



# Nasushiobara & Linz

## Report on CIR Activities

Book me!



Hello everyone! I am back with a report on my latest activities as the CIR of Nasushiobara. In February and March, I was once again able to visit elementary schools throughout the city. In light of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister city relationship between Linz and Nasushiobara in 2026, I hope there will be even more opportunities like this in the future. I look forward to hearing from you!

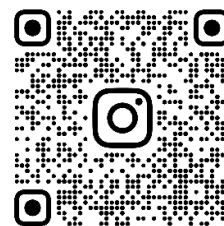
### Culture Seminar and German Lesson at Takabayashi Elementary School

On February 17th, I held a seminar on Austrian culture and a German lesson at Takabayashi Elementary School. I was given the morning to speak to the entire school about Austria. The pupils had fun learning about Austria's geography, food, and elementary schools, through interactive quizzes. They also deepened their understanding of the sister city relationship between Linz and Nasushiobara. Lastly, we practiced German pronunciation and studied some greetings commonly used in Austria. I was happy to hear that the pupils continued to actively use those greetings throughout the following week.



### I opened an Instagram Account!

For the latest information on international exchange events in Nasushiobara, as well as news from Austria and Linz, scan the QR code or search for @nasushiobara\_global\_life. Please "follow" and "like" our posts to support my activities!





# Nasushiobara & Linz

## “Global Communication Day” at Inamura Elementary School

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Inamura Elementary School held its “Global Communication Day”, and I participated alongside some of the city’s ALTs. When introducing myself, I was also able to share a bit about Austria. It made me very happy to hear the kids comment, “The landscape is so pretty!” and “The food looks yummy!” Afterward, the pupils and I took part in an English language quiz and a treasure hunt, while trying to communicate only in English. Throughout the games, not only the kids’ English ability, but also my knowledge on Chinese characters was tested. By combining our strengths, we were able to complete all of the missions while having a great time.



## Traditional Austrian Event: “Maibaum”

In May, Austrians get excited about an old tradition called “Maibaum”. The name literally translates to “May Tree”, and this tradition is indeed closely centered around a tree. Every year at the beginning of May, villages and towns across Austria erect an evergreen tree, which had its bark removed, in their central town squares. It is tradition for a group of young people to put it up using only wooden poles and ropes, without any help from machinery like cranes. Erecting the 23-meter-high tree requires immense strength, so locals and a marching band usually gather to play music in support.



Maibaum



# Nasushiobara & Linz



Erecting the tree

However, once the tree is up, nightfall brings the risk of it being stolen by youth groups from neighboring towns. Therefore, it must be watched throughout the night. Should it be stolen nonetheless, it can be redeemed by paying a “ransom” of snacks and drinks. The rules regarding when and by whom the tree may be stolen vary by region, but the tradition is common throughout Austria.

While its exact origins are unclear, “Maibaum” trees are known to date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In

many areas, the tree is believed to be a symbol of agricultural prosperity.

At the end of May, locals gather once again to witness the tree being taken down while celebrating together. Before it falls, traditional competitions – such as guessing the tree’s exact height – are held. The most popular of these is the tree-climbing contest. Because the bark has been removed, the trunk is incredibly slippery and difficult to climb, so whoever is able to reach the top receives all the glory.

On the days the tree is erected or taken down, many wear Austria’s traditional clothing: “Dirndl” and “Lederhose”. Since machinery is not used during these events, it feels like

stepping back in time. If you have the chance to visit Austria in May, I highly recommend seeking out a “Maibaum”. Although this tradition is more prevalent in rural areas, they can also be found in cities like Vienna or Linz.

By the way, in the area I grew up, it is also common to put up a smaller “Maibaum” in a friend’s front yard to celebrate important milestones, such as a wedding.



Tree-climbing

Mäster J. Plisak via Wikimedia Commons



Marching band

Werner100359 via Wikimedia Commons



## Austria Quiz



Which of the following traditional events is not related to the “Maibaum”?

A : Painting the tree

C : Climbing the tree

B : Stealing a neighboring town’s tree

D : Estimating the tree’s height

(Find the answer on page 4)



# Nasushiobara & Linz

Things CIR Rena finds curious about Japan



## Valentine's Day and White Day

Everyone, did you give and receive a lot of treats for Valentine's Day and White Day? In Japan, girls traditionally give chocolate to boys they like on February 14<sup>th</sup>, although in recent years it has become more common to give them to friends and colleagues as well.



Valentine's Roses

In Austria, however, Valentine's Day serves as an opportunity to show someone that they are important to you, regardless of gender. Presents are not limited to chocolate, but giving flowers is very commonplace. In particular, many people in relationships buy roses for their partners. In my family, my mother gives flowers to my grandmother every year.

I used to have very little interest in Valentine's Day, because there are so many other opportunities to give presents to loved ones, such as Mother's Day or anniversaries. However, as someone who loves making sweets, that changed when I learned that people in Japan often make their own chocolates. This year for Valentine's Day, former CIR Yukari came to Nasushiobara, and we made chocolates together.



Chocolates by Rena



Yukari♡

By the way, White Day does not exist in Austria. White Day is said to have originated in Japan, and is an event celebrated on March 14<sup>th</sup>, where boys return the favor to the girls from whom they received chocolates. Since everyone in Austria exchanges gifts on Valentine's Day, there is no need for a separate White Day.

What kind of sweets did you prepare this year? I believe a lot of people struggle with what to give on White Day. How about trying "Linzer Augen" next year?



What are Linzer Augen?

**Published by :** Nasushiobara City Hall, Civic Life Department, Civic Cooperation Promotion Section (Verena Mirt)

**Contact :** Tochigi Prefecture, Nasushiobara City, Kyoukonsha 108-2, 325-8501 Japan

**TEL :** 0287-62-7019 **FAX :** 0287-62-7500

**E-Mail :** [shiminkyoudou@city.nasushiobara.tochigi.jp](mailto:shiminkyoudou@city.nasushiobara.tochigi.jp)

**Past issues (German/English/Japanese) :**

[https://www.city.nasushiobara.tochigi.jp/kurashi\\_tetsuzuki/shiminsankaku/kokusaikoryu/3/8553.html](https://www.city.nasushiobara.tochigi.jp/kurashi_tetsuzuki/shiminsankaku/kokusaikoryu/3/8553.html)

