



# The Shoei Journal



## Tracking Down 140 years of History



"When the Cherry Blossoms Ripen"

December 8th, 1884, Shoei took its very first step as a Christian girls' school in Shirokane Takanawadai. In its 140 years of history, it has connected with some greatly distinguished people, including the famous Shimazaki Toson, where he described some features of Shoei in his autobiography

book, "When the Cherry Blossoms Ripen."

*"Following the shaded slope, Sutekichi Kishimoto ascended the loophole leading to Takanawa from just before the Shinagawa parking lot. A car carrying passengers was also seen coming up from the bottom of the slope, making rattling sounds of wheels touching stones. Instinctively, Sutekichi turned, saw and said, 'Isn't that Shigeko?'"*

These are the very first lines of the book; it describes the situation where the main character, Sutekichi, is walking up the hill when he finds his ex-girlfriend's car driving towards him. The slope mentioned here is said to be the Pomegranate hill, a road Shoei students use to go to school from Shinagawa station. Moreover, the ex he encounters, Shigeko, is speculated to be a teacher of

Shoei- she is described as a teacher at a girls' school, and around the time this book was written in 1919, there were no girls' school in Takanawadai but Shoei.

### The School Gym Used to be a Samurai Residence

One of the most fascinating pieces of Shoei's history lies on the ground of the gym and school field.

It is said that the gym that we use today was built on the ruins of a Samurai Residence, and the field was a small, beautiful pond.

During the Meiji Restoration, people's lifestyles and culture changed. Samurai eventually vanished from Japan as time went by. People started to use the land for growing crops and plants, which is why Shoei has a lot of trees and plants around the

school building. The small pond around the house was changed into a flat surface by filling in the space with sand and dirt. Then farmers used the land to grow rice and crops.

This is the interesting relation between Shoei and Shimazaki Toson, and how a Samurai's small pond turned into the school field we use today.



School field

*Photo by Shoei*

By: Hatsuna Tanaka & Arin Fujiwara

## New Gossip Going Around in Shoei!

Let's be honest. Many private schools in Tokyo may seem similar at first glance. However, each school has its uniqueness. At Shoei, that is the uniforms, so why don't we dig deeper into our iconic uniforms and find out the history behind them?

### About Our Uniform

When Shoei was founded in 1884, the uniforms were nowhere close to the ones we have now. Instead of a blazer and skirt, it was a sailor uniform, which was common at the time. However, things took a turn when Shoei reached its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1982. As a part of the celebration, the uniforms were changed to a completely different design. Shoei became the first school to introduce blazers and kilt skirts in Japan and the iconic outfit was made.

The uniqueness of the

uniforms does not stop there. Although many schools adopted the idea of a tartan check skirt into their uniforms, most did not use the skirt design itself. Shoei's skirts are a traditional Scotland garment called a kilt skirt. As a kilt is a wraparound skirt so safety pins are required to keep the cloth together. The pin is called a kilt pin, and this is where the gossip comes in.

### Kilt Pins and Gossip

Some students exchange their kilt pins with their favorite seniors who retire from club activities after Senior two, which is like how girls want the second button of their crushes' uniforms. This happens only in some clubs. Therefore, it has been a source of mysterious gossip in Shoei. Some may think that an only-girls school is not interesting since they won't be able to experience one of the best parts of going through junior and high school, which is having

interactions with boys. However, in reality, an only-girls school has its own ways of having the best school life, and being able to wear this cute uniform is something that makes Shoei unique and enjoyable.



Shoei school uniform in 1884  
*Photo from Shoei's history book*

We wear our school uniforms almost every day. That is why school uniforms play an important role in our school life. Not only is the appearance of our uniforms

cute, but it also becomes a motivation for us to go to school and makes us feel like we are in a scene in a movie. We hope you have the chance to come be part of Shoei and spend the best time making lifetime memories here at Shoei!



Shoei school uniform in 2025  
*Photo from Shoei's history book*

By: Ayaka Maeda & Rin Morishima



# Dynamic Change of The School Festivals



Shoei Field Day 2024  
*Photo by Shoei*

**C**oronavirus. This is a word that changed our lives in many ways. Schools were closed, and many people suffered from several symptoms. Our school was also affected by the pandemic, especially for school events such as Shoel Field Day (SFD) and Co Learner's Day (CLD).

## Shoei Field Day

SFD, our sports day, was one

of the events most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Shoei students were forced to keep their distance from other people during activities. Therefore, events like Cavalry Battle and Eye of the Typhoon were strictly restricted, time spent for those programs were also shortened, and overall, SFD was held on a smaller scale to prevent the virus from spreading. This year, since regulations became lax, the P.E. committee members of Senior One came up with a new program called "Tamakappa", which is a mix of the ball-toss and the dance of the anime, "Hanakappa". At first, many people in our grade thought it would be embarrassing for a senior to dance like a kindergartener. However, "Tamakappa" unexpectedly heated up!! Ms. Kubota, a P.E. teacher, said that this was the most dramatically changed program in

SFD this year.

## Co Learner's Day

CLD is a one-of-a-kind event of Shoei, which acts as an alternative to cultural festival in Japanese. The purpose is to show what the students have been working on in classes and clubs, and to appeal to the girls who are considering coming to Shoei. One of the aspects that didn't change during the pandemic is the requirement for students from Junior One to Senior Two to prepare a presentation on a topic they have researched on. Also, the club presentations and the senior presentations always attracted a lot of attention even during the pandemic. However, many activities that could potentially spread the coronavirus were banned. For example, only a limited number of visitors were allowed, and food sales weren't permitted during this time. Now we have more options available,

including food offerings like pizza and hamburgers, and many more visitors are allowed to attend. These shifts make the CLD much more exciting for everyone involved.

All students come to Shoei dreaming of an ideal teenage school life. Our school events have become even more powerful than before the virus with more fun activities. So why not come to Shoei and experience this with us?



Dance stage in CLD performed by senior three students  
*Photo by Shoei*

By: Asuka Kurokawa & Haruka Higuchi

# Alarming Athletic Ability- why?

**A**t Shoei, students tend to excel academically, though athletic achievements are not as prominent. We wondered why this may be because it has been like this for a long time.

To get some information, we interviewed Ms. Nishina, a P.E. teacher who came to Shoei this year, but has experience working around other schools. We thought she could give us information to compare Shoei to other schools. She gave us a persuasive answer: our commuting time. Having students coming from all over and outside Tokyo, Shoei students have longer average commuting times than other high school students. This restricts our time for exercise since school starts early for morning prayer. On top

of this, while some schools allow for clubs to practice until 7 or 8 p.m. Shoei ends at five-thirty, making practice after school limited. This is the situation for people in sports clubs, but students who aren't don't get nearly as much exercise as their bodies need.

We also interviewed Ms. Kubota, who has been at Shoei for a long time, thinking that she could give an opinion on our athletic ability. According to her, the main reason is due to the nature of this school. Our school has a junior high school entrance exam and because of this, students have spent their elementary school days studying for long hours. They don't have the custom of going outside to play after school. Furthermore, our school takes

great pride in its high English skills even having as many as seven classes a week. This is possible due to reducing P.E. classes, which also may result in low physical ability. Shoei also being a preparatory school for university entrance exams, students spend less time in clubs, which makes matters worse. However, Shoei is the only school which teaches archery in their P.E. classes in Tokyo. The government requires schools to teach one of these arts: martial arts, Japanese archery, or sumo wrestling. Shoei teachers first thought of teaching self-defense techniques, but soon switched to Japanese archery, which makes us mentally stronger and teaches us manners.

Overall, Shoei's unique curriculum might not offer enough

time for P.E., but we are able to put effort into English, making students globally oriented.



Shoei students learning Japanese archery  
*Photo from Shoei Instagram*

By: Sae Matsuki & Reika Fujiki

# Shoei's Instagram Era

One tool our generation CANNOT live without is Instagram. In March 2023, Shoei started Instagram and within a year it has gained more than 6000 followers, gaining more and more each day. But why did Shoei, which previously relied on its homepage for communication, decide to start Instagram?

To find out, we interviewed Ms. Shinomiya, who manages Shoei's Instagram posts. The main goal was to showcase Shoei's unique qualities and appeal to future prospective students. With Instagram, Shoei now has a platform to highlight club activities, school events such as Shoei Field Day, Co Learner's Day, and important information for students who plan to apply for Shoei. Recently,



## Shoei Instagram Photo by Shoei Instagram

Shoei has also started a new series of posts where we can get to know about teachers in Shoei along with friendly trivia about the teachers and a heartwarming and encouraging message to students that plan to take the entrance exam. Although it is meant for people outside of school, these posts are especially popular among Shoei's students, as they can get to know their teacher's backstory and trivia that they didn't know before.

Another factor behind the move was the rise of rival schools using Instagram to promote their school. There are many new schools that have gained popularity among social media, which are gaining more and more students every year with their amazing advertisements. In order to remain competitive in this situation, Shoei recognized the need to adapt to this trend.

Before having an Instagram account, the only places people could get to know Shoei were

through the official site or the school introductions at major cram schools. Shoei hasn't really gotten the recognition it deserves from most of the public, and that needs to be changed.

While it's too soon to measure Instagram's direct impact on entrance exam applications, the growing follower count suggests increased interest in Shoei. By embracing social media, Shoei is ensuring that more students and families can learn about the school's unique environment and opportunities. As the account continues to grow, it is likely that Instagram will play a key role in shaping Shoei's future.

By: Nanami Aoki &  
Mai Kawanishi

# Lifelong Memories

Teenage days spent in clubs are a precious period in Japanese people's lifetimes. Many people agree that doing club activities at school with friends is the most memorable time in youth. Here at Shoei, there are 35 clubs which over 90% of students belong to.



Cheerleading Performance in CLD  
Photo by Shoei

The Cheerleading club in Shoei mainly practice for performances at school events such as Co-Learners' Day and Shoei Field Day. Cheerleading

performances include skills like dance, stunts, jumps and tumbling. Although it is a dangerous sport, our teamwork is stronger than any other team. Throughout our practices, we can unite and build a firm relationship regardless of grades. When we move up to high school, we begin to decide the component of the performances by ourselves. By then, we will have built a strong relationship which brings us together, which is important when the time comes to lead the club. In order to give our best performance, we set up as many opportunities to practice as possible. Although our practices can be tough, the feeling of relief after performing is incredible.

## New Challenges

The Shoei Choir became well-known after receiving Bronze in The NHK All-Japan School Choir Competition in 2023. Teachers and students in school congratulated them not

only because of the outcome, but also because they know how hard members worked for this. They are also known for putting effort into school services, singing hymns in events such as the Entrance and Graduation ceremony, and the Christmas worship.

Last year, between performing for our school festival and Christmas worship, they participated in a new performance, as part of school services. Mrs. Umetsu, who teaches Bible in Shoei, asked the Shoei Choir to take part in the Ogikubo Music Festival. The Ogikubo Music Festival aims to revitalize the city of Ogikubo through classical music, and the Christmas worship being held in Mrs. Umetsu's church was going to be part of it. The choir started to prepare for this event, practicing eight songs in both Latin and Japanese.

The event turned out to be a success, with many people from the city of Ogikubo joining the



Students of the choir singing at the Ogikubo Church  
Photo by Shoei

worship and listening to the beautiful voices of the choir filling the church. They hope to continue participating in many events this year as well.

Although students are busy with schoolwork and homework, joining club activities can create a fulfilling school life. Moreover, we are able to build relationships that are beyond friendship with the team we spend six years with.

By: Sakiko Doi &  
Chihana Yoneshima



# Shoei Danger, Police for the Changer

Q. How many steps are needed between Shoei and Takanawadai Koban?

1. 30steps 2. 60steps 3. 120steps

1'V

Widely distributed across the country, the number of police boxes has gone up to 6215 in Japan, protecting our safety every day. Police boxes can be commonly seen, but how about near schools? Such a situation may not be found very often. However, an unusual environment of that kind can be easily found near Shoei. Takanawadai Koban, which most of the Shoei students see every day is right next to the school. How many steps are needed between Shoei and

Takanawadai Koban? According to our stride, it was only 30 steps! As you can imagine, this is a distance we can reach in about 10 seconds, providing Shoei students with reassured protection.

As we Shoei students all know, Shoei is created in a way where the school, a public road, and a residential area are right next to each other. With few pedestrians, it seems easy to sneak into the school, from a stranger's point of view. Because of this, some parents are concerned about their daughter's safety. According to research in Japan, the average time it takes for the police to arrive after calling 110 is said to be 8 minutes and 16 seconds. However, due to the

Takanawadai Koban and Shoei's stride being only 30 steps apart, it takes approximately 10 seconds, which shows that even if there is an emergency in school, the police will arrive before we know it. Therefore, thanks to the police box, Shoei students can spend their time in school safely. In addition, security guards are also here to protect us. Consequently, we want parents to send their daughters to Shoei without worrying and have a sense of security.

Having Takanawadai Koban near Shoei creates a spectacular environment that Shoei students, parents, and teachers feel grateful for. Every one of us tends to feel protected just having a glance at the police box,



Picture of Takanawadai Koban

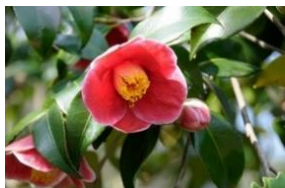
*Photo from Google Maps*

and therefore, we want to send a message to future Shoei students that Shoei will provide an absolute guaranteed safe environment with a comfortable place to learn for our bright future.

By: Yuna Obayashi & Rio Hara

## The Secret Life of Shoei Plants

Shoei students come to school every day, feeling the season from the plants. Below, we will be introducing four flowers you can see around Shoei.



### Camellia Japonica

(Tsubaki)

Originally from China, Korea and Japan, the color of the flowers is white, to all shades of pink, and red. The anthesis is from November to December, and February to April. The name of this flower comes from its beauty of the leaves which is quite rare.



### Fragrant Olive

(Kinmokusei)

Originally from China, the color is Orange, and its anthesis is September to October. Fragrant olive is a dioecious plant, meaning that male and female trees are separated. In Japan, the very first fragrant olives that was brought was a male tree, and since then, only male trees exist in Japan. That is why it is impossible to see the fruit.



### Japanese Wisteria

(Fuji)

Originally from Japan, and you can see white, pink, and purple wisteria. The anthesis is from April to March. Since the wisteria grows with tight vines, the floriography of this flower are

“Never be apart” and “Loyalty”.

This is because the wisteria grows with vines tightly wrapped around each other



### Hana Peach

(Hana-momo)

Originally from China and the colors of the flowers can be white, red, and pink. Its Anthesis is from March to April. This hana peach is different from the plant that grows fruit.

We hope that by reading this article, more people will get to know about the wonderful nature of Shoei.

By: Shizuka Nagai

The Shoei Journal

Published by a group of 15 students of Shoei, a private high school in Shirokanedai, Minato city, Tokyo, in cooperation with the not-for-profit Global Education Information Center (GEIC).

Publisher: Shoei Girls' Senior High School Sr. 1-5A

Project Supervisors: Ms. Megumi Aikawa and Mr. John Presley from the English Department

Editors: Hatsuna Tanaka, Shizuka Nagai, Rio Hara

Staff Writers: Nanami Aoki, Yuna Obayashi, Mai Kawanishi, Asuka Kurokawa, Hatsuna Tanaka, Sakiko Doi, Shizuka Nagai, Rio Hara, Haruka Higuchi, Reika Fujiki, Arin Fujiwara, Ayaka Maeda, Sae Matsuki, Rin Morishima, Chihana Yoneshima

Contact: ☎108-0071 2 Chome-26-5 Shirokanedai, Minato City, Tokyo

URL: <https://www.shoei.ed.jp/>