

## Happy New Year(?!)



There must be a lot of people out there thinking; “What?! 2020 Only started three months ago, how is it already time for a new year?”. In Japan, there is a distinction between the *toshi* (calendar year) and the *nendo* (financial or academic year). The calendar year starts on January 1<sup>st</sup> and finishes on December 31<sup>st</sup>. The term “*nendo*,” however, refers to a one-year period that starts on April 1<sup>st</sup> and finishes on March 31<sup>st</sup>, often used by schools, Government offices and businesses. This is why we often hear slightly bizarre-sounding phrases such as “The graduation ceremony for the 2019 academic year was held on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020.” In Japan, schools start the academic year as of April 1<sup>st</sup>. Companies and Government offices also often start new projects in April. This is why you often see images and scenes of people starting at a new school or office with cherry blossoms gently scattering in the breeze in the background. Starting the cycle here also matches up with the planting of rice and enjoying cherry blossoms, which seems appropriate given how important these things are in Japanese culture. That’s why in this month’s *Living in Miyazaki*, we’ll introduce you to some of the courses and events that the Miyazaki International Foundation has planned for the coming year, for those of you who would like to celebrate the new *nendo* by trying something new.

### Learning Japanese:

From April this year, we will be running “Beginner 1” and “Beginner 2” Elementary Japanese language courses. “Beginner 1” is aimed at people starting to study Japanese from scratch, and will teach from the very basics of learning hiragana and katakana. “Beginner 2” is aimed at people who can already read hiragana and katakana. Both courses will be taught by a qualified Japanese language instructor using a textbook. The course is free, but students must pay for their own textbooks.

At the “Japanese Practice Sessions” (*Nihongo renshū kai*), you can practice Japanese one-on-one at your own pace with a volunteer. If you’d like to start learning Japanese, or if you started learning in the past but ended up having to stop partway through and want to pick it up again, how about giving one of our Japanese language courses a try? The Miyazaki International Foundation also plan to hold other Japanese



language classes in various places around the prefecture – further information will be posted on our website and Facebook page as soon as it becomes available.

### Courses and Events

The “Japanese Culture Experience Course” is a class designed to teach people from overseas about the culture of Japan and Miyazaki. At the “Disaster Preparedness Course for Foreign Residents,” you can learn about how to prepare for natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons, as well as how to evacuate effectively, should you need to. Plus, at the “Disaster Preparedness Seminar,” local Government employees can hear opinions and questions from people from overseas living in the prefecture, and it’s a great opportunity to think about how to help each other out in the event of a natural disaster. We also organize several opportunities to interact and have fun with other residents of Miyazaki, such as the “International Chat” sessions in English, Chinese or Korean, the “International Festa,” where you can meet people from all over the world, and the “Art Festival”, where people express their feelings about Miyazaki through paintings, photography, calligraphy, and crafts.



### The Miyazaki Support Center for Foreign Residents

Do you know anyone having trouble in their daily life here in Miyazaki? The Miyazaki Support Center for Foreign Residents is here if you would like someone to talk to! Feel free to get in touch:

TEL: 0985-51-5901      FAX: 0985-41-5902      E-mail: [support@mif.or.jp](mailto:support@mif.or.jp)

Over the coming new *nendo*, the Miyazaki International Foundation will do our very best to make Miyazaki a great place for people from all over the world to live, while interacting, learning and respecting each other’s cultures. We will post more detailed information regarding our courses and events on our website and Facebook page. Also, if you’re ever nearby, please stop by the Miyazaki International Plaza (on the 1<sup>st</sup> basement floor of the CARINO Miyazaki Building, Tachibana-dori Higashi 4-8-1, Miyazaki-shi, Miyazaki Prefecture, Japan 880-0805) – we look forward to seeing you!

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions regarding this column, please contact the Miyazaki International Foundation:

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