

PROMOTING
KIZUNA BETWEEN

VIET NAM AND JAPAN

Active as a Coordinator for International Relations in Japan, Nguyen Bui Anh Thy works valiantly day after day for the future of Viet Nam and Japan.

Transmitting information to foreign residents of the city, giving presentations at schools, and offering introductory lessons in Vietnamese culture and language at the international exchange association; Nguyen Bui Anh Thy puts tremendous energy into her activities. With three years' experience as a Coordinator for International Relations, she continues to cheerfully strengthen bonds between Japan and her home country of Viet Nam. "In Viet Nam, many people are familiar with Japan because our education includes learning about the country's history and geography." Nguyen adds,

"I am one of those people." In college she majored in East Asian Studies, which included time as an exchange student in Japan. Hoping to help Vietnamese people who work in Japan, she applied to the JET Programme. She is particularly involved in facilitating relations between Vietnamese people who live in Saijo and the local Japanese residents. Saijo has become a friendship city of Hue in Viet Nam, with nearly 400 Vietnamese people currently living there. Although many of them work in the city, opportunities to speak Japanese are fewer than expected. Here, Nguyen seeks to

Mount Ishizuchi is the tallest peak in western Japan and has been revered from time immemorial. Blessings continue to flow from its heights down to the people of Saijo.



get them involved in events that introduce Vietnamese culture, or Vietnamese language classes. "These events and classes are popular with both the Vietnamese participants and the locals who have had few interactions with Vietnamese people and are unfamiliar with their culture. Through such occasions, the Vietnamese participants can tell the local residents that they came to Japan not only to earn money, but also to provide for their families and see their dreams fulfilled. This leads the locals to feel sympathy and respect for the Vietnamese residents and to become more willing to offer support."

Nguyen also puts great effort into encouraging medical personnel to describe treatment options in easy-to-understand

Japanese, as many foreigners especially struggle with the language barrier during times of illness. Although the recent COVID-19 crisis has limited her activities, she has been persevering in every way possible. She even made a video, featuring interviews with several dozen people, including foreigners living and



In addition to assisting foreign residents, Nguyen also plays a role in conveying the attractions of Saijo City to the rest of the world. At an event held in Hue, dressed in a yukata, she informs Vietnamese people about life in Saijo.

working in Saijo, the companies that have hired them, and other local citizens, asking about the charm of the city and their thoughts about international exchanges. "I believe that having everyone share their feelings frankly will enhance mutual understanding." Her enthusiasm for building bilateral ties stops at nothing.

According to Nguyen, the charms of the city of Saijo are its

NGUYEN BUI ANH THY
Born in Binh Duong Province of Viet Nam, and having visited Japan twice as an exchange student, Nguyen found work upon her return to her home country in the Consulate General of Japan in Ho Chi Minh City, and was also involved in a project of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Wanting to become more involved in cultural exchanges between the two countries, she applied to the JET Programme, and was assigned to the city of Saijo in Ehime Prefecture. She is a big fan of sumo wrestling.



"After returning to Viet Nam, I would like to support Japanese people seeking new opportunities and challenges in business, work, and academia in the country."

abundant bounty of nature and the warmth of its people. "Saijo has really delicious water, and of course the vegetables and fruit cultivated using such pure water are wonderful. There is even someone who grows crops of food used in Vietnamese cuisine, such as lemongrass, just for me! I'm impressed by how thoughtful everyone is."

Nguyen, who talks about her desire to introduce Japanese ways of craftsmanship to people in her homeland, is hoping for even stronger relations between both countries. "I feel that both Vietnamese and Japanese people share a strong sense of altruism, and naturally want to do something for others. Japan has a long history of supporting Viet Nam. I hope that the relationship between the two countries will be more equal and that cooperation and exchange will become deeper and broader, going beyond the

economy and culture to cover other fields such as education and disaster prevention. I sincerely believe that, by building a deep partnership between both countries and joining forces, we will find solutions to many global problems." ●

Saijo City has many springs of subterranean water originating from Mount Ishizuchi. The water is available to all, including people who come from outside the city. Nguyen's beloved daughter is a big fan of the water.



ABOUT THE JAPAN
EXCHANGE AND TEACHING
(JET) PROGRAMME



The JET Programme began in 1987 with the goal of promoting grassroots international exchange between Japan and other nations, and is now one of the world's largest international exchange programs. In 2019, the JET Programme welcomed 5,761 participants, and there are currently more than 70,000 alumni from 75 countries living in all parts of the world.

The JET Programme official website >> <http://jetprogramme.org/en/>