

# REIHO

## fuji



SPRING 2020

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The REIHO FUJI is published by the International Affairs Desk in Fujiyoshida City Hall. For questions regarding content or if you would like to contribute please feel free to contact us!

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The COVID-19 pandemic has taken over most of our lives this season. It's been a strange, surreal time for all of us and we have all been learning how to cope with our new routines (or lack of). The International Affairs Desk has had to cancel several events including our beloved annual middle school exchange delegation to our American sister city of Colorado Springs. It will be the first time since its creation that the program has not gone ahead as planned. The postponement of the Tokyo Olympics has also thrown a considerable wrench in our annual plans. Though many things have been disrupted, we still count our blessings and are grateful for our health and wellbeing. Fujiyoshida has remained clear of a major outbreak, thanks in great part to early interventions by local government and businesses to limit exposure. In Japan at large the motto continues to be to avoid the three C's (Closed Spaces, Crowded Places and Close Contact). "Social Distance" has become part of the Japanese lexicon, and there have been efforts to encourage further distancing in social spaces. Hand sanitizer can be readily found at entrances to stores and mask-wearing continues to be a normal social practice. The question remains what we will and won't be able to do for the remainder of the year, but we will continue to share information with readers from our little corner of the world here at the base of Mt. Fuji. Stay well everyone!

**THE BEST PRACTICE FOR PREVENTING INFECTION IS PROPER HANDWASHING!**



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# BAILAMOS!

*Using Dance (& Spanish) as Lingua Franca*

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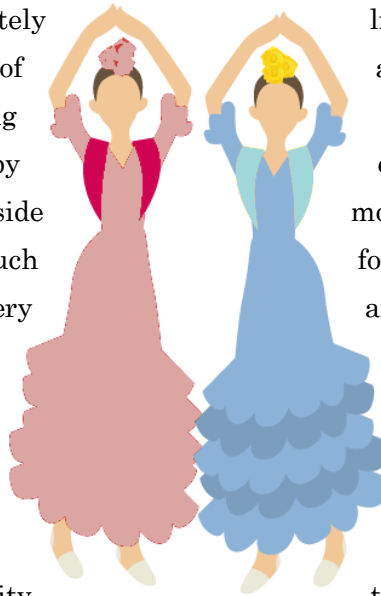
*By Adelaide Kelley*

When I first arrived in Japan, I desperately sought out human connection outside of my workplace. I knew that if I was going to thrive here in Japan, I needed a hobby that connected me to people, ideally outside of work. My first attempts to make such connections involved using my very limited collection of Japanese phrases in the community center up the street and using a language board to create a library card in my town. While both of these interactions were somewhat successful (I got a catalog of community classes and a library card), neither of them led to regularly scheduled activities.

I was hiking up to Daiso one day when I passed an unexpected sign “Estudio Amparo Fiesta Flamenca”. Whoa, whoa. I can read those words with no problem. THAT’S SPANISH! If the teacher knows flamenco, there is at least a small chance they speak Spanish. I took a photo of the sign so I could follow up.

Later, back in my apartment, I went to the website from the sign and used the Google Translate plug-in to find out if I could take classes there. Using the contact tool, I drafted a simple email in English, Spanish, and Google Translate Japanese to ask if the teacher was open to teaching me. She responded in Spanish and offered a free trial lesson. A big victory!

We set a date, and I showed up for my trial lesson. She was nervous about explaining dance in Spanish because this was the first time she would be using her second language to teach dance. I was also nervous but because I am a terrible dancer. My body is not good at listening to my brain and usually, my



limbs end up in all the wrong places at all the wrong times. After that first lesson, it was clear that with a little effort we could both do this. It required more patience on her part and a lot of focus on mine, but this lesson arrangement would work and even be fun for both of us.

After the first month, Kaori, my flamenco teacher, asked if I would be willing to chat with her after class to better her Spanish skills. Of course, I said “yes!” Before I arrived in Japan, I took Spanish classes every day, worked with international students who spoke Spanish, and volunteered in my community translating classes into Spanish. Talking to myself and listening to Radio Ambulante just wasn’t cutting it. I missed the language.

Every Thursday, I showed up to class, learned a little more of the Sevillanas and chatted with Kaori in Spanish. She asked about the US, I asked about Japan. She taught me words in Japanese, I taught her more words and phrases in Spanish.

As it got colder, I asked her what she does to keep warm, and she told me about her yutampo, which after some discussion we determined was indeed a hot water bottle, or guatero in Spanish. In Chile, my host mom called her guatero “a man without fingernails because the only thing men are good for is warming up the bed”. We both laughed at that bit of wisdom from a faraway country and how some advice can reach across the ocean, through many languages and on opposite sides of the equator. I told her funny stories of misunderstandings in Spanish (mistaking the word for horses (caballos) with the

word for gentlemen (caballeros), she told me about her love for Ugly Betty.

The most interesting thing about communicating in Spanish is that we both speak it as a second language. Unlike when I speak with native speakers, we can't guess at the word that the other is looking for as quickly or efficiently. Compared to speaking with Spanish speakers who learned from English using cognates or pronouncing English words with a Spanish accent rarely works to overcome communication barriers. Sometimes we can't find the word either of us is looking for, and then we turn to our dictionaries, which are sourced from our native languages. This means we end up learning words that we never would have looked for before. Some of the best words I have learned from these exchanges are the words for: Fog, Cabbage, Persimmon (the same word in Japanese and Spanish!), Chestnut, and Algae.

When I came to Japan, I wasn't sure my past language experience would be useful. While most days Spanish isn't particularly useful it helped me

make a friend who supports me, shares a new perspective, and gives me a reason to keep learning Spanish. Taking a chance on Estudio Amparo was the best thing I have done for myself in Japan so far!







## solo dining adventures

When I first arrived in Japan I was too intimidated to try out new restaurants on my own. But I've mustered up the courage to start exploring the vast variety of delicious shops in my own backyard (and I urge you to do the same!) Nothing that a little Google Translate and charades can't help you navigate (be sure to clearly identify any food allergies at the outset!) – Adelaide Kelley

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The first place on the list was a Korean restaurant recommended by my coworker. The restaurant was in the Shimoyoshida neighborhood and reachable by foot for me. I went on a Friday night without a reservation. The restaurant has a yellow light up sign that is placed perpendicular to the road, and is not too hard to spot when walking! Upon walking in, I saw two sections, a raised part with *kotatsu* and tatami on the right and a bar area on the left. As a solo diner, I was guided to the bar side and presented with a menu.

The menu was written in Japanese and Korean, a real challenge for me (the only let down)! Google Translate was able to help me locate *bulgogi*, one of my favorite dishes. Neither of the workers spoke any English, so I used the point and attempt Japanese pronunciation method. A few minutes later, one of the women plopped a large gas burner down in front of me. She then came out with a hotpot full of delicious looking mushrooms, beef, and noodles. After a quick demonstration and a lot of "*chotto matte, taberu*" (fingers crossed in an 'X') I got that I was in charge of stirring my food while it cooked over the gas burner. I was also presented with three varieties of pickles and rice to eat while I stirred my dinner.



The pickles were very good, one was burdock root, the next was a radish of some sort with extra spices in the mix, and the last were bean sprouts. These were very fun to eat and made the process of cooking my dinner at the restaurant much more entertaining. The *bulgogi* itself was excellent. A large variety of vegetables were included. The beef was tender and well-seasoned. All of this was accompanied by glass noodles that had been cooked in the sauce with all of the other ingredients. The ratio of noodle to vegetable to meat was perfect, even with my very basic chopstick skills, I was able to get a bit of each part of the dish in each bite! The portion was a little big, even though I was very hungry and ready to eat a lot, I couldn't finish the dish, perhaps not the best dish for a solo diner!

# ALT REPORT

We are very lucky in Fujiyoshida to have such a diverse group of English teachers from all over the world! In this segment we chat with them about life in Japan & Fujiyoshida



**SAMUEL ZDRODOWSKI**

In this edition we talked to Samuel Zdrodowski from Canada!

Samuel-sensei has lived in Fujiyoshida for a year and is currently teaching at Fuji Elementary School and Yoshida Middle School. He studied Intercultural Studies and Christian Theology in college and enjoys drawing, photography and video games in his free time. Here in Fujiyoshida, aside from teaching in a school setting, Samuel-sensei has gotten involved in a local community where he volunteers teaching English to group of children.

**Q:** What inspired you to pursue a job teaching English Japan?

**A:** For me, I was always interested in pursuing some form of education. Even when I was young, my role models were mostly teachers who had a deep impact on me growing up. I think this is what fostered an interest in teaching. So when I heard of an opportunity to both teach and live in Japan, it felt like the obvious choice. I had grown up with Japanese anime and manga, and it was always a country that was close to my heart.

**Q:** What do you enjoy most about your role as an assistant language teacher? What do you view as your biggest challenge in your role?

**A:** I think my favorite part of the job is connecting with the students and seeing them grow. Sometimes you find students who shut you out or really do not care about English class. For me, those can be the most rewarding students to work with. The building of trust and learning how to best teach them can be the most rewarding part of the job. In regards to the biggest challenge, I would have to say it was probably adapting to the culture. Starting off, the larger differences were easier to spot and one could quickly adapt to those. However, the smaller ones were a quite a bit trickier, and required constant reminders to myself in order for them to become habits.

**Q:** What have you enjoyed about living in Fujiyoshida?

**A:** I think my favorite part about living in Fujiyoshida so far has been the communities I have gotten involved in and the relationships I have developed within them. The people who I have gotten to know in Fujiyoshida have been so kind and accepting. It was amazing when I first visited Fujiyoshida Baptist Church and they were quick to invite me in and to join whatever they were doing at the time.

**Q:** What advice would you give anyone who is or is planning to teach in Japan?

**A:** If I were to give any advice, it would be to get involved early on with some type of community where you can build some type of friendship. It can be rather lonely at times leaving all the people you knew in your home country, so finding a community here is a big help. It also can be a good motivation for learning new skills and help you learn Japanese.

**Q:** If you could describe your year so far in 3 words, what would they be? Why?

<b>A:</b>	Chaotic	While the society itself is rather orderly, cultural and language barriers sometimes make the simplest things confusing.
	Educational	I've learned skills and language, as well as new things about myself and the culture around me.
	Enjoyable	Despite all the chaos that ensues from changing countries and all the unknowns that come with it, the people I have met and the adventures that have come with it make any of the struggles that came with it feel worth it.



# TRAIL • HEAD

By Christopher Moore



## ACCESS INFO



### TRAIL NAME:

### LAKE SHOJIKO PENINSULA

### PRO SUMMARY:

A lovely short hike that combines three of the area's best qualities: tranquil lake, quiet forest, and stunning views of Mt. Fuji. Suitable for all ages, can be enjoyed on foot or by mountain bike.

### COURSE SPECS:

3.5 km / 2hrs (watch for ospreys, deer, kites, and volcanic rock formations)



The starting point is the south west corner of Lake Shoji just off route 139, which can be reached by car or by the Blue Line bus from Kawaguchiko Station (Stop 92. Shoji Kasseika Center)

The volcanic peninsular jutting into Lake Shoji was created during the Jogan Eruption from Mt. Fuji in 864 AD, in which magma flowed into the ancient lake of Senoumi, cutting it in half and creating the two new lakes (Shojiko and Saiko). You can still see the mounds of volcanic rubble and deep magma chasms caused in the eruption. The QR code included above will take you to the start / finish point on Google Maps.

The trail takes you into the forest, winding until the lake shore becomes visible through the trees. Follow the trail around the lake shore until Mt. Fuji comes into view behind you. On your left side you'll find a lovely open spot from where to admire the mountain and the lake. It's a fine place to have a picnic whilst watching Black Kites wheel around over the water.

The path continues around the north of the peninsula until you reach the "Kamabatake" (pothole) sign on your left. It's easier to see from above, but you may be able to make out the large circular volcanic pot hole on the shores of the lake. From here, the panoramic grassy interior of the peninsular can be reached by turning right and pushing through the tall grass and ferns. Native deer use this area for raising foals and snoozing during the daytime, so get your camera ready for when they leap up and spring away from your rustling feet! The views of Mt. Fuji here are stunning.

After exploring the interior, head back to the main path and follow the path south once again. Keep your eyes peeled on this section for the ospreys, which can often be seen plucking fish from the lake and then evading the thieving crows.

The trail eventually bends to the right and takes you to the last section of the trail, which winds charmingly through a forest dominated by red pines and mosses. After just over 1km you will arrive back at the Shoji Kasseika Center where you started.





## A Request to all Residents! Regarding COVID-19 Prevention

- In observance of the nationwide state of emergency declaration, we ask all residents to please avoid taking unnecessary, frequent trips outside of your home.

▶ Please avoid the 3 C's

1. **Closed Spaces** with poor ventilation
2. **Crowded Places** with many people nearby
3. **Close-contact settings** like close-range conversations

Examples of acceptable trips outdoors:

Purchasing food, going to the hospital, going to work, walking or running outdoors, farming, gardening, outdoor activities that avoids crowds

- If you develop 1. A fever 2. A dry cough or 3. lose your sense of smell / taste  
Stay home & contact the Public Health Center (*hokenjo*) ☎ 0555-24-9035

We ask for your continued cooperation in practicing self-care, handwashing, and proper etiquette when coughing and sneezing. Please make an effort to ventilate your home and if feeling unwell please avoid school and work, and prioritize recovery in the safety of your home.

All city events will be cancelled and all public facilities will be closed for foreseeable future.

When visiting the Fujiyoshida Municipal Hospital please wear a mask and use the hand sanitizer that is available at the entrance. For the safety of hospitalized patients, visitations are not allowed.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

FUJIYOSHIDA CITY ・ COVID-19 PREVENTION TASK FORCE

- ◆ Inquiries: Kenko-Chou-ka (Health & Longevity Section): 0555-22-1111
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