技ば調も
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Ship for World Youth

On February 24th, the Ship for World Youth made port at Yamada High School. The Ship for World Youth, abbreviated as SWY, is an exchange program sponsored by the Japanese government where young people from Japan and a dozen or so other countries board a cruise ship and visit locations around Asia. This year, participants from fourteen countries, from Zambia to the Solomon Islands, toured around Japan. Kochi prefecture was one of the destinations, and thirty SWYers visited Yamada High School for an event planned under the Global Research Course with the theme of the “empowerment of young people.”

After a frenzied reception and handing out of name cards, SWYers, Yamada students, and support staff from local companies were divided into groups and exchanged self introductions. In English, of course. As is often the case when people from so many different countries gather, English was the common language. Because of this, it was a great chance for students to experience international exchange, or a situation where they had to use a language other than their native language in order for any significant communication to take place. Such opportunities can be major source of motivation for studying a second language, which can be a long and frustrating journey.

But before fully entering English mode, everyone participated in a rain gutter relay as an icebreaker. This relay is one where teams use rain gutters to pass a ping pong ball. But, when you roll the ball to the next person, you have to say their name. The sounds of shouted names and chaotic footfalls filled the room as groups successfully learned each other's names and erased any remaining nervousness.



From there, things calmed down as we transitioned to a poster session. In the Global Research Course, students choose a topic to research, either in groups as first-year students or alone or in pairs as second-year students, and in this poster session, they presented their progress up to now.



To make the most of this opportunity, students had been working hard on their English since January, doing a thorough job making posters and speeches, working on pronunciation and presentation skills, and practicing taking and answering questions. The sight of the students who consider English a weak point struggling to overcome their difficulties was moving. I was also busy at work checking pronunciation, serving as an audience and asking questions, proofreading student posters, and translating the posters of local businesses who would also be presenting.

In total, all nine first-year students, eleven second-year students, two third-year students, and two local companies (Futagami and Netz Toyota) presented. Everyone presented twice and had three minutes for their speech, five minutes for Q&A, and two minutes for receiving feedback. SWYers and other audience members who came as spectators saw a diverse set of topics: how to be high schoolers prepared for an earthquake, how to make damaged jeans from chemicals you can easily find at home, what we can learn from terakoya (temple schools during the Edo period of Japan), using AI to make recycled chalk, and more.

After presenting, everyone was a bit drained from straining their brains and wringing out so much English, so it was time to work out their bodies instead. One second-year student, to apply what he had learned through his research

into audio engineer work, had planned a dance event. SWYers and students learned Kochi's Yosakoi dance, watched a professional dance duo's performance, and finally danced freely while listening to a mix of English and Japanese songs. It was heartwarming to see usually shy and reserved students be drawn in by the energy and gradually come out of their shells to dance.

Now that everyone was physically and mentally tired, it was time for some lunch, which consisted of bentos, Tosa tea, and ponkan mandarins and was all from Kochi and provided by JA Kochi. (JA, or Japan Agricultural Cooperatives, is a group of agricultural cooperatives in Japan.) While I had thought I could take a rest too, as if to say, "wouldn't it be unfair if only students had to struggle with their second language," I was asked to interpret an introduction of the Tosa tea and ponkan, with content ranging from deep-steamed tea from Shizuoka prefecture to the unique geography of Kochi prefecture. After safely making it through the introduction, I felt relief and satisfaction at first, but then a pang of vexation at my mistakes and a desire to further hone my Japanese.



And before we knew it, it was time to say goodbye. While it had only been around four hours, the room was filled with the sound of camera shutters taking final pictures and a lingering reluctance to depart, and students saw the SWYers off until their bus had left.

With that, SWY had weighed anchor and left Yamada, and after cleaning up, without much of a physical trace. But what was left behind was gratification from successfully commanding a second language for so long, ambition to study and improve even more, and some good memories in the students. And so were some ponkan, which I happily interpreted and accepted as a translator's fee.

Gather Round!

Kami City is striving to be a town of inquiry. The main event where Kami City's educational institutions come together to show this side of the city is the Gather Round Lifetime Learning Forum, held this year on February 17th at Yamada High School. At this event, you can see the research results of elementary, middle, high, and university students, as well as those of adults in the community, in the form of stage or poster presentations.

I watched presentations from the general and business research courses: business research course students usually do something more business-oriented, such as preparing business plans including branding and detailed operating costs, and general course students research something related to the local area. For example, one group made “passcuit” cookies with hachimaki beans, one of Kami City’s specialty agricultural products, designed to be popular among students studying for exams.

With all this different research on display, you could see firsthand the value in choosing a problem and thoroughly searching for an answer. And there wasn't just learning. So adults and children alike could enjoy the day, there were band, choir, and dance performances as well as a mix of entertainment, including "mochinage" (throwing mochi, or candy, down into a crowd at a celebration), photo displays, VR experiences, wood crafting workshops, food and drink stands, and more.



General course second-year students presenting their research.



Food and drink vendors in the courtyard.



A joint performance of Y.M.C.A. by students from elementary to university level.

Entrance Ceremony

“Spring is the season of encounters and farewells,” is what I wrote, mainly focusing on farewells, when writing about personnel reshuffle at public high schools in Japan. For the revival of ALTidings, this time, I’d like to shift the spotlight onto encounters. In terms of school events that symbolize new encounters, the entrance ceremony stands out the most.



While watching the ceremony, I kept thinking about how, while the entrance ceremony marks the beginning of school life, it's strikingly similar to the graduation ceremony, which marks the end of said school life. Ignoring the difference of students receiving permission to enroll rather than their diplomas, the decorations for both ceremonies were almost the same, and both events included students entering (same song), the national anthem, the school song, speeches from several people (many of them the same people), all the students being called on one by one, and students exiting.

From the crowd of people taking pictures in front of the decorations an hour before the ceremony even started, there was also evidently similar enthusiasm. It was clear how schools replicate spring's farewells and encounters through a graduation ceremony and entrance ceremony.

To mention some differences, instead of receiving everyone's diplomas, the student representative gives a short speech promising to be upstanding high school students, the entrance ceremony is only about half as long, the students' bows are endearingly out-of-sync, and before the students leave, the teachers who they'll interact with most - teachers in charge of various departments - give short speeches.

ments and teachers in the first-year group (homeroom teachers, assistant homeroom teachers, and teachers assigned to the grade, including me) - are briefly introduced. And emotionally, while I'm sure people at both ceremonies feel a mixture of anxiety, expectation, and happiness, the bittersweet sadness found at a graduation ceremony isn't so present.

Given Japan's love for ceremonies, having an entrance ceremony is a given, but at my high school and many schools like it in America, there is no entrance ceremony. While there's a day in the summer when we go to school to get our textbooks and school IDs, on the first day of school we just go to class normally.

When I mentioned this difference to a friend, he said that our entrance ceremony was getting lost on the first day. There was no being seen off by our parents in a ceremony, and as soon as we got to school we were on our own. This direct, straight-to-the-point start has a completely different flavor to it. Although thinking back to my impatient high-school self, I'm sure that I appreciated there being no ceremony.

Despite that, I think there are many advantages to having an entrance ceremony. Not having to worry about getting lost on the first day is a given, but other than that, by being able to get used to your new environment, classmates, and homeroom teacher before classes start, some of that freshman anxiety is put to ease. For parents, they also get to know a bit about the teachers right away and hear some explanations directly from different department heads and the head of the first-year group. And there's the charm of having a ceremony during cherry blossom season which complements graduation.

Entrance ceremony or not, thinking back on the new first-year students filing out of the gymnasium, I hope that they have a high school life filled with wonderful encounters, and I look forward to meeting them in class.



入学式が始まる一時間前から、もう入学を祝う飾りの前で写真を撮っていた人混みを眺めると、似ている意気込みもありました。春の別れと出会いみたいに、学校の卒業式・入学式で均整が取れていることをさまざまと感じました。違いを挙げたら、生徒代表が卒業証書をもらう代わりに、校長先生に良い高校生になることを宣誓するし、入学式の長さは卒業式の半分だし、生徒達の礼が可愛らしいほどばらばらだし、退場の前に新入生と最も関わる先生方に「私を含む一年団と各分掌の部長など」が紹介されます。その場にいる人の気持ちに関しては、どちらの式にも不安心・期待・嬉しさがあるでしょうけど、卒業式に見られる甘酸っぱい悲しさはさほど

これまで春は別れと出会いの季節だと、別れに焦点を当てて人事異動について書いてきました。今回は ALT のつぶやきの復活に際して、出会いに着眼したいと思います。新しい出会いを象徴する学校行事と言えば、入学式ですね。

入学式は学校生活の始まりを意味するのに、その終わりを意味する卒業式によく似ています。式を見ながらしみじみ思いました。卒業証書ではなく入学許可を与える点を差し引いたら、飾りがほぼ同じで、両方の流れに生徒の入場（同じ曲）・国歌・校歌・いくつかの辞（同一人物数人）・生徒全員の呼名・退場がありまます。

それでも入学式があると思います。初日に迷子になる心配がないのはもちろんです。が、授業が始まる前に、新しい環境・同級生・担任に少し慣れて、不安が少し解消されます。親側にとつても、早くから先生方のことを探し知ることができ、教務部や学年主任などから直接説明を聞くこともできます。そして卒業式の裏返しとして、桜の季節の入学式に趣があるのだと思いまます。

緊張して退場する一年生の姿を思い返したら、素敵なお会いに溢れた高校生活が送れたらと願っています。授業で会うのを楽しみにしていま

感じられません。式が大好きな日本なので、入学式があるのは当たり前ですが、実は自分の母校やアメリカの多くの高校では入学式がないのです。教科書や学生証をもらう登校日は夏休みの間にあるけど、一学期の初日は普通に授業に行きます。この違いを友達に話したら、私達の入学式は初日に迷子になることだったよ、と言われました。式で親に見送られることなく、学校に着いたら新しい環境でいきなり一人です。このぶつけ本番の直球スタートは、高校生活の始まり方としての味わいがかなり違いますが、高校生の頃の短気な自分にとつては、式がなかつたのはありがたいことだつたのかもしれません。

入学式

Graduation Ceremony



For beautiful flowers to bloom, those same flowers must one day wilt and wither away. Some might even say that if they didn't do so, they couldn't have been beautiful. In other words, for everything there's an end, and something can only have any meaning because of this. Experiencing Japan's seasons, culture, or aphorisms for long enough will certainly leave you aware of this ideal. For one's high school life, what makes its ending concrete is the graduation ceremony. Each graduate's self as a high schooler has become a flower, and here it wilts, turning to petals and floating away in the wind down everyone's separate paths. And this year, among these flowers whose growth I've watched for three years, I'll be in the mix drifting away too.

More than anything else, Japan's graduation ceremonies are solemn. At the rehearsal, graduates must practice countless times the timing and angle of their bows, how they walk, how they stand on stage, and how loud they respond with "hai" (yes) when their names are called. The first time I watched a graduation ceremony here I counted, and aside from the class representative, graduates had to stand 12 times and bow 20 times, so it's useful practice. But while the fruits of that practice can be during the graduation proper, the focus placed on each action means that the air of the gymnasium is heavy with a nervous tension.

Yet what truly makes you feel like that tension is bearing down on your body is the silence. Until the graduates walk out to a final sendoff, for the most part, there's little outside noise, cheering, or applause, and each part of the ceremony is

simply carried out, with solemnity and finality. Each speech looks back on high school life or wishes graduates the best in the future, but is delivered in an almost detached manner, with few surprises. When the diplomas are presented to a class representative, there's only the sound of the students' names being called and their "hai" in response, one by one, almost like a clock rhythmically ticking away in an empty room. And even though everyone singing the national anthem, school song, and graduation song together inspires a moving sense of togetherness, they're still sung with a lingering heaviness.

While steeping in this tense, thick air, everyone is thinking, I can't move an inch, I can't make a sound, so it can be exhausting even if you're just watching. But I do think, for an ending as momentous as this, the solemnity and melancholiness are appropriate. And when the graduates finally walk out, they're cheered on with applause loud and long, and the tension that had accumulated in the air dissipates, sending a feeling of relief rippling across your body, so you can physically feel that, ah, it's really over, isn't it.

Compared to that, an American graduation ceremony almost seems like a party. While we did have a rehearsal, there was nothing comparable to practicing bow angles or timing, and after the schedule and prohibited behaviors were explained we just did a casual run through. On the day of, when our names were called, the audience cheered and clapped loudly, sometimes even frenetically. When I graduated, one family had even snuck in some vuvuzelas (those plastic horns you sometimes see at sports matches) to blare away on. The speeches from the representative student and teacher were also quite personal, often provoking laughter, and sometimes even touching on contentious political topics. And at the end, when everyone takes their caps in hand, throwing them into the sky without a care in the world, you can experience a completely different flavor of release. Giving a proper conclusion to a childhood, which will be carried around for the rest of one's life, is never easy, but I think both cultures' graduation ceremonies do so in a manner befitting that culture.

Now the time has come for me to try and give a proper conclusion as well. Whenever this time of year rolls around, the adults wring out their hearts for the best advice and deep words they can muster, and a flood of words spills over the graduates like a tidal wave, so I'll try to keep it short. Thank you for all your hard work; while there were difficult times, in the end, it was a lot of fun. Even though our paths have diverged, may we all someday bloom as beautiful flowers once again.

美しい花が咲くには、その花も
いずれ散らなければなりません。
散らなければ美しくないと言え言
えます。つまり、何もかもには終
わりが必ず訪れ、だからこそ意味
があります。日本の季節・文化・
諺等に触れたたら意識せざるをえな
い理念です。高校生活においては、
いの終わりを具体化させるのが卒業
式です。ここで、卒業生の高校生
としての自分という花が散つて
花弁となり、それぞれの道に舞つ
て行きます。そして今年は、三年
間の成長を見届けた花の中に、私
も混ぜてもらいます。

日本の卒業式はなによりも厳か
です。予行練習では歩き方、礼の
角度とタイミング、ステージでの
立ち振舞返事するときの「はい」
の声の大きさまで、卒業生が何回
も練習させられます。初めて見た
ときに数えてみたけど、代表生徒
以外が「一」回起立して、20回札を
するので、必要な練習でしよう。
当日にその練習の成果が充分見ら
れるけど、各仕草を意識しなけれ
ばならないせいいで、体育館が闇々
まで緊張感で溢れています。

その緊張感を膨らませて肌にの
しかかってるように感じさせるの
が卒業式の静かさです。最後の見
送りまでは、雜音や歓声や拍手が
ほとんどなく、卒業式の各部分が
確実に、整然と、執り行われるだ
けです。それぞれの辞は、学校生
活を振り返ったり卒業生を祝福
たりするけど、変哲もなく淡々と
述べられます。卒業証書授与は、
何もない部屋に規則正しく時間を
刻む時計の音のように、卒業生の
名前が呼ばれて一人一人の「はい」
が返ってくるリズミカルな繰り返
しです。国歌・校歌・式歌の合唱
も、感動的な一体感を感じられま
すが、重々しく歌われます。

長い間この張り詰めた空気に浸
りながら、一切動けない、音一つ
も出せない、と皆がずっと意識し
ます。

ているので、見ているだけでも疲れます。しかし、大切な終わりに相応しい、厳肃で物悲しい雰囲気だと思います。そしてやがて卒業生が退場する、皆が盛大な拍手で見送るので、積もるに積もった重い空気が一気に霧散して、身体を駆け巡る開放感からは、本当に終わったな、と身を持つて感じられます。それに比べたら、アメリカの卒業式はパーティーに近いかもしれません。予行練習はしたものの、礼の角度や声の大きさ等の指導はもちろんなく、禁止行為と当日の流れが説明されて一回軽く通すくらいでした。本番では各卒業生の名前が呼ばれたら、観客全員がたまに歓声だと思わせるまで拍手したり歓声を上げたりします。私が卒業したとき、ブブゼラ（スボーツ試合などで見られるプラスチック性の管楽器）を持ち込んで騒々しく吹いていた家族さえいました。代表者の生徒や先生の辞も個人的な内容が多くて、笑いを起こしたり政治的な話にふれたりする部分もよくありました。そして最後に、卒業生がキャップを手にとつて、遠慮なしに全力で空に投げたる混乱極まりた終わり方も印象的で、違う味の開放感を体験します。これから的人生に背負つっていく「子供時代」に終止符を打つのは容易くないと思いますが、どの卒業式もその文化らしく終わりを告げます。