

## **Language Workshop for JLCCS Participants at MIJSC@IIMB**



Mizuho India Japan Study Centre (MIJSC) conceptualized and conducted Japanese Language Workshop for the participants of Japanese Language Conversation and Culture Study (JLCCS) Program on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The program commenced from 17<sup>th</sup> January in an online format.

The language workshop was the first quarterly meetups planned during this course, exhibiting our commitment to improve the conversational competency, and increasing the cultural sensitivities of the participants.

One of the key contributors to this event were the two native Japanese teachers viz, Ms Minako Sarkar & Ms Miyuki Dobashi. Apart from these two, two members from IJCCI, viz Ms Anjana Sheshagiri & Ms Savitha A.S and Senior expert from Japan Foundation and member of Teachers' association of Bangalore, Mr. Yoshifumi Murakami contributed richly to make this a memorable event. Hon. Secretary Mr. Karanth and Director for culture Ms. Geetha Bhat from IJCCI, Senior teacher from Bangalore University, Mr. Ohashi along with two more Japanese teachers also graced the occasion with their presence. The icing on the cake was the Japanese sweets' stalls set up by Harima and Hatsuhi restaurants which displayed many delicious sweets for sale.

The meet-up commenced with Rajio Taiso, almost a 100-year-old exercise regime, which the Japanese swear by. It still plays a significant role in Japanese society as many factories and construction companies' employees, not only in Japan, but also in other countries, including India, start their day with a few minutes of Rajio Taiso exercise.

We began the day formally with welcome address by the Chairperson of Mizuho India Japan Study Centre, Prof. Jaideep Sarkar who motivated the team with his chosen anecdotes and gave us a glimpse of subtle intricacies of Japanese culture. His revelation about Sumo game, that it is the only game where there is no signal from referee to initiate the game, was surely jaw-dropping for most participants.

The first language exercise of the day was aimed at increasing bonding between the participants. A demo of self-introduction with exchanging business cards was demonstrated by both the teachers, Minako and Dobashi Sensei. Participants were then divided into 9 groups and were asked to practice this repeatedly. This exercise helped build bonds and language skills in the participants.

The second language exercise was based on "World Café Style" and was introduced and facilitated by Murakami Sensei. In this activity, participants were asked to talk about their family members. One Japanese teacher was assigned to each group to facilitate the conversation. It was an enriching experience for all the participants as they not only got to talk about things that they liked most in Japanese culture but also learnt new Japanese words and expressions.

Post the language competency building activities, participants were given a flavor of Japanese culture in terms of the famous "Tea-Ceremony" which highlights the 4 principles of Harmony, Respect, Purity, and Tranquility. A short presentation about the same was shared by Minako Sensei, who also brought along with her some Japanese sweets and Japanese green tea called matcha, which was much appreciated by participants. Later a video of tea-ceremony was shown as well.

The day proceeded with another interesting group-activity, called Karuta, wherein a game of recognizing Japanese alphabets was played. The game surely reminded everyone of their childhood days and sparked competitiveness among participants. The winners of each group were on the top of the world upon receiving applause from everyone.

Another cultural aspect was introduced by Anjana san of IJCCI when she exhibited the cultural similarities of India and Japan using the concepts of Hina Matsuri in Japan

(celebrated on 3<sup>rd</sup> of March every year) and Navratri Golu concept, both the festivals being the ones wherein we refer and celebrate girl child and place dolls on a formation of steps, in both these countries.

These activities were followed by a presentation by COO of MIJSC, Mr. Saideep Rathnam, who shared some eye-openers with all the participants in terms of the attendance, their performance in assignment and provided a roadmap of the way forward, if we are to achieve the targets set at the beginning of the course. He shared some of the milestones achieved so far and shared the proposed plan of having buddy system and volunteers in place, advocating the concept of community learning.

This was followed by felicitation of the guests who had supported us in various activities including Murakami Sensei, Ohashi Sensei, Ms Anjana and Ms Savitha.

There were few Japanese traditional ladies wear, known as Yukata, traditional Men's wear and "Happy-coat" brought by few of the facilitators for participants to try on and get their pictures clicked in them. To enlighten them about Kimono and Yukata, Minako sensei shared some of the pictures and explained them about the major types of Kimonos and also how they differ in terms of the ones wore by married woman and unmarried ones.

The session concluded with vote of thanks by Sowmya san, who is an integral part of MIJSC and takes care of all the admin and coordination aspect. Research Associates of MIJSC, namely, Mr. Shivam Srivastava, Ms Prabha Narayana, Mr. Akshay Rao and Ms Neha Joshi were also supporting the Workshop. We called it a day around 7pm after high-tea and Yukata trials. It was an invigorating day for everyone which ended on a positive note with a lot of enthusiasm among participants and all the activities timed as per the schedule. We have plans to host 2-3 more of such meetups, once every quarter, as it is crucial for immersive language learning experience.