

令和4年度

福岡県移住者子弟留学報告書

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2022 Exchange Students Program for  
Descendants of Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture

C o m p l e t i o n R e p o r t

Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation

公益財団法人福岡県国際交流センター

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**Brazil Fukuoka Kenjinkai  
Towata Ota Julia Luri  
Kyushu University,  
Faculty of Art and Design**

There are a few reasons why I wanted to come to Fukuoka to participate on the Program for Descendants of Immigrants of Fukuoka Prefecture(Kempi Ryugakusei Program).

The main one is because five years ago, my sister Mariana came to Fukuoka on the same scholarship, and when we talked via video call, she always said that she was loving to live and study in Japan. That made me want to come to Japan and have the same experiences as her. Besides that, Fukuoka is my grandfather's hometown, so I also wanted to know more about the city he lived in and I wanted to improve my Japanese in both conversation, reading and writing.

In fact, I tried to come to Japan in 2021 as a Kempai, but due to the effects of the new coronavirus, I was unable to fulfill my dream, and due to the time difference, I took classes at Kyushu University online in the early morning in Brazil. However, in April 2022, I was finally able to come to Fukuoka, Japan, and was very happy to have the experience of going to school, attending face-to-face classes, and living in Fukuoka, which I had longed to do.

Before deciding on a topic for my graduation thesis in Brazil, I wanted to do further research in Japan on temporary housing for natural disasters. I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn more about Japan since the country is prone to natural disasters. So I decided to study in the Environmental Design Course at the Faculty of Art and Design at Kyushu University, where I studied in Professor's Tanoue laboratory.

I had the opportunity to participate in an event organized by a group called KASEI. KASEI is composed of architecture students from Kyushu who are engaged in activities and projects to improve the quality of life of people living in temporary housing. At the event I participated in, we made bamboo lanterns for the residents of Yamae Village in Kumamoto. It was a very good experience not only to make the lanterns but also to see the temporary housing up close.

Besides my research I was also able to participate in two other projects with my professor: the first involved me and my research colleagues assembling a model of the Onojo City Hall. We met weekly for two months, cutting parts of the model, and assembling it. It was a large size model (4 x 2.5 m), so it took us a long time to sort out how to cut, structure, and assemble it. I had never assembled such a large model before, so it was very challenging and interesting.

The second project I participated in with my professor was a project to rebuild an apartment complex area in Fukuoka. I participated in meetings to determine how the new residential building should be designed and how the space should be organized. After the final decision was made, I helped my teacher to make a 3D model in a computer software used for architecture.



Apart from my professor's seminars I also participated in some classes that my university offered. For instance, Japanese classes, Design in Japan and Landscaping design classes. Because a lot of these classes were in Japanese, I could improve my Japanese during the Kempri year.

I participated on events organized by Kazokukai members that allowed me to know more about the Japanese culture and fully experience it. For example, I went to a Japanese barbecue; I learned how to wear yukata and could wear it to go to Nanzoin

temple on summer and to a Hakata festival; I learned how to make ceramic plate, cup and doll and I went to pick up persimmon fruit from the tree and could eat it fresh.



With the activities offered by the Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation I was also able to immerse myself in Japan's culture. I had the experience of wearing a kimono and participating in the tea ceremony; with the Short Term Visit Program for Descendants of Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture I was able to visit and know the daily life of the Japanese primary schools, I could make mochi, get to know the castle and the history of Kokura, get to know the Dazaifu Shrine, go to hot spring for feet.



During this year I was able to learn about the architecture, culture and history of many different places in Japan. In Sapporo I went to visit the Hill of Buddha, designed by Tadao Ando. The place is very impressive, because you can't feel how big is the Buddha until you cross the garden and the tunnel, after you do that you come across a 13.5 meter high Buddha. In Tokyo I went to visit a church that the famous architect Kenzo Tange projected, I also went to the International Forum and The National Art Center that are places that have impressive structure. I climbed Mount Fuji to the top with my friends and saw the amazing view from up the mountain. In Kyoto I visited a lot of Shrines and temples and could learn about the history of all of those places. In Kobe, I went to visit

the Port of Kobe Earthquake Memorial Park and I was able to see up close and learn about the damage that the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake caused in the city. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki I went to the Atomic Bomb Museum and saw how sad and terrible was this part of the history for Japan. In Fukuoka I visited Gurin gurin, an experimental learning facility designed by architect Toyo Ito, the architecture is impressive because its shape makes it camouflage in the environment.



I had the chance to meet my relatives that I would not be able to meet if I didn't come to Japan. I could finally meet the person responsible for me who lives in Fukuoka about

10 months after I arrived here, and when I went to Hokkaido I spent two days in Hakodate and met my dad's cousin for the first time. He took me to a lot of places and I learned about the history of Hakodate and he also took me to know the school that my dad's side grandfather went to study and to the monastery he used to go to. It was great to see the places my grandfather used to go and feel so close to him. When I went to Tokyo I stayed in my great aunt's and uncle's house and met my dad's cousin that I haven't met in a very long time because they couldn't travel to Brazil due to the coronavirus, so it was very nice to be able to spend more time with them.



I am very grateful for the Fukuoka Prefecture, the Brazil Fukuoka Kenjinkai and the Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation for giving me the opportunity to study in Japan. During this year I learned more and experienced a lot about Japanese culture. I got to practice and learn more Japanese and really got to know my grandfather's hometown. When I return to Brazil I am going to keep helping Brazil's Fukuoka Kenjinkai in the events and activities and I hope that with all the knowledge in architecture and Japanese I have acquired here, I can apply it in my future work in Brazil

and also in the Kenjinkai. I would also like to thank Professor Tanoue for giving me the opportunity to participate in various projects and for teaching me a lot during this year.

Finally, I would like to thank this year's Kempri program participants: Maya, Megumi, Seri and Naoto for the wonderful year that we had together. I am also grateful to Juliano for all the advice he has given throughout the year.





**Bolivia Fukuoka Kenjinkai**  
**Hayashi Naoto Daniel**  
**Kyushu Sangyo University**  
**Faculty of Art and Design**

"Kempis are awesome! They helped me a lot!" This was what my younger brother said, the summer of 2017, when he returned from the Short Term Visit Program for Descendants of Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture. Among all of what he told me about Fukuoka, that was the sentence that remained in my head. This is when I learned for the first time the existence of a "Kempi," (an exchange student from the Program for Descendants of Immigrants from the Fukuoka Prefecture) which lead me to develop a desire to also go to Fukuoka.

Time passed and the opportunity to apply and go to Japan came. However, I could not get enough courage to apply for the program because, if I had been honest, I was very afraid of living alone in an unknown country while attending classes at one of its universities. Nevertheless, I had already graduated from university and had been listening to my father, who is an active member of the Bolivia Fukuoka Kenjinkai, say many things about its activities. I had also heard many Fukuoka anecdotes from past exchange students and I had the support of many people from the Kenjinkai. As a result, on April 20, 2022, I arrived in Fukuoka as an exchange student for the 2022 Program for Descendants of Immigrants from the Fukuoka Prefecture.

Upon arrival, I immediately visited the teacher that I was assigned by the university and chose the subjects to be taken in the first semester with him. This past year, I studied Product Design at the Department of Living Environment Design, Faculty of Arts in Kyushu Sangyo University. The reason I chose Product Design was because I graduated from Industrial Engineering in Bolivia. I loved several subjects related to Product Design in that curriculum, thus, at Kyushu Sangyo University, I mainly chose the practical training subjects.

In the first semester, I was doing my best in the university classes while getting accustomed to life in Japan. While I was struggling with many things I was unfamiliar with,

all of my classmates were excellent students with crazy and unique designs. I was desperately feeling, "I cannot lose to them, I need to be better," which led me to be less social. However, at the end of the first semester, everyone individually presented what they produced and a number of classmates commented "Naoto's design was really good" or "I like your work very much," and I felt that it was worth the hard work. From there, my number of friends had increased and they have still been getting along well with me until this day. In the first semester, I took the following subjects, "Three-dimensional composition," "CG exercises," "Drawing," "Modeling practical training B," and "Japanese." Among them, what I designed with the "Builder card" in the three-dimensional composition class has been one of my favorites.

During the summer vacation, I went to Saitama and Tokyo to meet my relatives who I hadn't seen for 20 years. They are the son and daughter of my grandfather who passed away in Bolivia right at that time. Because I was a little depressed, they took me to various places to cheer me up. They also took me to places where my grandfather often went. I was very grateful to my relatives because thanks to that I was able to grieve and feel close to him.

After that, I joined the other Kempis and returned to Fukuoka from Tokyo by local train using the "Seishun 18 Ticket." We were able to go to various prefectures as it was a long trip. When we arrived in Fukuoka, although we were exhausted, everything ended as a very good memory that we created as a group.

I thought that if I could endure the summer in South America, summer in Japan wouldn't be that bad. In reality, as it was still midsummer at the time, and the heat was so extreme it couldn't be compared to the summer in Bolivia. However, there were many summer events and thanks to the people of the Kazokukai we were able to wear a yukata and go to various festivals of Japan and Fukuoka. Overall we enjoyed our summer vacation to the fullest.

At the end of the summer, the second semester started. I participated in the classes I wanted to take while asking my classmates which subjects to choose. Since my Japanese improved and my number of friends increased even more, the second semester was easier than the first one. I was feeling more comfortable and confident in myself and my skills. So as a way to try new things and challenge myself I joined a university club and a gym.

The club is called "Intercultural Exchange Club." It can be briefly explained as a place where international students and Japanese students interact. I attended several discussion sessions with students with very different backgrounds and one of the conclusions, which I agree with was "Though it seems big, it's a small world, and thanks to that this club can exist." I also taught Spanish courses and I was very happy that several students were interested in my native language.

The reason why I had started going to the gym was because as of September, I realized I couldn't achieve the body I wanted from the everyday run around Kashiihama I had done since May. Although I had lost a lot of weight, even if I continued jogging or adjusted the distance and the speed, I felt stuck. Thus, I entered the university's gym and set new goals. After going to the gym at the end of every class, being supported by the coach, and doing muscle training, I have become satisfied with the results and my body.

In the second semester I focused on make things with my hands. Thus, there were many practical training subjects including, "Rendering practical training," "Material processing practical training A," "Material processing practical training B," and "Japanese." Among them, the chair that I built in "Material processing practical training A" and the lunch box that I designed in "Material processing practical training B" were my favorites. Also, as I was taking Japanese classes since the first semester, I was able to pass the Japanese Language Proficiency Test N2 that I took in December with really good grades. I am very grateful to the teacher.

When the second semester was over and the end of the year was approaching, I went to my uncle's house in Saitama to welcome the new year. My aunt from Tokyo was also there. It was a very good memory because I was able to experience a New Year's Day differently from the New Year in Bolivia.

In the middle of January, the Short Term Visit Program for Descendants of Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture, which was canceled due to the influence of the coronavirus in the previous years, resumed. Unfortunately, no one came from Bolivia, however, many children came from around the world and it was hard to take care of 5 boys alone. After everyone returned home, I received messages from some kids saying "I will study hard to speak Japanese well like you and return to Fukuoka as a Kempti!" I was so impressed that I could have that much impact on a small child just for being an international student.

In February, I was able to go to my relative's house in Yame-shi. In order to discover my roots, which is one of the goals of this study program, we went to Kurogi-machi, which is my grandmother's hometown, and while walking with my grandmother's sister I was listening to the old stories and memories of them. Even though my relatives in Fukuoka had not interacted with my Bolivian family before, they loved me as if they have known me for a long time. I am really grateful that they had helped me a lot since the moment I arrived in Fukuoka.

Lastly, I am full of gratitude to the Fukuoka Prefecture, the Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation, and the Fukuoka Kenjinkai of Bolivia, for giving me the opportunity to come to Japan for a year to study and learn more about my roots. When I return to my country, I would like to actively participate as a member of my Kenjinkai and do my best to become a bridge between Bolivia and Fukuoka in order to help the next generation of Kempis and the next participants of the Short Term Visit Program.







**Mexico Fukuoka Kenjinkai  
Kawashima Maya  
Kyushu University  
Faculty of Human Environment Studies**

My name is Maya Kawashima Okuma. I came as an exchange student through the Program for Descendants of Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture (Kempi Ryugakusei Program) representing Fukuoka Kenjinkai Mexico. I am from Monterrey, the capital of the state of Nuevo León, located in northeastern Mexico. I studied Industrial Design at the University of Monterrey (UDEM). During my university years, I taught a little Japanese level 1 to Mexicans at the Northeast Japan-Mexico Association in Monterrey and worked as a part-time interpreter at Japanese companies during my summer vacations every year.

The Kempri program brought me to Fukuoka for the first time. To explain my connection with Fukuoka and Kenjinkai, my maternal great-grandfather Teizo Okuma was born in Tanushimaru-machi, which belonged to Ukiha-gun, in Fukuoka Prefecture. He later emigrated to Mexico around 1928 and founded Fukuoka Kenjinkai Mexico in 1952 with other Japanese emigrants. Teizo's second son, my grandfather Masami Okuma (Nikkei 2nd generation), was born in Mexico, and served as the president of Fukuoka Kenjinkai Mexico from 1996 to 1997, and was a member of the committee until his death. Masami's eldest daughter is my mother, Maria Elena Okuma (Nikkei 3rd generation), who came to Fukuoka in 1989 through the same Kempri program and studied at Kyushu University. One of the many reasons why I decided to come to Fukuoka as a Kempri student was to keep the connection between my family and Fukuoka.

During this Kempri program, I was accepted to enter Professor Takita's Research Laboratory in the Department of Educational Systems, in the Graduate School of Human Environmental Studies at Kyushu University. My research is about "Refugee Children Living in Japan". Specifically, my research is about finding the environmental and educational issues of the refugee children who were victims of war and other conflicts that violated their human rights in their home countries, and were accepted as refugees

in Japan. I am researching how they spend their daily lives, the language and cultural barriers, what kind of concerns they have after moving to Japan which is a completely unknown country for them, and their education level differences compared to Japanese children and their rights as a child. I am also learning Japan's refugee acceptance policy and current situation, interviews of refugees who came to Japan when they were a kid and have become adults and still living in Japan, and also how children deal with post-psychological trauma. The refugee issue is currently a major global challenge, and while it is very sensitive and a bit difficult to obtain information in Japanese, Professor Takita, gave me ideas and advice on how to conduct my research which was a great help.

I would like to use this research as an opportunity to create tools to teach refugees and Japanese children what war/refugee is, and give them insights on how to live together in an intercultural environment and society respecting each other's cultures. This will be difficult to complete until the Kempf program is over, but I would like to continue this as a project even after I return to Mexico. My goal is to contribute in some small way to guide children's future and reduce the concerns they are carrying along.



I also took classes held by Professor Takita. For example, in a class called "Theory of Community Development," I was involved in the production of the PR and how-to-use video for my professor's project "TOKETA", which is a card games kit for foster children, and children who will spend time in foster families. Also, I have been participating in the event planning for their release, the data analysis of survey responses, and other activities. The picture below is one of the events held in Fukuoka on February 24th of this year, and there are plans to hold another one in Osaka on March 15th, which unfortunately I will not be able to attend as I am already back home.





<https://toketa.jp>

At the beginning of the Kempri program, I presented three objectives to the Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation and Kazokukai's opening ceremony. With these in mind, I have been working towards achieving my goals over the course of the year.

The first goal was to learn more about Japanese culture by participating in events and projects, and make many friends. During the past year until today, I participated in countless events. Among them, Kazokukai organized a variety of activities that allowed us to experience Japanese culture. We were invited to persimmon picking, Japanese pottery making, yukata and kimono dressing, Japanese style barbecue, strawberry picking, Fukuoka history tour, and summer festivals. This way, I became good friends with the members of Kazokukai and I am very grateful to them.



With Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation, we participated in the Short-Term Visit Program for Descendants of Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture (Shiteishouhei).

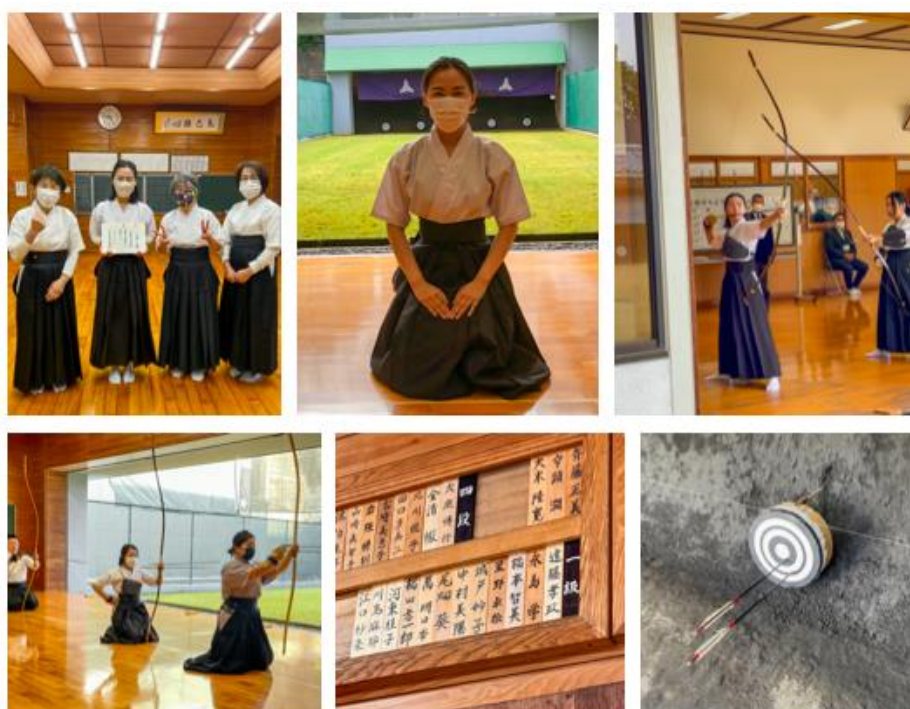
This year's Shiteishouhei program was very special because it was the first time for the children, youth leaders, and us Kempri students to experience things that are only possible in winter Japan. The rice cake pounding experience, sightseeing in Kokura and Fukuoka, and the visit to Japanese elementary schools were very interesting and we learned a lot. The children's mother language varied from Spanish, Portuguese and English, but they all got along well with each other, and I felt that this was truly a cross-cultural exchange.



There were also university events. I was a member of KUIFA and QUESPA, an international exchange club and a Latin club. We had various activities for international students to learn about Japanese culture and vice versa for Japanese students who are interested in foreign countries. For example, we had Latin cooking classes, Language Table events, a Setsubun festival, and others. It was an opportunity for everyone to teach each other about their own culture. I also taught Japanese and other international students about Mexico. I made many friends not only at school, but also through friends of friends and chance encounters. I am sure I will keep in touch with them from now on.



One of the most influential things that helped me to understand Japanese culture during this program was *Kyūdō* (Japanese Archery). *Kyūdō* is the Japanese martial art of archery that trains the body and mind. I was introduced to *Kyūdō* by a former senior Kempu student, and since I was very interested in the sport, I formally began learning under Nakamura Sensei in June. In December, I took the beginner's test and received *Ikkyū* (first level). I will never forget the teachings and practices with Nakamura-sensei and my colleagues, and the wholesome experience of the test day. I am still training these days since it will be difficult for me to continue when I return to Mexico, but I hope I will be able to shoot an arrow again at the *dōjō* soon.



My second objective was to improve my Japanese. In my laboratory at the university, I was the only international student and everyone else was Japanese, so all seminars and classes were held in Japanese. I had a seminar once a week to report the progress of my research. At first, it was very difficult to remember and use technical terms, and it took me 2-3 times longer than usual to write my reports. Thanks to this, I learned new words and correct grammar, and although I still take time and there are times when I get confused, I have gained some confidence in presenting my work in Japanese. I also learned the correct etiquette to greet/thank and other courtesies thanks to *Kyūdō*.

Finally, my third objective was to get in touch with my relatives living in Fukuoka. This was the first time I met my relatives from Kitakyushu. We went out for lunch, went sightseeing in Kokura, and talked a lot. We had a lot of quality time. With the help of

Ryochiku Kazokukai, we started to search for my relatives still living in Tanushimaru-machi, where my great-grandfather, Teizo Okuma, was born, and after some information gathered by different family members, we were miraculously able to find some distant relatives. I visited them in November, and they told me a lot about my great-grandfather and gave me precious photos. I am currently working on my family tree and was very happy to be able to add a new family member to it.



Finally, I would like to express my gratitude. First of all, I would like to thank my parents for encouraging me to take the program, the Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation and the Fukuoka Kenjinkai Mexico for supporting my studies in Japan, Kazokukai who treated us like a real family, Professor Takita and fellow students at Kyushu University who contributed so much in my studying and research, my Kyūdō instructor Nakamura sensei, Kubo san, my seniors Micaela, and Juliano. I also would like to thank all the friends I made and the former Kempri students with whom I had a good time, and at last, my new family with whom I have spent the whole year, the four Kempri students of this year: Julia, Megumi, Seri, and Naoto. I am so glad that I was able to meet people I can rely on even after this program is over. Everyday life in Fukuoka was a new adventure and full of learning experiences. Through these experiences, I want to contribute to my Kenjinkai's activities and at my workplace where I will be from now on. I believe that my year of study in Fukuoka was worthwhile. I will do my best. Thank you all very much.



**Peru Fukuoka Kenjinkai**  
**Koga Kaneko Megumi Arejandra**  
**Kyushu Sangyo University**  
**Faculty of Art and Design**

The year passed by quickly and I am already at the end of the program. It has been fantastic and unforgettable, I have gained new experiences and so much knowledge about photography and Japan. During the span of this year I had 3 main goals that I wanted to achieve: Take a lot of pictures, learn more about Japan and enjoy the program as much as possible. I approached the program with this in mind, and made the best out of it. I was not used to living here in the beginning and struggled with the language, but little by little I started to keep up with the pace of this lifestyle.

Since I am graphic designer, I wanted to take this opportunity to study photography as it is an industry that compliments and is usually in cooperation with graphic design. While my classes have been challenging, they were also very insightful and I have since gained new knowledge of the photography field. One of my favourite parts of the first semester was learning the process of developing black and white film. I had never done it before, so I was very excited about it, specially the working in the darkroom. I also did a weekly studio session. It was challenging but it taught me how to properly approach one and got to use a medium format camera, which was an amazing experience. To add, on the Seminar, a class which I took all throughout the year, I experimented with various filters and editing techniques, which I enjoyed. For example, during the summer break, I took pictures with a PL filter as part of my summer vacation homework. This filter in particular reduces glares and reflexions while enhancing the contrast and colours. It is ideal to photograph bodies of water and the sky, specially during the summer. On the second semester I wanted to learn more about the industry lingo in Japanese, so I took a History of photography class. It was very interesting, as it covered Japanese photographers too and Japan's involvement in the history of photography. A class that really stood out to me was Advertising. I learned about all types of mediums in it, industry lingo and the process of creating a successful ad. I have always been intrigued by Japanese commercials, so this class was one of my highlights of the year. During the Seminar, I kept experimenting with different techniques. A method that I enjoyed was

printing with UV light. Both the Aojashin (Cyanotype) and the Tezuki Washi Ichibei were charming in their own way and I really liked the results. I can confidently say that I was able to fulfill my first goal and have gained so much more from it. I did take tons of pictures this year, but I was also able to learn different perspectives and approaches in photography. Overall, I think I have gained a lot of knowledge which will be useful to me in the future. I am also thankful for having professor Aramaki in charge of me, as he taught and guided me with patience the whole year.



Besides studying, I was able to experience life in Japan and various culturally enriching activities, as well as getting in touch with my roots in Fukuoka. This year's official activities were realized in conjunction with The Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation. Some of these included a memorial service, the tea ceremony and the Short Term Visit Program for Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture. The memorial service was a traditional buddhist ceremony; for this we had to clean the graveyard to prepare it for the event. My personal favourite was the tea ceremony; all of us Kempri wore kimono and were taught how to serve in it; I am thankful that I was given the opportunity to be part of such a traditional event with a deep rooted cultural background. There was also the

Short Term Program, in which us Kempri supported the participants and the Exchange Foundation during the 10 day affair; this also included visiting tourists spots around Fukuoka like Dazaifu Tenmangu, Kokura Castle and Fukuoka Tower, in which I learned a new insights about the prefecture while having fun. There were also numerous events with Kazokukai, which I really enjoyed, but also taught me plenty about Japanese culture, among those were barbecues, wearing yukata, Japanese pottery and fruit gatherings. Besides the delicious Japanese style barbecue, the barbecue events were an opportunity for cultural exchange and engaging in activities like smashing a watermelon and hiking. I also cherish and am grateful for being able to learn how to wear a yukata and then visit both a temple and a shrine while wearing one. The Japanese pottery was interesting and a rare opportunity that I appreciate very much. There was also the persimmon gathering during the autumn season, which is a fruit I rarely find in Peru and like very much; and the strawberry gathering on winter, which were specially delicious since Fukuoka is famous for the Amao variety. I was also able to explore Fukuoka and Japan as a whole thanks to my relatives. Under their guidance and support, my year in Japan was even better than I could ever imagine. I was able to experience and learn from Japanese culture and customs like visiting shrines and temples, going to firework displays, seeing the autumn leaves, eating chicken on Christmas, New Year, etc. While all of these activities were great, what stood out the most was having my relatives show me the place where my great-grandmother used to live in during the Obon festivities. Finally, since one cannot talk about Fukuoka nor Japan in general without mentioning its cuisine, I must say that everything I tried was truly delicious. I loved the tonkotsu ramen, every form of mentaiko I tried, sashimi, sushi, seiromushi, okonomiyaki, every mochi variation, etc. Since my two other goals were learning more about Japan and enjoying the year, I can, without a doubt say that I achieved them. It has been a year in which new experiences and great times were abundant, but also were accompanied with lessons and insights.

Studying abroad in Japan has been one of the most enriching experiences of my life and I am truly grateful for it. I have not only learned academically, but enriched myself culturally while living here. I think that I was able to achieve my goals for the year through I also got to learn about some of my family's history, which I think is fascinating. This year studying abroad has been very productive for both my personal and professional life and I am really glad that thanks to the Kempri program, I got to experience a year like this.



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**Hawaii Fukuoka Kenjinkai  
Nakamura Seri Chiyo  
Fukuoka University  
Faculty of Science**

I'm a Honolulu, Hawaii-born, 4th generation Japanese American. My family has been living in Hawaii since my great-grandma and great-grandpa came to Hawaii. When we were children, my sister and I would ask our grandma about our ancestors, and our grandma would tell us that our great-grandma and great-grandpa came to Hawaii when they were young and started a new life. It is a story about my family that worked hard while working at their small supermarket and growing coffee. I really respect my great-grandma and great-grandpa. I can't ask them details anymore, but I can learn about the place they were born and grew up in, so I decided to come to Fukuoka as a Kenpi study abroad student.

When I was a child, I barely knew anything about my roots and at that time, I only met with my relatives that lived in Fukuoka once. When I met them, I didn't speak Japanese at all. Moreover, I knew nothing of Japanese culture. The only thing I knew of Japanese culture was New Years mochi making. Truthfully, I had little interest in learning about my Japanese roots because I didn't know anything. But during my seventh-grade year, I started taking Japanese Language courses. I started learning Japanese and my interest in Japanese culture increased.

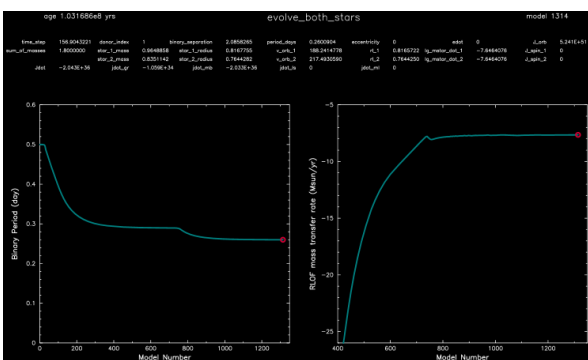
I came to Fukuoka thinking, "this experience is once in a lifetime". Because of Coronavirus, I transferred universities and also changed my major. With the circumstances of that time, I became a little lost in what I wanted to do in my future. Thus, I decided to participate in this study abroad program before graduating.

I came on this program with 3 goals. First, I wanted to spend time with my great-grandma and great-grandpa's relatives, my relatives who now live in Kitakyushu. Every month, we enjoyed meals together, went shopping, and visited shrines together. I found out that my family in Fukuoka have many similar interests. We have been able to talk

about many things and through this experience, I was able to strengthen the bridge between us.



My second goal was to learn as much as I can. The topic that I wanted to research here in Fukuoka would be the first project I have worked on. The research the professor is working on is similar to the topic I wanted to research, so I wanted to discuss various things with him. When I arrived in Japan and visited the professor for the first time, we discussed about his research and from there, I created a plan for a research project. Within the plan, I would be creating a website that you can easily read data from the gravitational wave detector that the professor is conducting research on. This webapp would have the capabilities to access telescope data and analyzed it. In order to give the proposal for this project, I visited the telescope. The KAGRA gravitational wave telescope is located in the mountains of Toyama Prefecture and Gifu Prefecture. There, I saw the gravitational wave detector in person and learned about how the data is read.

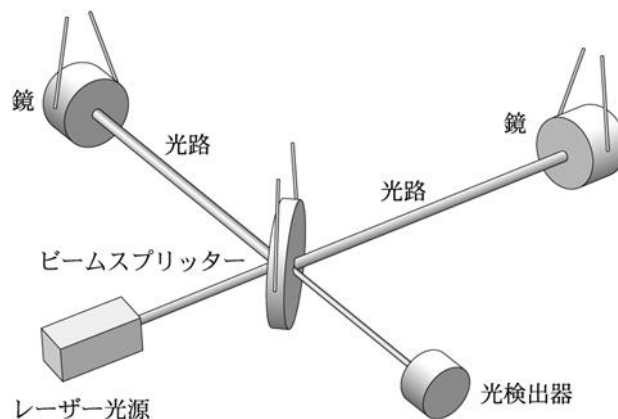


In addition to this project, I also started another project. This project is 1D modeling with the program MESA of a recently discovered astronomical object called AM CVn. Within the AM CVn astronomical object, there is a binary star system consisting of a white dwarf star and a cataclysmic star. The white dwarf accretes

helium matter from the cataclysmic star. The modeling program I am using is a 1D modeling program that uses calculated numbered values to create graphs, however I want to create a 2D modeling program.



In August, there was an Open House for the Fukuoka University Physics. There, I explained different things about the Astrophysics department to high school students. I explained the physics basics that are used in our research groups' research, one being the basics of the Michelson Interferometer. The Michelson Interferometer small model can be used to explain concepts like how gravitational wave detectors receive data. A Michelson Interferometer is a laser beam and mirror system. First, the light leaves the laser beam and passes through a diagonal beam splitter, also known as a half mirror, creating two beams. Then, the two beams reflect off their respective mirrors and return to the half mirror where the beam becomes one. Lastly, the beam is read by the photodetector. If this model is made into a bigger machine, a gravitational wave detector would be made.



My third goal for this study abroad was to experience Japanese culture and scenery. I joined the Naginata club during the spring semester and practiced until summer break. I learned about the beauty of Naginata, as well as the strength of Naginata. I started practicing the Koto after summer break. Playing the Koto, I understood the peaceful nature of Japanese music. I was able to experience many other sides of Japanese culture thanks to the Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation and Kazokukai. For example, tea ceremony and wearing a kimono. In order to experience Japan's scenery, I climbed to the summit of Mt. Fuji, and I went to Kitakyushu to view the Fuji flowers blooming.



Throughout this year's study abroad, there were times where I couldn't speak Japanese well. There were situations where I was unable to convey what I meant to others, and I was unable to understand the meaning of the things I heard. But every time, I would pick myself up and continued forward. Now, even though speaking in front of many people still makes me nervous, I

have realized that I can easily speak with people individually. I have made improvements compared to when I first came to Japan. It is not just in my Japanese that I made developments. I saw improvements in how I create plans and how I collaborate with other researchers. For these reasons, I am grateful that I was given the opportunity to participate in this study abroad.

