iCLA Obento

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NEWSLETTER TOPICS

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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/

iCLA Students Bring Global Perspectives to a Traditional Shrine Festival

Sakaorinomiya Shrine, located just a 13-minute walk from iCLA, is a local landmark known as the birthplace of Renga poetry.



It is also mentioned in two of Japan's oldest historical chronicles, Kojiki and Nihon shoki, making it the only shrine in Yamanashi to be featured in these works. The Kojiki was compiled in 712, and the Nihon Shoki in 720.

Every year, the shrine holds the "Sakaorinomiya Annual Festival", celebrating the achievements of deity Yamato Takeru no Mikoto, a legendary hero whose story appears in Kojiki.

Shinto rituals are attended by local parishioners and members of the devotional association, who gather to take part in the ceremonies and celebrate the occasion.

The annual festival plays an important role in promoting local prosperity, preserving cultural traditions, and fostering a sense of community and gratitude among residents.

As part of the annual festival, Sakaorinomiya Shrine also hosts an Offering of Performing Arts, where participants present music, dance, and poetry in the main hall.

iCLA Students Bring Global Perspectives to a Traditional Shrine Festival

This year, the festival took on an international flair with iCLA students participating for the first time.



The students shared aspects of their home cultures through a variety of lively performances, including traditional dances from Myanmar, popular songs from Bangladesh, paper theatre presentations featuring Hong Kong folktales and Indian history, and a musical performance with the kalimba by students from Mexico and Japan.

These performances joined those of the local people and groups, who showcased their own talents through hula dancing, taishō koto music, and rakugo storytelling.



Together, the performances created an opportunity for different cultures to meet and enrich a long-standing tradition of the Sakaori area.



Beyond the performances, iCLA students contributed to the festival by helping with preparations and cleaning up the shrine grounds alongside neighborhood people, sweeping up fallen leaves and wiping down the dust on the shrine building.

These shared activities provided occasions for conversations, and the people in the community were excited to chat with the students.



Local residents praised the students' enthusiasm that added a lively atmosphere to the event, and the head priest of Sakaorinomiya Shrine was particularly grateful for the students' help with preparations and post-event clean-up, recognizing their contribution to the smooth running of the festival.

The experience was equally meaningful for the students joining the event. Students said they especially enjoyed working with local seniors, whose kindness made them feel welcome in the community. Some were impressed by how actively the seniors participated in local events. In addition, the festival provided a valuable opportunity to learn firsthand about Shinto traditions and the role of the shrine in the local community.

By actively participating and bringing elements of their home country to this annual neighborhood festival, the students helped strengthen ties between iCLA and the residents in the Sakaori area, and there was a shared appreciation of both local and international cultures.





Diversity Day Celebrates Cultures from Around the World at YGU's Jutoku-Sai

On October 24 and 25, iCLA hosted Diversity Day on campus as part of Yamanashi Gakuin University's annual Jutoku Festival!

Held for the second consecutive year in the campus cafeteria, Turquoise Blue, the event was once again a great success. Although rainy weather greeted visitors on the first day, it did little to dampen the excitement and enthusiasm of the many guests who came to experience cultures from around the world. Students from iCLA representing 13 countries prepared booths showcasing their home countries and cultures.

Each booth was thoughtfully decorated to highlight its country's unique features, including cultural traditions, cuisine, iconic landmarks, famous figures, and more.

Students also prepared trivia questions, giving guests the opportunity to test their knowledge and discover fascinating facts about countries around the world.

At the core of Diversity Day was the opportunity for students to share a little piece of their home countries with others. Guests could experience a variety of authentic flavors from around the world. From sweet beverages and treats such as Venezuelan *chicha* and

Filipino *taho* to delicious foods such as Nepali *momo* and Singaporean *kaya* spread, there were new flavors for everyone to enjoy.



Beyond food and drink, guests were invited to immerse themselves in different cultures through a variety of hands-on activities prepared by the students. Visitors could explore traditional arts and crafts, try their hand at writing in different languages, and even learn popular dances. From experiencing the art of henna and learning to write their names in Urdu at the India and Pakistan booth to discovering the beauty of traditional designs from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, there were plenty of opportunities to try something new. Guests could also learn how to wrap *hallacas*, a traditional Venezuelan Christmas dish, pick up useful phrases in Slovak and Czech, or have their names written in Thai and learn popular Thai dances. Traditional clothing and handicrafts offered yet another glimpse into the countries represented, with the Syria booth showcasing traditional dress and beautiful crafts made from seashells. Through visiting each booth, guests were able to learn about many unique cultural traditions from around the world.



The festival also featured an exciting program of stage performances and creative activities organized by Interdisciplinary Arts professors, Dr. Mike Blow and Dr. Sam Stocker. A stunning traditional dance performance by students

from Myanmar and musical performances using traditional instruments fascinated the audience in the venue. In addition, a collaborative mural activity had guests of all ages contribute their own artistic touches to a large group artwork.



Finally, iCLA's wonderful team of student volunteers played an essential role in making the event a success. Their enthusiasm and hard work helped ensure that everything ran smoothly from beginning to end. In addition to supporting the event's operations, they also contributed their creativity and ideas to designing an eye-catching promotional poster, as well as the pamphlets and stickers distributed to guests during the event. Their contributions behind the scenes and during the event were invaluable.

The two-day event truly reflected the global spirit of iCLA's community, which students from more than 60 nationalities are a part of.

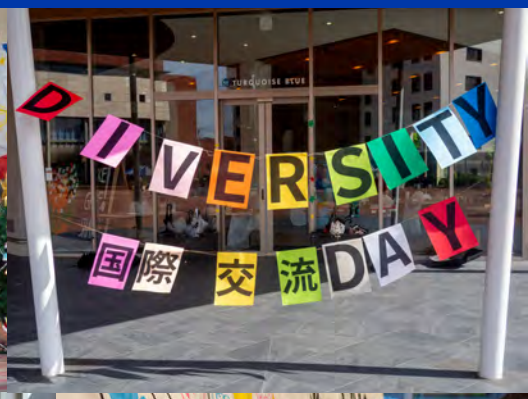


It was a wonderful opportunity for iCLA students to share their cultures, traditions, languages, and personal experiences with the local community. The excitement and curiosity of the visitors made the weeks of preparation and hard work by students, faculty, and staff especially meaningful, and for the guests, the event was a very valuable learning experience about cultural diversity. By interacting directly with international students, exploring the country booths, trying unfamiliar foods, and participating in the activities, visitors were able to experience and appreciate global cultures locally on the Yamanashi Gakuin University campus.

Diversity Day

Photos from the event!



















Attention!!



Curious about Internships in Japan?

Ask your fellow iCLA students and understand where to begin!



How did you find your internship?

What level of Japanese language ability was expected of you?

What was your biggest challenge?

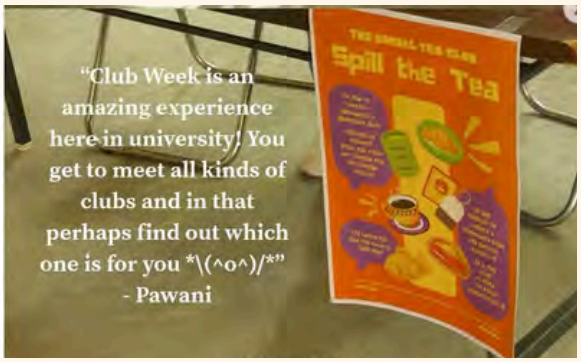
Is it worth doing an internship?

How true are the stereotypes of a Japanese workplace?

This is the perfect opportunity to understand internships in Japan!
Come and chat with students who have successfully found and completed their internship, so you can best prepare for yours.

Enjoy a Cozy Autumn

SOCIAL MEDIA FEATURES



Check out the latest posts from our Student Ambassadors!



Autumn colors on the Yamanashi Gakuin University Campus



Happy Halloween!



Watch our language challenge to celebrate Halloween!

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