

# iCLA Obento

ISSUE 11 | DECEMBER 2024

## NEWSLETTER TOPICS

iCLA'S NEW JAPANESE  
LANGUAGE WINTER  
PROGRAM

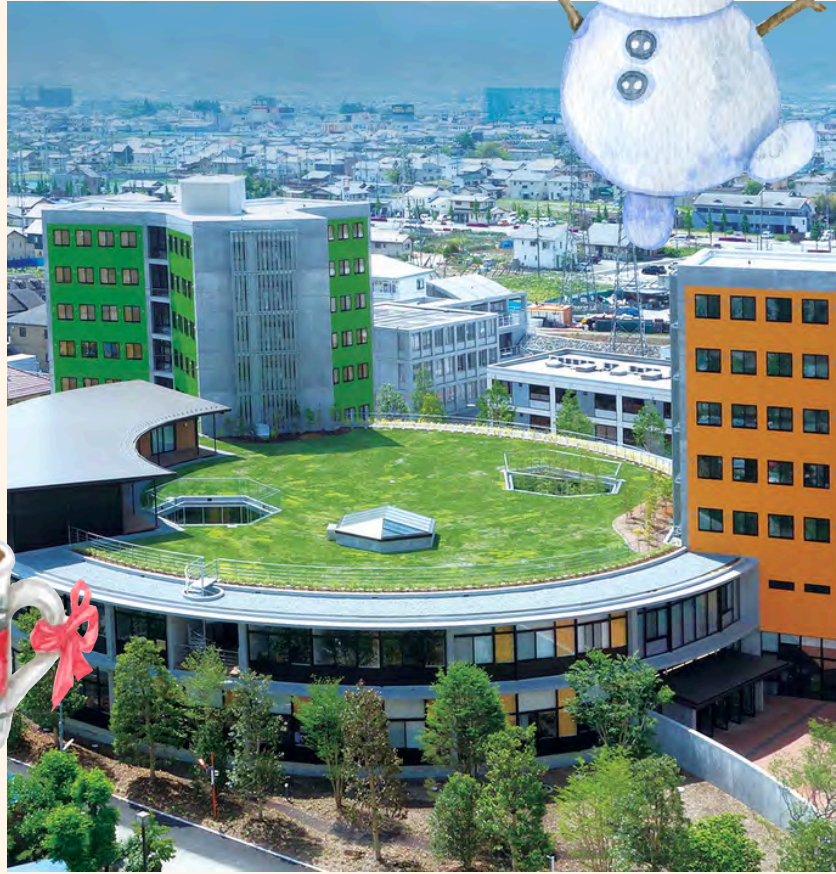
iCLA STUDENTS  
AWARDED IN  
YAMANASHI  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT SPEECH  
CONTEST



iCLA CLUB  
FEATURE: HIKING  
CLUB

INTERVIEW WITH  
WINNER OF THE  
MEMORABILIA DESIGN  
CONTEST

DEPARTMENT NEWS:  
WINTER GALA 2024



The iCLA Obento is a newsletter dedicated to highlighting the successes of iCLA's community members, celebrating our unique backgrounds, and learning more about the members of iCLA's community. We hope you enjoy reading about iCLA's bright students and wonderful faculty members in interviews, news articles, and feature pieces.

## iCLA OBENTO ARCHIVE



[www.icla.ygu.ac.jp  
/en/icla-obento-  
archive/](http://www.icla.ygu.ac.jp/en/icla-obento-archive/)







# iCLA's New Japanese Language Winter Program has started!

Are you a 1st year or 2nd year student aiming to work in Japan after graduation?

Join the Japanese Language Winter Program classes taught by Professor Masahiro Toma and build a strong foundation for your Japanese language skills!

**Registrations are open - Sign up now!**



<https://forms.office.com/r/zGRNGKBsAJ>

## Japanese Language Winter Program

**Registration Open Now!**

This program is designed to support - especially 1st & 2nd year students - who are serious about learning Japanese with a view to finding employment in Japan.



<https://forms.office.com/r/zGRNGKBsAJ>

### Class Dates:

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>

### Time and Contents:

**Class N5 (10:30 ~ 12:00):**

Review of the essentials for JPNN111 & 112 / JLPT N5 Preparation

**Class N4 (13:00 ~ 14:30):**

Review of the essentials for JPNN113 & 114 / JLPT N4 Preparation

**Registration Capacity:** 25 per class

\* If capacity is exceeded, a brief interview may be conducted

\* Class levels and content may change depending on registrants' proficiency







# iCLA Students Achieve Success at 21st Yamanashi International Student Speech Contest

The 21st Yamanashi International Student Speech Contest was held on December 7th, with 24 international students joining from universities and junior colleges across Yamanashi Prefecture. Organized by The Consortium of Universities in Yamanashi, participants prepare a maximum 5-minute speech in Japanese with a designated theme. The theme of this year's speech contest was "My Future Self" (将来の私). The participants are judged on their Japanese ability, expressiveness, composition, creativity, logical thinking, and originality. Six students from Yamanashi Gakuin University participated.

Two iCLA students earned top places in the competition! 2nd-year student Nehal was awarded 2nd place, and 3rd-year student Neema was awarded the Special Sponsor Award: Colony Diamond Award. Judges commended Nehal for her ideas to enhance English education in Yamanashi Prefecture and promoting internationalization in the region. Neema's five-minute speech was described as impactful, with her delivery praised as comparable to that of a political candidate.

All participating students have shown remarkable determination and impressive effort in the speech contest despite a busy end-of-semester season.



iCLA participants and supporters cheering them on

**A big congratulations  
to all participants!**





# iCLA Club Interview with The Hiking Club

HIKING CLUB LEADERS:  
IZZAT  
SEBASTIEN



## The Hiking Club

iCLA Obento had the pleasure of interviewing Izzat and Sebastien, club leaders of iCLA's Hiking Club! The two club leaders have a captivating passion for hiking, and immediately, it was easy to tell that they love to hike and share that joy with club members.

There is no better place to hike in Japan than Yamanashi with its abundance of mountains. If you're interested, read on and find out what the club is about and how to join!



**Photo Credit for all photos in the article: Izzat**

**Can you tell me what the Hiking Club is about?**

**Sebastien:** The goal is to go hiking in the mountains, mostly in Yamanashi. We are surrounded by 200+ mountains, and we want to go out there and have some adventures. The title says it all.

**What inspired you both to start this club?**

**Izzat:** Since I came to Japan, I was very interested in the mountains surrounding us because in my country, the closest mountain was 4000 kilometers away from where I was. I was very excited about going to the mountains. When I went to Yokonemachi Hills, which is around this area, I liked it so much. It was only 100 meters high, but the view of Kofu City was very beautiful. The week after I went to a higher mountain, Mount Daizokyoji, with my best friend. We liked it so much and I felt a fire in my heart which started burning for hiking higher mountains.



# iCLA Club Interview with The Hiking Club

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LEADERS:  
IZZAT  
SEBASTIEN



I had a desire to adventure all the trails, forests, and of course, see the view at the summit.

I opened an unofficial group on Instagram for my friends who would like to go hiking. I had the idea of opening a hiking club because there are people who want to hike, but don't know where to go or how to start. And since I have a little bit of experience in that, I can guide people. I shared the idea with Sebastien, because he enjoys hiking as well and we went together often.

**Sebastien:** I've been in Japan for about four years and I was living in Yokohama before, so I was going to mountains close by like Mt Takao or in the Hakone region. I was going to the mountains all the time with my friends, so when I got to Yamanashi and saw the mountains, I thought, "I want to go hiking!" Fast forward through summer, Izzat set up a few hiking trips and I went with him often. Then, at the Welcome Mixer this semester, I was talking with new students and a lot of them said they want to go hiking but didn't know where or how.

**Izzat:** We both were thinking of opening a club and at the perfect timing, we talked about it.

**Where has the club gone hiking so far?**

**Izzat:** Officially since the club started, we went to Kannongatake Mountain, Mount Takao, Mount Daizokyoji, and Mount Fukakusa.

**How do you prepare for a hike?**

**Izzat:** First of all, I ask everyone that decides to go to take water. At least two to three liters if they can carry it. Also, a lot of snacks, like energy bars. When it comes to knowing the trail, I use hiking apps - Yomap and AllTrails. Those maps are made by professional hikers, and we can choose the easy or harder trails. In the mountains, there are also pink ribbons that are tied to trees to indicate the trail. We also follow them.

**What is your biggest tip when it comes to hiking?**

**Sebastien:** Take it easy and don't force yourself. We are surrounded by smaller mountains, so start small. Don't over-stress about gear and equipment, but have good shoes. You do need to be in somewhat decent physical condition. After the first couple of hikes, you'll know what you can do and what you cannot do right away.

**Izzat:** It's obvious, but take water. It's the most important thing when hiking. Also, for those who don't have any experience, I would say jogging is very helpful to prepare you for hiking.

**Can you tell me about a moment that was most memorable when hiking?**

**Sebastien:** There's a few (laugh). I'll go with Tanayama. We started at the camping ground that is nearby, and then we're supposed to follow the path with the pink ribbon. But multiple times, we were like, "Hey, has anyone seen a pink ribbon lately?" So technically speaking, we did get lost on the way, but as long as you go up, you're fine, so we made it to the top without following the path. There were some sketchy parts that's muddy, damp, and was steep at some points, but it was fun!

**Izzat:** For Kannongatake Mountain, we found out that we were starting late even if we took the earliest train possible, since the base of the mountain is very far away from the campus. We didn't end up reaching the top, unfortunately. We reached the elevation of 2200 or 2300 meters and

we noticed that it was getting dark. We headed back straight away. Since it was getting dark and the mountain is very steep, it was very dangerous, that's why we thought it was a heck of an adventure, if you can say that. That hike was very memorable for everyone there.

### **Did you have any memorable moments of a beautiful view?**

**Izzat:** We have them each time, especially when it comes to high mountains and the weather is clear. You can see faraway mountains, for example, Mount Fuji. Or the whole Yamanashi. It's very beautiful. We take a lot of pictures and a lot of videos. I asked the members from the recent hike, how was the hike even if we didn't make it to the end? They said it was one of the best days of their life because we saw all those mountains, and we were above clouds so we could see a sea of clouds. The views are always beautiful.



### **What are some goals in the future for the club?**

**Izzat:** My biggest goal I would ever have for the club is climbing Mount Kitadake. It's the second tallest mountain in Japan after Mount Fuji, but it's considered as one of the most difficult mountains in Japan. The trails are very difficult. It takes maybe two days, and if you make to the summit of the Mount Kita, it means that you have already finished two other mountains which you have to climb first.

**Sebastien:** We have two different views for the club. My idea of the club is mostly for beginners, and I hope participants can meet others with different backgrounds of experience. If they have similar ideas of what they want to do for hiking, then they can go hiking together on their own time too.

### **Do you enjoy everything about hiking or is there anything specific that makes you feel like it's worth it?**

**Izzat:** Well, me personally, I enjoy every single millisecond of hiking. The second I go out, I start enjoying because I have friends around, in my dream country, doing my dream thing. I get to go to the mountains and into nature. I get to see views I hadn't even dreamed of. It's very enjoyable.

**Sebastien:** I'm from Quebec, Canada, and the area where I'm from is just farmland. The tallest mountains are 200 meters, just ski stations. So, I started hiking here in Japan, and now I have done about 30 mountains. There's no reason behind it per se, it's fun and relaxing. It's a change from living in the city, it's new scenery, and we get to meet new people.

**Izzat:** There is no one better hike than another. Each hike is completely different and they're all perfect.

### **So if someone is interested in joining a hike, what do they need to do to join?**

**Izzat:** They can talk to me or they can look up the Hiking Club's Instagram account because I post the latest announcement there. For each hike we also label the difficulty, so people can know how difficult the mountain is going to be and if they can do it.

**Sebastien:** The QR code to find the group is on the poster. We also put a small paper on the poster that has the main information, like the date, where we're going, and when we meet. It's nice to know if there's people coming in so we can wait for them but if people are too shy or decide on the spot they want to come, they can.

Thank you to the Hiking Club for the interview! Find their Instagram below:

 **iCLA Hiking Club Instagram: [@hiking\\_club\\_off](https://www.instagram.com/hiking_club_off)**

## **iCLA Club Interview with The Hiking Club**

HIKING CLUB  
LEADERS:  
IZZAT  
SEBASTIEN





iCLA International College of  
Liberal Arts



# Interview with Winner of the iCLA Memorabilia Contest 2024

SHWE SIN

## Interview with Shwe Sin

The iCLA Memorabilia Contest held from September 10 to October 4 saw many wonderful submissions with creative renditions of the iCLA logo from the iCLA community. The contest featured an opportunity to have the winning design made into iCLA merchandise which is sold in the semesterly sale.

The winning design of this year's Memorabilia Contest was created by iCLA student Shwe Sin Yadanar! Shwe Sin's design was chosen based criteria such as feasibility, quality, and pertinence to iCLA. Her beautiful design is featured on tote bags which was available for purchase in the Fall 2024 iCLA Memorabilia Sale.

We interviewed Shwe Sin on her inspiration for the design!

**Can you tell me about yourself and also about your artistic background?**

**Shwe Sin:** Where I come from in my country, it's hard to get art materials. So, I always have to be innovative about my creative process. Along the way, I picked up different creative skills. I learned to sew. I can embroider. I do a bit of traditional art. But these days I mainly do digital art because you don't need to get materials. I don't really see myself as a graphic designer, but more of an illustrator. I don't have much experience with designing logos, but I wanted to challenge myself.

**How long have you been creating art?**

**Shwe Sin:** I've been doing art since I was a kid. I just never stopped, basically.

# Interview with Winner of the iCLA Memorabilia Contest 2024

SHWE SIN

## Interview with Shwe Sin

**What was your motivation for submitting a design to this year's contest?**

**Shwe Sin:** I always wanted to participate in the contest, but I didn't know what to draw because I don't really do graphic design. Last year, there was a winning design by Hannah, and I realized, "Oh! I could do something like this." So, I got inspiration from that. It's thanks to her that I got to participate this year.

**What was the inspiration for your design?**

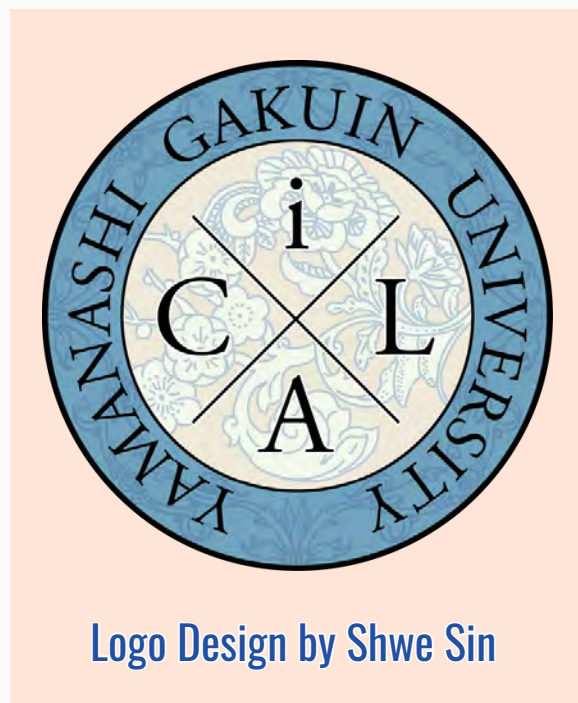
**Shwe Sin:** One of the criteria of the contest was diversity, so I was trying to think of different ways to represent it in a logo. I thought of flowers because every country, every culture, has some kind of flower motif. So that's what I decided on and I took inspiration from different flower motifs from cultures around the world and tried to make it into one whole design.

**What is the significance behind the flowers and colors that you chose to put into your design?**

**Shwe Sin:** Well, the colors are neutral colors, so that was more of a technical decision. But for the flowers, for example, each section of the logo is from a different culture. The "i" section is like lace from western or European countries. The "C" section is Sakura or cherry blossoms, like a design on a kimono. And then the "L" section is like *batik* from Indonesia. Then the "A" section, this is a kind of flower motif you can see in South and Southeast Asian countries like in India, Myanmar where I'm from, and maybe Thai.

The outer layer are flower designs inspired from etching, something that's used in printing in the early days of the industrial age. And actually, in the juncture of the vines there are little flowers, and they are actually national flowers from different countries. We have the rose from the US, cherry blossom from Japan, and the King Protea flower from South Africa.

I tried to think about how to balance all the cultures together.



Logo Design by Shwe Sin

**Was there a specific artist that inspired you to draw the way you did?**

**Shwe Sin:** Because the flower motifs are from different cultures, I wouldn't say there's one single artist, but I was introduced to William Morris during a past class with Professor Sam Stocker. I was inspired by the designs of artists like that who focus on shape and flow.

**People will be carrying merchandise with your design on it. Did that factor into what you wanted to create?**

**Shwe Sin:** Diversity is an important thing. I tried to make sure that everyone can feel represented. I couldn't put in every country, but I tried to think of all the corners of the world when I made it.

**Do you have a message for those people who are considering to buy your tote bag or maybe already bought it?**

**Shwe Sin:** First of all, thank you! Thank you for choosing to buy my design. I hope more people will support this so there can be more contests and other people can participate. I want to see more designs by other wonderful artists in iCLA 😊





## An Unforgettable Night of Art, Music, and Fashion at the Winter Gala!

On November 29, iCLA came alive with glamour, creativity, and community spirit in the Winter Gala 2024!

Thanks to the Gala Committee, Professor Mike Blow, and Professor Sam Stocker, the much-anticipated event of the semester brought together over 160 attendees from the iCLA community for an unforgettable evening filled with music, art, food, and fashion.

The theme of this year's Winter Gala was Fashion Show. The iCLA lobby was stylishly adorned with fashion design themed decorations put together by students such as giant thread spools, button garlands, murals of clothing designs, and a chic photobooth for event goers to take trendsetting photos.



The event kicked off with musical performances in the second-floor lobby, setting a vibrant tone for the night. The first act of the night was a lively tap-dancing routine by Professor William Reed, which was followed by captivating performances from the students of the Koto Workshop led by Professor Joji Murasawa, and the students of the Guitar Workshop led by Professor Mike Blow. The iCLA Music Club and other student groups gave fabulous musical performances with an eclectic mix of rock, anime and movie theme songs, opera, and more.







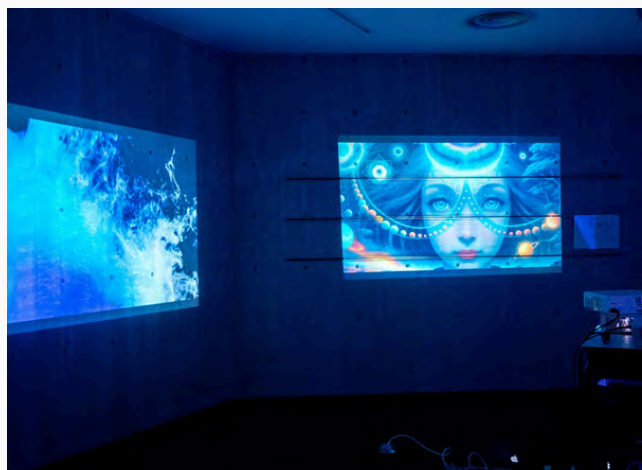
# An Unforgettable Night of Art, Music, and Fashion at the Winter Gala!

A riveting art exhibition spanning across two floors was curated by the Gala Committee and Professor Sam Stocker. The gallery showcased an impressive array of artistic mediums, including photography, sculpting, painting, digital art, Japanese brush calligraphy, and immersive visual art experiences. Interactive activities such as t-shirt print design and polaroid message writing added an extra layer of fun and hands-on creativity.

Another highlight of the evening was the first-ever Gala fashion show. The first-floor lobby was transformed into a fashion runway for the night, with student models showcasing stunning outfits on the catwalk. Each outfit, put together by iCLA's fashion enthusiasts, celebrated individuality, style, and self-expression.

The food direction team also worked hard to prepare delicious food and drink such as Chinese tangyuan, Korean rice cake, dumplings, almond pudding, and soft drinks. Finally, finishing off the event was a dance party with DJing.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the students, faculty, and staff whose hard work and creativity made Winter Gala 2024 a smashing success. It was a night that truly celebrated the talent, diversity, and vibrant spirit of the iCLA community!







## SOCIAL MEDIA FEATURES



O-Chat Time was held in the Language Acquisition Center! The event was held with the Yamanashi Gakuin Junior College students.



We love this aerial view of Mt Fuji from iCLA Student Ambassador Raghav!



The Yamanashi Gakuin University campus was beautifully colored in shades of gold, orange, and red for autumn.



iCLA students had the opportunity to participate in a tasting for the Nihoncha Award 2024!

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Click +Follow on our page to get the latest updates about what is going on at iCLA and stay connected!



### Add iCLA to your Profile

Add International College of Liberal Arts in your Profile's 'Education' section to show that you're an iCLA graduate or current student



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