



JOiNEWS



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Kyougikaruta Club Leap



Photo by Ms. Kaori Rokudo

The *Kyougikaruta* club before competing in 2019 National Culture Festival for Upper Secondary Schools

There are many famous clubs in Josso Gakuin high school, like the baseball club and brass band club. These clubs participate in huge national competitions. In 2019, the *Kyougikaruta* club of the school participated in the "All Japan high school *Kyougikaruta* tournament" which was held at Omi shrine. *Kyougikaruta* is a traditional Japanese card game where two players listen to poems and compete to choose the corresponding shell. Today, the gameplay has changed. Nowadays, the players listen to hints and try to pick up the right card faster. There are one hundred cards to choose from.

Kyougikaruta club was established six years ago. At

first, there were only three people in the club, and they practiced in the corridor. But now, there are about 30 members. They practice *Kyougikaruta* from Mondays to Saturdays. On Sundays, they have a practice game. In the prefectural round of the 2018 *Kyougikaruta* competition to play at Omi shrine, they performed poorly. After this frustrating experience, they changed their practices. They focused on essential skills, such as picking up cards quickly, practicing 90-minute matches and maintaining team motivation.

The changes paid off and they could participate in the huge *Kyougikaruta* competition at Omi shrine.

Unfortunately, they lost their first team match. However, in the individual matches, one club member moved up from Grade D to Grade C and won the third prize. Another club member progressed from

Last year, the club couldn't take part in the competition held at Omi shrine. But the members never gave up and they worked hard for a year. It bore fruit and they could participate in the



Playing *Kyougikaruta* at Omi shrine.

Photo by Ms. Kaori Rokudo

Grade C to Grade B and won the second prize. They performed very well.

competition, producing good results this year. The club will make a leap to the future.

The Miracle of School Lunch!

High school students need lots of energy for school life. The quality of the food they eat greatly affects their lives. For them to perform at their best, students at Joso Gakuin eat school lunch. This lunch is served to 1700 students on time every day. Where does the school lunch come from? Near the senior high school is Joso Gakuin Kyushoku Center Isozaki Corp. With 21 employees, Isozaki has an amazing power to prepare 1700 school lunch boxes on time every day, they don't have magic. Isozaki cooks 180 kg of rice a day in order to prepare lunch. How do they make a lot of school lunch boxes on time?

They are particular about making a good lunch. One of their aims is to satisfy each student's needs. When he became the president, Mr. Isozaki noticed what he



Mr. Isozaki

didn't notice before. He became strict with himself not to make mistakes. There were various difficulties before he became the president. For example, he dropped a bucketful of miso soup when he was delivering them in the hall way.

Also, there are a lot of processes with strict rules to make our lunch boxes. They have to begin

making it every morning from 6:00. Time is important in cooking. For example, it is necessary to heat food at 75 degrees for more than one minute according to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. They heat lots of food uniformly to prevent food poisoning. It is an example of Isozaki's great work, and you should recognize other workers to make our delicious

lunch. Finally, they place food in the lunch boxes. Those are all processes of making our lunch.

Also, Ms. Hosoya, the dietician, thinks carefully about the school lunch nutrition. She decides the amount of food following the guidelines in the "Food Balance Guide". This provides the appropriate nutrition and energy requirements for boys and girls.

Finally, they said that "we want our students to eat a well-balanced school lunch and want them to grow up quickly and healthy. We always think about everybody".

Even though Isozaki is only 100 meters from the school building, not many students know about all the work that happens to provide daily lunches. Isozaki Corp. always help the students stay healthy.

Photo by Souia Watanabe

Japan and China School Lunch Differences

There are lots of differences between different countries. It is interesting to know how countries differ, especially about food. For people who have never been



Sho Kazuhi

abroad, it is difficult to understand the essence of foreign food. Sho Kazuhi is a Chinese student in our school who moved to Japan when he was a junior high school student.

He lived in Sichuan, a Chinese prefecture, and attended a private school there.

The most surprising difference was the cost of school lunch. At his private school, school lunch cost around 3,000 yuan for six months (about 50,000 yen). It is the same as that of Joso Gakuin. In Chinese public junior high schools, however, the cost of school lunch is 150 yuan a month (about 2,500 yen). It is about half of that of Japanese public junior high schools.

"Japanese school lunch tastes much better than in China", Sho said. Of course, there are large differences among schools in China. Compared with school lunch in China, he enjoys lunch in Joso Gakuin.

"I was served 'Gombaojardin' (stir-fried chicken and peanuts with chili) and 'Hong Xiaolou' (that looks like kakuni) at my junior school." Sho said. The kinds of food served also seem to be different. According to him, Sichuan cuisine, which is often very spicy, was often served as school lunch in China. On the other hand, there were common points with Japanese school lunch. Many schools both in Japan and China serve milk with school lunch almost every day. Therefore, there are lots of differences and some common points in dishes between Chinese and Japanese school lunches.

"I was worried about Chinese food safety." Sho said. There are some incidents with Chinese food safety.

He gave us examples where some packs of milk were poisoned or mold on the food. Then, there were other problems regarding food safety and hygiene. He has a better impression of foreign food rather than domestic food. There may be some problems with food safety in Japan. However, the problems in China are more serious. Japanese people may not be worried about the safety of food in Japan, but you may feel thankful for it after learning about the problems in China.

There are lots of interesting differences in school lunch between China and Japan. There were surprising discoveries. Sho also said that it is interesting to know the differences in Japan from China.

Photo by Nakagawa Hayato

FEATURES

Historic Local Hotel

Mt. Tsukuba is a popular tourist destination close to Tsuchiura, where Joso Gakuin senior high school is. Many tourists use the hotel called Aokiya. Mr. Tomokazu Kouda, the sales manager at Aokiya told about the history and project.

History: Aokiya opened with just two rooms in 1908. Since 1954, they have extended the building many times. In 1981, Aokiya was able to accommodate about 200 people, including 38 rooms and two banquet halls. From the bathhouse

called Mt. Tsukuba Onsen on the 7th floor, you can enjoy a spectacular view of Mt. Tsukuba. Kouda explained that this is the selling point of this hotel.

Cuisine: At Aokiya, they source many local ingredients for the food they serve. Guests can enjoy eating seasonal food at the hotel. There are dishes with many Ibaraki's local produce like anglerfish and Mirei pork (local pork approved by Japan Specific Pathogen Free Swine Association).

Guest status: Mr. Kouda told the effects of the tourism industry circumstances on operating hotel. "I have seen significant changes over the last thirty years. In the past, many company groups came by bus and stayed at the hotel." said Mr. Kouda. Summer is still the busiest season, but now there are more senior or college students and fewer adult guests. Recently, the number of families enjoying family trip has increased." The reason is infrastructure development in the

south of Ibaraki. Kenou-Highway, built in 2015, has made it easier for guests to take day trips to Mt. Tsukuba, reducing the number of groups staying at the hotel.



Mr. Tomokazu Kouda

Photo by Hayato Noda

The Power to Move You

The Joso Bus Co. has been serving Joso Gakuin since 1983. It now operates over ten routes. The buses with their two-toned color scheme; a deep red color for the bottom half and light pink for the top half, stand out in the local areas. The school name, Josogakuin, is written in maroon on the sides. The bus drivers have been transporting students safely for 35 years. Mr. Suzuki and Mr. Morooka are two employees who have been with the company since the beginning.

Until 1994, there were only high school students on the buses. In 1994, Joso Gakuin junior high school opened. As junior high school students started using the buses, they often got motion sickness and stomachaches. However, there were fewer convenience stores with bathrooms then, so the drivers struggled to look after them.

Opening the junior high school increased student numbers from Ibaraki, so they had to add 10 buses. Now, there are 123 bus stops. Mr.

Morooka said that the distance the buses travel has also increased.

The bus company do all that they can to avoid disruptions to their service. Accidents, traffic jams or sudden student illness can happen at any time, so the drivers are in constant contact with the school office and each other via transceiver. They use these to keep everyone informed and to make updates on their situations. They also simulate different situations in order to keep trouble to a minimum. The most important

thing is transporting students safely.



Joso Gakuin Bus

Photo by Mayu Ambiru

International Outlook on Education Now

There are eleven foreign teachers at Joso Gakuin junior high school and Mr. James Coburn is one of them. He is from Hawaii in the U.S. and came to Japan four years ago because he became interested in Japanese history and teaching Japanese students.

There are many differences between the U.S. and Japan. Mr. Coburn said "There are some challenges in education here. You have a lot of homework, especially during long vacations" In the U.S., they tend to have little homework, even over the 3-month long summer vacation. Instead, they have some reports.



Mr. James Coburn

Photo by Mikuru Fujihira

It can be said that Japanese homework is to keep students studying every day. In Japan, homework makes most students work hard. On the other hand, in the US, some students work very hard, and some are too lazy because they do not have homework.

"You have to be careful that you finish your homework, don't just work on it." Finishing homework is not the "purpose", but the way to consider and gain practical knowledge. Therefore, it can be said that "Japanese homework" might want to change.

When asked to describe the education systems in Japan and America in one word, he said "Now and future." He explained "Japanese students have lots of examinations and they always look back at their grades. On the other hand, in the US, you can take the ASVAB exam, if you want." It is an aptitude test for 16 or 17-year-olds, indicating what kind of job might

suit them. It is an opportunity to explore avenues for their future. A similar test exists in Japan, but most of students don't regard it important. Going to college is common in the US these days. Colleges, public and private, accept scores from either the SAT or ACT national tests. Another important factor is the Grade Point Average, a continual assessment over four years of high school. Colleges use it as a guide to student ability, so students need to keep a good attitude in school.



Bright World of Science!!



Mr. Takeshi Matsushima is one of the science teachers at Joso Gakuin high school. He is a role model for the students. He gives them a lot of chances to do experiments and explains difficult concepts in language they can understand.

He was born and brought up in Sapporo. He got his master's degree at the graduate school of University of Tokyo. He studied device design in the University of Tokyo research institute and in a research institute in Tsukuba city. Then, he found delight in teaching and talking with students and has been teaching for 10 years.

"The interesting part of science is that, unlike Japanese and mathematics, everyone can actually experience it" said Mr. Matsushima.

One of the experiments his students love is about the



Photo by Miku Matsumoto

Mr. Matsushima explaining

structure of rock salt. The arrangement of the particles in the rock salt means students can split the rock salt cleanly in two.

Another experiment students like is about static electricity. It is generated by rubbing tissue paper on foamed polystyrene covered in plastic wrap. You can feel the large static electricity charge

build up. Then, you put an aluminum plate on the polystyrene, and put a round piece of tinsel on the plate. The tinsel floats when you put it on the plate. It is dangerous to do the experiment with wet hands, because it may well give a shock. "Science is sometimes dangerous but that is also the interesting part." he said.

Finally, Mr. Matsushima explained dieting knowledge, appealing to high school girls. He said that he had lost fifteen kilograms in four months. He didn't just do exercise and dietary restrictions. He used the scientific knowledge. "I take in no more than 1500 kcal because I use 2000 kcal a day." The body will change through use of knowledge.

Mr. Matsushima now has a big dream about leading the world in robots and machines. He wants not to be directed by robots but to direct robots. Also, he wants to tell students to try something even if they hesitate. Young people can try their own objective again or make another even if they fail. Never give up and try something you are interested in!! This is his motto.

Today's Japan 'Occupational therapist'

Japan faces an aging society today. This is a pressing problem, but young Japanese people don't have a sense of crisis. In Ibaraki prefecture, the number of people over 65 was 824,000 people last year. They account for 28.9 % of all the population in Ibaraki prefecture. Nursing care to support the elderly has become more essential. Occupational therapists are an important part of this care. An occupational therapist is a rehabilitation professional. They help people who can't walk go to the toilet and so on. To be an occupational therapist, it is necessary to pass the national examination.

Mr. Yuya Kaneko is an occupational therapist working at rehabilitation facility "Kokokara".

"I didn't study when I was in high school. I regret that. So, I didn't even think I could enter the vocational school." He was accepted and faced many hours of classes and training. The hardest thing he faced during his training was the practical training in a hospital. "With my little knowledge, I had to decide each patients' treatment schedules and goals."

When he started care work, he helped people who need bathroom assistance. Then, he thought "I want them to move more freely." He puts just limited rehabilitation in the patient's schedule and gets patients to do everything they can for themselves. He believes that

through direction, his patients make themselves better.



Photo by Natsumi Matsumoto

Yuya Kaneko rehabilitating his patient

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